

AK PARTY

YEARS IN TURKEY

DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY



Editors:

Kılıç B. Kanat

Burhanettin Duran

SETA

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SETA

SETA Publications 69
First Published in 2020 by SETA
ISBN: 978-625-7040-73-0

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Cover: Erkan Söğüt
Printed in Turkey, İstanbul by Turkuvaz Haberleşme
ve Yayıncılık A.Ş., September 2020

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CHAPTER 1

THE CODES OF THE AK PARTY'S IDEOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION

BURHANETTİN DURAN*

The identity and ideology of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), and more importantly, the transformation thereof, which came to power just one year after its establishment and has ruled Turkey for 18 consecutive years, has been the subject of heated debate. At home and abroad, there is an ongoing discussion about where the AK Party 'wants to take Turkey.' In this regard, a number of ideologically-charged criticisms have been voiced over the years. The most extreme lines of criticism include the accusation that the movement was a sub-contractor of Washington's Greater Middle East Project and the charge of turning Turkey's back on the West to join the Eurasian axis. It is important to note that the same critics identify the AK Party in various ways, ranging from 'democratic Islamist' to 'religious authoritarian' to 'counter-revolutionary' and 'religious Kemalist'. In the wake of the 2009 World Economic Summit in Davos, Switzerland and the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident, the AK Party was charged with 'returning to Islamism' and 'taking an authoritarian turn'. Since the 2013 Gezi Park protests, that narrative became commonplace in the Western media. Amidst those accusations, how the AK Party views its actions vis-à-vis its political platform and identity references is often ignored.

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There is no doubt that the movement, whose self-declared goal is to create a 'new Turkey', has brought about various changes in Turkish politics during its long tenure in power. Those changes are often discussed with reference to the AK Party's position vis-à-vis ideological positions, such as Islamism, nationalism, and Kemalism. Needless to say, it is necessary to discuss those changes with an eye on policies related to coming to terms with Kemalist modernism, the Turkish Republic's founding ideology, the future of Turkey's relations with the Western alliance, interactions with the Islamic world and the Middle East, and Turkey's domestic issues.

Under successive AK Party governments, which overcame a number of major crises including the 2007 presidential crisis and the July 15, 2016 coup attempt, traditional avenues of Turkish politics underwent critical transformations. Over the course of fifteen years, the comprehensive transformation regarding civil-military relations, the relationship between politics and religion, and the political system's reformation created new challenges and problems – which could be the subject of a large body of academic literature.

In this regard, this article has a more limited objective. It analyzes the ideological references and identity discourses employed by the AK Party in its efforts to shape and implement policies to transform Turkey. In doing so, it takes into account how policy changes caused by international and regional developments and realities transform the movement's ideological discourse – with regard to change and continuity.

This article's main argument is that the AK Party relies on three interrelated discourses depending on circumstantial needs and without fully adopting or abandoning any specific one: *conservative democracy*, *our civilization*, and the *native-national (yerli-milli)*. It is possible to argue that all three discourses, which represent the movement's responses to challenges over the past fifteen years, rested on pragmatic and strong leadership.

The AK Party's ideological transformation corresponds to the movement's confrontation with three past and one current challenge(s). Past challenges include (a) the National Outlook movement, of which many AK Party founders were members; (b) Kemalism, which shaped the Republican period; and (c) the regional order, which was born out of World War I and transformed by the Arab revolts.¹ It is possible to argue that the AK Party today faces a number of realities, including chaos in the post-Arab Spring Middle East, efforts by the great powers to redesign the region, and power struggle between regional powers. We could add to that list the AK Party's coming to terms with its own performance – vis-à-vis the July 15 coup attempt.

Taking into consideration *conservative democracy*, *our civilization*, and *native-national* –designations of the ideological and political framework of those four confrontations— it becomes clear that the AK Party has been re-blending the various ideological currents of Ottoman-Turkish modernization: Islamism, nationalism, Westernism, and Ottomanism.² The concepts and symbols of those political traditions are united around the idea of the *national* (millilik) with a level of dynamism as required by changing circumstances. The AK Party seemed pro-Western when Turkey had a real opportunity to integrate into the European Union. During the Arab revolts, the country stressed the importance of the *ummah* to be labeled as “Middle Eastern.” Finally the movement has been described as ‘nationalist’ as it underlined the themes of “unity, state and nation” while intensifying the struggle with terrorist organizations such as FETÖ and PKK, especially after the July 15 coup attempt. In this sense, the AK Party tends to highlight a certain point as required by the times without abandoning others.

¹ Burhanettin Duran, “Understanding the AK Party's Identity Politics: The Multi-Layered Civilization Discourse and Its Limits,” *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013).

² Malik Müftü, “The AK Party's Islamic Realist Political Vision: Theory and Practice,” *Politics and Governance* 2, no. 2 (2014): 28-42.

Primarily, this article stresses the shared roots of the AK Party's references to identity and ideology since its establishment and the extent to which they changed over time.

Secondly, it concentrates on the idea of *conservative democracy*, the circumstances under which it was shaped, and the policies it informed.

Thirdly, it focuses on the discourse of *our civilization*, which was adopted by a confident AK Party amid the Arab Spring revolts.

Finally, this study engages in a discussion of *native-national*, a discourse that emerged in response to the turbulence of recent years. It questions whether the adoption of this discourse, which was born out of a sense of being under attack and made references to 'survival,' means that the AK Party became 'pro-state' or 'nationalist.'

'CONSERVATIVE DEMOCRACY' AS SEARCH FOR HARMONY AND INTEGRATION

Established in 2001, the AK Party set out to develop a new approach to politics. To be clear, the idea of 'conservative democracy,' which features prominently in public speeches by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, did not exist in earlier periods. It is a well-known fact that the movement did not prefer the term 'Muslim democrat' due to its religious connotations. Instead, the party picked 'conservative' to nod at the Turkish people's traditions and their continuity, and the word 'democrat' to indicate their intentions to transform Turkey's political system and promote democratization.³ As such, the AK Party adopted the idea of 'conservative democracy' to bridge the gap between the local and the universal, and to reconcile its values with democracy.⁴ Again, this discourse, which emerged against the backdrop of Turkey's push for European integration and the democratization process, reflected

³ Evangelia Axiarlis, *Political Islam and the Secular State in Turkey: Democracy, Reform and the Justice and Development Party* (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2014), 86.

⁴ Yalçın Akdoğan, "The Meaning of Conservative Democratic Political Identity," in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz, (Salt Lake: The University of Utah Press, 2006).

the AK Party's efforts to introduce itself to domestic audiences as well as the Western-centric international system.

The discourse of 'conservative democracy', which rejected the label 'Islamist' for being too closely associated with the National Outlook tradition, was a testament to the AK Party's originality as well as its eagerness to settle the score with the Kemalist establishment.

Instead of limiting the definition of conservatism to its own political tradition and local values, the movement sought to reproduce them in the form of a new brand of conservative politics, which lived up to global standards.

As the initial concept developed by the AK Party, 'conservative democracy' imagined the political arena as a space for reconciliation. It viewed diversity as a source of richness and identified 'the national will' as the source of political authority. Moreover, this approach posited that Turkish politics must rest firmly on the principles of reconciliation, tolerance, and integration – as opposed to confrontation, conflict, and polarization.⁵

The idea of 'conservative democracy' made it possible for the AK Party to bring to an end the February 28 process in Turkey. The movement's inclusive style sought to cleanse the political arena from polarization or, in other words, to facilitate normalization. As such, the main goals of this approach were to overcome financial crises, promote economic liberalization, spur robust growth, and facilitate democratization by complying with European Union norms.

Between the years 2002 and 2007, the AK Party transformed Turkey's political system by employing the discourse of conservative democracy and using as leverage accession talks with the European Union and the harmonization process. Until the crisis-stricken 2007 presidential election, the movement stressed the importance of 'reconciliation' in politics. It is important to note, however, that this *politics of reconcil-*

⁵ Yalçın Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, (Istanbul: Alfa Publishing, 2014), 16.

iation entailed an unspoken confrontation with Kemalist tutelage due to the gradual empowerment of civilian officials and the promotion of democratization through the EU membership process.⁶ As a matter of fact, the Kemalist elite's attempts to prevent the election of a president whose wife wore the religious headscarf and to remove the AK Party from power compelled the movement to respond to this *politics of tension* in kind. As such, settling the score with the Kemalist guardianship regime gained importance from 2007 onwards.⁷ Meanwhile, the AK Party continued employing the discourse of democratization and reform until the April 16, 2017 constitutional referendum – largely thanks to its commitment to responding to tensions by calling for elections and deriving power from the people.

The idea of 'conservative democracy' created a useful and ambiguous framework that could facilitate the AK Party's emphasis on *synthesis* in 2008–2010. With reference to this concept, the movement was able to accomplish several tasks, including reversing the secularist radicalization of the February 28 process, promoting economic liberalization and robust growth, pushing for integration with the European Union, and making efforts towards democratization.⁸

It is important to note that the AK Party attempted to distance itself from the National Outlook movement by making references to 'conservative democracy'. Some elements of this disengagement process included the abandonment of religion-based politics and Third Worldist critiques of the West, making peace with the Republican legacy, and limiting the state's transformation to reversing Kemalist-secu-

⁶ Ali Resul Usul, "The Justice and Development Party and The European Union: From Euro-Skepticism to Euro-Enthusiasm and Euro-Fatigue," in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Umit Cizre, (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁷ Burhanettin Duran, "Whither the Justice and Development Party's 'New Politics'? Steering towards a Conservative Democracy, Revised Islamist Agenda or Management of New Crises," *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Umit Cizre, (New York: Routledge, 2008).

⁸ Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, 106-7.

larist practices. By contrast, the service-oriented approach to local government, which the Welfare Party invented in 1994, remained part and parcel of the AK Party's platform. It is no secret that Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's successful performance as the mayor of Istanbul was influential on his movement's emphasis on public service. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the ultimate source of legitimacy for successive AK Party governments was service, action, and development.⁹

It goes without saying that the AK Party's definition of *conservatism* was always inclusive of the legacies of center-right parties of the past, such as the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal's Motherland Party.¹⁰ However, it went beyond that: Although the movement does not engage in religion-based politics, there is no doubt that it takes into consideration religious sensitivities. In this regard, the AK Party kept in mind the Virtue Party's transformation and sought to create a synthesis of several currents in Turkish politics – conservatism, nationalism, Islamism, and Westernism.¹¹ At a time when Kemalists had grown increasingly skeptical of the European Union, the AK Party was thus able to advocate deeper integration with Europe. Attaching importance to meeting Islamic demands, such as religious education and lifting the headscarf ban, the movement clearly subscribed to the Anglo-saxon interpretation of secularism.¹² As such, the AK Party carved out a significant position for itself in the political mainstream under Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership.

⁹Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, 91-113; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Address to the AK Party Caucus" (speech, May 20, 2003) <http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/haberler/basbakan-recep-tayyip-erdoganin-ak-parti-grup-toplantisinde-yaptigi-konusma/4715>; Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Address to the AK Party's 3rd Extraordinary Convention" (speech, May 21, 2017), <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/75276/3-olaganustu-kongre-ak-parti-icin-yeniden-dirilis-ve-kurulus-kongresidir.html>.

¹⁰ Sabri Sayarı, "Political Parties," in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı, (New York: Routledge, 2012).

¹¹ Metin Heper, "Turkey: Between East and West," in *The Convergence of Civilizations: Constituting a Mediterranean Region*, (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 273-77.

¹² Akdoğan, *AK Parti ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi*, 91-113.

It is a well-known fact that *conservatism* also refers to efforts to preserve the Kemalist status quo in Turkey. Although the AK Party assumed an identity closely linked to the goal of transforming the country's political system, this transformative agenda never sought to challenge the Republic's founding principles. Instead, the movement was content with undermining Kemalist tutelage and elitism, prioritizing the people's needs in matters of state and transitioning into a milder, more Anglosaxon brand of secularism. Therefore, it is possible to make the case that the AK Party completely subscribed to a brand of conservatism seeking to strengthen the state apparatus and pushing for the Republic's *restoration*.

Prior to 2013, the movement viewed democratization and liberalization as ways to strengthen the state apparatus. As a matter of fact, the European Union accession process consolidated the government's support behind democratization. Although the membership talks came to a screeching halt in 2006, the AK Party sought to keep the democratization process going by arguing that the Copenhagen criteria were actually *the Ankara criteria*. The 2010 constitutional referendum took place within the same context. The systematic infiltration of state institutions by the Gülen Movement (which has since come to be known as FETÖ) and the organization's attempt to overthrow Turkey's democratically elected government through the proxy of the judiciary on December 17-25, 2013, created an urgent need to *cleanse* and *strengthen* those institutions. Under the circumstances, the AK Party was compelled to strengthen the state apparatus and step up counter-terrorism operations to consolidate Turkish democracy.¹³

In a way, this process resulted in a confrontation between EU reforms and the realities on the ground. The July 15 coup attempt, in turn, presented the AK Party with the task of restructuring public insti-

¹³ "Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Uluslararası Ombudsmanlık Zirvesi'nde önemli açıklamalar," *Aktüel*, September 25, 2017. <https://www.sabah.com.tr/aktuel/2017/09/25/cumhurbaskani-recep-tayyip-erdogan-uluslararasi-ombudsmanlik-zirvesinde-onemli-aciklamalar>

tutions within the broader framework of Turkey's transition to the presidential system of government. Obviously, this situation represented a serious dilemma: On the one hand, the AK party was being accused of supporting the status quo and becoming *neo-Kemalist* for seeking to protect the state apparatus. On the other hand, the movement was described by the Republican People's Party (CHP) as 'destructive' for showing the courage to adopt a new system of government.¹⁴

In truth, this whole situation was the direct result of the AK Party's transformation of *conservatism* in Turkey. In other words, it stemmed from the movement's synthesis of change and preservation. As a political player, the AK Party was motivated by perpetual action and struggle. The movement's quest for *synthesis* and *redefinition* had an impact on the concepts it invoked to define its identity. The AK Party tended to take a range of concepts in an ambiguous form and applied its own colors on them. It ensured in particular that the contents of those concepts were not rigid, radical, exclusive, or alienating. For instance, the word *conservative* was redefined to entail integration with Europe and openness to the world by emphasizing the commonality between Turkish conservatism and Western traditions of conservatism. This openness was not viewed as a radical break but a process that would eventually strengthen domestic/local values. When the movement stressed the idea of *civilization*, in turn, it was considered the shared accumulation of global and national values. The stress on "strong *national values*" was not a rejection of human heritage, on the contrary it was regarded a will to digest their global counterparts. Whether *nation* referred to *our civilization* or the *native-national*, it signified unity – which embraced, rather than excluded, the various ethnic groups. The emphasis on *singularity*—*one nation, one state, one flag, one homeland*— did not go beyond the movement's awareness of being under attack. As such, it was possible for the AK Party to switch back and forth between *conservative*

¹⁴ "Kılıçdaroğlu: Yapılan bir rejim değişikliğidir," *NTV*, December 9, 2016.

democracy and *our civilization*, or to go back to the *native-national*. Erdoğan's strong leadership and ability to persuade his base played a crucial role in those seamless transitions.¹⁵

In the wake of the Arab revolts, especially the Jasmine Revolution of late 2010 in Tunisia, the AK Party took a confident step by introducing a new theme, *our civilization*, without turning its back on *conservative democracy*.

THE 'OUR CIVILIZATION' DISCOURSE: A SIGN OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

When the Arab revolts broke out, the AK Party was in a comfortable position in Turkey's political arena as well as its relations with powerful players in international politics. Turkey's declining relations with Israel, which were strained by what came to be known as the 'one minute' incident at the 2009 World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and the 2010 Mavi Marmara assault, had not yet evolved into anti-Turkish rhetoric in the Western media. As a matter of fact, Turkey was largely considered a *model country*¹⁶ in 2011, when then-U.S. President Barack Obama's warm messages to the Islamic world coincided with calls for liberty and dignity by Arab protestors. In this particular discussion, the AK Party was credited for Turkey's accomplishments.

The AK Party leadership, the argument went, served as an example to the Islamic world and its neighborhood – thanks to Turkey's economic development, democratization, and good relations with the West. The so-called *former Islamists* were also celebrated for making Islamic movements more moderate or democratic. Having attempted to resolve its problems with its neighbors, Turkey built on its stability and relied on economic cooperation to launch new foreign policy ini-

¹⁵ Metin Heper, "Islam, Conservatism, and Democracy in Turkey: Comparing Turgut Özal and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 2 (2013):141-56.

¹⁶ Burhanettin Duran and Nuh Yılmaz, "Islam, Models and the Middle East: The New Balance of Power following the Arab Spring," *Perceptions*, (Winter 2013).

tatives and make new claims. At the time, many observers expected the successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt to spread to other Arab countries. It was not yet known that the Syrian conflict would morph into a bloody civil war. Against this backdrop, the AK Party's rhetoric was transformed into something more inclusive and daring that had regionwide appeal. Without abandoning the discourse of *conservative democracy*, which de-escalated domestic tensions and was harmonious with the outside world, the movement stressed another bold concept: *Our Civilization*. On September 30, 2012, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a speech at the AK Party's 4th Ordinary Grand Convention to associate the movement's new ideological discourse with the perspective of *civilization*. In that address, he used the term *conservative democracy* just twice, whereas there were 14 references to *civilization* – which could refer to national-spiritual values, Turkey being part of the Middle East and the Islamic world, and humanity's values in general.

In his speech, which repeatedly referenced the historical symbols and religious-conservative values of *the Great Nation*, Erdoğan recalled the common past and long-standing unity of Kurds and Turks. He also talked about the 2071 vision – which brought to mind the 1000th anniversary of the Battle of Manzikert. To be clear, this new direction did not represent a clear break with the AK Party's emphasis on *service* – specifically economic development and concrete projects— but it highlighted the *mission* that was 'the New Turkey.'¹⁷

It is possible to argue that the AK Party's *Our Civilization* discourse was an attempt to redefine the idea of *nation* within the context of Turkey's claims and responsibilities towards the region. In addition to recalling the historical solidarity between Turks and Kurds, this definition reflected the movement's self-confidence – which translated into

¹⁷ Erdoğan, Recep Tayyip, "Address to the AK Party's 4th Ordinary Grand Convention," September 30, 2012, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/basbakan-erdoganin-ak-parti-4.-olagan-buyuk-kongresi-konusmasinin-tam-metni/31771>.

two rounds of disarmament talks with the terrorist organization PKK. Indeed, the AK Party had acknowledged the Kurdish community's identity rights, which had been denied to them by the Kemalist ideology's exclusive form of nationalism.

Erdoğan, who courageously initiated a “democratic opening” in order to meet the Kurdish community's demands, justified his efforts with references to the two ethnic groups' long history of coexistence dating back to the Seljuk Empire and the Battle of Manzikert. It was also Erdoğan, however, who showed due determination to fight the PKK when the group returned to violence and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) used politics to lay the groundwork for terror attacks. He opposed steps by the PKK and its Syrian branch, the YPG, to establish so-called cantons in Northern Syria and exploit the Peace Process to stockpile weapons across Southeastern Turkey. In addition to cracking down on PKK networks at home and abroad, Erdoğan thus oversaw the stripping of several HDP deputies of their parliamentary immunities.¹⁸

The movement's emphasis on *our civilization* reflected its desire to raise awareness about the international system's unfairness and to re-arrange the country's relations with the West. As a matter of fact, Erdoğan condemned Israel's attacks on Gaza in November 2012 and criticized the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, including the United States, for their inaction. At the same time, he urged the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League to play a more active role, and recalled Turkey's *agency* in the Islamic world.¹⁹

The language of *civilization* used by the AK Party was considered by some observers as “the emergence of a new nationalism.”²⁰ It is note-

¹⁸ Talha Köse, “Rise and Fall of the AK Party's Kurdish Peace Initiatives,” *Insight Turkey* 19, no. 2 (2017).

¹⁹ “Erdoğan'dan İsrail'e Mesaj,” *Takvim*, November 19, 2012.

²⁰ Soli Özel, “Anayasa MHP ile Yapılacak Gibi,” *Habertürk*, October 1, 2012.

worthy, however, that the movement was accused of being nationalist at every stage of its ideological transformation. The main problem with that line of criticism was its association of the AK Party's efforts to create a sense of *us* with some kind of exclusive 'nationalist' essence. With regard to belonging and the generation of identity, the AK Party tends to redefine the meaning of certain words, such as 'nation,' within the framework of original ideological concept sets. This content must not be confused with concepts used by other groups, with which the movement forms temporary alliances for political reasons. For example, the AK Party sought to use the concepts of liberal and Westernist groups, to which it was close during the EU negotiations, without abandoning the *native-national* approach.²¹

To be clear, the idea of *our civilization* was neither about being part of (or opposed to) the European civilization nor belonging to the Islamic civilization. Quite the contrary, it was an interpretation that took into account Turkey's strategic, historical, economic, and cultural codes, which entailed both necessities and opportunities. In other words, it aimed for the best of both worlds. As such, the AK Party believed that it could simultaneously become a member of the European Union and become more integrated into the Islamic world. Therefore, it is impossible to consider the movement's earlier pro-EU statements a sign of *Europeanism* and its criticism against the European Union as an essentialist opposition to Europe. Instead, the movement sought to take advantage of all of Turkey's connections and identities. To create this broad framework, it engaged in a series of confrontations. By coming to terms with the Islamist movement's Third Worldist language, it transformed Turkey's relations with the West from essentialist opposition to what we could call *critical integration*. In this regard, the emphasis of *our civilization* on internationalization seeks to reach

²¹ Murat Yeşiltaş, "Turkey's Quest for a "New International Order": The Discourse of Civilization and the Politics of Restoration," *Perceptions* 19, no. 4 (2014): 43-76.

a new definition of the *universal* that rejects both Eurocentrism and Third Worldism.

This search for a new synthesis pointed to an effort by the AK Party to establish a new kind of relationship with the West. At once, the AK Party movement stressed the importance of Turkey's alliances with Western nations, such as NATO and the European Union, and criticized the Western-centric international order. Noting that the existing international order was unfair to underdeveloped nations and Muslim countries, it demanded a new international order.²² It is possible to criticize the AK Party's *civilization* perspective for failing to acknowledge regional realities by trying to *transcend* national borders in the Middle East. As a matter of fact, one could make the case that Turkey temporarily turned a blind eye to the PKK/YPG threat, which the Syrian civil war brought to its doorstep.

The *our civilization* discourse was closely linked to the positive environment created by the Arab revolts and the Peace Process in Turkey. Under the circumstances, many people believed that Turkey could shape regional developments; hence the goal of creating the New Turkey. In 2013-2016, a number of development took place to the detriment of the Middle Eastern order imagined by Turkey. The overthrow of Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi, the Russian intervention in the Syrian civil war and the shifting of the balance of power in Bashar al-Assad's favor, efforts by the PKK/YPG to create a corridor in Northern Syria under the pretext of fighting DAESH, steps taken by the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt against Turkish interests, and regional conflicts fueled by Saudi-Iranian rivalry immediately come to mind. Meanwhile on the domestic front, the Gezi Park revolts, the December 2013 judicial coup attempt, the events of October 6-8, 2014, political instability caused by the June 2015 elections, the PKK's

²² Hakan Övünç Ongur and Hüseyin Zengin, "Transforming Habitus of the Foreign Policy: A Bourdieusian Analysis of Turkey as an Emerging Middle Power," *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2016): 117-33.

return to violence in July 2015, the collapse of the Peace Process, and the July 15 coup attempt were among negative developments. Those domestic and international developments strengthened the conviction of AK Party supporters that the movement was under attack and, subsequently, deepened their sense of struggle and resistance. By extension, the sense that Turkey was combatting three terrorist organizations and fighting a new War of Independence gave rise to the discourse of *the native-national*.

THE DISCOURSE OF STRUGGLE AND RESISTANCE: THE NATIVE-NATIONAL APPROACH

The final stage in the AK Party's ideological transformation was the *native-national* discourse – which was expressed with the Rabaa sign: one nation, one flag, one homeland, one state.²³ As a matter of fact, the Rabaa sign was incorporated into the movement's charter at its most recent convention. In both *conservative democracy* and *our civilization* discourses, the word *native* referred to a commitment to local values. By contrast, the term came to be used more recently to express a sense of patriotism – uniting around the cause of Turkey's survival. It assumed the dual meaning of withstanding attacks from the outside and cracking down on traitors and terrorists at home.

In this regard, it is possible to suggest that the AK Party's emphasis on the *native-national* dates back to the Gezi Park revolts²⁴ and the December 2013 judicial coup attempt. Needless to say, this sentiment reached its peak during the July 15 resistance. The idea that Turkey was

²³ The Rabaa sign was originally invented to support the democratic resistance of the Egyptian people to the Sisi regime.

²⁴ Fahrettin Altun, "The Rising Criticism of Erdoğan During the Gezi Protests," *The Turkish AK Party and its Leader*, ed. Ümit Cizre, (New York: Routledge, 2016); Hatem Ete, "The Political Reverberations of the Gezi Protests," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 3 (2013); Coşkun Taştan, "The Gezi Park Protests in Turkey: A Qualitative Field Research," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 3 (2013).

under Western attack resulted in the transformation of the *native-national* stance into an identity of resistance. This language, which was used against FETÖ during the Peace Process, became more common in the wake of the PKK's return to violence in July 2015. It was the July 15 resistance, however, that made the *native-national* discourse part and parcel of mainstream politics in Turkey, as the various political parties and their leaders had to position themselves vis-à-vis this definition of the *native-national*. Moreover, the reluctant response of Western countries to the coup attempt effectively ended the hegemony of Westernist politics in Turkey, which had been intact for more than a century. Questioning its alliance with the West, Turkey has been moving to redefine that relationship.²⁵

Another interesting point is that the word *native* became more and more important within the context of the fight against FETÖ between the December 2013 judicial coup attempt and the failed coup of July 15, 2016. During this process, it became clear that the organization served foreign intelligence agencies and therefore was not loyal to Turkey, even though it presented itself as a religious movement. Moreover, the Gülen Movement's drift away from *native values* became its main difference from religious movements in Turkey.²⁶ As such, putting Turkey's interests first and loyalty to the state became active parts of *the native*.

The idea of *native-national*, which the AK Party developed by building on *the national spirit* at the Yenikapı Convention after the July 15 coup attempt, gradually evolved into a shorthand reference to the alliance between the AK Party and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). In a sense, the two movements were able to form an unprecedented bloc in Turkish politics, as the MHP's support for Presi-

²⁵ Ali Aslan, "Yerli ve Milli Siyaset," in *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Toplum*, (Istanbul: SETA Publishing, 2017).

²⁶ Burhanettin Duran, "Gülen Hareketi ve Sünni Kodların Kaybı," *Star Açık Görüş*, December 28, 2013.

dent Erdoğan facilitated the adoption of presidentialism by the Turkish Parliament²⁷ and the passing of a constitutional referendum on April 16, 2017. The presidential system, which was developed to address the shortcomings of Turkey's parliamentary system, sought to meet the country's national needs. Advocates of presidentialism argued that the new system of government would not only preserve Turkey's territorial integrity and ensure its security but also promote a diverse national identity. Again, ahead of the 2019 presidential election, the AK Party and the MHP referred to their alliance as *the native-national alliance* and *the popular alliance*.

As such, the *native-national* discourse has been used in a range of areas including counter-terrorism operations, Turkey's new system of government and a renewed sense of unity. It is capable of describing an identity and a political position as well as developing an inclusive founding language. In this sense, the AK Party's new discourse, like *conservative democracy* and *our civilization*, reflects the movement's commitment to transforming Turkey and improving the country's international standing. It stands for the desire to transcend the limits of a single political party's identity and become part of a dream that brings together various social groups.

An important point here is that senior AK Party officials' emphasis on 'one state' and 'one nation' do not necessarily exclude Kurdish ethnic identity – although the Peace Process ended with a bitter note, when 'trench wars' broke out in Southeastern Turkey with the support of the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). The idea of 'one nation' stresses the importance of citizenship, which covers all communities in Turkey. Nor did this emphasis translate into a reversal of AK Party's reforms, which provided certain cultural rights to the Kurds as 'equal citizens.' Quite the contrary, it

²⁷ Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, "The Transformation of Turkey's Political System and the Executive Presidency," *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (2016); Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, "Turkey's Constitutional Referendum and its Effect on Turkish Politics," *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (2017).

represents the movement's search for a 'strong domestic identity,' which would include the Kurds supporting the goals of 'one homeland' and 'one flag.' In other words, it is a statement of the AK Party's determination to fight groups, such as FETÖ and the PKK, that place at risk Turkey's independence:

If you want to be fully independent, you must implement 'domestic and national values' across the board. In truth, Turkey's political history is the history of the struggle between the *native-nationals* and those who have been estranged from their people and their country.

With the help of the *native-national* brand of politics, the AK Party seeks to improve Turkey's standing in the international arena. There is no doubt that this effort reflects the search for a new balance of power within the Western alliance and in the region. At a time when the great powers enter a period of uncertainty, Turkey must preserve its political stability and prepare for the challenges ahead.

The *native-national* discourse has been used since 2013 to respond to the threats that Turkey encountered, to withstand attacks from the outside and, simply put, to define 'the resistance.' At its core is the idea of putting Turkey's interests first. In this language of resistance, PKK and FETÖ are considered proxies for foreign governments seeking to threaten Turkey's territorial integrity. Countries with links to said terrorist organizations, such as the United States and European nations, are accused of violating the rules of partnership and urged to revise their policies. Meanwhile, Turkish President Erdoğan makes the case that his country will take care of its own business – which reflects a realist approach that takes into account the failure of the European Union and NATO to show due support for Turkey. At the same time, this language creates an emotional platform, which idealizes the country's firm commitment to addressing all of its current problems and national aspirations.

It is possible to argue that the AK Party's *native-national* discourse remains ambiguous at this time. However, as the movement has never

expressed its identity through rigid ideologies since 2001, the current level of ambiguity is not considered a major problem. As a matter of fact, one could make the case that the AK Party, an inherently pragmatic movement, might thrive on that ambiguity. Still, it is no secret that various social groups, including the Kurds, closely follow the debate on the definition of *native-national*, which has been frequently invoked to justify key policies such as counter-terrorism efforts. The AK Party's most concrete step in this regard was the incorporation of the Rabaa sign into the movement's charter. However, even this emphasis on *singularity* could not fully address the need for clarity. As such, who will identify the content of *native-national*, and how, remains a serious issue for the AK Party.

It is possible to argue that there is fierce competition in this area: If a brand of politics, which upholds the 'national will,' fights against all forms of tutelage, and performed the July 15 resistance, ends up defining the *native-national* discourse, this process could contribute to the consolidation of Turkish democracy. By contrast, the neo-nationalist/Eurasianist approach, which seeks to feed off the turbulence of recent years to further a specific ideological agenda with the help of state institutions, comes out on top, many people could end up feeling that they have been forced out of the system. Moreover, this approach threatens to deform the AK Party's inclusive brand of politics, which has always been there since the movement's formation. Pumping essentialist anti-Westernism/anti-Europeanism or ethnic nationalism into the *national* identity would mean that the AK Party shall be taken over by a reactionary and singular agenda. Similarly, AK Party must be wary about the risk of the security apparatus being taken over by ultra nationalist Kemalists. Preventing this is not only a key requirement for the success of the war on terror, but is also critical to preserve its electoral base among religious-conservative groups. Those ultra nationalist groups could attempt to identify all religious communities as national security threats under the pretext of cracking down on FETÖ

networks. To mitigate this risk is an inherent part of the AK Party's new definition of secularism.²⁸

Having secured the support of 50 percent of voters and reaching out to various social groups, the AK Party must develop a local, pluralist, civilian, and democratic definition of the *national* to ensure that it can carry itself into the future. It is a challenge that this concept must be defined at a time when Turkey experiences the negative side effects of violent conflicts in Syria and Iraq as well as serious tensions with some of its 'allies', including the United States and the European Union.²⁹ At this point, the AK Party not only lacks the pleasant comfort of the *conservative democracy* and *our civilization* periods but also bears on its shoulders the burden of 15 years in power.³⁰

The definition of the *native-national* discourse is closely related to the future direction of the political opposition. The opposition's preoccupation with the radical and marginal narrative pushed by Turkey's adversaries is one thing. But there is also a very real risk of the opposition embracing some type of populist nationalism over the question of Syrian refugees. The fact that many senior representatives of the main opposition CHP have been asking why Syrians live comfortably in Turkey instead of going back to their country to fight is a clear indicator of said risk.³¹ Therefore, the AK Party's definition of the *national* must counter-balance the opposition's controversial remarks and prevent the alienation of Syrian refugees.

Another line of criticism is that the AK Party's alliance with the Nationalist Movement Party has made the movement more like the MHP and resulted in the adoption of a Turkist-nationalist ideology.

²⁸ Burhanettin Duran, "FETÖ'nün Yerli Kodlardan Kopuşu ve Geleceği," in *FETÖ'nün Anatomisi*, ed. Enes Bayraklı and Ufuk Ulutaş, (Istanbul: SETA Publishing, 2017), 174-81.

²⁹ Kemal Kirişçi, *Turkey and the West: Fault Lines in a Troubled Alliance*, (Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2017).

³⁰ Burhanettin Duran, "Milli ve Yerli Söyleminin İçini Kim Dolduracak?," *Sabah*, September 9, 2017.

³¹ "Kılıçdaroğlu: Suriyeliler bütün düzenimizi bozacak," *Habertürk*, March 12, 2016.

The assumption here is that the movement has replaced its emphasis on Islamism and the *ummah* with nationalist sentiments. As a matter of fact, the charge of nationalism against the AK Party has been made in other contexts as well: Today, some observers claim that two other types of nationalism (neo-nationalist/Eurasianist and Kemalist-secular) influence the movement's identity and policies. This line of criticism is flawed for two reasons.

First, this isn't the first time that the political tradition, of which the AK Party is a part, was charged with taking a nationalist turn. In the past, critics made similar arguments when Islamist-nationalist politicians and intellectuals stressed the importance of the *national*. The adoption of the words *conservative* and *national* during the War of Independence, the emphasis on Turkish identity by Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nurettin Topçu, and the National Outlook movement's definition of *national* and its 1991 alliance with the National Labor Party (MÇP) immediately come to mind.³²

Second, the AK Party is almost always portrayed as a passive participant in its interactions with the various 'nationalist' groups and identities. For some reason, the groups with which the movement interacts are generally considered the 'dominant' side, whether they are Kemalists or the Nationalist Movement Party. The AK Party's identity is imagined as some type of mold which shall be reshaped by others. As a matter of fact, the Islamic legacy, from which the AK Party borrows much, has an impact on nationalist groups that interact with the movement. It is possible to argue that this influence is stronger among Turkish nationalists. Prior to the July 15 resistance, there was an understanding that the MHP was shifting towards a secular brand of neo-nationalism *a la* CHP. The alliance between the AK Party and the MHP not only stopped that drift but also highlighted the Islamic-Ottoman references of Turkish nationalists. The MHP leadership's support for

³² Gökhan Çetinsaya, "İslamcılıktaki Milliyetçilik," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* 6, (2005): 420-22.

President Erdoğan's reaction against U.S. President Donald Trump's Jerusalem move attests to that fact. Likewise, the MHP sides with the AK Party government in its criticism of the international order's unfairness on behalf of Muslims around the world.

The AK Party's relationship with nationalism has been shaped with reference to the July 15 resistance. At the heart of this approach lies a sensitivity towards the nation and the state, which is part of the political thinking and traditions of Islamic-conservative communities. Erdoğan's description of Turkey's fight against three terrorist organizations as "the greatest struggle for independence and the future since the War of Independence" and his emphasis on *survival* must be viewed from the same perspective. Likewise, *resistance* and *struggle* rest on an inclusive approach akin to *our civilization* – as opposed to a narrow nationalist perspective.

As a matter of fact, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan highlighted Turkey's civilizational heritage as the source of the spirit of resistance and struggle at the AK Party's 6th Ordinary Provincial Convention in Eskişehir:

Although the AK Party is a 17-year-old movement, we are representatives of a rich civilization. You know that we are the contemporary representatives of a tradition, which has one eye in the past and another in the future, right? This movement is rooted in Mount Hira, Manzikert, Dumlupınar, Sakarya and Çanakkale. At the source of this cause is the last will of Sheikh Edebalı, the courage of Corporal Seyit [and] Hasan Polatkan's love of service. We are the grand children of Sultan Mehmed the Conquerer, who, at the age of 21, said "whether I shall take Byzantium or it shall take me." And, of course, we are the representatives of a conviction, which states that there is no victor but Allah.³³

Another crucial aspect of the AK Party's new definition of *the national* is the changing nature of Turkey's relationship with the West.

³³ Recep Tayyip Erdoğan "Genel Başkan ve Cumhurbaşkanı Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Yenikent Spor Salonu'nda düzenlenen Eskişehir 6. Olağan İl Kongresi'nde partililere hitap etti," (speech, February 17, 2018), <http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-eskisehir-6.-olagan-il-kongresinde-konustu/97422#1>.

Erdoğan's frequent criticism of the United States and the European Union in recent years gave rise to questions about where the AK Party government wants to take Turkey. The Western media often criticizes Turkey, which is obliged to take care of its own business in the fight against terrorism, for cooperating with the Russian Federation and Iran when necessary. Critics accuse the country of drifting away from the West and experiencing an axis shift. The Trump administration's efforts to redefine Washington's global role with reference to the U.S. President's campaign slogan, *America First*, fuels uncertainty, instability, and power struggles in the international arena. Under the circumstances, both the relationship between the great powers and transatlantic relations are undergoing certain changes. Needless to say, Turkey experiences the side effects of those processes more clearly than other U.S. allies. At this time, the country has no choice but to create a new set of policies and discourse to ensure its survival at a time of uncertainty. Moreover, the AK Party, whose government faced serious challenges including security threats emanating from Syria and Iraq as well as efforts to re-design the Middle East,³⁴ is obliged to develop a new identity framework suitable to the high level of turbulence. It is absolutely crucial that this framework take into account the prediction that international and regional crises will continue in the foreseeable future and build the necessary capacity to turn crises into opportunities.

Turkey's growing 'autonomy'³⁵ in the area of foreign policy has nothing to do with the perceived total abandonment of the West. It is clear that the country has no obligation to comply with poli-

³⁴ Ufuk Ulutaş and Burhanettin Duran, "Ortadoğu'da Bölgesel Dizayn mı Bölgesel Rekabet mi?," in *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Dış Politika*, ed. Kemal İnat, Ali Aslan and Burhanettin Duran, (Istanbul: SETA Publishing, 2017), 61-84.

³⁵ Malik Müftü, "Turkey's Choice", *Insight Turkey* 19, no. 1 (2017); Ali Aslan, "Türk Dış Politikasını Anlamak İçin Kavramsal bir Çerçeve: Otonomi Arayışı," in *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Dış Politika*, ed. Kemal İnat, Ali Aslan and Burhanettin Duran, (Istanbul: SETA Publishing, 2017), 17-40.

cies that place its national interests at risk. At a time when Turkey follows a policy of ‘critical integration’ with the West, essentialist views of the West have been replaced by pragmatism and strategic choices. In the meantime, efforts by the United States to transform the PKK/YPG into a standing army as part of a statelet in Northern Syria continue to fuel anti-Americanism in Turkey. It is possible that the definition of the *native-national* could fuel certain sentiments, including a commitment to confront U.S. troops if Turkey’s vital interests are at stake. Still, the perception that the United States and the European Union have been not only unhelpful but also openly hostile towards the country in its fight against FETÖ and the PKK could result in the emergence of a reactionary and exclusive brand of nationalism mixed with anti-Americanism. To be clear, this type of nationalism would not fall within the limits of the AK Party’s ideology.

Looking into the relationship between the *native-national* discourse and Islamic thought in Turkey would be helpful to make sense of the AK Party’s ideological transformation. Despite being a mass party, the movement’s senior leadership and popular base largely consists of Islamic-conservatives. Unlike FETÖ, this group tends to put Turkey’s interests first and looks out for the long-term interests of the *ummah*. Likewise, many mainstream religious movements are characterized by their compliance with local and Sunni values. Those values shelter those movements from outside ideologies such as Salafism and Shi’ism. Simply put, this ‘pro-state’ approach, which could be described as refusal to turn one’s back on the state and national interests despite the control of Republican governments by secular Kemalists, provides ample support to the *native-national* discourse. In several periods of authoritarianism, including the single-party period and the February 28 process, the Islamic community adopted a ‘pro-state’ approach that manifested itself as an effort to use democratic opportunities to expand their positions as opposed to total surrender to the

state. In a way, it represents an effort to analyze and realize Islamic ideals and sensitivities from Turkey.³⁶

From this perspective, it is possible to note that Islamic movements, which were influenced by developments in Iran, Pakistan, and Egypt, failed to adopt this 'pro-state' approach for a long time – unlike Sunni orders and communities with Ottoman roots. Notwithstanding, the vast majority of Islamic movements in Turkey adopted *native* and *pro-state* positions under the Welfare Party and the AK Party. To be clear, this transformation was largely influenced by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's political moves, which made valuable contributions to the National Outlook tradition. Erdoğan reached beyond mosque-goers and practiced an inclusive brand of politics that opened itself up to various social groups. Accordingly, Turkey's relationship with the West did not become the subject of ideological rejection. Instead, it was viewed as an interaction on the basis of rational interests.

Finally, it is necessary to analyze the AK Party's approach to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Republic's founder. Some observers would recall that the enthusiastic participation of AK Party members in ceremonies to commemorate Atatürk on the anniversary of his death on November 10, 2017 fueled controversy in Turkey. The AK Party's appropriation of Atatürk as a shared value was described by certain journalists as "the Atatürk opening." Others went further to argue that the AK Party had finally seen the truth and Atatürk was still right after all

³⁶ In the early Republican period, Islamists, who were forced out of the Parliament and politics, were frustrated by the secularist regime, yet carefully avoided a confrontation with the state. Despite a range of problems, they viewed loyalty to the state as part of being and staying 'native'. Burhanettin Duran, "Cumhuriyet Dönemi İslamcılığı," *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce* 6 (2005): 129-35.

The Islamists saw the rejection of any engagement with foreign agencies, which would hurt their state's interests, as part of their commitment to their homeland, nation and *ummah*. This is what President Erdoğan meant when he said "the memory of this geography and this land is stronger than the memory of man. This land, which rewards those who love and serve it, shall punish those that sell [betray] it," Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, "Türkiye Tarım ve Kırsal Kalkınma Hamlesi Proje Uygulamaları Tanıtım Programında Yaptıkları Konuşma," (speech, April 4, 2015). <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/konusmalar/353/32123/turkiye-tarim-ve-kirsal-kalkinma-hamlesi-proje-uygulamalari-tanitim-programinda-yaptiklari-konusma.html>.

those years. It is necessary to analyze this debate in conjunction with other lines of criticism – specifically, that the AK Party surrendered to ‘statist reflexes’ and generated some kind of ‘religious Kemalism’. Since its establishment, the AK Party adopted its own interpretation of Atatürk’s ideal of modernization, also known as ‘reaching the level of contemporary civilizations.’ Again, in line with the traditional approach of Turkish conservatives, the movement viewed Atatürk, the leader of the War of Independence, as a shared value. By contrast, it criticized the radical secularist practices of the single-party era by targeting the Republican People’s Party (CHP) and İsmet İnönü. Over the years, the AK Party has been critical of certain practices, such as the Maintenance of Order Law, the independence courts, the closure of the Progressive Party, the Turkish History Thesis, and the Sun-Language Theory.

In this regard, the AK Party’s embrace of Atatürk should be considered a sign of Turkey’s normalization rather than proof of the movement’s support for the status quo. Erdoğan, who believes that he settled the score with Kemalist tutelage and took steps to transform radical secularism, acts out of the conviction that his movement has made the establishment recognize the people’s Islamic demands – such as the religious headscarf and religious instruction. Moreover, it must be noted that the AK Party’s emphasis on Atatürk represents an attempt to encourage resistance against outside attacks and mobilize support behind the war on terror over the past four years. By invoking the Rabaa sign as part of the *native-national* discourse, Erdoğan brings together shared “Islamic” values and Atatürk as the leader of the War of Independence. It is noteworthy that this step seeks to prevent the AK Party’s opponents from turning Atatürk into the symbol of a marginal resistance.³⁷

³⁷ Burhanettin Duran, “Yeni bir Atatürkçülük mü geliyor?,” *Sabah*, November 14, 2017.

CONCLUSION

Since 2001, the AK Party's most important asset has been its ability to stay ahead of other political parties in Turkey with regard to implementing reforms.³⁸ In other words, the movement has been able to position itself as the driving force behind change and stability at the same time.³⁹ This self-proclaimed position directly stemmed from the eagerness of the AK Party and its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to transform Turkey. This transformative agenda stood the test of a dynamic process, featuring not just reforms, new initiatives, and restoration but also confrontation and crises. Meanwhile, the party's discourse served to legitimize a range of policies, which came in response to this challenging process.

Over the years, the AK Party underwent a number of ideological/rhetorical changes. To be clear, those changes weren't random ruptures but variations of three interrelated discourses, whose emphasis changed based on a growing body of experience and temporary needs: conservative democracy, the idea of 'our civilization', and the domestic/native approach. In this regard, the reform agenda that accompanied Turkey's push for European integration, the idea of the "New Turkey" against the backdrop of the Arab revolts, and the emphasis on domestic/native values in the wake of the July 15 coup attempt were parts of the same story of transformation. As such, the AK Party's ideological transformation must be considered the end result of 15 years in power. It rests on the experience of coming to terms with Kemalist tutelage, the movement's Islamist past and the regional order. Thanks to its strong leadership, the movement has been able to easily legitimize policy changes over the years. For example, the AK Party government attempted to disarm the terrorist organization PKK twice between 2009

³⁸ Sabri Sayarı, Pelin Ayan Musil and Özhan Demirkol eds., *Party Politics in Turkey: A Comparative Perspective*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

³⁹ Meltem Müftüleri-Baç and E. Fuat Keyman, "The Era of Dominant-Party Politics," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (January 2012): 85-99.

and 2015. Since July 2015, it has cracked down on PKK networks at home and abroad, specifically in Syria and Iraq, with vast popular support by deriving legitimacy from its earlier attempts. The dynamic shifts between the three discourses have been facilitated by Erdoğan's strong leadership. After all, the AK Party's founding leader has been able to borrow from three main avenues of Turkish politics—conservatism, nationalism, and Islamism—depending on pressing needs and abilities. Viewed by his supporters as a leader who could bring together Turkey's national interests with the grievances of Muslims in Syria, Somalia, Myanmar, and elsewhere, Erdoğan also came to be known as a vocal critic of the Western-dominated, deeply unfair world order. Simply put, the Turkish president has been able to tailor his political platform as a synthesis of pragmatism, which stems from knowing and deeply caring about power, and ideals, which he continues to pursue.⁴⁰

It is no secret that the three discourses employed by the AK Party and the extent to which they are emphasized are closely related to pressing problems at home and abroad. At a time when domestic and international politics are one and the same, the AK Party occasionally relied on foreign policy language in order to consolidate its domestic base. At critical junctures, such as the Peace Process, the July 15 resistance, Operation Euphrates Shield, and Operation Olive Branch, international developments served to facilitate domestic consolidation. As such, the movement responded to the complex and dynamic needs of domestic and international politics by focusing on one of the three discourses at the expense of others. At times when emphasis had to be shifted, Erdoğan's strong leadership and effective communication with the public played an important role.

The AK Party has been charged with “surrendering to Turkish nationalism” by opposition parties for stepping up counter-terrorism efforts and declaring a state of emergency after the July 15 coup attempt.

⁴⁰ Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, “Kriterimiz Yerlilik ve Millilik Olmalı,” *Kriter*, no. 1, May 2016.

This line of criticism is inherently weakened by the confusion of the AK Party's elastic and inclusive approach to the various political concepts and the rigidity of certain groups, with which the movement happens to cooperate. As such, the current accusations bring to mind earlier claims that the movement had turned Kemalist, embraced the status quo, or adopted Turkism. By contrast, the AK Party's traditional emphasis to 'the national' has merely been combined with conservatism, 'civilization' and 'the native'. However, it is important to note that the term 'national' invariably differs from Kemalist nationalism and the Nationalist Movement Party's Turkish nationalism.

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FIRST

TRANSFORMATION IN
DOMESTIC POLITICS
DURING THE AK PARTY ERA



CHAPTER 2

THE AK PARTY'S POLICY TOWARDS TRANSFORMATION OF POLITICAL SYSTEM IN TURKEY

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The Justice and Development Party (AK Party) represents an exceptional political movement in Turkish politics. Established on August 14, 2001, the party won its first victory on November 3, 2002, by receiving 34.4 percent of the vote in the parliamentary elections. Today, it remains the longest-ruling movement since Turkey transitioned to multi-party democracy in 1950. Having won five general and three municipal elections, three referendums, and a presidential race, the AK Party will have been in power for seventeen consecutive years when Turkey holds elections in 2019. During this period, the movement's popular support never fell below its share of the vote in the 2002 parliamentary elections. In addition to winning every parliamentary and municipal election, the party was able to beat its competitors by a distance. Although the AK Party failed to receive a large enough majority in the hung parliament after the June 7, 2015 general elections to form a single-party government, it was able to recover its full strength in the repeat elections held shortly afterwards. Taking into consideration the movement's track record, it is possible to argue that the AK Party qualifies as a 'dominant party'.

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Over the past fifteen years, the AK Party implemented a large number of reforms and amended various pro-tutelage and anti-democratic articles of Turkey's 1982 Constitution. More important, the movement oversaw the country's transition from parliamentarism to the so-called 'presidency system'. As of April 16, 2017, Turkey adopted a new system of government proposed jointly by the AK Party and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). In the constitutional referendum, which took place with an 85.32 percent turnout rate, 51.4 percent of the electorate voted in favor of proposed changes to the constitution. The April 2017 referendum was the third such contest in the AK Party period and seventh since 1950. The newly-adopted constitutional reform package amended the 1982 Constitution for the nineteenth time. Whereas past amendments represented changes *within* the existing political system, the most recent amendments altered its very structure to create a new system of government.

This study analyzes how the AK Party was able to successfully transform Turkey's political system, whose overhaul had been an important item on the nation's agenda for four decades. In this regard, it concentrates on the movement's fifteen-year legacy of political reform. The first part provides a summary of the arguments invoked in favor of and against the Turkish political system's transformation prior to the AK Party's rise to power. The second section attempts to answer the question why change became possible under the AK Party, even though a number of other movements had attempted to take similar steps in the past. At the same time, it delves into previous attempts by the AK Party to draft a new constitution. The third section focuses on the AK Party's cooperation with the MHP in the wake of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt in Turkey and how it facilitated political change. This section also deals with the various arguments that the two parties invoked to advocate constitutional reform and explains why some other movements opposed the proposed changes. Moreover, it provides information about the constitutional design of the 'presidency'

system. The final part concentrates on Turkey's transition to its new system of government and the potential influence of this process on Turkish politics.

THE PRE-AK PARTY DEBATE ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF TURKEY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

Turkey's search for a new system of government started long before the AK Party came to power. Since the 1970s, right-leaning political parties had made the case that the country's political system was crippled by weak coalition governments and the crises that took place on their watch, and therefore must be changed. During this period, the National Salvation Party (MSP), the National Order Party (MNP) and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) emerged as the leading advocates of the presidential system of government. Between 1972 and 1980, a total of eleven coalition governments had been formed in Turkey, but differences of opinion between coalition partners made it impossible for any of the coalition governments to work together in the long run. To make matters worse, eight out of the fifteen coalition governments formed during the 19-year period when the 1961 Constitution was in effect, ruled the country in 1961-63 and 1971-73 when the military guardianship regime was directly involved in all matters of state.¹

In the wake of the September 12, 1980 coup d'état in Turkey, the potential transition to presidentialism or semi-presidentialism was discussed as part of the deliberations on a new constitution. The public debate on presidentialism and semi-presidentialism largely revolved around the idea of introducing popular presidential elections. After all, it was the Parliament's failure to elect Turkey's next president after 115 rounds of voting that created a major gridlock before the military

¹ Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Sistemin Dönüşümü ve Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sistemi," in *Türkiye'de Siyasal Sistemin Dönüşümü ve Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sistemi*, ed. Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran (SETA Publishing, Istanbul: 2017), 20-23.

seized power which stressed the need for a new system of government. To be clear, most members of the Founding Assembly, which was established after the 1980 coup d'état to draft a new constitution, favored the preservation of the parliamentary system. In their opinion, it was necessary for the president to be able to dissolve the Parliament if Turkey's political system suffered from gridlocks.²

The military administration, which drafted the 1982 Constitution, viewed the Office of the President as an ideological ally and protector of the guardianship regime. From their perspective, adopting a presidential or semi-presidential system of government could prove problematic, because it would entail the introduction of popular presidential elections. Having failed to keep popularly-elected parliamentarians under control in the past, the military administrators feared that they would lose all control over Turkish politics if the people, as opposed to the Parliament, were to elect future presidents. In other words, they assumed that their self-proclaimed role as 'guardians' would be at risk under those circumstances. It was therefore decided that the Parliament must continue to elect Turkish presidents.³

The 1982 Constitution, which was drafted under military supervision, reflected an anti-democratic mindset. Under the parliamentary system, the civilian and military bureaucracy were considered part of checks and balances to keep civilian politicians under control. To be clear, the 1982 Constitution inherited its pro-guardianship spirit from the 1961 Constitution. Like its predecessor, the 1982 Constitution was drafted under military supervision and sought to redesign the Turkish state according to the needs of the national security establishment. Under this system, pro-guardianship bureaucratic elites could impose policy decisions on the popularly-elected legislative branch. Moreover,

² Serap Yazıcı, *Başkanlık ve Yarı Başkanlık Sistemleri: Türkiye için Bir Değerlendirme* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Publishing, 2013), 160.

³ Nebi Miş, Ali Aslan and Abdullah Eren, "Türkiye'de Cumhurbaşkanlığı'nın Demokratikleşmesi," *SETA Analysis*, no. 103 (August 2014): 14.

public institutions such as the National Security Council (MGK) and the State Planning Organization (DPT) acted independently of elected officials and instead were part of the checks and balances on the power of elected officials. As such, the Parliament was not at the center of the country's political system. As a matter of fact, the 1961 Constitution had created the Senate as the upper house of the legislative branch in an effort to counter-balance the popularly-elected Parliament. Likewise, the Constitutional Court was tasked with keeping tabs on the Parliament rather than protecting civil rights and liberties.⁴

In turn, political parties, which were a crucial part of democratic politics, were forced to operate in limited space. Military Chief of Staff Gen. Kenan Evren, who orchestrated the 1980 coup d'état before assuming the presidency, would later defend those restrictions as follows:

[Founder of the Great Turkey Party] Ali Fethi Esener approached me. I told him not to form a political party or I would have to shut it down. He did not listen to me. He formed a political party and I shut it down. Then [Turgut] Özal visited me. I told him that we would permit him to form a political party. I said: "But you have a history with the National Salvation Party. If you let members of the National Movement Party or the National Salvation Party join your party, we will shut down your party." If we allowed one right-wing party and one left-wing party, the right would have won everything. We feared that, if we allowed a single right-wing party, they would have received enough votes to change the Constitution!⁵

THE 1982 CONSTITUTION AND DEVIATION FROM PARLIAMENTARISM

The 1982 Constitution further strengthened the guardianship regime that was created in 1961. Although the text kept the parliamentary system intact, it granted broad power to the president which went far

⁴ Yazıcı, *Başkanlık ve Yarı Başkanlık Sistemleri: Türkiye için Bir Değerlendirme*; Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Süreci, Anayasa Yapımı ve Anayasa Yargısı* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Publishing, 2014).; Ergun Özbudun and Ömer Faruk Gençkaya, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme ve Anayasa Yapım Politikası* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2010).

⁵ "Kenan Evren: Sağ partiler Anayasa'yı değiştirir diye korktuk," *Türkiye*, April 9, 2017.

beyond the usual limits under democratic parliamentary systems. Under the new rules, the Turkish president became considerably more powerful than their counterparts in other parliamentary systems around the world. Therefore, it is worth noting that Turkey's system of government under the 1982 Constitution was designed according to the parliamentary blueprint, but it was actually similar to the post-1958 semi-presidential system in France and could be considered 'watered-down parliamentarism'.⁶ After all, the Turkish president exercised broader powers than many heads of state serving under semi-presidentialism. As a matter of fact, Turkish presidents were granted even broader power when political crises occurred over the following years which, in turn, tilted the country's system of government towards presidentialism.⁷ In this regard, the system of government under the 1982 Constitution deviated from parliamentarism *par excellence* by significantly empowering the Office of the President.

Under the 1982 Constitution, the Turkish president had no political liability and did not answer to the people. In this regard, the Office of the President was positioned at the very top of the state apparatus to protect the guardianship regime. From May 27, 1960 onwards, the establishment compelled civilian politicians to elect presidents from among retired soldiers. Having no previous ties to civilian politics, Turkish presidents used their sweeping powers to mount pressure on elected governments, whose ideologies they did not share. Turkish presidents and prime ministers frequently disagreed over policy which fueled political crises. This problem of dual legitimacy gradually evolved into a systemic crisis.⁸

With the return of elected governments in 1983, disputes between President Kenan Evren and Prime Minister Turgut Özal rekindled the

⁶ Ergun Özbudun, *Türk Anayasa Hukuku* (Ankara: Yetkin Yayınevi, 2004), 338.

⁷ Bakır Çağlar, "Anayasa Mahkemesi Kararlarında Demokrasi," *Anayasa Yargısı Dergisi* 7, (1990): 103-10.

⁸ Miş, Aslan and Eren, "Türkiye'de Cumhurbaşkanlığı'nın Demokratikleşmesi."

public debate on popular presidential elections. Upon assuming the presidency four years later, Özal brought up Turkey's potential transition to presidentialism. In his view, the Turkish-style parliamentary system stalled key reforms. He argued that presidentialism, by contrast, was the driving force behind change and therefore the most suitable system for the country.⁹ In his defense of the presidential system, Özal recalled that weak coalition governments were incapable of managing Turkey's affairs effectively. He added that the country's political culture, with its emphasis on social diversity, regional identities, and townsmanship, fueled fragmentation and argued that the adoption of presidentialism would contribute to Turkey's unity. According to Özal, the presidential system was "a better fit for countries with multiple large ethnic communities."¹⁰

Turgut Özal did not just explain why presidentialism was necessary but also provided a framework for the proposed system of government. In his view, it was necessary to preserve the presidency's powers under the 1982 Constitution if Turkey were to introduce popular presidential elections. Moreover, Turkish presidents would be elected for five years under a two-round system. Özal added that presidential and parliamentary elections must be held simultaneously and the president would have to stand for re-election if the Parliament were to call for early elections.¹¹

Süleyman Demirel, who originally opposed Özal's proposal arguing that it would lead to 'one-man rule', called for the adoption of presidentialism during his own presidency.¹² Ironically, he invoked the same arguments as his predecessor in his defense of the presidential system: "The presidential system is key to promoting political stabil-

⁹ "Özal'dan farklı bakış," *Milliyet*, July 17, 1990, 11.

¹⁰ Mehmet Barlas, *Turgut Özal'ın Anıları* (Istanbul: Sabah Books, 1994), 141.

¹¹ "Özal Yeni Bir Türkiye önerdi," *Milliyet*, November 30, 1990.; "Üç parti üç anayasa," *Milliyet*, November 11, 1990, 9.

¹² "Türkiye, başkanlık sistemi ile yönetilmeli," *Hürriyet*, September 19, 1997.

ity. The executive and legislative branches must be clearly separated. The presidential system is inevitable. Turkey must adopt this system.”¹³ In this regard, both Demirel and Özal advocated presidentialism with reference to political stability, governability, democratic consolidation, and the introduction of popular presidential elections.¹⁴

OBJECTIONS TO THE TRANSFORMATION OF TURKEY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

While political representatives of the periphery had traditionally advocated presidentialism in Turkey, elite groups maintained a generally negative view of the system. For example, certain academics, who claimed that presidentialism was not suitable for Turkey, argued that the system's success in the United States was an ‘exception’. Arguing that the presidential system had failed to promote democratic governance in Latin America, they posited that Turkey would end up in the same situation. With reference to the ‘virtues of parliamentarism’¹⁵ and the ‘perils of presidentialism,’¹⁶ they made the case that no developed country had been able to keep their democracy alive under a presidential system with multiple political parties.¹⁷

If Turkey adopted presidentialism and successfully promoted the government's stability, these critics maintained, political instability would become unavoidable. Another popular claim was that the presidential system would tend towards one-man rule and cause a drift towards authoritarianism. Moreover, critics argued that if the same political movement controlled both the executive and legislative branches, the opposition would be rendered completely ineffective. Noting that

¹³ “Demirel: başkanlık sistemi tartışılmalı,” *Hürriyet*, October 21, 1997.

¹⁴ Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, “The Transformation of Turkey's Political System and the Executive Presidency,” *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (2016).

¹⁵ Juan J. Linz, “Virtues of Parliamentarism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 4: 84-91.

¹⁶ Juan J. Linz, “The Perils of Presidentialism,” *Journal of Democracy* 1, no. 1: 51-59.

¹⁷ Juan J. Linz and Arturo Valenzuela, eds., *The Failure of Presidential Democracy: Comparative Perspectives* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1994).

Turkey's political culture was inherently compatible with parliamentarism, they claimed that the parliamentary system, despite its various shortcomings, had been consolidated since the late Ottoman period.¹⁸

Over the years, political parties and individuals that opposed Turkey's transition to presidentialism attempted to make the discussion personal. During the tenures of Turgut Özal, Süleyman Demirel, and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan alike, opponents of the presidential system invoked arguments that were closely linked to those individuals. In this regard, a consistently popular argument among critics of presidentialism has been that adopting a new system of government would lead to 'one-man rule' by whoever was in power at the time.¹⁹

Despite voicing their opposition to the presidential system, however, critics failed to find ways to overcome the various crises of parliamentarism. Knowing that the people would support presidentialism in case of a referendum, they fueled several 'political fears' to discredit the system. First, there was the claim that Turkey would have a federal administrative system like the United States if it adopted the presidential system of government. It was tailored to fuel fears that presidentialism would place at risk Turkey's territorial integrity, specifically with reference to the Kurdish question. At the same time, the Kemalist elites and their political parties associated the question of political system reform to 'regime change' in an effort to take the public debate out of context. By extension, they argued that the presidential system would mark the death of the Republican regime.

¹⁸ Teoman Egül, ed., *Başkanlık Sistemi* (Ankara: The Union of Turkish Bar Associations Publishing, 2005).; Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Başkanlık Rejimi Türkiye'nin Diktatörlük Tehdiidiyle Sınava," in *Başkanlık Sistemi*, ed. Teoman Egül (Ankara: Türkiye Barolar Birliği yayınları, 2005), 13-31.; Cem Aktaş, ed., *Kritik Kavşak: Parlamenter Sistem-Başkanlık Sistemi* (Istanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015).; Ergun Özbudun, "Başkanlık Sisteminin Olası Tehlikeleri," in *Kritik Kavşak: Parlamenter Sistem-Başkanlık Sistemi*, ed. Cem Aktaş (Istanbul: Koç University Publishing, 2015), 61-77; Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Alaturka Başkanlık Rejimi ve Türkiye'nin Otoriterlikle İmtihanı," in *Kritik Kavşak: Parlamenter Sistem-Başkanlık Sistemi*, ed. Cem Aktaş (Istanbul: Koç Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2015), 153-65.

¹⁹ Nebi Miş, "Başkanlık Sistemi ve Kalıplaşmış İtirazlar," *Star Açık Görüş*, February 22, 2015.

THE POLITICS OF RESISTANCE AGAINST THE AK PARTY AND THE CRISIS OF PARLIAMENTARISM

The AK Party came to power on November 3, 2002, against the backdrop of a serious political crisis in Turkey. Upon winning its first national election, the movement reconciled the middle class' demand for change with the European Union harmonization process to take a number of significant steps towards democratization. At the same time, it attempted to promote economic stability by focusing on public services and concrete action. The AK Party's politics of change and transformation across the board was met with resistance by the civilian and military bureaucracy, which represented the interests of the establishment, and certain groups that supported their views. In an effort to de-escalate tensions and avoid a governmental crisis, the party refrained from taking direct action against the civilian and military bureaucracy and other advocates of the status quo represented by the Republican People's Party (CHP). Instead, the movement concentrated on promoting economic stability and social welfare, and implemented democratic reforms in an effort to strengthen its rule.

Although the AK Party controlled nearly enough parliamentary seats to amend the Constitution after the 2002 elections, it faced fierce resistance from the old guard and the Kemalist bloc. At the time, representatives of the establishment were seriously concerned that the ruling party's majority in the Parliament meant it could single-handedly elect the next Turkish president. Provided that the Presidency was considered an extension of the guardianship regime under the 1982 Constitution, it was crucial which political party's candidate would control the top public office. In the past, the establishment had gotten results by forcing the Parliament to support a hand-picked candidate that met their ideological criteria. In this regard, the fact that the AK Party could single-handedly name the next president was a historic turning point.

Within the framework of the 1961 and 1982 constitutions, Turkish presidents were unofficially required to meet certain ideological criteria. In this sense, the establishment would prevent the Parliament to support presidential candidates deemed not secular or nationalist enough. As a matter of fact, the election of Turkish presidents by the Parliament served this particular purpose.²⁰ In an effort to stop the AK Party from supporting a candidate who did not fit the unofficial criteria, pro-establishment pundits started talking about the 2007 presidential election two years in advance. Various groups, whose interests were not aligned, joined forces ahead of the historic vote and severely criticized the government for various reasons. Step by step, the establishment created a crisis just to prevent Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, or another member of the AK Party, from being elected to the Office of the President.²¹

First, the establishment sought to persuade the people that it would be reasonable for the Parliament to conduct the 2007 presidential election less than one year before the following general elections. Starting in 2005, then-CHP chairman Deniz Baykal and other members of his party made the case in media appearances and parliamentary addresses that the Parliament did not have the right to hold a vote for the presidency. The objective of this argument was to compel the AK Party to call for early elections and “hopefully” lose its parliamentary majority in order to prevent it from electing the next president.

The second line of attack was related to the idea that the AK Party would nominate a presidential candidate, whose wife wore the religious headscarf. Deniz Baykal famously claimed that the ruling party was trying to “make the headscarf official” as part of a broader struggle to “incorporate the headscarf into Turkey’s official, constitutional or-

²⁰ Miş, Aslan and Eren, “Türkiye’de Cumhurbaşkanlığı’nın Demokratikleştirilmesi,” 15-23.

²¹ Miş and Duran, “Türkiye’de Siyasal Sistemin Dönüşümü ve Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sistemi,” 27-32.

der.”²² Moreover, the establishment studied legal ways to put the future president on trial for treason if their wife wore the headscarf.²³

The following step came to be known in Turkey as the Republican rallies. At the time, Deniz Baykal stated that then-President Ahmet Necdet Sezer ought to urge non-governmental organizations to step up their efforts and called on the institutions in question to answer Sezer’s call.²⁴ In an address to the CHP’s parliamentary caucus, he further escalated tensions by telling Recep Tayyip Erdoğan not to run for president.²⁵ In the wake of those statements, the first Republican rallies took place on April 14, 2007, where participants urged the military to overthrow the country’s democratically-elected government.

At the same time, the establishment started a legal debate on the methodology of presidential elections. The ‘367 crisis’, as it came to be known in Turkey, kicked off when pro-establishment figures raised questions about certain details of the election process which had not applied to previous elections. Although the debate started in a newspaper column,²⁶ it was quickly picked up by the former chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, Sabih Kanadođlu. The Parliament, his argument went, could not hold a presidential election unless two thirds of all parliamentarians in other words, 367 parliamentarians were present and voting.

To be clear, the general population and constitutional scholars did not take this claim seriously at first. After all, the 1982 Constitution clearly outlined the methodology of presidential elections and stipulated that the president would be elected after no more than four rounds of voting. Accordingly, two thirds of all parliamentarians would have to support a given candidate for them to win the race in the first two

²² “Çankaya’da Türban Türkiye’yi Krize Sokar,” *Radikal*, June 13, 2005.

²³ “Gül’ün Başörtülü Eşi Vatana İhanettir,” *Akşam*, February 5, 2011.

²⁴ “Gerekirse Sine-i Millete Döneriz,” *Hürriyet*, May 16, 2006.

²⁵ “Sakin Ha Cumhurbaşkanı Adayı Olma,” *haberler.com*, April 3, 2007.

²⁶ Ali İhsan Karacan, “Köşk seçiminde Anayasadaki püf nokta,” *Dünya*, December 1, 2006.

rounds. In the third and fourth rounds, a simple majority would suffice. At the time, the AK Party caucus was large enough to secure a victory for their candidate in third or fourth rounds.²⁷ Nonetheless, the CHP leadership adopted Kanadoğlu's argument and assumed a political position accordingly.

On April 24, 2007, the AK Party officially nominated Abdullah Gül for president. Three days later, the Parliament held the first round of voting. To ensure that less than 367 parliamentarians were present during the vote, the entire CHP caucus was absent. The Motherland Party (ANAP) and the True Path Party (DYP), which controlled a small number of seats yet could put the number of parliamentarians participating in the election over 367, were likewise outside the General Assembly. At the time, the military reportedly pressured ANAP chairman Erkan Mumcu to not attend the parliamentary session.²⁸ Asked by a fellow party member why the ANAP caucus did not participate in the presidential election, Mumcu allegedly said that "the military had already determined whom they would take and where those people would be forcibly taken if we attended the session and [Gül] became president."²⁹

Provided that no parties, with the notable exception of the AK Party, were present during the first round of the presidential election, the number of parliamentarians ended up below 367. In the first round, in which a total of 361 parliamentarians participated, Abdullah Gül received 357 votes. In other words, the CHP leadership fulfilled the recently-invented criteria to submit an application to the Constitutional Court to declare the vote null and void. In addition to asking the Court to cancel the first round, CHP chairman Deniz Baykal attempted to mount pressure on the country's top legal body by publicly

²⁷ Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Süreci, Anayasa Yapımı ve Anayasa Yargısı*, 87.

²⁸ "Askerler Gül'e Karşı Mumcu'ya Baskı Yaptı Mı?" *Milliyet*, June 4, 2011.

²⁹ Muharrem Sarıkaya, "Seni De Beni De Götürecekler," *Sabah*, April 26, 2008.

stating that “Turkey will witness a violent conflict if the Constitutional Court fails to enforce the 367 [criteria].”³⁰

The final stage of the establishment’s crisis scenario was reached when the military answered repeated calls to intervene in civilian politics. On April 27, 2007, just hours after the first round of the presidential election, an official statement was posted on the official website of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), which came to be known as the ‘e-memorandum’. Suggesting that the military was prepared to meddle in civilian politics yet again, the infamous statement read as follows:

In recent days, the problems that emerged in the presidential election process have concentrated on a debate on secularism. This situation is being monitored by the Turkish Armed Forces with concern. It must not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party to said debate and a clear guardian of secularism. Moreover, the Turkish Armed Forces ... shall make perfectly clear its position and actions when necessary.³¹

As such, the military became part and parcel of efforts to prevent the AK Party from controlling the Office of the President. In the wake of this crisis, which was jointly orchestrated by various pro-guardianship groups, the Constitutional Court on May 1, 2007, canceled the first round of the presidential election citing the Parliament’s failure to meet the 367 criteria. Five days later, the first round of voting was repeated at the Parliament yet proved inconclusive because less than 367 parliamentarians were present. In light of this gridlock, the AK Party government called for early elections on July 22, 2007.³²

At the same time, the AK Party reached an agreement with the ANAP leadership on a constitutional reform package, which would introduce popular presidential elections to prevent similar crises in the future. Those constitutional amendments were adopted in the October 21, 2007 referendum with the support of 68.95 percent of the elector-

³⁰ “Utancı Bildirisi Hala Sitede,” *Yeni Şafak*, April 27, 2011.

³¹ “Genelkurmay’dan Çok Sert Açıklama,” *Hürriyet*, April 29, 2007.

³² “Cumhurbaşkanlığı seçimlerinin 1. turu iptal,” *Yeni Şafak*, May 1, 2007.

ate. Under the new rules, future presidents would serve no more than two five-year terms, parliamentary elections would be held every four (as opposed to five) years and only one third of all parliamentarians would have to be present in order for the Parliament to conduct any business.³³ This step marked the end of presidential elections by the Parliament, which created crises, and the beginning of the Presidency's democratization process.³⁴

THE AK PARTY'S EFFORTS TO DRAFT A NEW CONSTITUTION

The introduction of popular presidential elections in 2007 effectively and unofficially transformed Turkey's system of government into something akin to semi-presidentialism. The fact that Turkish presidents, who already exercised vast powers without an ounce of liability, would be elected by the people meant that the country's system of government strayed further away from parliamentarism.³⁵ The problem of dual legitimacy, which could arise in a system of government with two elected executives (the president and the prime minister), made it necessary for Turkey's political system to undergo more comprehensive changes.

In this sense, the AK Party's newly-formed parliamentary caucus identified the drafting of a new constitution and the transition to presidentialism as priority items on their agenda. The movement had drafted a new constitution ahead of the 2007 general elections and pledged to create a 'civilian social contract' on the campaign trail. In line with this campaign promise, AK Party chairman Recep Tayyip Erdoğan instructed a group of constitutional scholars to draft a new constitution. The said draft preserved popular presidential elections as well as parliamentarism.

³³ Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Demokratikleşme Süreci, Anayasa Yapımı ve Anayasa Yargısı*, 88.

³⁴ Miş, Aslan and Eren, "Türkiye'de Cumhurbaşkanlığı'nın Demokratikleştirilmesi," 15-23.

³⁵ Miş and Duran, "The Transformation of Turkey's Political System and the Executive Presidency," 21.

Just as the AK Party took steps to share its draft constitution with the general population, the chief prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals filed a lawsuit against the movement in March 2008, claiming that it had become a ‘focal point of anti-secular activities’ and urging the Constitutional Court to shut it down. On July 30, 2008, the Court ruled against the AK Party’s closure. Although the majority of its members voted in favor of closure, their numbers failed to meet the constitutional criteria of qualified majority. Meanwhile, the movement was banned from receiving financial assistance from the Treasury.³⁶ According to several constitutional scholars, the Constitutional Court’s ruling did not comply with the standards identified by the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission and was even in violation of the Turkish Constitution. Therefore, it reflected an oppressive and authoritarian interpretation of secularism that did not exist in any Western democracy.³⁷

In the wake of the closure case and the opposition’s politics of resistance against the AK Party, the movement decided to pause its search for a new constitution. Having been weakened by democratic reforms, the guardianship regime attempted to use the judiciary, its final stronghold, against elected officials in 2008 to maintain its influence on civilian politics. At the time, the judicial bureaucracy was eager to fill the void left behind by the military and emerge as the guardians of the Republican regime to become part of checks and balances. Under the circumstances, the AK Party attempted to defend itself from the establishment’s attacks and weaken the bureaucratic oligarchy.³⁸ In order to do so, the movement created a constitutional reform package in 2010 and called for a constitutional referendum.

³⁶ “AK Parti kapatılmasın’ kararı çıktı,” *Milliyet*, July 30, 2008.

³⁷ Özbudun, *Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme Süreci, Anayasa Yapımı ve Anayasa Yargısı*, 95.

³⁸ Cem Duran Uzun, “Türkiye’nin Yeni Anayasa Arayışı ve Yüksek Yargı,” *Çankaya Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 2, no. 1 (April 2017).

The AK Party's constitutional reform package did not just seek to make changes to the judiciary but also stated that positive discrimination towards women was constitutional, children's rights had constitutional standing, and the authorities had to take necessary measures to protect personal data. It also eased restrictions on international travel, regulated union rights, introduced individual applications to the Constitutional Court, created the Office of the Ombudsman, and enabled the judicial review of Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) decisions and disciplinary actions against public officials. Another important part of the constitutional reform package related to holding accountable perpetrators of military coups in Turkey for the first time.

Upon introducing the constitutional reform bill, the AK Party leadership initially hoped to reach an agreement with other parties represented in the Turkish Parliament. Such cooperation became impossible, however, since the various opposition parties offered conditional support. For example, CHP chairman Deniz Baykal stated that his party would endorse the bill if the ruling party agreed to take out sections related to the judiciary.³⁹ Unwilling to backtrack on judicial regulations, which were essential to the reform bill, the AK Party called for a parliamentary vote. On May 7, 2010, the Parliament passed the constitutional reform package with enough votes to hold a referendum. In addition to refusing to participate in parliamentary votes, the CHP leadership submitted an application to the Constitutional Court in an effort to cancel the constitutional amendments with immediate effect.⁴⁰

Although the Constitutional Court turned down the main opposition party's request, it overstepped its mandate by conducting a substantial review of proposed changes and striking down parts of the text. Nonetheless, it conceded that the referendum was constitutional. In

³⁹ Murat Yılmaz, "2010 Referandumı: Siyasi Partilerin Tutumu," *SETA Analiz*, no. 28 (October 2010).

⁴⁰ "CHP, Anayasa Mahkemesi'ne gitti," *Radikal*, May 14, 2010.

its detailed response, the Court stated that “the judiciary shall cease to be an obstacle before the Justice and Development Party, which cannot fit within its legal limits and closure cases and the threat of being put on trial at the Supreme Divan shall fail to strike fear.”⁴¹ In other words, it openly criticized efforts to weaken the judiciary’s influence over civilian politics. In this sense, the Court’s decision to cancel parts of the legislation represented a last-ditch effort to undermine the country’s democratization process. On September 12, 2010, Turkey held a constitutional referendum, which passed with 58 percent of the vote.⁴²

POPULAR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS AND UNCERTAINTY IN THE POLITICAL SYSTEM

Representatives of the AK Party, particularly Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during his mayoral and prime ministerial tenure, frequently acknowledged the need to transform Turkey’s political system. In the wake of the movement’s rise to power, Erdoğan shared his thoughts on the matter in a 2003 interview:

Semi-presidentialism is my wish in politics. I want and hope that it will be adopted. Of course, it is necessary for all institutions in the country to join the people to reach a consensus. Without such consensus, the transition would be unhealthy. I believe, however, that Turkey will take a serious step forward as soon as we implement it. ... Of course, the ideal is the American model.⁴³

The introduction of popular presidential elections in 2007 reinvigorated the public debate on the political system’s transformation in Turkey. This step marked a clear break with parliamentarism and pushed it closer to semi-presidentialism. Under this system, it was probable that problems could arise between elected executive officials, the president and the prime minister. Although those problems could be managed if both officials were members of the same

⁴¹ “Anayasa Mahkemesi kararını verdi: Referandum,” *Radikal*, July 7, 2010.

⁴² “2010’da Türkiye,” *SETA Analiz*, no. 32 (January 2011): 34-35.

⁴³ Muharrem Sarıkaya and Okan Müderrisoğlu, “Ankara’da Sabah,” *ATV*, April 20, 2003.

political party, disputes between members of rival movements would inevitably create serious crises.⁴⁴ It was therefore that the AK Party continued to make the case for presidentialism after the 2007 constitutional referendum.

The pledge to draft a new constitution was an important part of the AK Party's 2011 election campaign. The movement stated that its third consecutive term in power would be devoted to drafting a new constitution on the basis of the amendments passed in 2004, 2007, and 2010.⁴⁵ Upon winning another landslide victory in 2011, the AK Party took important steps towards drafting a new constitution and transforming Turkey's political system. The movement oversaw the formation of the Constitutional Reconciliation Commission at the Turkish Parliament, which was chaired by the Speaker of the Parliament and consisted of three representatives from each political party. According to the commission's working principles, each movement would enjoy equal representation regardless of their popularity, all decisions had to be unanimous, and the body would be dissolved if any party withdrew from the talks. Although the commission identified those principles as a token of goodwill, it became clear that drafting a new constitution through consensus was impractical even in the most homogeneous and conciliatory societies. In 2013, the Commission was dissolved, having accomplished nothing.⁴⁶

During the all-party talks, the AK Party called for the adoption of presidentialism and the restructuring of relations between the various branches accordingly. The movement drafted a new constitution, presented it to the commission and made it available to

⁴⁴ Burhanettin Duran, "Bir Süreç Olarak Başkanlık Sistemi Arayışı," *Sabah*, May 26, 2016.

⁴⁵ "AK Parti 2011 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi," accessed, December 21, 2017, 32-33, <https://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2011-beyanname.doc>.

⁴⁶ Cem Duran Uzun, "Türkiye'nin Eskimeyen Gündemi Yeni Anayasa: Nerede Kalmıştık," *Star Açık Görüş*, January 3, 2016.

the general population.⁴⁷ The CHP, in turn, rejected presidentialism and called for the preservation of the parliamentary system. In the end, the Constitutional Reconciliation Commission agreed on 59 articles. A proposal by the AK Party leadership to hold a general debate on those articles was turned down by the remaining parties. In light of those developments, Speaker Cemil Çiçek announced on November 18, 2013, that the commission had completed its work and concluded that the parties were unable to reach a consensus on the new constitution.

The 2014 presidential election, when the Turkish people elected the president for the first time, marked an important step in the transformation of Turkey's political system. On August 10, 2014, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan received 51.8 percent of the vote to win in the first round. Having stated that he would play an active role in politics⁴⁸ on the campaign trail, he started exercising all of his powers under the 1982 Constitution. Provided that the 1982 Constitution granted sweeping powers to Turkish presidents, it is possible to argue that Erdoğan's election represented the *de facto* transition of Turkey's political system to semi-presidentialism.

As in 2011, the adoption of presidentialism was an important campaign promise made by the AK Party ahead of the June and November 2015 parliamentary elections. In its manifesto for the June 7, 2015 election, the movement recalled that Turkey's political system had been tailored for the guardianship regime and warned that the introduction of popular presidential elections could create certain problems whose solution depended on the adoption of presidential-

⁴⁷ The draft constitution submitted by the AK Party to the Turkish Parliament's Constitutional Reconciliation Commission in November 2012 stipulated that the president would be elected for five years. An individual could serve no more than two terms as president. The president was granted decree powers. Presidential candidates entered elections with their vice president of choice. Moreover, the draft stated that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held on the same day every five years.

⁴⁸ "Terleyen Koşan Cumhurbaşkanı," *Milliyet*, April 9, 2014.

ism.⁴⁹ In the same document, the party made the case for presidentialism as follows:

The existing system of government has the potential to fuel crises if the president and the prime minister come from different political backgrounds. Recalling that the current system's pro-tutelage design, the AK Party believes that the potential problems caused by popular presidential elections could be solved through presidentialism. As a matter of fact, we proposed the presidential system, which we have been advocating for a long time, at the Parliament's Constitutional Reconciliation Commission that was formed in 2011. ... In the public debate on presidentialism, there is an effort to hide the fact that a number of democratic countries with strong economies are being governed according to this model. In this sense, we must draw from the experiences of our political tradition and not make this debate personal in order to keep searching for a system compatible with our new vision for Turkey and find a solution.⁵⁰

Although the AK Party received approximately 41 percent of the vote in the June 7, 2015 parliamentary elections, it could not form a single-party government. Consequently, Turkey experienced a period of coalition-building and, by extension, the crises caused by the parliamentary system. Provided that the election results ruled out a single-party government, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan asked Ahmet Davutoğlu to form a coalition government. Coalition talks started shortly afterwards. It is important to note, however, that it became possible on election night that there would not be a multitude of potential coalition governments. Hours after the ballots closed, the MHP and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) announced that they would not form a coalition government with the AK Party. Nor was it the preferred coalition partner for the CHP. However, the inability of the three parties to form a coalition government among themselves meant

⁴⁹ "Yeni Türkiye Yolunda Daima Adalet Daima Kalkınma: 7 Haziran 2015 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesi," accessed December 21, 2017, 39, <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/secim-beyannamesi>.

⁵⁰ "AK Parti 7 Haziran 2015 Genel Seçimleri Seçim Beyannamesim" accessed December 21, 2017, 39-40, www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/2015-secim-beyannamesi-20nisan.pdf.

that the AK Party had to reach an agreement with the CHP –which resulted in the so-called exploratory talks between the two parties. To be clear, the idea of a grand coalition was the result of the rest of the opposition’s eagerness to form a government without the AK Party. Consequently, the two parties effectively agreed to hold repeat elections during the coalition talks.⁵¹ It was therefore that the threat of political instability, which plagued Turkey until the 2000s, made a comeback.

Provided that the coalition talks failed to yield results by the 45-day deadline, President Erdoğan announced that repeat elections would be held on November 1, 2015. Political instability and this brief period of chaos, however, revived old memories in Turkey and served as a reminder that transforming the country’s political system was a necessity.

In the wake of the November 2015 general elections, there was initial interest in bringing back the Constitutional Reconciliation Commission to facilitate dialogue on the new constitution. After two weeks, however, the body was dissolved due to the unwillingness of CHP representatives to discuss alternatives to parliamentarism and their decision to walk out of the third meeting.⁵²

During the same process, there was a clear lack of coordination between President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. This problem was caused by their different reactions to political developments rather than an ideological dispute. Although their shared political background facilitated the containment of this shortage of coordination and stopped it from evolving into a full-blown crisis, it became clear that the problem of dual legitimacy could fuel severe tensions between future executive officials and stressed the need for systemic change.⁵³

⁵¹ Mehmet Zahid Sobacı, “Erken Seçim Üzerine ‘Koalisyon’ ve Parlamenter Sistem,” *Yeni Şafak*, August 20, 2015.

⁵² “CHP, Anayasa Uzlaşma Komisyonu’ndan ayrıldı,” *NTV*, February 16, 2016.; “Anayasa Uzlaşma Komisyonu dağıldı,” *TRT Haber*, 16 February 2016.

⁵³ Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, “Turkey’s Constitutional Referendum and Its Effects on Turkish Politics,” *Orient* 58, no. 3 (2017): 56.

The above-mentioned problems resulted in leadership change within the AK Party on May 22, 2016. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, who replaced Davutoğlu, stated that making the *de facto* political situation fully compliant with the Constitution would be a priority item on his agenda.⁵⁴ Although the AK Party formed a single-party government following the November 2015 elections, it did not control enough parliamentary seats to single-handedly amend the Constitution. Provided that the remaining political parties were categorically opposed to the presidential system, the AK Party was compelled to suspend its constitutional reform efforts.

AGREEMENT ON THE POLITICAL SYSTEM'S TRANSFORMATION

The public debate on the transformation of Turkey's political system, which continued for decades, was revived in the wake of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. One of the most serious threats against Turkey's national security in recent years, the failed coup stressed the need to crack down on FETÖ, the organization led by the U.S.-based Fetullah Gülen, and to restructure the state apparatus. At the same time, the event promoted dialogue among politicians and various social groups. In this regard, the coup attempt and its aftermath marked the beginning of a new chapter in Turkey's political history, as many social groups came together and reconciliation became possible in the political arena.

Although the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) advocated the presidential system under its founding leader, Alparslan Türkeş, it sided with the establishment throughout the 2000s against the AK Party's attempts to transform the country.⁵⁵ As a matter of fact, the movement

⁵⁴ "Binali Yıldırım'dan İlk Grup Toplantısında Başkanlık Vurgusu," *Al Jazeera Türk*, May 24, 2016.

⁵⁵ Ali Aslan, "1 Aralık Mutabakatı ve Yeni Devletin İnşası," *Sabah Perspektif*, December 3, 2016.

stated in its manifesto ahead of the November 2015 elections that “the problems stemming from the system’s functioning must be addressed within the limits of the parliamentary system.”⁵⁶

Having supported the government’s post-July 15 efforts to declare a state of emergency, crack down on FETÖ and the PKK, and address foreign policy issues, MHP chairman Devlet Bahçeli turned over a fresh leaf⁵⁷ by reversing his position on constitutional reform. In an address to the MHP caucus at the Turkish Parliament, he called on the AK Party to introduce a bill on the proposed transition to presidentialism.⁵⁸

The AK Party leadership welcomed Devlet Bahçeli’s change of heart on the political system’s transformation. On October 17, 2016, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım discussed future steps on the new constitution with Bahçeli at Çankaya Palace in Ankara. Shortly afterwards, the AK Party started drafting a constitutional reform bill, which was shared with the MHP on November 15, 2016 for deliberations. Following discussions between the two parties, an agreement was reached and the draft bill was introduced at the Parliament following a joint press conference on December 10, 2016. Accordingly, the proposed system of government was based on presidentialism and officially called the ‘presidency’ system.

Consisting of 18 articles, the final version of the draft bill was passed by the Constitutional Commission. Following an intense and lengthy debate at the General Assembly, the draft bill was passed on January 26, 2017, with the support of AK Party and MHP parliamentarians. Having received more than 330 votes, the bill was submitted to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for approval. On February 10, 2017, the Turkish president signed the bill –which the Constitution required

⁵⁶ *MHP 1 Kasım Seçim Beyannameesi*, Ankara: 2015.

⁵⁷ Burhanettin Duran, “Neden Yeniden Başkanlığı Tartışıyoruz?,” *Sabah*, October 14, 2016.

⁵⁸ “Bahçeli’den Başkanlık Sistemine Yeşil Işık,” *Ihlas News Agency*, October 11, 2016.

to be put to a popular vote. Finally, the Supreme Electoral Board (YSK) announced that the constitutional referendum would be held on April 16, 2017.⁵⁹

CONTRADICTING VIEWS ON THE PRESIDENCY SYSTEM

The constitutional reform bill, which would facilitate Turkey's transition to the 'presidency' system, was jointly drafted by the AK Party and MHP. Ahead of the constitutional referendum, both parties campaigned in favor of the proposed changes. On the campaign trail, the AK Party made its traditional arguments for a new system of government in greater detail and explained to voters why constitutional reform was critically important for the country's future.

The AK Party campaign advocated the 'presidency' system with reference to permanent political stability, speedy and active action, a stronger legislative branch and stronger political representation, and a strong and reliable Turkey. Moreover, the movement pledged to address the problem of dual legitimacy, eliminate bureaucratic guardianship, put an end to weak coalition governments, strengthen the legitimacy of the executive branch through popular presidential elections, and to deepen and consolidate democracy in Turkey.⁶⁰ At the same time, it argued that the election of future presidents with a simple majority would promote political reconciliation and Turkey would become more influential in the region and globally thanks to its stable government. The movement added that the perpetuation of political stability would undermine the guardianship regime, ensure the separation of powers to ensure that the Parliament would concentrate on its legislative functions, promote a culture of reconciliation and contribute to

⁵⁹ Miş and Duran, "Turkey's Constitutional Referendum and Its Effects on Turkish Politics." 52-60.

⁶⁰ "Kararımız Evet: AK Parti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi Kitapçığı," accessed December 21, 2017, <http://www.akparti.org.tr/kararimizevet/>.

the robust growth and the population's economic well-being.⁶¹ Another important point made by the AK Party was that the new system of government would address the problem of dual legitimacy, which was caused by the introduction of popular presidential elections in 2007. Finally, the movement responded to critics, who claimed that the 'presidency' system would undermine the separation of powers, weaken the principle of unitarism, lead to 'one-man rule' and result in the 'personification' of the government.⁶²

The MHP, in turn, focused on the survival of the Turkish state and nation. Arguing that the question of the political system's transformation was a matter of national interest as opposed to ideology, spokespeople for the party adopted a more moderate nationalist approach and stressed that the country was under threat. On the campaign trail, the movement, therefore, adopted the slogan "Yes for the nation, yes for the state, yes for the Republic, yes for the survival of Turkishness, yes for Turkey." In an effort to convince its supporters to support the proposed changes, the MHP made frequent references to Turkey's survival in the wake of the July 15 coup attempt. Furthermore, it argued that Turkish democracy and politics would benefit from constitutional reform for various reasons.

In the wake of the July 15 coup attempt, two large blocs emerged in Turkish politics. While the AK Party and the MHP ended up on one side, the opposite faction included the CHP and the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP). The same division manifested itself ahead of the constitutional reform, as the latter parties emerged as leaders of the 'no' campaign, which included a number of fringe parties including the National Outlook-based Felicity Party (SP) and the neo-Kemalist Homeland Party (VP). To be clear, the opponents of the constitutional reform weren't limited to political parties. In addition to

⁶¹ "Kararımız Evet: AK Parti Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi Kitapçığı."

⁶² Abdülhamit Gül, "Milletin Özne Olduğu Sistem: Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi," *Yeni Türkiye* 23, no. 94 (March-April 2017),: 129-60.

the aforementioned movements, a number of non-governmental organizations actively campaigned against the proposed changes. Moreover, presidents and senior executives of certain semi-official bodies, such as the Istanbul and Ankara bar associations, played an active role in the ‘no’ campaign.

Traditionally, the CHP was always in favor of the parliamentary system. On the campaign trail, the party built on anti-Erdoğanism and charges of authoritarianism to claim that the new system of government would lead to ‘one-man rule’. At the same time, it employed neo-Kemalist language, including references to Turkey’s territorial integrity and political unity, in an effort to win over nationalist voters.⁶³ Incorporating economic and national security elements into its referendum campaign, the main opposition party accused parliamentarians who voted in favor of the constitutional reform bill of committing treason.⁶⁴

Another supporter of the ‘no’ campaign, the HDP, demanded that the parliamentary debate on constitutional reform be suspended until several of its parliamentarians, who were under arrest, were released.⁶⁵ Joining forces with the CHP against constitutional reform, the movement’s referendum campaign and rhetoric were notably similar to the main opposition party. Like the CHP, spokespeople for the HDP argued that the new system would lead to ‘regime change’, weaken the Parliament and result in ‘one-man rule’.

Opponents of the ‘presidency’ system, furthermore, objected to the constitutional design of the proposed system of government. Accordingly, they were critical of simultaneous presidential and parliamentary elections, the ability of the Parliament and the president to end each

⁶³ “Kılıçdaroğlu: Koşullar 12 Eylül’den daha ağır,” November 1, 2016.

⁶⁴ “Kılıçdaroğlu: Bu parlamento kendi tarihine ihanet etti,” *NTV*, January 21, 2017.

⁶⁵ “Müslüm Doğan: Alevilerin Anayasa değişikliği teklifine ilişkin bilgisi yok,” *bdp.org.tr*, April 5, 2017.

other's terms in office, the issuing of presidential decrees, and the constitutional mandate of the president.

THE CONSTITUTIONAL DESIGN OF THE 'PRESIDENCY' SYSTEM

Although the 'presidency' system emerged out of the AK Party's long efforts, it was ultimately shaped by an agreement between two distinct political parties. Therefore, the final text does not necessarily reflect either side's approach in full. For example, the new system of government was designed after presidentialism, although it came to be called the 'presidency' system.⁶⁶

The constitutional reform bill primarily related to the adoption of a new system of government.⁶⁷ In this regard, it made changes to executive and legislative elections, repeat elections, the mandate of the executive branch, the judiciary, the methodology of trials of the president and cabinet ministers, the appointment of vice presidents, presidential decrees, and the preparation of the annual budget. By contrast, the bill did not address the fundamental traits of the state apparatus, the principle of unitarism, fundamental rights and liberties, the structure of the legislative branch, or the mandate and selection of Constitutional Court justices.

Under the new arrangement, which was based on a system of government officially called the 'presidency' system, Turkey continues to have a unitary administration and unicameral parliament. The main difference between past and present practices is the resolution of the problem of dual legitimacy. The constitutional reform bill stipulated that the president, who was the head of state, would also serve as the head of the executive branch. Moreover, the presidential mandate was expanded to include the appointment of vice presidents, cabinet min-

⁶⁶ Nebi Miş, "AK Parti'nin önerisinde siyasal sistem tasarımı," *Kriter*, December 2016.

⁶⁷ "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Anayasasında Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun," *TBMM*, January 21, 2017, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k6771.html>

isters and senior public officials along with the establishment and abolishment of ministries and the determination of their responsibilities.

Although the bill made it possible for the president to issue decrees, it is important to note that decree power is not unlimited. Under the new rules, the president may not issue decrees regarding fundamental rights, individual rights and responsibilities, and political rights and responsibilities. Likewise, presidential decrees may not be issued with regard to all matters that the Constitution requires to be regulated by law. If conflicts arise between decrees and laws, the law takes precedence. Moreover, the Parliament may annul presidential decrees by passing laws on the same subject.

The constitutional reform bill states that the president shall serve no more than two five-year terms. Presidential elections take place under a two-round system and all political parties, which received at least five percent of the vote in the most recent elections, or a minimum of 100,000 individuals, have been declared eligible to nominate presidential candidates. Furthermore, it was decided that presidential and parliamentary elections would be held on the same day.

According to another newly-introduced rule, the president may call for early parliamentary elections if the legislative branch faces a gridlock. However, the law states that the president must step down simultaneously. Likewise, three fifths of all parliamentarians may terminate their term, along with the president's term, by calling for early elections. As such, the constitutional reform bill made it possible for both the executive and legislative branches to call for early elections if the country's political system is crippled by crises.

Under the new rules, the president is explicitly prohibited from participating in the legislative process. Instead, the Parliament alone has the authority to draft new laws. The president, however, is permitted to request legal changes by issuing non-binding statements. Moreover, the Parliament may conduct parliamentary inquiries, hold a general debate or submit written questions in order to monitor the ac-

tivities of the executive branch. At the same time, the legislative branch may, through the proxy of the Court of Accounts, conduct legal and financial audits on all institutions receiving public funds –including the Presidency and ministries.

At the same time, the constitutional reform bill struck down certain parts of the 1982 Constitution that were relevant to the severing of the president's ties to political parties. In other words, it became possible for the president to become a member of any political party or to serve as its chairperson. Furthermore, the new legislation imposed new limits on the president's legal immunity by increasing presidential liability and facilitating legal action against sitting presidents.

The most important changes regarding the judiciary related to the number and selection of the members of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). The institution was renamed as the Board of Judges and Prosecutors and the number of its members was decreased from 22 to thirteen. Of those thirteen, seven members would be selected by the Parliament and another four would be appointed by the president. The minister of justice and the undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, in turn, are considered natural members. Although no changes were made to the selection methods and term limits of Constitutional Court justices, the constitutional reform bill reduced their numbers. Due to the abolishment of military supreme courts, those institutions became ineligible to send representatives to the Constitution Court – which, by extension, meant that the total number of members were reduced to fifteen.

Finally, the following changes, which were not directly related to the 'presidency' system, were made under the reform bill: The number of parliamentarians was increased from 550 to 600. The age of candidacy was decreased from 25 to eighteen. The judicial review of Supreme Military Council (YAŞ) decisions was made possible. Martial law was abolished. The General Commander of the Gendarmerie was removed from the National Security Council. An earlier exception

to supervision by the State Monitoring Board (DDK) granted to the Turkish Armed Forces was revoked.⁶⁸

THE TRANSITION TO THE ‘PRESIDENCY’ SYSTEM AND ITS AFTERMATH

The constitutional amendment package, which facilitated Turkey’s transition to the ‘presidency’ system, was no ordinary piece of legislation. It represented the replacement of parliamentarism with the executive presidency, necessitating certain changes to laws related to the legislative, executive and judicial branches. With the adoption of the ‘presidency’ system, the popularly elected president, along with the Parliament, was positioned at the heart of Turkey’s political system. Provided that the popularly elected president shall exercise executive power alone, all crises stemming from executive dualism will have been avoided automatically.

Under the new system of government, the president will assume a key role in the development, monitoring and assessment of public policy. With the abolishment of the Office of the Prime Minister, which was part of the parliamentary system, the Council of Ministers will be transformed into an executive body tasked with assisting the president in the policy development process. By extension, the various ministries will be reformatted to concentrate on policy implementation. For the purpose of formulating, monitoring, analyzing public policy and pitching new ideas in the areas of healthcare, education, agriculture, national security and foreign relations, the Office of the President shall be restructured, as new and secondary departments must be created.

The constitutional reform bill facilitated a gradual shift towards the ‘presidency’ system. As such, the constitutional amendments will enter into force in whole following the 2019 presidential and par-

⁶⁸ Serdar Güleler and Nebi Miş, “Cumhurbaşkanlığının Anayasal Tasarımı,” in *Türkiye’de Siyasal Sistemin Dönüşümü ve Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sistemi*, ed. Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran (Istanbul: SETA Kitapları, 2017), 51-82.

liamentary elections. Certain sections of the bill, however, became effective immediately after the official results of the April 2017 referendum were announced. Ahead of the 2019 elections, the Parliament must pass a number of harmonization laws related to the ‘presidency’ system in a range of areas including electoral laws and the law on political parties.

One of the first arrangements that became effective immediately related to the Board of Judges and Prosecutors (HSK). Under the new rules, the number of the Board’s members were reduced from 22 to thirteen – seven of whom were selected by the Parliament and four others were appointed by the president. The justice minister and the undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice, in turn, were considered natural members. Meanwhile, the constitutional reform bill entailed a similar reduction in the number of Constitutional Court justices. Since the Military Court of Appeals was abolished, the two military members of the Court became redundant.

Another new rule related to the president’s ties to party politics. In the wake of the April 2017 constitutional referendum, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan re-joined the AK Party on May 2, 2017 and was elected chairman at the party’s Third Extraordinary Congress on May 21. At this point, it is important to analyze the relationship between the president and party politics with reference to Turkey’s political culture and party system. First of all, a new problem of dual legitimacy could arise if future presidents do not serve as leaders of their parties. Differences of opinion between the president and the chairperson of their political party could create gridlocks. After all, the party chairperson could influence its parliamentary caucus to block legislation deemed necessary by the president. As such, whether or not the president also serves as a leader of a political party directly affects several things including party discipline, election campaigns, electoral behavior and the nomination of parliamentary candidates. Likewise, presidents who have strong ties to their political party are likely to play an active role

in “get out the vote” efforts and to encourage party members to contribute more to election campaigns.⁶⁹

The adoption of the ‘presidency’ system will surely reshape Turkey’s political culture for various reasons, including the transformation of the party system and voter behavior. One of the most notable contributions of the new system to Turkish politics is that the president must be elected with a simple majority. Provided that the leader of any single party is unlikely to receive such high levels of support by themselves, the Turkish Parliament passed a law in January 2018 to legalize inter-party alliances in presidential and parliamentary elections.⁷⁰ Under an agreement between the AK Party and the MHP, a legal framework was created to encourage political parties to join forces in national elections.

Under the new system, all presidential candidates, regardless of their political backgrounds, are compelled to run on a more moderate and conciliatory platform. In this regard, the ‘presidency’ system strengthens mainstream politics through reconciliation rather than fueling polarization. In order to break the 50-percent mark, the various presidential candidates must adopt a campaign rhetoric geared towards winning over multiple social groups. Political parties and candidates alike will have to form alliances ahead of elections. Provided that successful candidates shall stand for re-election, they will be compelled to respect democratic rules. Drifting towards authoritarianism or one-man rule, in this regard, would likely mean that the electorate will throw its support behind other candidates and punish the president’s party at the ballot box. Moreover, the popularly elected president will require support from other political parties in order to pass key legislation. Therefore, they will be compelled to build bridges.

⁶⁹ Miş and Duran, “Turkey’s Constitutional Referendum and Its Effects on Turkish Politics,” 52-60.

⁷⁰ Nebi Miş and Hazal Duran, “Seçim İttifakları,” *SETA Anaiz*, no. 232 (February 2018).

The transformation of Turkey's system of government into an executive presidency will likely create two large blocs rather than a two-party system. The population's ideological preferences, the impact of social divisions on voter behavior, historical data on electoral volatility, and society's tendency to become polarized support that claim. Looking at the history of party politics in Turkey, it is possible to employ several concepts (i.e. center-periphery, left-right and conservative-secularist) to identify the limits of the abovementioned blocs. The driving force behind the genuine two-party system between 1946 and 1960 was the political legacy of contemporary history. The two main traditions in Turkish politics and society reflected the same divisions. This trend, which translated into competition between left and right politics from 1965 onwards, continued with certain exceptions.

Within the limits of those blocs, a number of political parties emerged over time with different levels of proximity to the mainstream. What they had in common, however, were their ideological preferences and voter profiles. At the same time, electoral volatility tended to occur *within* (as opposed to *between*) those two blocs.⁷¹ In other words, it was commonplace for voters with similar ideological convictions to change parties within the same bloc. As such, volatility between the two blocs remained consistently low. Regardless of the level of fragmentation within individual political parties, voters often remained within the limits of their respective blocs. Meanwhile, volatility within individual blocs remained consistently high, since military interventions reduced the lifespans of political parties and made it difficult for voters to identify with individual parties over long periods of time. Consequently, the average right-leaning conservative voter was more likely to vote for a number of right-leaning political parties, whereas it is quite rare for them to cross over to the opposite bloc.

⁷¹ Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Parti ve Seçim Sistemi* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 57-87.; Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, "Political Parties, the Political Systems and Turkey," *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (Fall 2016): 93-108.

Although the CHP's predecessors could never form single-party governments after Turkey's transition to multi-party democracy in 1950, the movement, under various names, formed the backbone of the leftist-Kemalist bloc. From this perspective, the multitude of political parties competing in elections did not change the fact that the CHP represented the opposition bloc over the years.

The AK Party came to power in 2002 –which means that Turkey's party system is headed towards a dominant party system. To be clear, the presence of a dominant party in the system makes it easier to highlight the two blocs. The dominant party's main effect on the political system, however, is that the opposition bloc becomes increasingly unlikely to come to power.⁷²

CONCLUSION

Turkey adopted a new system of government by passing the April 16, 2017 constitutional referendum. Transforming the country's political system had been a priority item on the AK Party's agenda at least since 2007. At the time, the pro-guardianship forces had created an artificial crisis in an attempt to prevent a member of the movement to assume the presidency by forcing the Parliament into a gridlock. During the same period, supporters of the old order and the military, which had a tradition of meddling in civilian politics, issued an e-memorandum to remove the AK Party government from power. Again, the Constitutional Court, another supporter of the guardianship regime, sided with the military to uphold recently-invented criteria to stop the Parliament from electing Turkey's next president. Moreover, the Court deepened the political crisis by filing a closure case against the AK Party.

In an attempt to break the gridlock, the AK Party called for a constitutional referendum the same year to introduce popular presidential elections. In the aforementioned referendum, the Turkish people over-

⁷² Miş and Duran, "Seçim İttifakları," 29-30.

whelmingly voted in favor of an amendment, which would allow them to elect presidents in the future. Already equipped with significant power, the presidency thus became more influential – which represented a drift away from parliamentarism and towards semi-presidentialism. In 2014, Turkey's president was elected directly by the people for the first time. As such, the executive branch was now formed by two elected officials, the prime minister and the president, whose constitutional mandate remained unclear. This problem of dual legitimacy, in turn, made conflicts more likely. In order to address that, the AK Party and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made a special effort to promote the political system's transformation from 2015 onwards.

In the wake of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt, which was orchestrated by members of the terrorist organization FETÖ, it became possible for the various political parties to reach an agreement on key issues. Consequently, the MHP came out in support of the executive presidency, which the AK Party had been advocating for years. The two parties continued their cooperation following the April 2017 referendum that facilitated the transition to the 'presidency' system. Today, the AK Party and the MHP continue to work towards the restructuring of the state apparatus in line with Turkey's new system of government. Having passed harmonization laws at the Parliament together, the two parties announced that they intended to form an alliance in the 2019 elections.

Turkey will complete its transition to the 'presidency' system following the 2019 elections. The country's new system of government will presumably transform its political culture and restructure political parties. Under the new rules, the popularly-elected president will assume a central role in Turkey's political system. Likewise, the balance of power between the legislature, the executive branch and the judiciary shall be redefined according to the constitutional framework of the 'presidency' system. It remains to be seen how the new system will influence political stability, the transformation of the bureaucracy and the elimination of the guardianship institutions and culture.

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CHAPTER 3

THE AK PARTY'S KURDISH POLICY

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TALHA KÖSE**

INTRODUCTION

This study discusses the AK Party's Kurdish policy from the November 2002 General Elections to-date. As one of the key issues, or rather the number one issue in Turkey; the Kurdish question may be examined along four different dimensions: economic, socio-cultural, security, and political (participation). The policies that have been developed in these particular areas by the AK Party governments since 2002 and the impact of these policies on Kurdish citizens of Turkey and on various Kurdish political and social organizations have varied sporadically during the AK Party's 15-year tenure. In times when political participation or security aspects have become more important, other aspects remained on and off the agenda. While these four areas are interrelated, examining them separately will make it easier to understand the implications of the policies developed by the AK Party to solve the Kurdish problem.

In brief, the policies developed in these four areas during the period of 2002-2017 reveal that the AK Party governments consistently adopted an approach based on rights in economic and socio-cultural

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areas, and prioritized the expansion of cultural and economic rights. On the other hand, the security and political dimensions had mostly a zero-sum character in that the PKK's political offshoot parties increased their influence during the PKK's ceasefires but found themselves quite limited – in terms of both narrowing popular support and hardening legal sanctions- at times when the PKK broke the ceasefires. Kurdish citizens of Turkey have supported the AK Party both for the party's inclusive policies in the cultural and economic dimensions as well as its conservative-democratic identity.¹ For this very reason, the AK Party has maintained, so far, its position as the only national party to be an alternative to ethnic political parties in the Southeastern and the Eastern Anatolia precincts.

The AK Party establishes direct and one-on-one communication with its electorates in economic and socio-cultural areas and has always competed with the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and its predecessors for the support of Kurdish constituents. From this point of view, other than the HDP and its antecedents, the AK Party has mobilized the most Kurdish voters in terms of political participation. Even more so, Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin provided utmost support to the AK Party during its 15-year tenure in all local, parliamentary, and presidential elections, except the general elections held on June 7, 2015 in which the HDP attracted a bigger share of Kurdish votes.²

With reference to the security aspect, the AK Party governments and the military and civilian bureaucracy have confronted the PKK. Although the 15-year span of the issue may be characterized as the period of fight against the PKK, the AK Party governments tried to settle the issue through negotiations in 2007-2009 and again in 2013-2015,

¹ For a discussion over policies in such domains in the earlier years: Huseyin Alptekin, "Ethnic incorporation policies and peripheral reactions: How are Turkey's Kurds treated by the state and how do they perceive their treatment," *Afro Eurasian Studies* 1, no. 2 (2012): 97-119.

² For the general election results of the HDP and its predecessor in this period, see Appendix 1.

and exhibited a determination that no other government had before. However, the negotiations fell apart as the two actors' (AK Party and the PKK) expectations from the process turned out to be irreconcilable. The PKK ended its cease-fire in the summer of 2015 and declared a "revolutionary popular war" against Turkey.

Through the four dimensions mentioned above, this study examines the AK Party's approach and policies on the Kurdish question. The most important characteristic that separates the AK Party governments from their predecessors, as a whole, is that the ruling party has not seen the issue simply as a security matter, but rather has made efforts to look into the socio-cultural, economic, and political aspects of it. The AK Party governments did not adopt a plain securitization approach to fight against the PKK and its cohorts in different areas, but instead took political risks and made an unprecedented move to persuade the PKK to end its campaign of armed struggle. Although previous governments had indirect contacts with the PKK in the past, the AK Party governments conducted more direct and extensive negotiation processes in 2007-2009 and 2012-2015.³

In response to this discernable difference in the AK Party's approach, the PKK also changed its tactics and volume of violence considerably during the AK Party's 15 year rule. Since day one, the PKK has maintained strong foreign ties and seized any chance in many areas such as positioning its organization, sheltering, and training of its militants in Syria and Iraq. The terror group obtained ample means after 2003, in particular, and has used every single occasion resulting from the US occupation in Iraq in 2003 and the on-going civil war in Syria since 2011 to expand. To the contrary of past periods, however, the PKK has evolved from simply being a proxy of mid-scale countries into a proxy backed by global powers as well.

³ For the efforts of negotiation with the PKK: Talha Köse, "Çözüm Sürecinin Yükseliş ve Düşüşü," *Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 1 (2017): 13-40; Talha Köse, "Rise and Fall of the AK Party's Kurdish Peace Initiatives," *Insight Turkey* 19, no. 2 (2017): 139.

Such a change on the PKK side, its growing self-confidence with external support and its ever-increasing demands - therefore, resistance to laying down its arms – have created a gridlock on part of the AK Party governments' search for a solution to the problem based on negotiations. This study will examine the AK Party's four-part Kurdish policy, a summary of which is already presented in the introduction. First, the status of the Kurdish question in Turkey inherited by the AK Party in 2002 will be discussed, then the development of the AK Party's Kurdish policy in regards to the socio-cultural, economic, security, and political participation aspects of the issue and the implications of that policy will be visited. A summary and future projection will be made in the conclusion.

THE INHERITED KURDISH QUESTION OF TURKEY

Prior to the AK Party's ascension to power in 2002, the security aspect of the Kurdish issue had topped the agenda of Turkish politics. The PKK declared its establishment in 1978, but hit the headlines in 1984 for attacking Turkish security forces. Since then, PKK militants have killed many people either in clashes with Turkish security forces or by targeting civilians.⁴ The organization had topped the political agenda since then, which led to numerous scholarly works on the causes of this violent campaign.

The literature on Turkey's Kurdish issue agrees, to a large extent, that the Kurdish identity was denied in principle and in practice until the 2000's under the assimilation policies followed by past governments.⁵ Although some politicians, such as the late President Turgut Özal and the late Prime Ministers Necmettin Erbakan and Erdal İn-

⁴ Total death toll in 1986-2002 approached 39,000, see Appendix: 2.

⁵ Mesut Yeğen, *Devlet Söyleminde Kürt Sorunu* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2003); Hüseyin Yayman, *Şark Meselesinden Demokratik Açılıma: Türkiye'nin Kürt Sorunu Hafızası* (Ankara: Seta, 2011).

önü, managed to discuss the issue beyond the deep-seated patterns in this period, the discourse did not bring about a change of policy until the 2000's. Upon its coming to power in 2002, the AK Party identified the Kurdish issue as Turkey's main problem to be solved. Although the order of priority among the aforementioned four dimensions have changed from time to time, it is fair to say that the AK Party has followed a policy seeking a final settlement of the issue since 2002.

The problem known as the "Kurdish issue" is a complicated identity-driven matter. Scrutinizing the issue beyond the "PKK Terror", developing inclusive policies in that vein, discussing these policies in public institutions, and sharing them with the public are facets that have become the trademark of the AK Party's Kurdish policy. However, the AK Party's solution-based policy, as of today, has not been sufficient to settle the security aspect of the issue in particular; in other words, to put an end to the PKK terror.

The PKK waged a terror campaign against Turkey from 1984 to 1999, although the attacks were interrupted by occasional ceasefires. The PKK declared a ceasefire for about four years after the group leader Abdullah Öcalan was forced out of Syria in 1998 and eventually captured in Kenya in 1999 and brought back to Turkey. The AK Party came to power during this ceasefire period. As the AK Party struggled to form an effective civilian government against the established military tutelage regime in Turkey; the US invaded Iraq, and the PKK found an opportunity to spread its settlements in northern Iraq and create safe havens in Iraqi territory.

In Iraq under the US occupation, the PKK practically found a security blanket and managed to prevent disintegration within the group to overcome the leadership crisis arising from Öcalan's capture. It also transformed its organizational structure (through KADEK, KONGRA-GEL, and finally KCK hierarchy) both vertically and hori-

zontally (with the PKK/HPG for Turkey and Iraq⁶, the PJAK/YRK for Iran and the PYD/YPG for Syria). The PKK consolidated its structural transformation benefiting from power vacuums in the region.

On the other side, the PKK signaled international actors that the group could be of use to interested actors. In fact, following the escalation of the civil war in Syria, the PKK successfully created a framework in which they could work together with numerous actors, even those with conflicts of interest among themselves, such as the Syrian regime, the US, and Russia. As a consequence, the PKK and the political and social organizations around it have become more acceptable to local and international actors. This process has made it harder for political actors in Turkey to successfully target the PKK in their efforts to resolve the PKK issue.

POLICIES ADOPTED IN SOCIO-CULTURAL SPHERE

Although ethnic identity is associated with a common blood-line, the concrete indicator of this imaginary common lineage usually appears to be the language or religion.⁷ Kurdish ethnic identity in Turkey, as well, differentiates itself in terms of language. While language marks Kurdish identity (as an ethno-linguistic ethnic group) different from Turkish identity, religion cuts across the ethnic groups that are formed according to such linguistic fragmentation. Sunni and Alevi or even Shia groups exist in both ethno-linguistic groups, whether they describe ethnic identity through Turkishness or Kurdishness.⁸ Apart from the religion as a crosscutting social cleavage, intermarriages and centu-

⁶ Although the group named its branch in Iraq "PÇDK", it did not see any reason to differentiate it from the Turkey branch in terms of organization and function.

⁷ Alberto Alesina, Arnaud Devleeschauwer, William Easterly, Sergio Kurlat, and Romain Wacziarg, "Fractionalization". *Journal of Economic Growth* 8, no. 2 (2003): 155-94.

⁸ Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevilik* (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999).; Erdal Gezik, *Dinsel, Etnik ve Politik Sorunlar Bağlamında Alevi Kürtler* (Ankara: Kalan Yayınları, 2000).; Ahmet Buran, "Kürtler ve Kürt Dili," *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 3 (2011): 43-57.

ries-long fusion of ethnicity as a result of numerous interactions make it hard to trace these two ethnic identities in Turkey.

Hence, some Sunni Kurds, for instance, feel that they share more of an identity with Sunni Turks than with Alevi or non-religious Kurds. The main reason behind this difference depends on whether these individuals identify their ethnicity based on language or religion. Thus, the socio-cultural aspect of the AK Party's Kurdish policy may be examined through religious and linguistic perspectives.

With respect to religious policies, AK Party policies resemble those of past governments, but the AK Party's public emphasis on the religious brotherhood between Turks and Kurds is more convincing due to the AK Party's strong conservative political identity. Through this emphasis, conservative Kurds are attracted to the AK Party since it is a conservative democrat party, whereas the PKK and the HDP are known for their secular and Marxist ideology.

The PKK & HDP's criticisms against the established gender relationships and traditional family institution; their actions and discourses in favor of abortion and gay rights - none of which rhyme with conservative values in Turkey- and the AK Party's growing public recognition through its widespread propaganda against anti-religion PKK practices have helped grow conservative Kurdish grassroots support for the AK Party. The criticisms of various PKK leaders, including Öcalan and Murat Karayılan, against the religion of Islam⁹, and the glorification of Zoroastrianism – the PKK has recently abandoned it, but it still exists in print - have played a big role in the growing support among conservative Kurds for the AK Party.

The AK Party has repeatedly sparred with the HDP and its predecessors over religious and cultural issues. In 2011, then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan countered the remarks of the Peace and

⁹ An example for the negative views of the PKK leaders against Islam and related reactions in the region: "PKK'nın Amacı İslam'dan Uzaklaştırmak," *Haber7*, May 15, 2011, <http://www.haber7.com/guncel/haber/743956-pkknin-amaci-islamdan-uzaklastirmak>.

Democracy Party (BDP) about the headscarf issue, stating, “Can an understanding under the religion of Zoroastrianism really entertain any worry about this?”¹⁰ Later, after the HDP, which was founded to replace the BDP, pledged in the June 7, 2015 General Elections program to eliminate the (general curricular) religion courses in primary and secondary schools and abolish the Directorate of Religious Affairs, the AK Party criticized the HDP’s discourse.¹¹ More recently, in an effort to combat the AK Party’s rising popularity with conservative Kurdish voters, the HDP (and its predecessors) and the PKK, became more friendly to Islamic discourse and revived religious and Kurdish historic figures such as Sheikh Said in collective memory. Moreover, the HDP and the PKK nominated pious Kurdish politicians for the legislature, such as Altan Tan, former Diyarbakır Mufti Nimetullah Erdoğan and several administrators of Mazlum-Der (The Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People). By doing so, the HDP and PKK tried to brand the AK Party’s conservative approach as Turkish conservatism to make room for Kurdish conservatism in their repertoire to counter the aforementioned moves of the AK Party.¹²

In response, the AK Party took a number of measures. For instance, the AK Party decided to appoint about 1,000 meles (who provide religious education and function as opinion leaders of Kurds) to the Directorate of Religious Affairs in late 2011.¹³ In response, the “Democratic Islam Congress,” upon the directive of Öcalan, was held in the

¹⁰ Hakkı Kurban, “Zerdüş’tün Başörtüsü Diye Bir Derdi Olmaz,” *Akşam*, October 15, 2011, <http://www.aksam.com.tr/guncel/zerdustun-basortusu-diye-bir-derdi-olmaz--73531h/haber-73531>.

¹¹ “İşte HDP’nin Seçim Vaatleri,” *Milliyet*, April 21, 2015, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hdp-nin-secim-beyanamesi/siyaset/detay/2047485/default.htm>.

¹² For a detailed information about the PKKs understanding of religion: Necati Alkan, “Dinin Araçsallaşması: PKK Örneği,” *Uluslararası Güvenlik ve Terörizm Dergisi* 3, no. 2 (2012): 17-26.

¹³ “Diyanet’te ‘Mele’ Dönemi,” *Hürriyet*, December 12, 2011, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/diyanet-te-mele-donemi-19443417>.

southeastern Turkish city of Diyarbakır.¹⁴ Individuals from the north of Syria also participated in the meeting.

Concurrently with its emphasis on religious brotherhood that encompassed broad groups, AK Party governments after 2002 also made noteworthy reforms regarding language, which is another aspect of ethnic identity. Throughout the history of the Republic, teaching Kurdish in schools or in special language courses was strictly prohibited. Although the ban on producing Kurdish music was lifted under the initiative of President Özal in 1991, legal barriers regarding education and election campaigns in Kurdish were lifted only during the AK Party governments.

One of the hurdles preventing the use of Kurdish language was the ban on giving newborns Kurdish names in accordance with Population Registration Act, No. 1587, Article 16. The AK Party limited the ban by an amendment in 2003. An annotation was added to the 4th clause of Article 16 limiting the ban to “only names that are not in compliance with ethics and insulting the public.”¹⁵ Under the “Regulation on Radio and Television Broadcasts in Different Languages and Dialects Used Traditionally by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives” directive issued in 2009, the AK Party abolished the older laws forbidding languages and dialects other than Turkish on private radios and televisions.

As legal hurdles about using and learning Kurdish language were removed one by one, Law No. 5767 was also ratified on June 11, 2008 and put into effect on June 26, 2008. Thus, the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) was granted authority for broadcasts in Kurdish, by an addition of an article to the “Law Concerning Amendments to the Turkish Radio and Television Law and the Law on the Es-

¹⁴ Zübeyde Sarı and Sinan Onuş, “Diyarbakır’da Demokratik İslam Kongresi,” *BBC*, May 10, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2014/05/140510_kongre_diyarbakir.

¹⁵ Law No. 4928, “Çeşitli Kanunlarda Değişiklik Yapılmasına İlişkin Kanun,” Article 5, *Resmî Gazete*, July 18, 2003, <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2003/07/20030719.htm>.

establishment and Broadcasts of Radios and Televisions”¹⁶ allowing that broadcasts can be made in different languages and dialects other than Turkish by the institution. Test broadcasts for a new channel dedicated to broadcasts only in Kurdish began on December 25, 2008 and were followed by 24 hour test broadcasts in the Kurmanci and Sorani dialects of Kurdish and in the Zaza language. The channel, launched as TRT Ses or TRT 6 and known today as TRT Kurdi, officially launched on January 1, 2009.

As for education in Kurdish language, which was available through private courses since 2004, teaching of Kurdish officially began to be offered starting in 2012-13 academic year as an elective course titled “Living Languages and Dialects” for students in the 5th grade and above. Additionally, Kurdish language courses were also offered in universities. The establishment of the first Kurdology institute in the history of the Republic was approved by the Council of Ministers in 2009 and opened in Artuklu University, Mardin. Later, the name of the institute was changed to “Institute of Living Languages” and a Kurdish Language and Culture department was formed in this institute. Despite all these improvements, it cannot be said, as of today, that every demand for Kurdish language from different segments of the society is met. The HDP’s demands for education in mother-tongue in primary and secondary schools and undergraduate-level Kurdish Language and Literature programs in universities are not met yet.

POLICIES ADOPTED IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE

The main reason that the AK Party has maintained its single party rule since 2002 is the party’s emphasis on economic stability and growth, and its economic policies to support this emphasis.¹⁷ Evidently, there

¹⁶ Law No. 5767, “Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kanunu İle Radyo Ve Televizyonların Kuruluş Ve Yayınları Hakkında Kanunda Değişiklik Yapılmasına Dair Kanun,” *Resmî Gazete*, June 11, 2008, <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/kanunlar/k5767.html>.

¹⁷ Ali T. Akarca, “Putting Turkey’s June and November 2015 Election Outcomes in Perspective,” *Insight Turkey* 17, no. 4 (2015): 81-104.

is also an economic aspect of the Kurdish issue in Turkey. Throughout the history of the Republic, the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions, heavily populated by Kurds, fell behind Western Anatolia in terms of development and economic welfare.¹⁸

In regards to the economic aspect of the Kurdish issue, the policies developed by the AK Party may be examined under two headings: One, the projects to improve economic infrastructure of the region and increase employment, and two, the compensation for material damages directly caused by terror to residents of the region. In order to stop the economic troubles of the region, infrastructure projects and job creation have become the main agenda items of the AK Party governments' economic policies in regard to the Kurdish issue.

As a matter of fact, the development projects set in motion by the AK Party in order to address the underdevelopment of the region predate both the AK Party period and the PKK. The most comprehensive and critical of these projects is the on-going Southeastern Anatolia Project (SAP, or Turkish *abv.* GAP). Launched in compliance with a Council of Ministers decision dated October 27, 1989, the GAP Project was designed to provide infrastructure, industry, mining, agriculture, energy, and transportation services to the region and to improve education level of locals.

The GAP still stands as the most comprehensive and expensive project in the Republic's history and covers the Southeastern Anatolian provinces of Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, and Şırnak. Although the program is aimed at the development of the region, the ongoing construction of 22 dams and multiple energy production facilities, some of which have already been completed, make the project important for the whole country. The latest action plan for GAP, prepared by the AK Party for the period of

¹⁸ İsmail Beşikçi, *Doğu Mitingleri'nin Analizi* (Ankara: Yurt, 1967).; Ahmet İçduygu, David Romano, and İbrahim Sirkeci, "The Ethnic Question In An Environment Of Insecurity: The Kurds in Turkey," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 22, no. 6, (1999): 991-1010.

2014-2018, focuses particularly on sustainable development. Investment allocations, for this purpose, are listed in Table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1, GAP ACTION PLAN!
1.628 billion Turkish Liras to accelerate economic development;
6.195 billion Turkish Liras to strengthen social development;
1.4 billion Turkish Liras to increase liveability in cities;
17.836 billion Turkish Liras to improve infrastructure, and
25 million Turkish Liras to increase institutional capacity
Total 27.084 billion Turkish Liras

* AK Parti, "GAP Eylem Planı Açıklandı," last modified March 8, 2015, <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/gap-eylem-planı-aciklandi/72187#1>.

As new education projects, construction of dams for irrigation, and energy production in the region continued and the Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Industry Development Organization (KOSGEB) offered government loans for the region, the PKK criticized and sabotaged these investments frequently. Viewing the increasing schooling rate as an activity to raise secret agents, the PKK murdered teachers working in the region while presenting the construction of dams as the "construction of military dams." These were among the main reasons for the PKK's ending the Resolution Process in the summer of 2015.¹⁹

Ending the cease-fire in the summer of 2015, the PKK resumed unrest in residential areas and terror attacks, and mobilized personnel and vehicles of the Democratic Regions Party (DBP, the name the HDP uses in local politics of the Eastern cities of Turkey). In response, the State of Turkey appointed trustees to many DBP municipalities. Most of the trustees were already civilian authorities (i.e., governors) in those regions and they were appointed as new mayors. With this policy, the AK Party government adopted service-based

¹⁹ In an interview to the Radikal daily, then the HDP co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş said regarding the dams under construction in Southeastern Anatolia, "Yes, Mr. Prime Minister doesn't get this. I want to explain. The dam under construction is not for irrigation or energy [production]. It is a military dam. It is a dam to prevent the guerilla to transit mountains and plains. It is a dam to fill these areas with water."

municipal policies instead of ideological municipal policies and prioritized the use of municipality resources and services for anti-PKK propaganda, instead of the PKK propaganda.²⁰

As part of economic policies developed for the settlement of the Kurdish issue, the post-2002 AK Party governments paved the way for compensation by the State of terror-related material damages to natural and legal persons. To this end, the “Law on Compensation for Damages Due to Terror and the Fight Against Terror” was ratified on October 4, 2004.²¹ According to the law, the State of Turkey compensates terror-related material damages arising from death, injury, and disability as well as the damages that occur to movable and immovable assets owned by natural and legal persons or persons who fail to retrieve their properties.

Under the leadership of deputy governors in relevant cities, commissions for damage assessment were established to meet demands for material damages rapidly and justly. From the the law’s date of enforcement in 2004 until August 2017, damage assessment commissions finalized 429,630 out of 429,630 applications, and decided to pay compensation to 227,157 applicants. In this period, the State of Turkey paid total 4,055,072,643 Turkish Liras in compensation for terror and counter-terrorism victims.²²

SECURITY POLICIES

The PKK has committed assassinations, planted bombs in city centers, and engaged in rural guerilla tactics before and after 2002, i.e. during

²⁰ For further information of infra and suprastructure investments of municipalities under trustees: Kayyum Haber, Twitter, accessed September 21, 2017, <https://twitter.com/kayyumdanhaber?lang=en>.

²¹ Law no. 5233, “Terör ve Terörle Mücadeleden Doğan Zararların Karşılınması Hakkında Yönetmelik,” *Resmî Gazete*, October 20, 2004, <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Mevzuat-Metin/3.5.20047955.pdf>.

²² Ministry of Interior, “5233 Sayılı Kanun’un Uygulanma İstatistikleri,” General Directorate of Provincial Administration, last modified June 9, 2015, <http://www.illeridaresi.gov.tr/5233-sayili-kanun-uygulanmasi-istatistikleri>.

the AK Party period. The PKK has attacked its non-state rivals in local areas, directly targeted the State of Turkey, launched rural guerilla fights, and supported these fights with acts of terrors in cities.

In this entire process, the PKK failed in its terror campaign it called the “strategy of long-term people’s war.” In other words, the group could not bring the initial stage, called “strategical defense,” up to a desired level and failed to jump to the second stage, called “strategical balance”. The PKK’s terror campaign could not sustain any concrete and durable gains, but caused significant death tolls and economic setbacks to Turkey. The PKK underwent a period of restructuring after Öcalan was captured in 1999, and resumed terror attacks against Turkey in 2003.

In addition to rural guerilla tactics used along with terror attacks in cities for many years, the PKK adopted a method called “rural-based urban war” in the summer of 2015.²³ The group’s terror strategy was to create a sphere of dominance in cities by applying the method of rural-based urban war and to establish de facto autonomy in these cities. However, the PKK’s attempts hit a dead-end thanks to counter-terrorism operations launched by Turkish security forces in the summer of 2015.

In their fight against the PKK, subsequent Turkish governments sometimes adopted military measures, and political means at other times. Despite the use of both measures, Turkey reached no final and permanent solution for the PKK to lay down arms. Subsequently, the PKK ended its ceasefire in July 2015 and left Turkey no other choice but to fight against terrorism by means of military measures. Considering the number of terrorists killed, of terror activities prevented, and decreasing participation in the PKK inside Turkey since then, it is fair to say that Turkey has become successful in its fight against the PKK.

²³ For a detailed analysis on urban warfare launched by the PKK in the summer of 2015: Murat Yeşiltaş and Necdet Özçelik, “PKK Terörünün Yeni Dinamikleri: Radikalleşme ve Şehir Çatışması,” *SETA Analiz*, no. 157 (April, 2016).

The AK Party's counter-terrorism strategy in the recent period may be examined under two headings: efforts to stop the PKK from committing attacks in Turkey, and efforts to eradicate the PKK's presence outside Turkey. In order to put an end to the PKK's acts of terror in Turkey, Turkish security forces cleansed residential areas such as Sur and Silvan in Diyarbakır, Derik and Nusaybin in Mardin, and Silopi and Cizre in Şırnak of dug-up and fortified PKK ditches. Turkish security forces conducted ditch-operations, filled them up and removed road blocks, finally establishing public order in these regions in a short span of time.²⁴

For this purpose, trustees were appointed to the municipalities that had declared autonomy in response to the PKK's call and had provided logistical support to the PKK before and during the ditch operations. The fight against the organization, which is nested in rural areas and in the mountains, has continued non-stop, the system of fortified military stations (*kalekol*) have been put in service, and national defense industry projects have been accelerated. Thus, Turkey tried to guarantee sustainability of its counter-terrorism campaign by increasingly using locally designed and produced equipment and resources. In this context, Turkey, producing its own unmanned air vehicles, began to use them more effectively, and built a wall along the Turkish-Syrian border in order to prevent PYD militants from Syria from crossing into Turkey to join the PKK's Amanos units or providing logistic support to the PKK.

Turkey's prioritizing security in terms of the PKK issue is nothing new. However, even if the criticism that the "fight against the PKK

²⁴ According to information about the Ditch Operations submitted by the then Interior Minister Efkân Ala during a session held at the Parliamentary Planning and Budget Commission, a total of 2,040 ditches and road blocks were removed and 2, 213 bomb set-ups were destroyed as of February 14, 2016. During the operations, 830 long-barrel weapons, such as bxc, kanas, kaleshnikov; 47 rocket launchers, 645 rocket launcher projectiles, 1,000 improvised explosive devices, 431 hand grenades, and 98,650 munitions were confiscated: "Efkân Ala'dan Hendek Operasyonları Açıklaması," *NTV*, February 14, 2016, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/efkan-aladan-hendek-operasyonlari-aciklamasi,zm0BHloELEKno0upRPCXObQ>.

cannot be won by using security measures alone” is accurate, the security aspect of this struggle is undeniably critical. Drones, *kalekols*, and border walls are new security measures that had not been tried before and have substantially worked, in conjunction with new security methods, in favor of Turkey during encounters with the PKK in rural areas. Meanwhile, the path to a political resolution is currently blocked, as the HDP remains subordinate to the PKK and is unable to influence the military wing to end its terrorism campaign, proving once again that no negotiations can be held with this organization for the foreseeable future.

As a further measure, Turkey also launched cross-border military operations in Syria where the PKK, with its Syrian offshoot PYD, was expanding the territories under its control. The most recent example of such operations is called Olive Branch operation, which lasted from January 20th to March 24th, 2018. The operation pursued a strategy of encirclement and the entire city of Afrin with its neighboring towns in Northwest Syria fell in two months with minimum collateral damage. The PKK’s military training camps and its schooling system where the PKK’s founder Öcalan’s texts were used as textbooks were all eradicated with the completion of the operation. Consequently, Turkey has put forward effective security measures against the PKK in Turkey.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION POLICIES

Socio-cultural, economic, and security dimensions of the Kurdish issue are, in a way, subdimensions of the political dimensions. In this section, however, the policies developed and the approaches adopted by the AK Party are discussed in terms of political participation, representation, and definition of the Kurdish question. One of the first steps of the AK Party took in the political arena was to use its legislative authority based on its parliamentary majority to expand and deepen the political participation of Turkey’s Kurdish community. Thus, the

AK Party amended Law No. 2911, on Meetings and Demonstrations²⁵ in 2008, 2010, and 2014, ratified Law No. 5253, of Associations in 2004,²⁶ and amended it in 2006 and 2009. Again, the AK Party expanded the limits of the non-parliamentary political sphere through the ratification of Law No. 6459, “Amendments Made in Some Laws within the Context of Human Rights and Freedom of Expression” in 2013. The most obvious expansion in this area occurred with the Constitutional Referendum held in 2010.

Through this popular vote in 2010, individuals were granted the right to appeal individually to the Constitutional Court, narrowing the sphere of the military judiciary. Additionally, obstacles to peaceful Kurdish mobilization were removed due to the impact the referendum had on party closure cases. Before 2010, Kurdish political parties such as the HDP suffered the most from lawsuits seeking the closure of political parties in Turkey. The latest example of this was the closure of the DTP (Democratic Society Party) in 2009. Following the referendum however, prohibitive decisions to close political parties or to deprive them of state funds required a larger majority among the Constitutional Court justices, 3/5 of votes compared to 2/3 previously.

Beside lifting political bans on legal entities, another significant difference between the Kurdish policies of the AK Party period and of past periods is the initiatives that the AK Party has undertaken to find political solutions to the PKK problem. In this regard, the most critical negotiation process was launched in March 2013 after the PKK decided to agree to a ceasefire, but ended in the summer of 2015. This two-year negotiation process is known as the Resolution Process, an initiative to find a permanent solution to the Kurdish issue.

²⁵ “2911 sayılı Toplantı ve Gösteri Yürüyüş Kanunu,” *Resmî Gazete*, October 8, 1983, <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.2911.pdf>.

²⁶ Law No. 5253, “Dernekler Kanunu”, *Resmî Gazete*, November 23, 2004, <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/Metin1.aspx?MevzuatKod=1.5.5253&MevzuatIliski=0&sourceXml-Search=&Tur=1&Tertip=5&No=5253>.

The Resolution Process signifies all constructive efforts made after the 2013 ceasefire in order to find a peaceful political solution to Turkey's Kurdish issue. The Resolution Process was a comprehensive plan addressing the legal, social, and economic aspects of the issue. Public diplomacy and communication strategies were other critical aspects of this process. Universal legal arrangements were made²⁷ through the democratization steps, taken before and during this process, to meet some expectations about rights for ethnic minorities; however, a constitutional amendment for local self-government and even for a confederation, both of which are the demands of the Kurdish ethno-national movement, was never discussed. Despite all these hurdles, psychological and bureaucratic barriers to a comprehensive peace were eliminated during the Resolution Process.

THE AK PARTY'S KURDISH INITIATIVE

Prior to the Resolution Process, the AK Party had launched a process publicly known as the Kurdish Initiative on July 29, 2009.²⁸ However, the Kurdish Initiative had been frozen due to the incidents that occurred upon the arrival of PKK militants at the Habur Border Gate on October 19, 2009. The Kurdish Initiative was based on a rationale and modus operandi different from those of the Resolution Process. When the AK Party government launched the "democratic opening/ouverture" process, or mostly known as the "Kurdish Initiative", then-Interior Minister Beşir Atalay was assigned to coordinate the relevant efforts. The opening policy, launched as a government initiative, focused on the Kurdish issue on the basis of democratization.

²⁷ For a comprehensive collection of the steps taken towards democratization during the AK Party period, see the 4th version of the work printed by: Undersecretariat of the Public Order and Security, *Sessiz Devrim: Türkiye'nin Demokratik Değişim ve Dönüşüm Envanteri 2002-2014* (Ankara: 2014).

²⁸ Kürt Açılım Start Alıyor," *Vatan*, July 29, 2009, <http://www.gazetevatan.com/-kurt-acilimi--start-aliyor-251217-gundem/>.

The Kurdish Initiative was later renamed the “National Unity and Brotherhood Project” in January 2010. To promote this project, the AK Party published and distributed a booklet entitled “The Democratic Opening Process with Questions and Answers: The National Unity and Brotherhood Project” in January 2010.²⁹ The Kurdish Initiative adopted the approach of “deliberative democracy” rather than a negotiation process and was an ex-parte democratization attempt by the government.³⁰

Expectations from the Kurdish Initiative were much more limited compared to the Resolution Process. While the Kurdish Initiative failed to reach its expected targets, largely because the societal support was not sufficiently ready for such a process, it was not a completely ineffective or fruitless effort. On legal and political grounds, the Kurdish Initiative tried to create a proper environment in order to make more durable moves towards the resolution of the Kurdish issue; for this reason, public discussions formed a critical part of the process. The Kurdish Initiative was a process that prepared political, social, and psychological grounds for a comprehensive negotiation process. The initiative was unable to transform the conflict spirit from its foundations, but made significant changes in the Kurdish community’s mentality.

The Kurdish Initiative demonstrated a paradigm shift in the official vision regarding the Kurdish issue. Official actors, for the first time, acknowledged that the Kurdish issue was not simply an issue of terror or of violence and that other approaches should also be used in addition to the security policies. While the Kurdish Initiative failed to change the spirit of the conflict at the community level, discussions were very useful at the official level. Legal regulations granting further political rights for ethno-political mobilization were significant conciliatory steps.

²⁹ AK Parti, “Sorularla ve Cevaplarıyla Demokratik Açılım Süreci: Milli Birlik ve Kardeşlik Projesi,” The AK Party Publicity and Media Department, January 2010.

³⁰ Sezen Ceceli Köse, “Müzakereci Demokrasi Kuramı ve Toplumsal ve Politik Dönüşümün İmkanları: Kürt Açılımı Üzerine Bir İnceleme.” *Spectrum* 89, (2012):115

Legal arrangements made in the context of the Kurdish Initiative aimed to permanently eliminate the reasons behind the emergence and rapid spread of the PKK. From this perspective, the adoption of a relevant policy sufficiently showed the remarkable change in the positions of official actors. Since the AK Party Government refrained from directly engaging actors who are linked to the PKK the process continued as a one-sided effort during this period.

FROM THE KURDISH INITIATIVE TO THE RESOLUTION PROCESS

The Head of the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), Hakan Fidan, met with Öcalan on İmralı Island on December 16, 2012.³¹ The meeting was publicly announced on December 29, 2012. A delegation of BDP members visited Öcalan on İmralı Island in early January 2013.³² The Resolution Process was coordinated in consultation with Öcalan, leading some to refer to the initiative as the “İmralı Process.” As part of the process, a three-stage plan was prepared to end the conflict. The first stage would be the withdrawal of PKK elements from Turkish territory, the second stage would concentrate on the government’s democratic reforms, and the third stage would plan the re-integration of PKK elements into political and civilian life following their disarmament and demobilization.³³

Negotiations were held with Öcalan through various representatives in this process. The Turkish State, announced its direct meeting with Öcalan for the first time and indirectly getting together with the PKK leaders in Mount Qandil and with the PKK/KCK representatives in Europe. For the first time in the last three decades, the region ex-

³¹ Abdülkadir Selvi, “Öcalan’la Hakan Fidan Görüştü,” *Yenişafak*, January 1, 2013 <http://www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/abdulkadirselvi/ocalanla-hakan-fidan-gorutu-35654>.

³² “BDP ve HDP Heyeti İmralı’ya Gitti,” *NTV*, January 11, 2014, <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/bdp-ve-hdp-heyeti-imraliya-gitti,19M-PSmWlkmFvzuwYHwCvA>.

³³ *Turkey’s Kurdish Conflict: An Assessment of the Current Process*, (London: Democratic Progress Institute, November 2013).

perienced a political, social, and economic normalization. Many psychological obstacles before peace were overcome during this process. A new environment paved the way for genuine talks, which might have made sustainable peace possible. However, the PKK's terror attack that murdered two police officers in the town of Ceylanpınar, in Şanlıurfa, on July 22, 2015 went down in history as a move ending the process.³⁴

Although the process ended unexpectedly after violence rapidly escalated with the Ceylanpınar attack committed by the PKK, the Resolution Process is one of the most serious peace initiatives established to settle the Kurdish issue. The Resolution Process had a more extensive program than the Kurdish Initiative, yet still it may be considered as the continuation of, or complementary to, the previous democratization process. Future peace initiatives will be based on the experiences gained under these processes.

THE DECLINE OF THE RESOLUTION PROCESS

There were two principal reasons behind the weakening of the Resolution Process. The first was that the expectations of the Kurdish social segment who sympathize with the PKK constantly increased during the peace process. It was difficult for the government to meet these ever-increasing expectations. The PKK, in general, believed that the Gezi Protests in the summer of 2013, the wave of investigations and detentions of government officials and pro-government individuals by FETO (The Gülenist terror organization)-affiliated officials in the Police and the Judiciary departments in 2014, the changing power balance in Syria's civil war, and the progress made by the PKK's Syria branch had weakened the AK Party government's bargaining power. That belief rapidly increased the expectations of the PKK. Concordantly, a perception occurred amongst the PKK ranks that the balance of power had changed to the detriment of the Turkish Government during the Resolution Process.

³⁴ "Şanlıurfada İki Polis Memuru Şehit Oldu Saldırısı PKK Üstlendi," *Habertürk*, July 22, 2015, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1106043-sanliurfada-2-polis-sehit-oldu>.

The second reason was that the course of events that led to the General Elections on June 7, 2015 in Turkey caused the adoption of a polarizing discourse as part of the escalating tensions. The more polarized political environment in the country poisoned the atmosphere necessary for peaceful negotiations. On the other hand, different actors of the Kurdish Movement gave inconsistent messages while the government adopted a more consistent attitude. Notably, the AK Party's constituents have never overtly supported the process. It even strengthened national sentiments in the party.

Despite these negative developments during the process, AK Party Chairman Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the party leadership spearheaded efforts to persuade the party grassroots to support the continuation of the process. The AK Party lost some votes to the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) as a reaction to the Resolution Process. The PKK used the process in order to collect more arms and re-organize and prepare its militants for urban warfare. Thanks to the ongoing civil war in Syria, the PKK had more opportunities to procure more weapons and gained international legitimacy for fighting against DAESH. After the PKK ended the ceasefire in the summer of 2015, Turkey considered other alternative measures against the PKK.

CONCLUSION

The failure to end the terror problem and resolve the security aspect of Turkey's Kurdish issue, stonewalls developments in other areas, such as political participation and socio-economic development. In regards to the the security aspect of the issue, the most important reason behind the failure to reach a total and permanent end of the PKK's terror campaign is that since the beginning of the Iraq War in 2003, the PKK has gradually established itself as an international organization.

While the PKK was active in terror camps abroad before 2003, the group seized the opportunity presented by the power vacuum in Iraq, which emerged after the American occupation in 2003. The PKK took

Iraqi regions under control, naming them “Media Defense Areas.” The PKK settled down in such regions, provided not only training and sheltering but also numerous public services including order and legal transactions. It also has become one of the dominant actors in the areas controlled by the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). All these developments have carried the PKK into a larger scale than ever.

With the outbreak of the civil war, or rather the proxy war, in Syria, the US began to use the Syria-branch of the PKK, the PYD, as a combatant force against DAESH in 2014. The fight against DAESH brought prestige and propaganda opportunities to the group as its material capacity increased through delivery of arms by the US. The terrorist organization developed the capacity to arm thousands of young men and women among the Syrian and Iraqi Kurds, train them in camps outside Turkey, and help them sneak into Turkey for terror attacks through the Turkish-Iraqi and Turkish-Syrian borders.

As we have outlined in this study, the number one factor for rendering inadequate the political, economic, and socio-cultural reforms of the AK Party in Turkey and the negotiations with the PKK in the years of 2007-2009 and of 2013-2015 is the fact that the PKK shifted its weight, more than ever, to territories outside Turkey.

Even if the PKK cannot recruit militants from within Turkey or find financial support in the country, the group has reached a level where it is able to maintain its presence through militants recruited from Iraq and Syria, the arms and logistic support provided to it by various countries, particularly the US, and the propaganda opportunities presented to it in the US and European countries. We do not mean that the PKK issue has totally left Turkey and that it follows a course independent from the developments taking place within Turkey’s borders. Turkey is already facing problems in the construction of an all-encompassing national identity, consolidating its democratic institutions, and lowering the differences among regions with respect to the distribution of economic wealth. Without doubt, all these problems interrelate with the Kurdish issue. However, today the PKK is largely nurtured from outside Tur-

key, and developments within Turkey are not sufficient to eradicate the PKK terror. Thus, the AK Party approaches the Kurdish issue through a multi-faceted and a multi-layered policy. On one side, it makes socio-cultural, economic, and political reforms in Turkey, and on the other side, it carries out a counter-terrorism strategy beyond its borders.

Appendix 1: Ethnic Kurdish Movement the 2002-2015 General Election Results

TABLE 1, ETHNIC KURDISH PARTY ELECTION RESULTS, 2002-2015*					
General Elections	Name of the Party	Number of Constituents	Valid Votes	Party's Vote	Vote Percentage
1995	HADEP	34.155.981	28.040.392	1.171.623	4,2
1999	HADEP	37.495.217	31.119.242	1.482.196	4,8
2002	DEHAP	41.407.027	31.414.748	1.960.660	6,2
2007	The Thousand Hope Candidates (DTP)	42.799.303	34.822.907	1.338.810**	3,8**
2011	The Labor, Democracy and Freedom Bloc (BDP)	52.806.322	42.813.896	2.439.605**	5,7**
2015 (June 7)	HDP	47.507.467	46.163.243	5.847.134	13,12
2015 (Nov. 1)	HDP	48.537.695	47.840.231	4.914.203	10,76

* For the data of 2002-2011: Hüseyin Alptekin, "Explaining Ethnopolitical Mobilization: Ethnic Incorporation and Mobilization Patterns in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Turkey, and Beyond," PhD Diss., University of Texas at Austin, 2014.; for data after 2012, High Election Board results are used: "Millietvekili Genel Seçim Arşivi," *YSK*, accessed October 4, 2017, <http://www.ysk.gov.tr/tr/milletvekili-genel-secim-arsivi/2644>.

** Candidates of block parties rather than individual parties joined the elections (depicted with asterisk), so the total of their votes are shown here.

Appendix 2: PKK-related Deaths

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO THE PKK TERROR, 1984-2016*					
Year	Members of Turkish Security Forces	Civilians	Total deaths caused by the PKK	The PKK militants	Total
1984	26	43	69	28	97
1985	58	141	199	201	400
1986	51	133	184	74	258
1987	71	237	308	95	403
1988	54	109	163	123	286
1989	153	178	331	179	510
1990	161	204	365	368	733
1991	244	233	477	376	853
1992	629	832	1461	1129	2590
1993	715	1479	2194	3050	5244
1994	1145	992	2137	2510	4647
1995	772	313	1085	4163	5248
1996	608	170	778	3789	4567
1997	518	158	676	7558	8234
1998	383	85	468	2556	3024
1999	236	83	319	1458	1777
2000	29	17	46	319	365
2001	20	8	28	104	132
2002	7	7	14	19	33
2003	31	63	94	87	181
2004	75	28	103	122	225
2005	105	30	135	188	323
2006	111	38	149	132	281
2007	146	37	183	315	498
2008	171	51	222	696	918
2009	62	18	80	65	145
2010	92	27	119	137	256

2011	128	50	178	211	389
2012	163	42	205	438	643
2013	3	0	3	435	438
2014	9	0	9	950	959
2015	218	39	257	3.764	4.021
2016	505	99	604	12.281	12.885

* For the data of 1984-2012: Alptekin, "Explaining Ethnopolitical Mobilization: Ethnic Incorporation and Mobilization Patterns in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Turkey, and Beyond.;" for the period from 2013 to June 2016, see. "İşte Yıllara Göre Erkisiz Hale Getirilen PKK'lı Sayısı," Habertürk, May 31, 2016, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1247022-iste-yillara-gore-etkisiz-hale-getirilen-pkcli-sayisi/53>.

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CHAPTER 4

**CHANGING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM
TRAJECTORIES IN TURKEY:
AN EVALUATION OF THE AK PARTY ERA**

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In the 1980s, mounting criticism in the United States and the United Kingdom against the welfare state in the political arena and the Weberian bureaucracy in public administration theory and practice gave rise to reform movement known as New Public Management (NPM). The movement rapidly spread to various developing and developed countries around the world, where it affected many fields of the public sector. In the early 1990s, in turn, the idea of *governance*—along with its derivatives such as *good governance*, *democratic governance* and *network governance*—rose to prominence as part of efforts to overcome NPM's shortcomings and provide governments with a political agenda.

Criticism against NPM has increased globally in the first decade of the twenty-first century. During this period, the outcomes and adverse effects of NPM reforms have become the subject of a comprehensive debate, as the idea of public administration reform has undergone certain changes. In this regard, a number of new approaches and alternative accounts, including *new public service*, *public value management*, *whole of government*,

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and *new public governance*, have become more and more popular. Meanwhile, in recent years, scholars of public management have advanced 'post-New Public Management' as an umbrella concept that drives a framework for addressing the outcomes of NPM reforms and alternative approaches.

Against this background, focusing on Turkey's public administration reform experience, it can be asserted that political and administrative systems have been transformed by New Right policies and practices, such as privatization, deregulation, marketization, and decentralization, from the mid-1980s onwards. This reform process, however, was stalled by political and economic instability fostered by the weak coalition governments of the 1990s. Public management reform efforts have been revived under the political and relative economic stability ensured by the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) who took power in the 2002 parliamentary elections. Since then, comprehensive political, economic, and administrative reforms have been implemented by successive AK Party governments including both NPM and governance approaches aimed at transforming relations between the state and its citizens. Thus, on one hand public sector organizations in Turkey have adopted modern management techniques from private companies including strategic management, performance measurement, total quality management, and human resource management. On the other hand, institutions of democratic governance such as the Ombudsman Institution, the Council of Ethics for Public Officials, and the Human Rights and Equality Institution have been established to rebuild citizen-government relations and strengthen trust in government and new ways to address grievances and seek mediation have been carved out, including reconciliation, right to information, and consumer rights.

This chapter aims to analyze public administration reform attempts during the AK Party's 15-year period. We argue that it is possible to identify three distinct reform periods since the AK Party's rise to power: The first period covers reforms that the government implemented under the influence of NPM. Starting in 2010, during the second period, the government took steps in line with the goals and values of the post-NPM

framework. Finally, the third period of reforms refers to the restructuring of the state apparatus in the wake of the July 15, 2016 coup attempt. In essence, the nature of the final set of reforms is significantly different from others. It is important to note that our periodization effort merely serves to unfold the AK Party's reform efforts in a systematic manner. Obviously, there are no rigid distinctions between the various periods and reform efforts. Today, the government maintains a number of intertwined reform efforts which encompass both NPM and post-NPM values as well as reorganization of the state. In this sense, through taking into consideration a variety of approaches in administrative reform and the challenges faced by successive AK Party governments, this study aims to analyze the future of public administration reforms in Turkey.

In this regard, the first part of this study examines the dynamics that shaped public administration reforms since the 1980s. The second section concentrates on public administration reforms implemented in Turkey in the 2000s. This part assesses the public administration reforms during the AK Party's first term (starting from the 2002 to 2010) and the ideas behind those reforms. The final section takes into account emerging trends in public administration reforms around the world as well as the recent political and social challenges faced by successive AK Party government to discuss the future of reforms.

NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE AS IMPETUS FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS AFTER 1980S

In the early 1980s, a new movement began promoting public administration reform in order to overcome the economic and financial challenges that countries experienced, meet changing societal demands, and facilitate the bureaucracy's adaptation to shifting external conditions as well as technological and administrative innovations. In this regard, conservative governments in the United States and the United Kingdom took initial steps, as the limits of the state and the public administration's performance became the subject of fierce public debate.

The Financial Management Initiative in the UK and the Reinventing Government Movement in the U.S were the first comprehensive public management reform initiatives in the modern world. To be clear, not only right-wing conservatives but also leftist governments in the Anglo-Saxon world supported similar programs. Moreover, reforms have rapidly spread across the European countries and other developed and developing nations in addition to Anglo-Saxon countries.¹

Despite certain implementation differences, NPM had become a global phenomenon by the early 1990s. Therefore certain commonalities among various NPM applications became clearer in relevant academic studies and in reform practice. Some of NPM's fundamental principles and proposals include the following: (1) Concentrating on outputs and results instead of inputs and procedures in administrative processes; (2) promoting decentralization and creating a flexible organizational structure and personnel system; (3) creating a competitive setting between government agencies and non-state actors, defining the service users as 'customers' and valuing their demands and expectations; (4) preferring smaller-scale, horizontal, and autonomous agencies instead of large-scale, multi-purposed, and hierarchical structures; (5) measuring the performance of public services and personnel to manage organizational change; (6) creating market-like structures in the provision and management of public services, relying more on market mechanisms and adapting private-sector management techniques; and (7) letting managers manage, and rendering public officials accountable for their performance and results.²

¹ Jan-Erik Lane, *New public management*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 3.

² Christopher Hood, "A public management for all seasons?," *Public Administration* 69, no. 1 (1991): 4-5.; David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming public sector*, (New York: Plume, 1993), 19-20.; OECD, *Public management reform and economic and social development* (Paris: OECD Publishing, 1998), 13.; Christopher Pollitt, "Clarifying convergence, striking similarities and durable differences in public management reform," *Public Management Review* 4, no. 1 (2002): 474.; Owen E. Hughes, *Public management and administration: An introduction* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 44.; Walter J. M. Kickert, "Public governance in the Netherlands: An alternative to Anglo American managerialism," *Public Administration* 75, no. 4 (1997): 733.; Rosie Cunningham, "From great expectations to hard times? Managing equal opportunities under new public management," *Public Administration* 78, no. 3 (2000): 699.

In the 1990s, when NPM reforms became more widespread in post-Soviet Central and Eastern European countries and elsewhere, the idea of *governance*, which complemented NPM reforms, rose to popularity. Over time, the idea of governance assumed a broader meaning to represent a new political and administrative system. At the same time, it stressed the importance of a new administrative insight focused on redesigning the relations between public and private sectors as well as civil society organizations.³

In its political meaning, *governance* refers to principles including effectiveness, transparency, and accountability as well as a reform agenda related to democracy, multi-party system, legitimacy of the government, rule of law, participation, civil society, human rights, press freedom, state's capacity to resolve problems and conflicts, administrative capacity, and citizen-centered provision of services.⁴ As an administrative issue, *governance* rests on the principles of co-production, participation, and public-private partnerships. In this sense, *governance* replaces authority, the chain of command, and hierarchical-bureaucratic guidance with a democratic approach and multi-actored model based on co-production, bargaining, deliberation and compromise.⁵

REFORMING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A NEW REFORM AGENDA?

As noted, governments across the world have taken NPM principles and practices into consideration since the 1980s in the provision of public services, public policy-making processes, and training of public officials. NPM, however, has faced criticism since its emergence. In the second half of the 1990s, critics focused on NPM's philosophical argu-

³ M. Zahid Sobacı, "Yönetişim ve politika transferi: Koşulsallık bağlamında bir analiz," in *Yönetişim: Kuram, Boyutlar ve Uygulama*, ed. Akif Çukurçayır, H. Tuğba Eroğlu, and Hülya Eşki Uğuz (Konya: Çizgi Yayınevi, 2010), 313.

⁴ Sobacı, "Yönetişim ve politika transferi: Koşulsallık bağlamında bir analiz," 314.

⁵ Nico Nelissen, "The administrative capacity of new types of governance," *Public Organization Review* 2, no. 1 (2002): 19

ments, convergence thesis, and the outcome of reforms.⁶ In the early 2000s, in turn, the seemingly unshakable dominance of NPM in public administration theory came under attack by increasing criticisms and questions put forth about the outcomes of the reforms. These developments ultimately triggered a new conceptual and theoretical revival in the field of public administration over the past decade.

A number of developments, new trends, and challenges emerged in the beginnings of the twenty-first century that influenced the idea of public administration and reform practices. Instead of concerns over economic efficiency, a number of social challenges which cut across local and national borders and could not be addressed by individual public bureaucracies or private organizations alone emerged, including global warming, international migration and human trafficking, corruption, and terrorism, emerged. Secondly, the surroundings of public administration have become more complex. In this complex world, public administrators must strive towards promoting public values, which focus on long-term outcomes rather than managerialism and short-term products. Moreover, mobilizing policy and administrative networks to promote the exchanging of experience, risks, and results—as opposed to market-based governance—became an important item of the public administration agenda. In recent years, public administrators and institutions have been paying more attention to certain aspects of Web 2.0 and social media, which promote transparency, participation, and democracy, at the expense of the idea of e-government with its concentration on the efficient provision of public services. Citizens, in turn, are considered co-producing partners rather than consumers to whom the authorities provide services.⁷

⁶ Binod Atreya and Anona Armstrong, “A Review of the Criticisms and the Future of New Public Management,” Working Paper, Victoria University of Technology School of Management, no. 7 (2002); Steven Van de Walle and Gerhard Hammerschmid, “The impact of the new public management: challenges for coordination and cohesion in European public sectors,” *Halduskultuur – Administrative Culture* 12, no. (2011): 190-209.

⁷ Carsten Greve, “Whatever happened to new public management?,” Danish Political Science Association Meeting, November 4-5, 2010, http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/8548/Carsten_Greve_KonfPap_2010.pdf;sequence=.

It seems unlikely that governments will be able to deal with those dynamics and developments using traditional bureaucratic methods. Provided that certain problems and challenges encountered by public administrations today were a by-product of NPM reforms, it is not possible to tackle them by employing NPM policies.⁸ Hence a range of theories and approaches have emerged as alternatives including New Public Service, Joined-up Government, Whole-of-Government, Network Governance, New Public Governance, Neo-Weberian State, Public Value Management, and Digital Age Governance. The principles and proposals associated with those approaches have already been incorporated into the reform agendas and policies of many countries. In addition to reformist concepts such as networks, governance, joint production, cooperation, partnerships, negotiation, information technologies, Web 2.0, social media and public value, approaches opposed to or critical of NPM reflect traditional values, i.e. justice, equality, democracy, participation, public service and citizenship. Those concepts and values are often intertwined within various approaches and alternatives.

Today, elected and appointed officials must deal with simple, everyday, routine public tasks along with increasingly complex ‘wicked problems’ – which cannot be solved by unidirectional and hierarchical managerial structures and decision-making processes but instead require local, regional, and international cooperation, horizontal relations, partnerships, and the use, construction, and restructuring of networks among multiple players. Although NPM was considered the best method to provide and improve public services, including economic development, until the 1990s, it became unable to meet the demands of decision-makers in the face of the above-mentioned developments.

⁸ Özer Köseoğlu and M. Zahid Sobacı, “Kamu yönetiminin geleceği: Yeni kamu işletmeciliğinden hibritleşmeye doğru,” in *Kamu Yönetiminde Paradigma Arayışları: Yeni Kamu İşletmeciliği ve Ötesi*, ed. Özer Köseoğlu and M. Zahid Sobacı (Bursa: Dora Yayınları, 2015), 298.

As Pollitt posits, however, this does not mean that NPM is dead or in coma.⁹ Moreover, it is important to note that none of NPM's alternatives are strong enough to be considered as paradigms.¹⁰ In this regard, it is possible to see the new approaches as new advances in the NPM menu or, at the very least, developments linked to NPM.¹¹

Consequently, it is possible to argue that multiple approaches and reform movements co-exist today in a complex, layered, and hybrid field of public administration and reform agenda – as opposed to one approach replacing another to become the dominant paradigm. Today, public management refers to a domain comprised of layered reforms and approaches, wherein incompatible, rival, and contradictory concepts, principles, and structures co-exist and the various interests and values are kept in balance.¹² 'Post-New Public Management' (post-NPM) as a conceptual framework, is employed to address the recent developments in public management literature. The idea of post-NPM can be considered a 'shopping basket', which contains non-NPM reform elements, including the prevention of fragmentation through institutional integration, re-centralization, and re-regulation, the strengthening of central political and administrative capacity, and public-private partnerships.¹³ It is still ambiguous whether post-NPM will represent a separate 'paradigm' or an 'umbrella term' covering the common principles and proposals of competing approaches such as Whole-of-Government, Network Governance, or Public Value Management.

⁹ Christopher Pollitt, "The new public management: An overview of its current status," *Administration and Public Management Review* 8, (2007): 113.

¹⁰ Jouke De Vries, "Is public management really dead?," *OECD Journal on Budgeting* 1, (2010): 1-5.; B. Guy Peters, Jon Pierre, and Tiina Randma-Liv, "Global financial crisis, public administration and governance: Do new problems require new solutions?," *Public Organization Review* 11, no. 1 (2011): 26.

¹¹ Henk Ter Bogt, Tjerk Budding and Jan Van Helden, "Current NPM research: Digging deeper and looking further," *Financial Accountability & Management* 26, no. 3 (2010): 241.

¹² Tom Christensen, "Post-NPM and changing public governance," *Meiji Journal of Political Science and Economics* 1, (2012): 6.

¹³ Christensen, "Post-NPM and changing public governance," 1.

In the face of growing fragmentation and decentralization fueled by managerial reforms, post-NPM advocates the strengthening of central capacity and control through greater integration and coordination. In this regard, it prescribes the use of horizontal governance and partnership models, such as inter-agency councils and committees, temporary and permanent networks, cooperation units within and among ministries, and cross-sector programs and projects, as opposed to vertical organization and hierarchy.¹⁴ Post-NPM reforms do not mean a return to traditional public administration however. In essence, post-NPM reforms represent an effort to cope with the administrative and democratic problems caused by NPM, and to re-establish balance between decentralization and recentralization, fragmentation and coordination, hierarchy and networks, and autonomy and central control – rather than a wholesale rejection of NPM. In this regard, the post-NPM framework is built on and intertwined with elements of NPM reforms.

ANALYZING PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM WAVES IN TURKEY

The history of public administration reforms in Turkey dates back to the nineteenth century, when a number of French institutions and practices were transferred to the Ottoman administrative system. Following initial attempts under Selim III (1761-1808) to reform the military, Mahmud II (1808-1839) expanded the reform agenda by restructuring the public personnel regime and the central administration. The proclamation of the Imperial Edict of Reorganization (*Tanzimat Fermanı* in Turkish) in 1839, in turn, marked the beginning of a new period, when efforts to reform the central administration continued and modern local administrations, courts, and bodies of the high judiciary were created. This public personnel regime and public administration system, along with administrative traditions and the

¹⁴ Christensen, “Post-NPM and changing public governance,” 1-11.

bureaucratic culture, were inherited by the Republic of Turkey, which was established in 1923.

During the Republican period, public administration reform remained an important item on the governments' agenda. From the single-party period until the 1960s, Turkey's public administration reform attempts were shaped by the reports of foreign experts. At the time, reform policies were limited to efforts by administrators to address day-to-day and routine problems they encountered through legal arrangements and administrative restructuring.¹⁵ From the 1960s onwards, public administration reforms were designed by the central organs and implemented by public administrators within the framework of planned economic development. It is important to note, however, that those reform attempts were both devoid of theoretical depth and unsystematic. Moreover, reform policies were largely focused on intra-organizational problems, such as 'red tape', reorganization and the creation of a rational personnel system. In other words, they lacked a holistic approach.¹⁶

The 1980s marked a turning point in the history of administrative reform in Turkey. From that decade onwards, liberal policies, which disseminated around the world, became more influential over Turkey's administrative domain as well as economic and political life. The first reform wave beginning in the early 1980s, which reflected the core values of economic liberalism, stressed the importance of shrinking down the state, economic liberalization, privatization, and deregulation.¹⁷ It is not possible, however, to assert that those reforms efforts were thoroughly accomplished.

¹⁵ Özer Köseoğlu and Göktuğ Morçöl, "Democratization of governance in Turkey: An assessment of the administrative reforms in the 2000s," in *Challenges to Democratic Governance in Developing Countries*, ed. Gedeon M. Mudacamura and Göktuğ Morçöl (New York: Springer, 2014), 139.

¹⁶ Kenan Sürgüt, *Türkiye'de idari reform* (Ankara: TODAİE yayınları, 1972).; Tacettin Karaer, "Kamu yönetimini yeniden düzenleme girişimleri ve sonuçları üzerine bir deneme," *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 20, no. 2 (1987): 25–46.

¹⁷ Bilal Eryılmaz, "Kamu yönetiminde değişim," in *II. Kamu Yönetimi* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2004), 62–63.

In the 1990s, when the average government survived for less than 18 months and political and economic instability were widespread, there was plenty of talk about public administration reform but almost none of those ideas translated into action. However, from the mid-1990s until the 2000s, governments maintained NPM-style reform efforts, specifically establishing new independent regulatory agencies.¹⁸ In the wake of the 2000 and 2001 economic crises, the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power in the 2002 parliamentary elections. In addition to promoting political stability and enjoying vast popular support, successive AK Party governments reconciled their agenda with the European Union's vision, implementing a large number of reforms at the legislative and institutional levels. Within the framework of this reform wave, which relied upon NPM and 'governance' principles, the government took important steps to reorganize the central administration, strength local governments, restructure public financial management, empower citizens to audit public administrations, and to promote a culture of transparency and ethics. In this regard, the AK Party governments made significant progress towards implementing overdue reforms.

As such, the economic liberalization reforms of the 1980s and the 1990s were followed by managerial reforms in the 2000s. It is possible to argue that those reforms were—at least on a formal level and in terms of their instruments—compatible with the core components of NPM and, to some extent, the 'governance' paradigm.¹⁹ Notwithstanding, it

¹⁸ Yılmaz Üstüner and Nilay Yavuz, "Turkey's public administration today: An overview and appraisal," *International Journal of Public Administration* 40, (2017): 3.

¹⁹ M. Zahid Sobacı, *İdari reform ve politika transferi: Yeni kamu işletmeciliğinin yayılışı* (Bursa: Dora Yayınevi, 2014), 196.; Seriy Sezen, "International versus domestic explanations of administrative reforms: The case of Turkey," *International Review of Administrative Sciences* 77, no. 2 (2011): 322-46.; Süleyman Sözen, "Recent administrative reforms in Turkey: A preliminary assessment," *International Journal of Business and Social Science* 3, no. 6 (2012): 168-73.; Hüseyin Gül and Hakan M. Kiriş, "Democratic governance reforms in Turkey and their implications," in *Public Administration and Policy in the Middle East*, ed. Alexander R. Dawoody (New York: Springer, 2015), 25-60.; Üstüner and Yavuz, "Turkey's public administration today," 3-4.

is necessary to take a closer look at a number of new reform policies and strategies, which were described as post-NPM and became popular in developed countries ahead of and after the 2008 financial crisis. As a matter of fact, NPM and governance reforms, which Turkey implemented under the AK Party's leadership, remained an important item on many countries' institutional agendas. At the same time, there has been greater emphasis on new approaches, such as digitalization, coordination, cooperation and partnership, in efforts to address complex and multi-dimensional social problems. To understand to what extent and at what level successive AK Party governments have been affected by the most recent changes of the reform agenda, it is necessary to take a closer look at the reforms implemented over the past 15 years.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF NPM AND GOVERNANCE IN TURKEY: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORMS IN THE 2000S

Having come to power in Turkey following the 2000 and 2001 economic crises, the AK Party issued an Emergency Action Plan to translate the ideas it expressed on the campaign trail into concrete policies and actions to combat poverty, corruption and prohibitions. In this regard, the newly-elected government remained committed to policies of economic liberalization, privatization, deregulation, and decentralization, whose groundwork was laid by previous governments, and adopted a new political agenda to expand the domain of political and economic liberties.

During this initial period of reform under the AK Party, Turkey launched a holistic, comprehensive, and long-term public administration reform program in line with economic, political, and social changes that was closely associated with NPM. During this period, the government identified compatibility with needs, participation, governance, citizen-orientation, transition to strategic government, performance driven, effective monitoring, ethical rules, confidence in people,

and subsidiarity in public service provision as the main principles of reform.²⁰ In 2003, the government introduced a Draft Legislation on the Basic Principles and Restructuring of Public Administration at the Grand National Assembly (TBMM). The bill included a number of proposals geared towards shrinking the state, limiting the central government and empowering local governments, promoting market values and tools, and adapting private sector management techniques into the public sector – which were largely aligned with NPM and governance. When it became apparent that the aforementioned draft law could not be passed because of the cancellation of the Constitutional Court, the AK Party developed a strategy of piece-meal reforms.²¹

In the early 2000s, Turkish public administration was characterized by secrecy, lack of transparency, and ‘red tape’. The administrative system lacked mechanisms to facilitate the participation of citizens in decision-making processes. The public was dissatisfied with the quality of public services and suspicious of the public officials’ performance.²² Furthermore, the political instability of the 1990s and the tradition of military interventions forced policymakers to concentrate on short-term societal problems, resulting in the spread of maladministration and corruption throughout the bureaucracy.²³ In order to address the aforementioned problems, successive AK Party governments adopted a large number of legal regulations and implemented a series of reforms.

RESTRUCTURING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND DECENTRALIZATION

Local governments have a rather important position in the AK Party’s tradition. Therefore, the movement paid special attention to local gov-

²⁰ Ömer Dinçer and C. Geray, *Değişimin yönetimi için yönetimde değişim: Kamu yönetimi-nde yeniden yapılanma 1* (Ankara: Başbakanlık, 2003), 127-35.

²¹ Sobacı, *İdari reform ve politika transferi*, 196-204.

²² TÜSİAD, *Kamu reformu araştırması* (İstanbul: TÜSİAD Yayınları, 2002).

²³ M. Zahid Sobacı, “Türkiye’nin Avrupa Yerel Yönetimler Özerklik Şartı’na uyumu: Özerklik miti,” *SETA Analiz*, no. 120 (2015), 162-66.

ernments since its initial term in power, and, believing that democracy and development start at the local level, attempted to change the centralist nature of the Turkish public administration. Those efforts, which were compatible with the goal of EU membership, represented a step towards decentralizing the administrative structure of the state.

In this regard, considering the need to comply with the European Charter of Local Self-Government, the government implemented a new wave of local government reform in the early 2000s. Within the framework of this reform program, the Turkish Parliament passed Law No. 5216 on Metropolitan Municipalities in 2004, as well as Law No. 5393 on Municipalities and Law No. 5302 on Special Provincial Administrations in 2005. This reform initiative was aimed at rendering Turkey's local governments more democratic. The legal arrangements, which were made as part of the reform program, entailed important changes to the responsibilities, organizations, monitoring and democratic features of local governments. Those changes effectively invalidated Turkey's several reservations to the European Charter on Local Self-Government and contributed to the government's shift from centralism to decentralization.²⁴ Local government reforms were comprised of two main streams: (1) enhancing local democracy, autonomy, and participation by establishing City Councils in provinces, abolishing the requirement that municipal councils' decisions be subject to the approval of governors, and so on, and (2) adapting market mechanisms such as privatization, strategic management, performance measurement, and human resource management in municipalities.

Another institution, which emerged out of the EU harmonization process, was the Regional Development Agencies (RDA). The Development Agencies, which played an important role in the implementation of the principles of regional development and governance, were established by Law No. 5449 in 2006. Operating on the principle of

²⁴ Sobacı, "Türkiye'nin Avrupa Yerel Yönetimler Özerklik Şartı'na uyumu," 13.

governance with the participation of local and regional stakeholders, the RDA's financed local development projects in an effort to realize local and regional potential.²⁵ The creation of new public agencies in Turkey facilitated the transition from top-down economic development to bottom-up development with the support of local and regional dynamics.

PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT REFORM: TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

Under the Law of Public Financial Management and Control (No. 5018 of 2003), public financial management and budgeting processes were modernized through integration with new managerial techniques. The new public financial system was built on four pillars: financial transparency, accountability, strategic planning, and performance-based budgeting. To implement those principles and practices, the Turkish government issued a number of circulars and took multiple administrative measures to rebuild the legal infrastructure of public financial management.

The main purpose of reforming the public financial management was to rationalize the processes of the drafting and implementing public agencies' budgets, and monitoring their use of public funds. Moreover, it sought to distribute public resources in a more rational and effective manner through strategic planning. Adopting principles of modern public financial management such as effectiveness, efficiency, financial transparency and accountability, Turkey aimed to change its administrative culture.

Law No. 6085 on the Court of Accounts, which was passed in 2010, facilitated legal and financial audits of public agencies and authorized auditors to carry out performance measurements. As a result

²⁵ M. Zahid Sobacı, "Regional development agencies in Turkey: Are they examples of obligated policy transfer?" *Public Organization Review* 9, (2009): 58.

of constitutional amendments enacted during this period, the jurisdiction of the Court, which monitors public properties, incomes and expenses, and delivers final decisions on responsible public officials, was expanded.

TACKLING BUREAUCRATIC SECRECY: RIGHT TO INFORMATION LAW AND ADMINISTRATIVE GRIEVANCE

The right to information, a useful tool in combating secrecy, creates opportunities to consolidate democracy, strengthen the rule of law, and boost citizen's trust in government. The concept, which was intensively debated in Turkey in the 1990s,²⁶ was a high priority on the AK Party government's reform agenda and was implemented with the passage of Law No. 4982 on the Right to Information in 2003.

The Law on the Right to Information stipulated that all citizens had the right to obtain personal information and documents from government agencies (Article 4) and added that the relevant public institutions must share the requested information or documents with applicants within fifteen days (Article 11). In the 2010 constitutional referendum, the right to information was inserted in Article 72 of the 1982 Constitution and became an inalienable right for all citizens.

As part of the policy of administrative transparency, Law No. 6698 on Personal Data Protection was enacted and the Personal Data Protection Institution was created as an autonomous body in 2016 to protect the fundamental rights and liberties of all citizens and identify the obligations of all parties storing personal data.

²⁶ T. A. Beydoğan, "Gizlilik, bilgi edinme ve demokrasi," *Yeni Türkiye Dergisi, Demokratiğe ve Yeni Anayasa Özel Sayısı* 29, (1999): 217-223.; Musa Eken, "Kamu yönetiminde gizlilik geleneği ve açıklık ihtiyacı," *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 27, no. 2 (1994): 25-54.; İl Han Özay, *Günışığında yönetim* (Istanbul: Alfa Yayınları, 1996).

COMBATING CORRUPTION AND MALADMINISTRATION

Ahead of the 2002 parliamentary elections, the ‘war on corruption’ formed the backbone of the AK Party’s campaign. In the initial years of AK Party rule, the Turkish government ratified a number of international conventions on combating corruption and bribery, joined the Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) in 2004, adopted the Strategy for Promoting Transparency and Strengthening the Fight Against Corruption in 2010, and established an Executive Committee to implement reforms in the same year.²⁷

Furthermore, the government established the Council of Ethics for Public Officials by passing Law No. 5176 in 2004. This was the first time that the country created a council to identify unethical behavior in the public sector, investigate alleged ethical violations, and promote ethical codes in the public service. The Council publicly identified the principles of ethical behavior by which public officials were expected to abide, and conducted audits and inspections in response to complaints or out of its own discretion.

A significant aspect of bureaucratic corruption relates to ‘red tape’. Until the 1980s, combating excessive procedures was considered the most important part of public administration reforms by successive governments and the bureaucracy. Nonetheless, it is difficult to claim that considerable progress was made in this area by the 2000s. Within the past decade, however, Turkey took notable steps towards reducing ‘red tape’ in the bureaucracy.

In this sense, the Grand National Assembly enacted a law in 2007 that abolished a number of laws that could not be implemented. The purpose of the law was to strike down obsolete regulations, address conflicts within the body of law, and improve the quality of legislations. Two years later, the Circular on the Principles and Methods

²⁷ Köseoğlu and Morçöl, “Democratization of governance in Turkey,” 143.

Applying to the Provision of Public Services was issued to introduce a series of measures and practices, including the use of information technologies and the Internet, intended to deliver public services in a more rapid, high-quality, simple, and low-cost manner. In this regard, public agencies set certain standards for the provision of public services and created service inventories that were published on their respective websites. At the same time, Turkey amended a total of 84 circulars in 2012 to reduce red tape and simplify transactions.

For the purpose of drafting laws, decrees, statutes, circulars, and other regulations in a more participatory and qualitative manner, the Prime Ministry issued the Circular on the Methodology and Principles of the Drafting of Legislation in 2006. The document aimed to standardize regulatory activities by public institutions, facilitate the participation of non-governmental organizations, labor unions, and professional associations, along with public agencies in regulatory processes, and the measurement of the impact of regulations. The Prime Ministry also published the Guide on Regulatory Impact Assessment to define practical processes and methods – which would be used in the analysis of regulatory activities.

An important measure against corruption in public administration and the protection of citizens from maladministration was the creation of the Ombudsman institution, which operates independently of the executive and legislative branches, reviews and investigates complaints about public institutions and agencies, and reports its findings to the relevant authorities and the public. Growing interest in human rights, gridlocks in the judicial system, and efforts to institutionalize democratic reforms were among the reasons why the institution was established in Turkey.²⁸ Lacking enforcement power, it serves as a mediator between the government and the citizens.

²⁸ M. Zahid Sobacı and Özer Köseoğlu, “Türkiye’de etkin bir ombudsman için medya desteği,” *SDÜ İİBF Journal* 19, no. 4 (2014): 26.

Although the AK Party government's efforts to create the Ombudsman institution date back to the early 2000s, it was not established until 2012. In the 2010 constitutional referendum, the right to complain to the ombudsman was recognized as a constitutional right. Subsequently, the Turkish Parliament adopted Law No. 6328 to create the Ombudsman institution in 2012. The ombudsman in Turkey seeks to review and investigate all actions, behavior, and manners of the public administration from the standpoint of human rights, justice, and compliance with the law, and to make suggestions to the relevant agencies.

Moreover, Human Rights Institution was established in 2012 as part of a broader agenda to promote a citizen-oriented approach in public administration. In 2016, the institution was restructured and renamed the Human Rights and Equality Institution. It seeks to protect and promote human rights, prevent discrimination against various groups in their enjoyment of legally-recognized rights and liberties, and actively combat torture and ill-treatment. The Institution as a public corporate body enjoys administrative and financial autonomy, allowing the Institution to act freely to prevent violations on human rights and liberties.

IMPROVING E-GOVERNMENT FOR BETTER PUBLIC SERVICES

The E-government initiative has been a substantive part of reform efforts in Turkey since the beginnings of the 2000s. Within the 15-year AK Party period, the E-Transformation project has been a milestone in that it fostered the following e-government initiatives. Starting with 2006, Strategies for Knowledge Society and related Action Plans have been issued every 4 years.²⁹

²⁹ M. Zahid Sobacı and Özer Köseoğlu, "AK Parti ve Türk kamu yönetiminde reform serüveni: Demokratikleşme yolunda atılan adımlar," in *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı-Siyaset*, ed. Nebi Miş and Ali Aslan (Istanbul: SETA, 2018), 174.

Under the framework of the strategy and plans, reforming public administration and transforming public services in a citizen-centered way through the employment of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in official operations has always been seen as a strategic priority. It is also expected from e-government to support the prevention of red tape. Moreover, a range of laws and administrative regulations have been put into force for completing legal infrastructure of practices of e-government. A number of e-government projects have been implemented in various public agencies and hundreds of public services have been gradually delivered through the e-government gateway.³⁰

TRANSITION TO HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC SECTOR: TOWARDS A MORE PERFORMANCE ORIENTED CULTURE

One of the most important developments related to the public personnel regime in the 2000s was the transition from the traditional personnel administration system to a private sector-based human resource management (HRM). During this period, HRM practices, including performance management, rational staffing practices, career management, and work analysis spread to various institutions and organizations such as local governments and the healthcare sector. We must note, however, that Law No. 657 on Public Officials, which was adopted in 1965 as the chief legislation regulating the public personnel system, remains in effect. Therefore, Turkey's personnel system has not been completely transformed in accordance with the HRM approach. Instead, the public authorities attempted to implement HRM reforms in various parts of the public administration through piece-meal legal changes and administrative measures.

³⁰ E-Devlet Kapısı, accessed March 22, 2018, <https://www.turkiye.gov.tr/>.

NEW CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTS FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM IN TURKEY

Until 2010, Turkey took important steps and made significant progress towards improving its public administration. Starting in 2010, however, the country encountered a host of new problems and challenges due to political, economic, and societal developments in the region and around the world. Serious challenges, including immigration and refugees, terrorism and national security, and the negative side effects of the 2008 economic crisis, which cannot be addressed through short-term solutions and managerial techniques of the 1980s, have been on the agenda of the Turkish government and society. Moreover, the country foiled a coup attempt on July 15, 2016.

The above-mentioned developments have changed the nature of public administration reform in Turkey. As such, from 2010 onwards, it seems that new reform attempts carried the traces of post-NPM tenets and the government moved from managerial reforms to the restructuring of the state. We will elaborate how these two accounts have affected the trajectory of public management reforms after 2010.

THE TRACES OF POST-NPM

Turkey's laws and administrative measures continue to form a strong basis for NPM- and governance-based reforms. The country's public agencies still purchase services from the market and employ market-based management techniques. Moreover, it is necessary to review the mandate, responsibilities, and status of institutions, such as the Public Monitoring Institution, the Council of Ethics for Public Official, and RDAs, which were established as part of the European Union harmonization process, to increase their role within the system. Furthermore, policy-makers should reassess the outcomes of NPM reforms, such as public finance management, the public procurement system, strategic planning and performance management, and HRM practices in

the public sector, and address the technical problems caused by lack of institutional capacity. Therefore, deepening the NPM- and governance-based reforms of the early 2000s and strengthening the implementation capacity of public agencies could be an important item on Turkey's reform agenda.

It is possible, however, to identify certain 'deviations' from NPM practices in post-2010 reform efforts which suggest that the government seeks to implement post-NPM reforms. Recent modifications of the Independent Regulatory Agencies (IRAs), which have been established by a series of governments after 1980s in Turkey, seems like an example of such tendencies. Over the years, regulatory institutions in Turkey have been criticized by various governments mainly due to their independence and the ambiguity of their accountability mechanisms. A 2011 legislation stipulated that the ministries would monitor all activities and operations of IRAs. As such, agencies have become administratively and financially accountable to the relevant ministries. This legislation seems to comply with post-NPM principles of strengthening of central capacity and increasing accountability.

The process of restructuring ministries, which took place in Turkey in 2011, serves as an example of re-centralization and inter-agency coordination – two important principles of post-NPM. In the context of central administration reforms, the government issued a decree in the same year to abolish state ministries and create new ministerial posts. In this regard, the six agencies responsible for social services were united under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.³¹ Moreover, the government established a number of administrative boards, in line with the post-NPM perspective, to develop strategies and policies to address critical problems such as immigration, counter-terrorism, economy, regional development, and the war on drugs, and to promote horizontal coordination and

³¹ Sabrina Kayıkçı, "643 sayılı kanun hükmünde kararname çerçevesinde Türkiye'de bakanlık örgütlenmesinde yeniden yapılanma," *Amme İdaresi Dergisi* 47, no. 1 (2013): 23-51.

cooperation between the relevant institutions. The Council of Economic Coordination, the Council of Coordination of Counter-Terrorism, the High Council on Regional Development, the Council of Immigration Policy, the High Council on the War on Drugs, and the Council on the Coordination of Reforms and Monitoring of Investments come to mind.

At the same time, there has been an uptick in public-private partnerships (PPPs), which rose to prominence concurrently with post-NPM reforms due to their reliance on cross-sector cooperation in Turkey since 2010. PPP projects, which amounted to \$7.2 billion in 2010, peaked three years later at \$23.1 billion. In 2016 and 2017 respectively, \$3.9 billion and \$4.4 billion was invested in PPP projects in the energy, roads, ports, healthcare, and air transportation sectors.³² The data indicates that successive AK Party governments had a clear-cut strategy after 2010 to provide key public services, such as energy, transportation and healthcare, through PPP practices, which strengthened cooperation between the various sectors.

One of the main lines of criticism against NPM was that it split public institutions into smaller organizations and thereby undermined central authority. This situation resulted in the presence of multiple institutions which must work together and coordinate their actions. As mentioned above, one of the most important principles of post-NPM was integration. With the spread of ICTs in public institutions, reintegration is expected to take place. ICTs facilitate vertical and horizontal coordination of public administration and expedite decision-making processes. Moreover, advanced e-government portals make it possible for citizens to access public services, which are delivered by various institutions, regardless of working hours.³³

³² Kalkınma Bakanlığı, *Kamu-özel işbirliği raporu 2016*, (2017): 18.

³³ Patrick Dunleavy, Helen Margetts, Simon Bastow, and Jane Tinkler, "New public management is dead – long live digital era governance," *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 16, no. 3 (2006): 467-94.

Turkey's e-government portal, which became operational in 2006, came to offer an increasing number of public services to a rapidly-growing number of registered users. As of 2018, close to 37 million individual users are able to access more than 3,000 services offered by 428 institutions.³⁴ Moreover, Turkey creates integrated management systems in certain areas of public service to promote cooperation and coordination between institutions and departments, and to provide public services more rapidly and in considering the necessities of the users. Those reforms appear to be in line with post-NPM tenets.

RESTRUCTURING THE STATE: THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT AND TURKEY'S TRANSITION TO PRESIDENTIALISM

The July 15, 2016 coup attempt marked a turning point in the history of reforms under the AK Party. Although Turkey's domestic security and intelligence policies had been changed in the wake of terror attacks in 2015-2016 and the security bureaucracy had been reformed, the July 15 coup attempt, which was orchestrated by the Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), changed the nature of reform programs. To be clear, the failed coup established that FETÖ had infiltrated not just the military but virtually all critical public agencies in Turkey. Therefore, it became necessary to develop a system of government that would eliminate the risks associated with weak coalition governments, prevent the emergence of power vacuums, and promote long-term stability. At the same time, reform proposals focused on the need to restructure the entire state apparatus.³⁵

As such, Turkey's military institutions underwent a process of restructuring in the immediate aftermath of the coup attempt. At the same time, the authorities took steps to dismiss FETÖ members from the civilian and military bureaucracy. In this regard, the Turkish gov-

³⁴ E-Devlet Kapısı.

³⁵ Sobacı and Köseoğlu, "AK Parti ve Türk kamu yönetiminde reform serüveni," 177.

ernment launched a reform program geared towards promoting the complete civilian oversight of security institutions, establishing a balancing security mechanism to prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a single individual or group, diversifying the personnel hiring system, and preventing the emergence of ideologically-motivated autonomous groups.³⁶ It is possible to suggest that those reforms concentrated on the restructuring of the state rather than depending on narrower NPM principles.

Another important item on Turkey's reform agenda after the July 15 coup attempt was the transformation of its political system. Advocates of reform argued that the country's tutelary parliamentary system generated weak and short-lived coalition governments that fueled instability and facilitated military interventions in civilian politics and intensified bureaucratic power over political institutions. Reform advocates proposed a new system of government based on presidentialism to promote the stability and effectiveness of future governments and to end the tradition of military coups and bureaucratic guardianship.³⁷ As a result of the subsequent constitutional referendum, which passed on April 16, 2017, Turkey adopted the 'presidency' system of government. This transition from parliamentarism to presidentialism revived the reform agenda, as the public administration system must be re-designed in accordance with the 'presidency' system – which renders certain legal and institutional changes to the Turkish public administration inevitable.

The 'presidency' system places the popularly-elected president at the heart of the political and administrative system. The president, who shall exercise executive power alone, will become the main actor in the development, monitoring, and assessment of public policies. At the same time, the President's Office must undergo a process of

³⁶ Nebi Miş, "Devlet FETÖ ve darbecilik zehrinden temizleniyor," *Kriter Dergisi* 2, no 15. (2017): 24.

³⁷ Sobacı and Köseoğlu, "AK Parti ve Türk kamu yönetiminde reform serüveni," 178.

institutional restructuring in order to formulate, monitor, and analyze the outcomes of public policies in a range of areas, including healthcare, education, agriculture, national security, and foreign policy, as well as develop new policies. Moreover, new administrative units must be created in the President's Office in order to facilitate those processes as in the United States and in other presidential systems. At the same time, the Prime Ministry will be abolished, and the various departments and administrative units within the Prime Ministry will be shut down or transferred to other offices, especially to the President's Office. The Council of Ministers, in turn, will be transformed into a consultative body that facilitates the development of public policies by the president. Under the new system of government, ministries will become executive units concentrating on the implementation of policies.³⁸ The 'presidency' system entails changes not just to the executive branch but also the Turkish Parliament. To accomplish the main goal of the new system, which is to increase the effectiveness of the government, it is necessary to reform the legislative branch in order to increase the Parliament's legislative capacity and to ensure that it functions without delay.

Keeping in mind the post-July 15 reform process and the changes required by Turkey's new system of government, it is possible to claim that the government's focus has shifted from managerial reforms to a comprehensive restructuring of the state apparatus. The transition to the 'presidency' system necessitates a huge reform wave. The restructuring process provides critical opportunities for the Turkish public administration to overcome its pathologies and function more rationally.

³⁸ Özer Köseoğlu, "Kamu politikalarında yeni aktörler ve değişen roller," *Kriter Dergisi* 2, no. 13 (2017): 14.

CONCLUSION

Since the AK Party came to power in 2002, public administration reform has been an important item on the agenda of the Turkish government, which consistently opted for change in the face of the status quo. After all, the AK Party understood that it would be unable to raise Turkey's democratic standards without transforming the public administration first. Therefore, successive AK Party governments since the early 2000s promoted key democratic values, including effective public administration, efficiency, transparency, participation, and accountability, by implementing NPM and governance-based reforms. The implementation of those principles in the Turkish public administration will presumably contribute to the transformation of state-society relations.

From 2010 onwards, in particular, it became clear to AK Party governments that Turkey could not address problems with regard to immigration, refugees, terrorism, national security, intelligence, drug and human trafficking, crises, and natural disasters with its traditional notion of public administration or the NPM approach. After all, those problems were extremely complex and the outcome of multiple internal and external factors. Moreover, it was impossible for any single public agency to address them alone, provided that a multitude of stakeholders, public institutions, and organizations should work on the same issues. Furthermore, those problems needed solutions comprised of contributions from multiple actors, which would involve various international, national, and local partners including non-governmental organizations and market actors. Starting in 2010, the various institutions in Turkey appear to have developed policies akin to post-NPM.

The July 15 coup attempt marked a turning point in the history of public administration reform under the AK Party. The failed coup changed the nature of reforms in Turkey and facilitated a transition from managerial reforms to the complete restructuring of the state apparatus. In the immediate aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt,

the Turkish government implemented comprehensive reforms in the Armed Forces and the security bureaucracy, and stressed the need for a new political system. The 'presidency' system, which represents a new reform, provides opportunities for the restructuring of the country's public administration. During this restructuring process, reform policies should be expected to have the following in common: increasing the capacity and expanding the control of the central administration, the provision of public services through integrated methods, promoting greater accountability for autonomous and independent bodies within the state apparatus, strengthening vertical and horizontal coordination within and among ministries, and promoting cross-sector partnerships and cooperation.

It remains to be seen whether Turkey will develop a reform framework or program comprised of post-NPM or whole-of-government reforms that are being adopted by developed countries, which currently implement NPM reforms in depth. We must note, however, that the by-products and negative outcomes of the NPM reforms, which more or less developed countries also witnessed, and the complex and multi-actor nature of challenges faced by the AK Party government such as terrorism, immigration, national security, and economic development, make it absolutely necessary to implement future public administration reforms within a certain framework or as part of a comprehensive program. The powers granted to the president under Turkey's new system of government could make it possible for the country to implement public administration reforms in a more holistic manner.

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SECOND

IMPACT OF THE JULY 15TH
COUP ATTEMPT
TO TURKISH POLITICS



CHAPTER 5

THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT'S EFFECTS ON TURKISH POLITICS

NEBİ MİŞ*

The bloodiest coup attempt in the history of modern Turkey was perpetrated on 15 July 2016 by a group of undercover Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (*Fetullahçı Terör Örgütü, or FETÖ*) operatives, who had secretly infiltrated the Turkish Armed Forces and other state institutions since the 1980s. To be clear, last summer's coup attempt was not unprecedented. A closer look at the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic reveals that a number of efforts were made since the New Army's establishment in 1826 to change the country's political leadership by force. Since Turkey's transition to multi-party democracy, military coups took place once every decade following the May 1960 coup d'état to interfere in civilian politics. The March 1971 memorandum, along with the 1980 coup d'état, the February 1997 'post-modern' coup and the 2007 e-memorandum, were attempts by the military to maintain the guardianship regime's control over the political process and to reproduce the 'junta' mindset.

Although the July 15 coup attempt was inspired by the methodology of previous attacks against Turkish democracy, it was distinguished by the junta's organizational structure, the perpetrators' ideology, the assault's goals and the coup attempt's motivations and

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implementation. Unlike others, the most recent coup attempt was designed as a rebellion intended to lay the groundwork for Turkey's occupation. To ensure their success, the coup plotters borrowed from the terrorists' playbook to hijack F-16s, helicopters and tanks in order to massacre innocent people with heavy weapons and air bombardment. Furthermore, Turkey's strategically important state institutions, including the Parliament, the Presidential Complex, the intelligence headquarters, and police stations came under attack. The coup plotters also dispatched a Special Forces team to assassinate President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The coordinated attacks were planned by a covert organization that adheres to a distorted interpretation of the Islamic faith.

In the wake of FETÖ's coup attempt, President Erdoğan and a number of prominent Turkish politicians appeared in the media to call on all citizens to resist the coup plotters. It was the people's peaceful resistance, coupled with the determination of politicians, media personalities, and the civil society that thwarted the attempted coup. The bloodiest coup attempt in Turkey's history claimed 249 lives and left at least 2,195 people injured. The Turkish people's extraordinary reaction to the coup attempt culminated in the 'democracy watch' events, which attracted thousands of people across country every night until 10 August 2016.

This study analyzes the major developments in Turkish politics since the July 15 coup attempt. It concentrates on the impact of the failed coup on Turkey's political landscape and state institutions. As such, it looks for an answer to the question why military coups could succeed until the Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or *AK Party*) years, while at least two coup attempts have been thwarted since the movement rose to power in 2002. The main purpose of this discussion is to better appreciate the nature of the anti-coup attitudes among Turkey's major political parties, civil society and the general population.

This study also focuses on the political parties' reactions to the coup attempt, efforts by politicians to reach a new consensus after the coup plotters' failure and how political parties approached the fight against FETÖ. Thirdly, it analyzes how political and social consensus was reached on constitutional reform, which made it possible for Turkey to adopt a presidential system of government. Needless to say, the attitudes of both advocates and opponents of constitutional reform were described at length to provide context. Finally, this study discovers the ways in which the transition to presidentialism has impacted efforts to restructure the state.

Regardless of their level of success, military interventions in Turkish politics created a culture of tutelage and perpetuated the mechanisms of guardianship. By fueling social tensions and promoting political fragmentation, coup plotters depended on conflicts of interest between rival identity groups to reach their goals. Likewise, they formed coalitions with likely supporters of their rule in order to ensure that they could overthrow democratically-elected governments and legitimize junta rule. Keeping in mind Turkey's level of political and economic development along with Turkish efforts to strengthen their democracy, the country's confrontation with coup plotters and the guardianship regime started later than similar nations. One of the reasons behind this delay was undoubtedly Turkey's political culture – which was a product of the interaction between society and political institutions. Political parties, in particular, play an important role in this process. Failure to seek compromise and differences of opinion about the guardianship role between political parties clearly encouraged would-be juntas and coup plotters.

In the aftermath of the May 1960 coup d'état, certain factors contributed to the institutionalization of the political culture surrounding military interventions in civilian politics, which ultimately led to the recurrence of military coups every decade. Until the AK Party took steps particularly to weaken the military guardianship regime

and confront the culture of military interventions in civilian politics, the likelihood of military coups set the boundaries of the political and social domains.

One of the factors that made it possible for the military to interfere and intervene in civilian politics was the suspension of the Constitution after each coup d'état to create extraordinary circumstances. Once extraordinary measures were taken, which became ordinary in later coups, the military found ways to meddle in the political process constantly. Secondly, the perpetrators of military coups created safeguards against their prosecution in the future. Moreover, legal and institutional safeguards introduced after military coups enforced a ban on all forms of criticism directed against the coup plotters and military rule. At the same time, the bureaucracy, the media, and intellectuals developed a language that legitimized and perpetuated the military's control over civilian politics in order to break the cycle of insecurity. Finally, certain political parties and their leaders implemented policies on structural, circumstantial or pragmatic grounds that ultimately facilitated the practices of military junta governments.¹

Policies implemented by the AK Party, by contrast, largely eliminated the military's tutelage over civilian politics and confronted the legacy of military guardianship regime.² In this regard, one of the most important factors behind the July 15 coup attempt's failure was the negative perception of coup plotters among the general population. Moreover, the fact that each military coup since the 1960s negatively affected a variety of social groups made it easier for the population to unite against military interference in the political process. The AK Party's efforts to facilitate an overhaul of Turkish politics and to raise awareness at the popular level about the military guardianship regime

¹ Nebi Miş, "Türkiye'de Güvenlikleştirme Siyaseti 1923-2000," (unpublished PhD dissertation, Sakarya University Institute of Social Sciences, May 2012).

² Nebi Miş, Serdar Güleler, İpek Coşkun, Hazal Duran and M. Erkut Ayvaz, *Demokrasi Nöbetleri: Toplumsal Algıda 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi* (Istanbul: SETA, 2016).

compelled all political parties to take a stand against the coup plotters on July 15.

At the same time, the transformation and increasing diversity of the media, coupled with developments in communication technologies, made things more difficult for the coup plotters. Likewise, the transformation and diversity of the bureaucracy and the ability of various intellectual circles to exert influence over the public domain deprived the coup plotters of crucial sources of support. Furthermore, the empowerment of the middle classes, along with the increased self-confidence among Turkey's conservatives, created a civilian force that could stand up to military tanks at public squares across the country. The AK Party's ability to handle political crises, including the April 2007 e-memorandum and the December 2013 judicial coup attempt, played a crucial role in the thwarting of the coup attempt because political players learned from crises and increased their strength. Finally, the fact that the coup plotters had to launch their attacks earlier than planned, the Turkish National Police emerged as a security force capable to balancing out the coup plotters and the fact that the chain of command had been broken contributed to the failure of the coup attempt.

A large number of civilians left their homes to peacefully resist the coup plotters and coupled with the efforts of the National Intelligence Organization and the Turkish National Police, the resistance of certain units within the Armed Forces and the joint efforts by the media, political parties, non-governmental organizations and local governments played an important role in the failure of the coup attempt. However, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's political leadership ultimately made it possible for all of the above efforts to yield results. That Turkish society, politicians and leaders overcame a number of challenges in the past created a rapid response to the coup attempt. For Erdoğan's ability to deal with crises served as an example to the entire society. If the decision by ordinary citizens to take to the streets to kick off the resistance, their fight against the coup plotters and willingness to stand guard for

days are analyzed with reference to Erdoğan's leadership skills, two things immediately stand out.³

The first important development was that Erdoğan appeared on national television to urge all citizens to gather at public squares and airports. In light of his message, millions of people left their homes to gain a psychological advantage over the putschists. It was this strategic move that shook the coup plotters' confidence and reassured the resistance movement. Erdoğan's decisive and determined attitude and appearance at Istanbul's Atatürk Airport further strengthened the population's resolve. Furthermore, tactical moves, such as the recitation of the call to prayer at mosques across the nation all night, sent the message to ordinary citizens that the country's independence and future were at risk.

The second issue related to the political leadership is that Erdoğan showed since 2002, not just during the coup attempt.⁴ Upon coming to power fifteen years ago, Erdoğan practiced a brand of politics that made it possible for Turkish society and politics to change. While the general population became more confident in the fact of anti-democratic guardianship regimes, political parties, bureaucratic classes and media outlets—which supported military coups in the past—were compelled to revise their positions. In previous decades, intellectuals took it upon themselves to legitimize military rule, which was endorsed by certain political parties and publicized by the media. The civilian bureaucracy, including the judiciary, often cooperated with coup plotters in order to serve the junta's benefits. Military coups were thereby presented to the public as ordinary events, as civilian politics was confined to a limited domain. Under the circumstances, the people tended

³ Nebi Miş and Burhanettin Duran, "Turkey's constitutional referendum and its effects on Turkish politics," *Orient* 58, no. 3 (2017): 52-60.; Burhanettin Duran and Nebi Miş, "The Transformation of Turkey's Political System and the Executive Presidency," *Insight Turkey* 18, no. 4 (2016): 11-27.

⁴ Nebi Miş, "Darbenin Önlenmesinde Erdoğan Liderliğinin Rolü," *Kriter*, no. 4 (August 2016): 32-33.

to keep silent since the masses were deprived of the self-confidence necessary to stand up to coup plotters.

Erdoğan's response to the April 2007 e-memorandum, too, was similar to his stand against the failure of the July 15 coup attempt. The elected government's strong reaction to the threat of a military coup was arguably a turning point in the history of military interventions in Turkey. Provided that the AK Party faced a series of major challenges over the years, it is safe to assume that the movement learned from past crises. Consequently, it became more experienced and self-confident.

After the December 2013 attacks by FETÖ operatives in the judiciary against his government, Erdoğan considered the fight against the Gülenists a matter of life and death for the Turkish state. Over the next months and years, he personally informed the public about the 'parallel state' structure, the threat posed by Gülen's organization and Fetullah Gülen's perverse interpretation of religion. Consequently, he was able to convince the masses that it was necessary to combat the group and continued his efforts despite the unwillingness of opposition parties to support him and the presence of certain people even from his own movement who failed to appreciate the gravity of the situation. To be clear, the fact that a large number of high-ranking Gülenists had been dismissed from the judiciary and law enforcement had been identified and removed from public institutions prior to July 15 significantly contributed to the successful resistance against the coup plotters. Moreover, Erdoğan took steps against the organization's supporters in the media to mitigate popular support for the Gülenists as well as precautions to hurt FETÖ's revenue stream. As such, he ensured that the group was weakened in due time. Had Erdoğan not led the effort to introduce safeguards against Gülen's organization, the coup attempt would have probably led to more serious problems.⁵

⁵ Nebi Miş, "Millet FETÖ'yi Bitirdi," *Star*, July 23, 2016.

HOW TURKEY'S POLITICAL PARTIES REACTED TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

During and in the immediate aftermath of the failed coup, the leaders of Turkey's major political parties issued public statements against the assault on Turkish democracy. Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım was first to appear on national television on behalf of the country's elected government. In his initial remarks, Yıldırım confirmed that there was a coup attempt underway and pledged that the perpetrators would be "punished as severely as possible."⁶ Needless to say, a driving force behind the coup attempt's failure was a series of statements by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who called on the people to take to the streets and resist the coup plotters. The AK Party base had largely mobilized as soon as the media started to report the news of an attempted overthrow of the government. Erdoğan's call, in turn, led large groups of people to gather in public squares, at the airports and other places occupied by the coup plotters. In the end, their response and resistance thwarted the attempted coup.

Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*, or MHP) Chairman Devlet Bahçeli was the first opposition leader to come out against the coup attempt. While the coup plotters were still on the streets, he unequivocally announced that his movement was "on the side of the political leadership against the coup plotters."⁷ Noting that a group of rogue officers within the Turkish Armed Forces were trying to suspend democracy, Bahçeli made it clear that such attacks were unacceptable.⁸ As a result, the AK Party and MHP supporters joined forces against the coup plotters on July 15 and in the failed coup's aftermath.

Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the chairman of the main opposition Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), in turn issued a written statement later in the night to pledge to "protect the Repub-

⁶ "Başbakan Binali Yıldırım'dan açıklama," *NTV*, July 15, 2016.

⁷ "Devlet Bahçeli darbe girişiminin olduğu gece ne yaptı?," *Hürriyet*, July 19, 2016.

⁸ "Bahçeli: Türkiye gayri meşru bir durumla karşı karşıya," *NTV*, July 15, 2016.

lic and democracy” yet failed to make any additional announcements against the coup plotters. The CHP’s delayed response to the attempted coup was received critically by the general population. Finally, the Peoples’ Democratic Party (*Halkların Demokratik Partisi, or HDP*) became the last opposition party to condemn the coup attempt by announcing on social media that the movement was “opposed to all types of coups as a matter of principle.” However, the HDP leadership’s position on July 15 has been far from coherent and clear. For example, spokespeople for the party attempted to discredit the people who peacefully resisted the coup attempt citing their use of religious references in their opposition to military rule. Although the HDP leadership failed to take a clear stand against the coup plotters, the conservative wing of the party base nonetheless was more openly critical of the failed coup.

In addition to issuing statements, the representatives of Turkey’s largest political parties gathered at the Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi, or TBMM*) to keep the Parliament in session. Over the next hours, the coup plotters attempted to crack down on the parliamentarians’ protest by bombing the building. On July 16, the Parliament convened for an emergency session to issue a joint declaration against the coup attempt signed by the leaders of the AK Party, the CHP, the MHP and the HDP along with İsmail Kahraman, the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament. The text highlighted the importance of solidarity and joint efforts against the coup plotters:

The fact that the various political groups represented in the Parliament took a common stand and used a common language to oppose the coup attempt was a historic development. It was a valuable act that will go down in history. This common stand and language will further strengthen our nation and the national will. As [the representatives of Turkey’s] four [largest political] parties, we stand in solidarity with the national will along with our parliamentarians and all local organizations, we stand up for the national will and shall forever do so despite our differences of opinion.⁹

⁹ “TBMM darbe girişimine karşı ortak bildiri yayınladı,” *Anadolu Agency*, July 16, 2016.

On July 25, President Erdoğan hosted AK Party Chairman Binali Yıldırım, CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli at the Presidential Complex in the Turkish capital Ankara. This historic meeting of Turkey's political leaders created an expectation among the general population that a new social contract could be in the making – which was further strengthened by Prime Minister Yıldırım's announcement that an agreement had been reached to work on constitutional reform. The parties' solidarity against the coup attempt paved the way to the Democracy and Martyrs Rally, which took place on August 7 in Yenikapı, Istanbul and brought together President Erdoğan and the leaders of all major political parties except the HDP.

THE 'YENIKAPI SPIRIT' AND POLITICAL CONSENSUS AGAINST THE COUP

In the failed coup's aftermath, politicians and ordinary citizens alike united and expressed solidarity against FETÖ. Under the leadership of President Erdoğan, the 'Democracy and Martyrs Rally' took place in Yenikapı-Istanbul on 7 August 2016. Having been invited to speak at the event, the leaders of the AK Party, the CHP and the MHP attended the historic rally and stressed the importance of unity and solidarity against coup plotters. At the same time, a number of senior officials, including the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Hulusi Akar, joined the millions of citizens. The atmosphere that day was later called the 'Yenikapı Spirit' – which was centered around the theme of fighting all terrorist groups together. In his address to the passionate crowd, Prime Minister Yıldırım famously described the thwarting of the coup attempt as Turkey's second war of independence. MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli, in turn, recalled that the Gülenists were 'a bloody terrorist organization' and announced that his party would fully support the government's efforts to bring coup plotters to justice.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Devlet Bahçeli kimdir? 15 Temmuz darbe girişimindeki rolü," *Yeni Şafak*.

Following the July 15 coup attempt, the main opposition party CHP had held ‘Republic and Democracy rallies’ at Istanbul’s Taksim Square and in the Western Turkish city of İzmir to express their opposition to coup plotters. In light of the aforementioned events, many people expected the CHP leadership to attend the Yenikapı rally.¹¹ As a matter of fact, whether or not CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu would attend the event remained unclear for some time. Although the main opposition party initially announced that it would send a delegation of party officials to Yenikapı, repeated requests by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, along with popular demand for unity, led the CHP chairman to state that he accepted the invitation.¹²

In the failed coup’s aftermath, announcements by Turkey’s major political parties that they would join forces against the coup plotters and were open to the prospect of cooperation was welcomed by the general population. Almost overnight, the pre-July 15 tensions between the country’s political leaders gave way to consensus.

Among the political parties represented at the Turkish Parliament, the only movement that wasn’t present at the Yenikapı rally was the Peoples’ Democratic Party. When the HDP leadership co-signed an all-party declaration against the coup attempt on July 16, there was an expectation that the party could distance itself from the PKK, which is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union, along with other terrorist groups. However, statements made by party officials and their failure to take convincing steps led the HDP to miss a historic opportunity.¹³

President Erdoğan invited the chairmen of the AK Party, the CHP and the MHP to the Presidential Complex to thank them for their

¹¹ Miş, Gülenler, Coşkun, Duran and Ayvaz, *Demokrasi Nöbetleri: Toplumsal Algıda 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi*, 44.

¹² “Kılıçdaroğlu Yenikapı’da yapılacak mitinge katılacak,” *Anadolu Agency*, August 5, 2016.

¹³ “Erdoğan HDP’yi neden çağırmadığını açıkladı,” *Sabah*, August 7, 2016.

response to the coup attempt and their support for the legitimate, popularly-elected government. The HDP leadership, however, was not invited. Likewise, the HDP was excluded from the Democracy and Martyrs Rally in Yenikapı-Istanbul, which took place on 7 August 2016, while the leaders of the CHP and the MHP were asked to address the crowd. When asked why the HDP leadership wasn't invited, President Erdoğan recalled that a spokesman for the party had "insulted the people who resisted the coup plotters in an interview with a FETÖ-linked newspaper." "I do not distinguish between the various terrorist organizations," Erdoğan noted. "I do not treat the PKK and FETÖ differently. Nor can I forgive anyone who would cooperate with such organizations. If I were to invite [the HDP leadership to Yenikapı], I could not explain to the wounded and the martyr [s' families] why I did it."¹⁴ The HDP's brand of politics after the June 2015 parliamentary elections, coupled with the party's failure to distance itself from the PKK and open support to the terrorist organization, and inability to unequivocally condemn acts of terrorism by the PKK were the main reasons why it could not be part of the pro-democracy front.

The post-Yenikapı environment made it possible for all opposition parties, especially the CHP, to part ways with their existing brand of political opposition, which reduced their respective platforms to anti-Erdoğanism.¹⁵ Claiming that the State of Emergency, which was declared to facilitate the dismissal of FETÖ operatives from public service and the ongoing fight against terrorist groups, had been unjustly expanded in scope, however, the CHP and the HDP quickly returned to their pre-July 15 positions.

The CHP chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu's decision to abandon the language of reconciliation was seen as an effort to prevent President Erdoğan from reaching out to a new voter bloc against the backdrop

¹⁴ "Erdoğan: Bu işin bittiğine inanmıyorum, rehavete kapılmayacağız," *Türkiye*, August 6, 2016.

¹⁵ Burhanettin Duran, "Siyasetin yeni trendi Yenikapı ruhu!," *Sabah*, August 6, 2016.

of the post-July 15 unity. In addition to revitalizing the war on terror, the failed coup had given rise to a new form of patriotism dubbed the ‘Yenikapı spirit.’ While President Erdoğan successfully adapted to this new political reality, the CHP leadership proved largely unable to control the narrative – which left the Republican concerned that the emerging political climate would hurt their interests. In the end, the CHP quickly returned to staunch opposition.¹⁶ By contrast, Devlet Bahçeli and his MHP remained committed to the post-July 15 unity. Unlike Kılıçdaroğlu, the MHP chairman refrained from publicly challenging the narrative on the coup attempt and adopted a harsh tone against Fetullah Gülen and his operatives in Turkey. At the same time, he called for the preservation of the ‘Yenikapı spirit’.¹⁷

WHERE MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES STAND ON THE FIGHT AGAINST FETÖ

On 21 July 2016, President Erdoğan held a press conference following a historic meeting of the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*, or MGK) to announce that the government had been recommended to declare a state of emergency for a period of three months. The Council of Minister, acting on the MGK’s recommendation, resolved to declare a three-month state of emergency. The decision played a crucial role for efforts by the Turkish authorities to dismiss FETÖ operatives from public institutions, which they had been infiltrating for four decades, and to fight against a number of terrorist organizations that placed Turkey’s national security at risk.¹⁸ As the state of emergency went into effect, President Erdoğan and spokespeople for the AK Party government stressed that the emergency powers would be used to facilitate efforts against FETÖ’s undercover network with-

¹⁶ Burhanettin Duran, “Yenikapı Kodları CHP’yi Zorluyor,” *Sabah*, September 2, 2016.

¹⁷ “MHP Lideri Devlet Bahçeli: Yenikapı ruhundan vazgeçmeyeceğiz,” *Sabah*, February 21, 2017.

¹⁸ Serdar Gülener, “Dünyada Arındırma Politikaları ve Devletin FETÖ’den Arındırılması,” *SETA Perspektif*, no. 142 (September 2016).

in the bureaucracy and other terrorist groups as opposed to imposing restrictions on the everyday lives of ordinary citizens.¹⁹ Over the next months, the government issued a series of decrees to take measures against not just the Gülenists but also the PKK, Daesh, DHKP-C and other terrorist organizations.

The fact that FETÖ operatives had been infiltrating various public institutions at home and abroad for a long period of time meant that the struggle against the group would take some time.²⁰ While the AK Party government highlighted the need to continue the fight against FETÖ in a determined manner, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım made it clear that all decisions regarding the dismissal of public employees would be made after careful review.²¹

What came to be known as the ‘Yenikapı spirit’ in Turkey, which referred to unity and solidarity against the coup plotters, gradually died down after the declaration of the state of emergency and decrees were issued by the government. The first politician to challenge the post-July 15 narrative was CHP chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, who claimed that the coup attempt had been ‘under control’ all along and suggested that the ‘real’ coup had taken place when the government declared the state of emergency on July 21. In truth, the first person to publicly claim that the July 15 coup attempt was ‘a controlled coup’ and therefore resembled a ‘theater play’ was FETÖ leader Fetullah Gülen himself. As such, a majority of the Turkish people criticized the main opposition leader for pushing this narrative and accused Kılıçdaroğlu of downplaying the gravity of what happened by turning a blind eye to the death of 249 innocent people and the suffering of thousands of survivors. The CHP leadership, furthermore, petitioned the Constitutional Court to declare the decrees null and void. The fact that a large number of public employees with ties not just to FETÖ but also other terrorist

¹⁹ “Başbakan Yıldırım’dan OHAL açıklaması,” *NTV*, July 21, 2016.

²⁰ Burhanettin Duran, “FETÖ tasfiyesinde iki kritik husus!,” *Sabah*, July 23, 2016.

²¹ “Kamudan ihraçları belirleyen 16 kriter,” *Yenişafak*, September 3, 2016.

organizations were dismissed by the government formed the basis of the main opposition party's objections over the past year.

As CHP chairman Kılıçdaroğlu gradually turned his back on the post-July 15 social and political consensus and adopted a language that served the interests of FETÖ operatives was considered a return by the main opposition party to its comfort zone – anti-Erdoğanism.²² The CHP leader's increasingly vocal criticism and speculations about the 'true' nature of the July 15 coup attempt at a time when FETÖ operatives started to appear in court, in particular, supported this view. As a matter of fact, the CHP leadership published a report on the failed coup in addition to downplaying the bloody assault on Turkish democracy and presented it as their dissenting opinion to the official report authored by the Investigative Commission on the July 15 Coup Attempt. The publication came under attack by AK Party officials and President Erdoğan, who complained that the main opposition party was providing rhetorical ammunition to FETÖ operatives on trial.²³

Devlet Bahçeli and his Nationalist Movement Party, by contrast, offered their full support to the AK Party's plans to combat terrorist groups, including FETÖ, in the July 15 coup attempt's aftermath. For Bahçeli, the fight against the Gülenists was crucial to the survival and future of the Turkish state. As such, the MHP leader repeatedly urged the authorities to continue the anti-FETÖ campaign until all undercover operatives would be removed from public institutions. Unlike CHP chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, Bahçeli threw his weight behind the government's decrees by stressing that the members of all terrorist organizations, not just the Gülenists, had to be dismissed from civil service.²⁴

²² Ali Aslan, "CHP 'Yenikapı Ruhu'nu Terk Mi Ediyor?," *Star Açık Görüş*, October 2, 2016.

²³ Nebi Miş, "CHP raporu ve FETÖ'nün savunma taktiklerine etkisi," *Türkiye*, June 15, 2016.

²⁴ "MHP Lideri Devlet Bahçeli grup toplantısında konuştu," *Sabah*, November 22, 2016.

Although the MHP leadership has been generally supportive of the AK Party government's steps against the FETÖ network in Turkey, it did not refrain from raising certain issues with the authorities. Specifically, Bahçeli and the members of his party either complained that the government's steps were not bold enough or suggested that there were certain problems with the implementation of the anti-FETÖ strategy.²⁵ At the same time, they called on the authorities to complete the FETÖ trials in a reasonable time frame and urged the government to act with due care to prevent grievances and, if necessary, address them retrospectively. Another criticism by MHP chairman Devlet Bahçeli related to the public perception that the FETÖ operatives targeted the government and the AK Party leadership alone. Recalling that the Gülenists had been targeting his movement since 2009 by leaking illegally-obtained information and visual materials involving MHP executives, Bahçeli maintained that efforts by the intra-party opposition, including former Interior Minister Meral Akşener, to hold an emergency congress to replace him were part of a conspiracy by the FETÖ operatives. Furthermore, he argued that FETÖ operatives within the judiciary had been complicit in efforts to undermine the Nationalist Movement Party and reshape Turkish politics.

In the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt, spokespeople for the AK Party and the MHP alike continued to criticize the HDP for failing to distance itself from the PKK. This line of criticism played an important role in the exclusion of the HDP leadership from the post-coup consensus in the political arena. As such, the HDP was the only major political party that wasn't invited to the Democracy and Martyrs Rally in August 2016 – which became a symbol of unity. HDP representatives were also among the staunchest opponents of the state of emergency, which was declared by the government to facilitate the fight against FETÖ and other terrorist organizations. Clearly, at the

²⁵ "Bahçeli'den flaş açıklamalar," *Hürriyet*, May 23, 2017.

heart of their objections lay the concern that the state of emergency, in particular the decrees, would hurt the interests of the PKK and its affiliates. As such, the movement was extremely critical of the fact that several HDP members were arrested over their organic ties to the PKK.²⁶ Having failed to condemn the PKK's acts of terrorism and, by contrast, publicly stated that he did not see PKK assaults as terror attacks, HDP co-chairman Selahattin Demirtaş was stripped of parliamentary immunity along with a number of other parliamentarians, which fueled more aggressive criticism from the party.²⁷ At the same time, the replacement of several HDP mayors over their ties to the PKK terrorists by decree further radicalized the movement's political discourse.²⁸

With the public debate on the replacement of HDP mayors with trustees still underway, all parliamentarians with pending subpoenas were stripped of their immunity by the Turkish Parliament. Among those deprived of legal immunity were members of the AK Party, the CHP and the MHP along with the HDP. Although AK Party, CHP and MHP parliamentarians appeared in court, the HDP caucus made a decision to collectively refuse to obey the court orders. Those who failed to appear in court were subsequently detained in order to obtain their testimony, while some of the HDP parliamentarians were arrested on terrorism charges.²⁹ Facing legal action, the HDP leadership continued to voice its criticism of the state of emergency, which was declared after the coup attempt to combat FETÖ and other terrorist groups more effectively, and incorporated the CHP's claim that the July 15 coup attempt was a 'controlled coup' into their own narrative.³⁰ Criticizing the government's decisions to extend the state of emergency

²⁶ "Demirtaş: Darbe senaryo değil ama...", *Al Jazeera Türk*, October 4, 2016.

²⁷ "HDP Eş Genel Başkanı Demirtaş PKK'ya "terör örgütü" demedi," *Hürriyet*, September 2, 2016.

²⁸ "DBP'nin kazandığı 106 belediyeden 33'üne kayyum atandı," *Milliyet*, November 17, 2016.

²⁹ "2016'da Siyaset," *SETA Yıllık*, December 31, 2016.

³⁰ Mehmet Metiner, "Aktif FETÖ hücrelerinin son yalanı," *Star*, June 15, 2017.

during trips to Europe, HDP politicians called on the European Union to take action against Turkey. The AK Party government, in turn, responded to the criticisms of European governments by recalling the state of emergency in France and charging the Europeans with distinguishing between terrorist organizations.³¹

THE FAILED COUP'S IMPACT ON THE TRANSFORMATION OF TURKEY'S POLITICAL SYSTEM

The similarities between the perspectives of the AK Party and the MHP on the July 15 coup attempt created new dynamics in Turkish politics.³² At the same time, the failed coup raised awareness about the threats against Turkey's national interests among political elites and ordinary citizens alike.³³ Furthermore, it became clear that the state institutions had to be restructured in order to identify and dismiss undercover operatives of terrorist organizations that had been infiltrating public institutions for decades.³⁴ In light of these developments, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli revisited his position on constitutional reform and co-sponsored a bill that would eventually transform Turkey's political system. Speaking at the Parliament in October 2016, he conceded that there were certain problems with the parliamentary system of government and warned that parliamentarianism's structural flaws could lead to serious political crises in the future:

Turkey needs a new social contract and the responsibility falls on all our shoulders. ... In our view, this need became more urgent especially since July 15. Nothing in Turkey can or will be the same as it was on July 14. The nation's requests and demands for a new breath [of air

³¹ "Fransız Bakanın OHAL eleştirisine tokat gibi cevap!," *Sabah*, October 24, 2016.

³² Miş and Duran "Turkey's constitutional referendum and its effects on Turkish politics," 52-60.

³³ Miş, Güleler, Coşkun, Duran and Ayvaz, *Demokrasi Nöbetleri: Toplumsal Algıda 15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi*.

³⁴ Nebi Miş, "15 Temmuz Sonrası Yeni Anayasa İhtiyacı," *Kriter Dergisi*, September 2018.; Ali Aslan, "15 Temmuz ve Başkanlık Sistemi'nin Önemi," *Sabah*, October 15, 2016.

and] a new legal consensus are visible clear. We cannot ignore it nor turn a blind eye to it.³⁵

Since the early 2000s, the MHP leadership had been staunchly opposed to the presidential system of government. Ahead of the November 2015 parliamentary elections, the party issued a manifesto that called for “the solution of the problems related to the system’s functioning within the limits of parliamentarianism.”³⁶ In this regard, the MHP was willing to acknowledge the shortcomings of parliamentarianism prior to the coup attempt. However, the movement’s leaders feared that the proposed transition to presidential system could place Turkey’s territorial integrity at risk, divide the nation and lead to regime change.³⁷

The July 15 coup attempt led the MHP leadership to endorse an overhaul of Turkey’s political system. In Bahçeli’s opinion, the failed coup had irreversibly altered the situation in the country. Having noted that the nation needed a new social contract, the MHP chairman announced that he was prepared to negotiate terms if the AK Party committed to keeping the first four articles of the 1982 Constitution unchanged and to refrain from taking any steps that could place Turkey’s territorial integrity at risk.³⁸ In the wake of the failed coup, there were two options available to Bahçeli: he would either ally himself with the old Kemalist elite, which wanted to regain control over the bureaucracy, or work with President Erdoğan and his AK Party to contribute to the new system of government.³⁹ Had the MHP leader opted for the former, there was a good chance that the conservative wing of his party’s base would throw their weight behind the AK Party in the next election cycle. By deciding to cooperate with the ruling party, the movement chose to effect change and fix the country’s structural prob-

³⁵ “Bahçeli’den başkanlık sistemi çıkışı,” *NTV*, October 11, 2016.

³⁶ *MHP 1 Kasım Seçim Beyannamesi*, (Ankara: 2015).

³⁷ “Bahçeli’den grup toplantısında ‘başkanlık’ açıklaması,” *Hürriyet*, May 24, 2016.

³⁸ “Bahçeli’den Başkanlık Sistemi Çıkışı.”

³⁹ Ali Aslan, “MHP ve başkanlık sistemi,” *Star Açık Görüş*, October 30, 2016.

lems. To be clear, the AK Party would not have secured enough votes in the Parliament to pass the constitutional reform bill had it not been for the MHP's support.

In light of Bahçeli's remarks, Prime Minister Yıldırım hosted the MHP chairman at Çankaya Palace in Ankara to discuss constitutional reform plans. On November 15, the AK Party presented the first draft of the bill to the MHP, which marked the beginning of formal negotiations between the two movements. Following an initial review by the MHP's working group on the constitutional reform, the issue was discussed at the party's executive council on November 21 with a focus on the 1982 Constitution's first four articles, the preservation of unitary government and the accountability of the President under the proposed system.⁴⁰ The MHP delegation then met with AK Party officials to present them with certain suggestions – according to which the original text was revised. Meanwhile, the MHP leadership announced that the first four articles of the 1982 Constitution were going to be preserved and that the new system of government would be called 'presidency' [cumhurbaşkanlığı] rather than 'presidential' [başkanlık] system. The constitutional reform bill, which was jointly drafted by AK Party and MHP lawmakers, was presented to the public at a press conference on December 10.⁴¹ Although the two parties officially agreed on the name 'presidency system,' the new system of government was actually inspired by presidentialism. The main opposition party, the CHP, in turn, stated early on that it won't even engage in negotiations.⁴²

The constitutional reform bill, which was presented to the Parliament's Constitutional Commission as a 21-item proposal, was amended by the commission's members and delivered to the General

⁴⁰ "MHP Başkanlık Divanı anayasa değişikliğini görüştü," *Yeni Şafak*, November 21, 2016.

⁴¹ "AK Parti ve MHP'den Anayasa Değişikliği Açıklaması," *Anadolu Ajansı*, December 10, 2016.

⁴² "Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan şaşkırtan Başkanlık açıklaması," *Akşam*, June 9, 2016.

Assembly with 18 articles. After fierce debate in the General Assembly, the bill cleared the 330-vote threshold thanks to the support of the AK Party and the MHP and delivered to the President, who had to call for a constitutional referendum. At the same time, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli announced that his party's support for constitutional reform would continue in the referendum. The CHP and the HDP, in turn, staunchly opposed the parliamentary proceedings on the bill.

Ahead of the April 16 referendum, the AK Party leadership coordinated their campaign schedule with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. While Erdoğan toured Turkey's major cities, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım covered the less populous cities. Although the AK Party held no joint campaign events with the MHP, there were certain similarities between the two movements' talking points. The AK Party concentrated on informing the public about the constitutional reform bill and focused on what the new system of government would entail. In this sense, the ruling party made the points that democracy and the Parliament's monitoring role would be strengthened, the separation of powers would become clearer, legislative powers would be safeguarded, and the problem of dual legitimacy would be addressed. As the opposition pushed the narrative that the referendum was an attempt to create one-man rule, the attacks made it necessary for the AK Party leadership to inform the public about the proposed changes.

On the campaign trail, the MHP leadership highlighted the importance of constitutional reform to the future of the Turkish state and nation. Noting that constitutional reform was not an ideologically charged endeavor but a question of national interest, Bahçeli warned that the state's very existence had been threatened by the July 15 coup attempt and adopted a more inclusive nationalist language. According to Bahçeli, it was unacceptable that there was chaos across the country's political system at a time when the state itself faced existential threats. He added that the debate on constitutional reform could not

be reduced to individuals, political parties or ideologies.⁴³ Ahead of the referendum, the MHP adopted a nationalist and pro-state language to make the case that the proposal was an attempt to empower the national will rather than push an ideological agenda. At the same time, the movement used a number of other arguments including the MHP's role as a 'lockpick' that protected the state and earned the public's trust by breaking deadlocks. In this sense, Bahçeli used the political crises of the past to his advantage and claimed that he made the right decisions in the 2007 showdown between the elected government and military commanders and by voting against the constitutional reform bill in 2010. Furthermore, the MHP leadership stressed that Turkish democracy and politics would benefit from the passage of the constitutional reform bill. In this respect, Bahçeli highlighted that the country's democracy and the Parliament's monitoring capabilities would become stronger, the President would become liable for his actions, that the legislative powers would be safeguarded, the separation of powers made clearer and the problem of legitimacy would be over.

While the CHP and the HDP assumed the leadership of the 'no' campaign, a number of fringe parties –including the Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi*), which comes from the National Outlook movement, and the neo-Kemalist Homeland Party (*Vatan Partisi*)— opposed constitutional reform. Moreover, various non-governmental organizations contributed to the 'no' campaign independently of the aforementioned political parties. As a matter of fact, the executives and heads of the Istanbul and Ankara bar associations –effectively semi-official institutions— actively opposed the proposed changes by holding campaign events all around the country.

Anti-Erdoğanism was the ideological backbone of the CHP's no campaign in the referendum, as the main opposition party tried to

⁴³ "MHP Genel Başkanı Devlet Bahçeli: Türk milletinin istiklalini korumak mecburiyetindeyiz," *Milliyet*, February 21, 2017.

fuel fears of authoritarianism and dictatorship.⁴⁴ By incorporating the famous line by HDP co-chairman Selahattin Demirtaş, “We won’t let you become president!” into his campaign speeches, Kılıçdaroğlu re-embraced anti-Erdoğanism, which he had temporarily shelved after the July 15 coup attempt. By taking back the leadership of the anti-Erdoğan front from the HDP after the arrests of several HDP politicians, the main opposition party attempted to win over parts of the HDP base.⁴⁵ On the campaign trail, the CHP leadership implemented a two-track communications strategy: while using very strong language at the local level, their national campaign was dominated by a mild rhetoric designed to appeal to likely ‘yes’ voters.⁴⁶ Acting on the recommendations of the various components of the ‘no’ campaign, including the media and non-governmental organizations, the CHP refrained from advertising its role within the broader movement in the early days of the campaign.

Instead, spokespeople for the CHP often complained about ‘one-man rule’ and ‘authoritarianism’ in an effort to fuel anti-Erdoğan sentiments.⁴⁷ At the same time, the movement borrowed from the neo-Kemalist playbook to suggest that the presidential system would place Turkey’s territorial integrity at risk and lead to the adoption of federalism and the destruction of unitary government, which could potentially confuse nationalist voters. Similar efforts included claims about PKK founder Abdullah Öcalan’s alleged support for presidentialism⁴⁸ and the AK Party’s supposed cooperation with the PKK. In paid ads for the ‘no’ campaign, the CHP used the operative word (‘no’) together with economic crises, terrorism and disintegration. Kılıçdaroğlu also accused parliamentarians, who had supported the constitutional

⁴⁴ “Niye Meclis’ten korkuyorsunuz?,” *Milliyet*, January 18, 2017.

⁴⁵ Fahrettin Altun, “2007 Öncesine Özlem Duyanlar İttifakı,” *Sabah*, February 22, 2017.

⁴⁶ “CHP anayasa değişikliğini Anayasa Mahkemesi’ne götürmeyecek,” *Habertürk*, February 14, 2017.

⁴⁷ “Niye Meclis’ten korkuyorsunuz?.”

⁴⁸ “Kılıçdaroğlu: Koşullar 12 Eylül’den daha ağır,” *Al Jazeera Türk*, November 1, 2016.

reform bill during the parliamentary proceedings, of ‘treason’.⁴⁹ Although the CHP leadership initially announced that it would challenge the bill in court, it changed its position soon after.

As the ‘no’ campaign kept trailing the supporters of constitutional reform over the following weeks, the CHP leadership adopted a more speculative approach. For example, the main opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu claimed just days before the historic vote that the government was going to grant citizenship to four million Syrian refugees if the referendum passed. He also claimed that the July 15 coup attempt was actually a ‘controlled coup’ in an effort to help the ‘no’ campaign gain momentum.⁵⁰ Likewise, in the days leading up to the referendum, certain CHP politicians resorted to threats against proponents of constitutional reform.⁵¹

The HDP, in turn, demanded that the parliamentary proceedings on constitutional reform be suspended until all members of the party, who had been arrested on terrorism charges, were released.⁵² The movement’s campaign events closely resembled CHP rallies in terms of messaging strategy – with an emphasis on ‘regime change’, ‘one-man rule’ and the supposed weakening of the Parliament. During this period, HDP co-chairman Selahattin Demirtaş and other HDP politicians, who were under arrest, made various accusations against the AK Party and President Erdoğan with no obvious ties to the constitutional reform bill and tried to discredit the court’s decision to hold HDP parliamentarian on terrorism charges.⁵³ Although some supporters of the HDP called for a boycott of the constitutional referendum, party executives refused to take their recommendations into consideration.

⁴⁹ “Kılıçdaroğlu: Bu parlamento kendi tarihine ihanet etti,” *NTV*, January 21, 2017.

⁵⁰ “15 Temmuz kontrollü bir darbe,” *Milliyet*, April 4, 2017.

⁵¹ “CHP ‘evet’i Yunan belledi: ‘Denize dökeceğiz,’” *Yeni şafak*, April 3, 2017.; “Baykal skandalı: Hayır çıkarsa düşmanı denize dökmüş gibi sevineceğiz,” *Yeni şafak*, April 2, 2017.

⁵² “Müslüm Doğan: Alevilerin Anayasa değişikliği teklifine ilişkin bilgisi yok,” *hdp.org.tr*, April 5, 2017.

⁵³ “Demirtaş: Bu gidişatı ancak HDP durdurabilir,” *hdp.org.tr*, accessed April 5, 2017.

THE FAILED COUP'S IMPACT ON THE RESTRUCTURING OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

On 16 April 2017, Turkey replaced its parliamentary system of government with 'the presidency system'. The constitutional reform bill, which included a number of amendments including the adoption of presidentialism, was passed by the Turkish Parliament thanks to the support of the AK Party and the MHP. A referendum was held on April 16, in which 58,366,647 eligible voters –including those who live overseas— participated. 25,157,025 voters, or 51.4 percent of the electorate, voted in favor of proposed changes, while the remaining 23,777,091 individuals –who constituted 48.6 percent— voted against. The turnout rate reached 85.3 percent. The April 16 referendum was the third constitutional referendum during the AK Party era and seventh since Turkey became a multi-party democracy in 1950.

President Erdoğan, the AK Party leadership and spokespeople for the MHP, in particular, repeatedly stressed that the restructuring of the Turkish state in the failed coup's aftermath had become a vital necessity. In their view, the July 15 coup attempt, which was actually an attempted occupation of the country through acts of terrorism, represented *the* most serious threat that the Turkish Republic had encountered since the 1920s. As such, they called for an urgent and comprehensive restructuring of the country's crisis-prone system of government and the national security bureaucracy. In this regard, progress has been made in two areas since the attempted coup.

In the aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt, the first area of government reform related to the need to create a new executive structure that could promote the political system's long-term stability by promoting strong political leadership. In this sense, the April 16 constitutional referendum facilitated the permanent replacement of Turkey's parliamentary system, which empowered the guardianship system by fueling political instability, with presidentialism. The constitutional amendments passed in April 2017 were primarily related to the system

of government. In this sense, changes were made to the various parts of the 1982 Constitution pertaining to legislative and executive elections, repeat elections, the responsibilities of the executive branch, the functioning of the judiciary, the investigation and trials of presidents and cabinet ministers, the appointment of vice presidents, presidential decrees, and the drafting of the government budget. No changes were made regarding the fundamental principles of the Turkish state, the principle of unitary government, fundamental rights and liberties, the structure of the legislature, the responsibilities of the Constitutional Court and the selection of Constitutional Court justices.⁵⁴

The most significant changes to 1982 Constitution related to the problem of dual legitimacy – which was a product of the parliamentary system.⁵⁵ Under the new system, the popularly-elected President –who doubles the head of state— has become eligible to exercise executive powers, while the Office of the Prime Minister has been abolished. The 2017 constitutional amendments stipulate that Turkish presidents can serve a maximum of two five-year terms. Presidential elections will take place in two rounds. If a deadlock occurs due to severe disagreements between the executive and legislative branches, the President can call for early elections. However, it is important to note that the President must terminate his/her own term in office to hold parliamentary elections. Likewise, three-fifths of the parliamentarians can call for early presidential and legislative elections.

Unlike the President, parliamentarians have the right to draft legislation. Under the new system, the Parliament will be able to use additional instruments, such as official investigations, to monitor the activities of executive officials. In April 2017, the Constitution's articles related to the severing of the presidency's ties to political parties were

⁵⁴ Serdar Güleler and Nebi Miş, "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sistemi," *SETA Analiz*, no. 190 (February 2017).

⁵⁵ Nebi Miş, "AK Parti'nin Önerisinde Siyasal Sistem Tasarımı," *Kriter*, no. 8 (December 2016).

amended to make it possible for Turkish presidents to join and lead any political party.

The main changes about the judiciary are related to the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, which was renamed the Board of Judges and Prosecutors. The number of the Board's members was decreased from 22 to 13. While the Justice Minister and the Justice Ministry's Undersecretary are considered natural members of the board, seven members are appointed by parliamentarians and the remaining four are picked by the President.⁵⁶

Although the constitutional reform bill made a direct impact on 18 articles of the 1982 Constitution, including the sections related to the system of government, approximately seventy articles were indirectly affected. While some articles were effectively abolished, others have been partially changed. In this sense, the amendments made in April 2017 were not ordinary changes but a complete overhaul of Turkey's political system and the functioning of the executive branch. As such, the constitutional reform bill made it necessary for the Turkish Parliament to update a number of laws pertaining to the judiciary and the executive and legislative branches.⁵⁷

The second area of transformation was the restructuring of Turkey's national security bureaucracy. The July 15 coup attempt revealed that the national security bureaucracy, including the Turkish Armed Forces, were largely autonomous entities with little or no civilian oversight.⁵⁸ This sense of autonomy arguably made it impossible for the civilian authorities to identify covert structures among the military's ranks. Completely immune to civilian oversight, this institution was able to use its access to classified information in order to mislead elected gov-

⁵⁶ Cem Duran Uzun, "Cumhurbaşkanlığı Sisteminde Yargı," *SETA Analiz*, no. 193 (March 2017).

⁵⁷ Mehmed Zahid Sobacı, "'Evet' sonrası devletin yeniden yapılandırılması," *Sabah Perspektif*, April 22, 2017.

⁵⁸ Murat Yeşiltaş, "Sivil-Asker İlişkilerinde Statükocu Değişim mi, Demokratik Dönüşüm mü?," *Sabah Perspektif*, August 6, 2016.

ernments. Moreover, the Armed Forces did not share information with the public about the threat posed by a terrorist organization whose infiltration of the military for the past four decades was known to military commanders but kept secret from the public.⁵⁹

A closer look at the national security bureaucracy, however, reveals that not only the Armed Forces but also the Turkish National Police and intelligence agencies were infiltrated by undercover FETÖ operatives. Although the Gülenists within the military led the coup attempt, it is important to recognize that they received assistance from FETÖ members in the rest of the national security bureaucracy. Had law enforcement and the intelligence community not been cleared from Gülenists after the December 2013 attacks, the July 15 coup attempt would have been more likely to succeed and violent clashes within Turkey's borders would have become more probable. As such, there were two reasons why restructuring national security institutions became an urgent matter after the failed coup. First, all institutions and agencies had to be cleansed of FETÖ operatives. The second step was related to addressing the structural problems of the security bureaucracy and to make it more effective against domestic and international threats.

In the immediate aftermath of the July 15 coup attempt, the Turkish government took a series of important steps designed to restructure the national security bureaucracy. As part of this plan, the authorities intended to establish full civilian oversight over the security forces, create a more balanced security mechanism to prevent the accumulation of excess power by any single individual or institution and to diversify the recruitment system to stop the emergence of autonomous entities within the bureaucracy along ideological lines.

Some of the most crucial steps taken in this regard are as follows:⁶⁰ The Supreme Military Council (*Yüksek Askeri Şura*, or YAŞ) was restructured to empower the civilian administration. While the interior

⁵⁹ Murat Yeşiltaş, "15 Temmuz Sonrası İçin Yol Haritası," *Star Açık Görüş*, July 24, 2016.

⁶⁰ "TSK'da yeniden yapılanma," *Sabah*, August 1, 2016.

minister, minister of foreign affairs, justice minister and deputy prime ministers became new members of the Council, the commander-general of the Gendarmerie, along with the commanders of the Navy and the Land Forces and other four-star generals, were removed from the crucial decision-making body. At the same time, the YAŞ secretariat was transferred from the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs (*Genelkurmay Başkanlığı*) to the Ministry of National Defense (*Milli Savunma Bakanlığı*, or MSB), which also assumed the command of the land, air and naval service commands. The General Command of the Gendarmerie and the Coast Guard Command were transferred from the Turkish Armed Forces to the Interior Ministry.⁶¹ The war academies were abolished and replaced with the National Defense University. All military medical centers, including the Gülhane Training and Research Hospital in Ankara, were transferred to the Ministry of Health. All high school graduates were declared eligible to apply to military schools. Moreover, the Ministry of National Defense staff was transferred from the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs to the ministry itself. Under the new rules, the appointments of senior and junior military officers will be subject to the Ministry's approval and military barracks located in town centers will be relocated to the countryside. Finally, the Military Supreme Administrative Court and the Military Court of Appeals were abolished.⁶²

Although the transition to the presidential system will be completed after the next presidential and legislative elections, which are scheduled to take place in 2019, a number of steps have already been taken by the Parliament to pass harmonization laws to facilitate the implementation of constitutional reforms. As such, the executive, legislative and judicial branches currently undergo certain changes regarding their organizational structures and functions. While the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (*Hakimler Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*,

⁶¹ "Jandarma ve Sahil Güvenlik İşçileri'ne bağlandı," *Yeni Şafak*, July 27, 2016.

⁶² "Askeri Yargıtay ve AYİM kaldırıldı," *Milliyet*, April 29, 2017.

or HSYK) has been restructured, an effort was launched to reform the Parliament's bylaws to increase the legislature's efficiency. At the same time, certain steps have been taken to transform the bureaucratic structure of the executive branch. Meanwhile, the re-establishment of the Presidency's ties to party politics already initiated a period of 'partisan presidency'.

Moving forward, the presidential system will require inevitable changes and transformation in a variety of areas including but not limited to the relationship between the executive and legislative branches, the role of political parties in Turkey's political system and their policy-development methods, the hierarchical order, institutional design and the hierarchy of norms within the executive branch, the redefinition of the institutional relations network among the bureaucratic class, decision-making processes and developments mechanisms for public policy.

CONCLUSION

In the aftermath of the July 15 failed coup attempt, the Turkish authorities started to implement lustration policies and took a series of steps to restructure the state. It was clear all along that the lustration policies needed to extend beyond the Turkish Armed Forces. Although a group of undercover FETÖ operatives within the military led the effort to violently overthrow Turkey's democratically elected government, the organization had a more powerful and widespread civilian wing. Within and outside the Turkish military, the Gülenists had created a messianic organization whose power was maximized by pragmatic players that adhered to ideologically motivated and perverted interpretation of the Islamic faith. As such, the lustration policies had to be implemented in a number of areas including the security forces, the civilian bureaucracy, the economy, education and civil society. In other words, the Turkish government launched a comprehensive effort to identify and dismiss FETÖ operatives from public service. In order to expedite the

process of lustration and prevent future attacks by the group, a state of emergency was declared in July 2016.

At the same time, the July 15 coup attempt established that the Turkish state ought to be restructured in two ways. First, the authorities had to make significant changes to the structure and functioning of the security forces, wherein the culture of military interventions remained dominant and could not be eliminated. In light of pressing challenges, the restructuring effort was made with due urgency. Secondly, the political system had to be transformed. Following the coup attempt, it was possible for the various political parties to agree to reform Turkey's system of government, which created major crises over the years, after years of unfruitful discussions. In the end, the Parliament passed a constitutional reform bill introduced by the AK Party and supported by MHP—which entailed, among other things, the replacement of the country's parliamentary system with presidentialism.

The presidential system places the popularly elected president, along with the Parliament, at the heart of the political system. When the new system of government goes into effect, presidential candidates and political parties will compete in simultaneous presidential and legislative elections, where they will present voters with a comprehensive roadmap including their priorities, strategies, and policy proposals in order to beat their competitors. Since the popularly elected president will exercise executive power alone, political crises associated with the problem of dual legitimacy under the parliamentary system won't place political stability at risk. As the Office of the Prime Minister is being abolished, the Council of Ministers will be redefined as an institution that helps the president to develop public policy.

Although the AK Party and the MHP supported constitutional reform, including the adoption of the presidential system of government, the CHP and the HDP sought to prevent change instead of joining negotiations in order to share their concerns and explain how the proposed amendments could be improved. During the proceedings

at the Constitutional Commission and the General Assembly debate, they continued to resist reforms and failed to even make proposals that they thought could make a positive contribution to the constitutional reform bill.

Although the CHP and the HDP are unlikely to resist efforts to pass harmonization laws with the same level of determination, it is safe to assume that they will raise objections against proposed legislation. In April 2017, a total of 18 constitutional amendments, including the adoption of the presidential system of government, were adopted by electorate thanks to the agreement between the AK Party and the MHP. Efforts by the two parties to find a compromise will presumably continue during parliamentary proceedings about harmonization laws. Although the AK Party controls enough parliamentary seats to single-handedly pass harmonization legislation, it will continue its dialogue with the MHP leadership. Under the circumstances, the MHP is likely to support the AK Party during the parliamentary debate on harmonization laws.

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CHAPTER 6

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE FAILURE OF THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

SERDAR KARAGÖZ*

PINAR KANDEMİR**

July 15, 2016 made history as the night of new beginnings in Turkey. Without any doubt, the most significant amongst the new beginnings was that, for the first time ever in Turkish history, the people comprehensively resisted a coup attempt. Equally as impressive, however, was the symbol of rebalancing of media-military relations, the roots of which can be traced back, over the last decade, to the empowerment of civil society against the paternalism of bureaucratic and military power in Turkish politics and public life. Media, often referred to as the fourth estate in a democracy¹ isn't a neutral observer of politics and public life according to Craig. Rather, it is a site "where politics and public life are played out, the sites where the meanings of public life are generated, debated and evaluated."² Historically, Turkish media has played an important role in coup attempts. It has been used as a medium to further the aims of coup plotters. In this regard, from the

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¹ Julianne Schultz, *Reviving the fourth estate: democracy, accountability and the media* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

² Geoffrey Craig, *The Media, Politics and Public Life* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004).

moment that the July 15 coup was publicly declared, press freedom was given an acid test: either the press would be co-opted and used to legitimize the coup, as had usually been the case in Turkish history, or it would maintain its independence and stand by democracy. On the night of July 15, almost every media outlet broadcast message against the putschists. Media's support for democracy, for the people of Turkey, and its resistance against the military played a crucial role in subverting the coup.

To understand why the media was so crucial that night, it is necessary to recall how media outlets were traditionally seized by the armed forces and the deep state to disseminate the messages of the military during previous coups. Still, even though the media is one of the main factors that needs to be discussed in order to offer a complete analysis of that night, it is important to ask ourselves whether it was a main actor or simply a tool used by the 'actors.' This article discusses the role and importance of the media in the making of a failed military coup.

THE MILITARY AND MASS MEDIA IN TURKEY: A BRIEF HISTORY

Among countless coup attempts that have taken place in Turkey, four have been successful. In 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997, the Turkish Armed Forces arbitrarily intervened in civilian politics to remove elected governments from power through the use or threat of violence.³ On each occasion, military officers identified media as an important target to deliver messages that discredited elected leaders in order to justify the actions of the military and, upon the removal of government, legitimize a military regime.

³ For a detailed analysis on the role of the military over Turkish politics, see Frank Tachau, and Metin Heper, "The state, politics, and the military in Turkey," *Comparative Politics* 16, no.1 (1983): 17-33.; İlhan Uzgel, "Between Praetorianism and Democracy: The Role of the Military in Turkish Foreign Policy," *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* 34 (2003): 179.; Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The anatomy of the Turkish military's political autonomy," *Comparative politics* (1997): 151-166.

The first successful coup d'état in modern Turkish history took place on May 27, 1960, when a group of soldiers led by 37 low-ranking military officers arrested their superiors, stormed government buildings, and seized full control of the media to announce the coup to the Turkish nation and the world. Over the following months, a show trial took place on the small barren island of Yassiada, to discredit the Democratic Party (DP) leadership. Though the logic of the main charges were tenuous, deposed Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, along with two other cabinet ministers, was executed in September 1961. President Celal Bayar, a hero of the War of Independence, who was also removed from his position, was offered clemency, although the coup effectively ended his political career. This process established the supremacy of military over civilian politicians,⁴ legalizing and guaranteeing more permanent roles for the army over other institutions.⁵

The 1960 coup marked the beginning of a long-term symbiotic relationship between the military and mass media. Having informed the public via local radio that the government had been overthrown, the previous Democratic Party government was discredited, the party itself outlawed, and the junta was praised by national newspapers which hailed the military officers as saviors of the Republic. According to Arıkan military, media, and universities were all supporters of the CHP against the DP during the 1950s.⁶ Anti-coup media personnel were gunned down and some critical media decided to publish front page of newspapers with black tone. However, military command headquarters announced new media rules which determined basic features such as the color and print sizes of newspapers.⁷ Over the following decades,

⁴ William Hale, *Turkish politics and the military* (Routledge, 2013), 312-13.

⁵ Bertil Videt Knudsen, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics," *Department of Political* (2005): 7.

⁶ Mustafa Arkina, "27 Mayıs'a Damgasını Vuran Söz ve Beyanlar," *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1, no. 4 (1997): 299.

⁷ Gökcer Tahincioglu, "Askeri Darbeler Öncesi ve Sonrası Medya Özgürlüğü," (Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Gazi Üniversitesi, 2004), 30-31.

the relationship between the press and military leaders became much closer as the Armed Forces discovered how media campaigns could be used to further their interests. Many reporters, columnists, and editors retrenched, allowing complacency to creep into their work by reducing their journalistic standards, backtracking from their commitment to democratic values in order to collaborate with coup plotters and the new self-declared guardians of the Republic. In 1971 and 1980, the mainstream media's support for military intervention in civilian politics made it possible for the generals to create an echo chamber that eventually marginalized all critical voices.⁸ Meanwhile, the public broadcaster's – Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) – monopoly over the media landscape at the time made it easier for the military regime to dominate and guide public opinion in the direction of their choice.

The mainstream media's cooperation with the Armed Forces continued to strengthen.⁹ In fact, journalists played an active role in 1997, when the generals issued an ultimatum to the coalition government led by the Welfare Party's Necmettin Erbakan at a meeting of the National Security Council. What distinguished the February 27 process, dubbed the 'postmodern coup,' from other interventions by the military into civilian politics, was the military's decision to rely on the media and non-governmental organizations to use soft power to alter the status quo, instead of using hard power. At the time, mainstream newspapers pioneered a media campaign designed to turn public opinion against the elected government through fabricated stories and the use of provocative images.¹⁰

⁸ Murat Erdin, *Silabsız kuvvetler medya: darbelerde basının ayak sesleri*. Destek Yayınevi, 2010.

⁹ For a detailed analysis of Military-media relations in Turkey, see Ragıp Duran, *Apoletli Medya* (Istanbul: Belge Yayınları, 2000).

¹⁰ "Kronoloji: 28 Subat'a giden yol," *Al Jazeera*, December 27, 2013, <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/kronoloji/kronoloji-28-subata-giden-yol>.

Since the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power in 2002, there has been a possibility that a coup against the civilian government could happen at any time. The AK Party leaders vividly recalled the challenges they had experienced since the February 28 postmodern coup. It was this trauma that helped them make a decisive effort to fundamentally restructure civil-military relations.¹¹ Although the AK Party successfully changed the nature of the relationship between the military and civilian government to reduce the military's tutelary role in politics, it pushed further the change in media's *modus operandi* when it came to legitimizing coups. To be clear, the relationship between the media and military leaders still carries echoes of the past. Nonetheless, it is important to note that advocates of military interventions in civilian politics have been marginalized, as the vast majority of Kemalist intellectuals and journalists – traditional allies of coup plotters – have started paying lip service to the illegitimacy of all coups, which itself indicates that Turkish politics has reached a new milestone.

In this regard, the tipping point was the response of the people and the government to a memorandum issued by the Armed Forces, dubbed the e-memorandum since it appeared on the military's official website ahead of the 2007 presidential election. Citing concerns over secularism, the generals, emboldened by Kemalist political parties, the mainstream media, and non-governmental organizations, attempted to strong arm the AK Party government into replacing the Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül with another presidential candidate.¹² In addition to launching a coordinated campaign to discredit the elected government, major media outlets openly used language betraying their sympathy and at times support for a military inter-

¹¹ İlhan Uzgel, "The Paradox of Modernisation and Securitisation: The Turkish Military vs the European Union," *EU-Turkish Relations Dossier, Observatory of European Foreign Policy, EUTR* 9 (2003).

¹² M. Michael Gunter and M. Hakan Yavuz, "Turkish Paradox: Progressive Islamists versus Reactionary Secularists," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 16, no. 3 (2007): 290.

vention in an effort to promote and legitimize a military intervention in the event that all other options failed. During this period of time, certain publications also played a central role in organizing massive pro-coup demonstrations.¹³

In this regard, the government's resistance to the military's demands and the support of ordinary citizens for civilian leadership marked a breakthrough in the transformation of civil-military relations in Turkey. The strong leadership of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, proved instrumental in mobilizing the opponents of another military power grab or any undue military influence in civilian politics. Having promoted a national conversation on civil-military relations since 2002, the AK Party had made the case that no coup d'état was legitimate, no junta was a viable alternative to an elected government, and that the only way governments should rise to and fall from power is through elections. In 2007, one of the government's main accomplishments was to utilize the emerging new media to by-pass the mainstream media, which traditionally supported the military, to reach their audiences directly. Turkey's changing political climate, which had become increasingly liberal since the second half of 1980s under Turgut Özal's leadership, made the civilian leadership's message more attractive to voters.

Following the 2007 confrontation between the elected government and the establishment, even Kemalist hardliners in the journalist community slowly turned their back on 'the coup option' and instead adapted to the changing circumstances – partly due to their desire to maintain good relations with the West, which sided with the civilian leadership against the military.

In addition to this, Erdoğan identified himself with Adnan Menderes, who was the first Turkish Prime Minister to come to power in free and fair elections and executed together with two of his ministers

¹³ Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Changing Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: Democratization through Coup Plots?" *Democratization* 19, no. 4 (2012): 735-60.

after 1960 military coup by putschists. Erdogan was one of the strongest voices criticizing the coup executed in Egypt in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. He fiercely resisted the anti-democratic intervention, provided his support for victims, and criticized other leaders who remained silent during the bloodshed in Egypt. During the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey, Turkish people, having learned from the coup in Egypt and their very own experiences in Turkey, successfully resisted the military forces and defended Turkey's democracy at the cost of their lives. When it comes to the reaction of the media, having revised its position on civil-military relations, the mainstream media reacted to the July 15 coup attempt in an unprecedented manner by openly opposing the power grab.

There is no doubt that this change is the result of the AK Party's democratization policies towards civil-military relations. With the second half of the 1980s under Özal, parallel to the rise of a burgeoning independent press, the media in Turkey started to change by diversifying not only in brands but also in perspectives. The number of media outlets has risen dramatically, especially in the early 2000s. In this regard, it is not possible to understand the change in media-military relations in Turkey without understanding the change in media economics.¹⁴ The development of private media sector in Turkey has broken the media monopoly in Turkey and it is this rapid evolution in regards to different ownership and operational structures that created an open space for democracy and pluralism within the media narrative. Additionally, innovation in communications technology has made it easier for ordinary citizens and marginalized voices to connect, discuss, organize, and influence public opinion through the web and social media.¹⁵

¹⁴ Sadik Ünay, "Medya-ekonomi: Medya-sermaye ilişkisini yeniden yorumlamak," *Analiz Dergisi*, (2009): 51-52, 79.

¹⁵ Ceren Sozeri and Zeynep Guney, *The Political Economy of the Media in Turkey* (Istanbul: Tesev Publications, 2011).

RESISTING THE COUP: THE ROLE OF CONVENTIONAL AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The role that the media played during the Arab Spring has been the subject of numerous articles and studies. According to some authors, it was new media, as opposed to conventional media, that expanded the social base of revolutionary political movements in Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Tunisia.¹⁶ In fact, a number of revolutionary movements in recent years have been called “Twitter Revolutions,” paying homage to social media’s central role in the resistance against authoritarian regimes. While democratization facilitated by social media opened new spaces to resist authoritarian regimes, some have lamented its role in the wave of populism that led to Brexit and the election of Trump.¹⁷ Whatever one’s view, it is important to acknowledge that new platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the blogosphere have made possible the free flow of information in places where the mainstream media is censored.

The claim that social media or mass media were the driving force behind the Arab Spring revolutions or the Turkish people’s resistance to the July 15 coup attempt, would be an oversimplification. Media did play an important role in mobilizing the masses and generating a higher level of awareness. However, the active use of Facebook and Twitter by protestors to communicate must not lead observers to overlook the significance of the extent to which the idea of democracy was internalized and institutionalized, as the driving force motivating the resistance. The “autonomy power”¹⁸ of the Turkish military over civil-

¹⁶ Philip N. Howard, Aiden Duffy, Deen Freelon, Muzammil M. Hussain, Will Mari, and Marwa Maziad, “Opening Closed Regimes: What Was the Role of Social Media during the Arab Spring?,” *SSRN*, (2011).; Adrienne Russell, “The Arab Spring: Extra-National Information Flows, Social Media and the 2011 Egyptian Uprising,” *International Journal of Communication* 5, no. 10 (2011).

¹⁷ Sergio Sismondo, “Post-truth?” *Social Studies of Science* 47, no. 1 (2017): 3-6.

¹⁸ İlhan Uzgel, “Between Praetorianism and Democracy: The Role of the Military in Turkish Foreign Policy,” *The Turkish Yearbook of International Relations* 34 (2003): 179.; Sakallioğlu, “The anatomy of the Turkish military’s political autonomy,” 151-66.

ian politics and other state institutions has decreased during the AK Party era with the implementation of EU integration policies. In this sense, The Guardian's Maeve Shearlaw certainly provides a more nuanced picture when she says, "despite Western media's love affair with the idea, the uprisings didn't happen because of social media. Instead, the platforms provided opportunities for organization and protest that traditional methods couldn't."¹⁹

Cyber activism, or "the act of using the Internet to advance a political cause that is difficult to advance offline," opened a new chapter in politics and media. The horizontal connectivity that was established between people and citizen journalism aroused interest during the Arab Spring revolutions. Over a short time, social media attained such power and influence that many conventional media outlets started covering stories due to their popularity online.²⁰ To be clear, the assumption that social media remains independent and uncensored is misleading.²¹ Nonetheless, online news remains attractive because it is disseminated through a platform that encourages, and is built upon, popular participation. Social media enables ordinary people to share their own opinions, photos and videos with other people freely and quickly.

In Turkey, social media remains widely popular. Roughly 46 million people, or 58 percent of the population, are active internet users. There are 71 million cell phone lines and the average Turk spends almost twice as much time on social media than watching television

¹⁹ Maeve Shearlaw, "Egypt Five Years On: Was It Ever a 'Social Media Revolution?'," *The Guardian*, January 25, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jan/25/egypt-5-years-on-was-it-ever-a-social-media-revolution>.

²⁰ Richard Hanna, Andrew Rohm, and Victoria L. Crittenden, "We're All Connected: The Power of the Social Media Ecosystem," *Business Horizons* 54, no. 3 (2011): 265-73.

²¹ In May 2016, a former Facebook employee claimed that the company had misled the public to believe that an impartial algorithm picked stories to be featured in the 'trending news' sidebar. See Nellie Bowles and Sam Thielman, "Facebook Accused of Censoring Conservatives, Report Says," *The Guardian*, May 9, 2016. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2016/may/09/facebook-newsfeed-censor-conservative-news>.

—4 hours and 14 minutes versus two hours and 35 minutes, respectively.²² During the night of the July 15 coup attempt, many people in Turkey became aware of the coup attempt through social media and the Internet.²³

At roughly 9:30PM, people started messaging each other via WhatsApp, asking whether something was wrong. In the following hours, citizen journalists started sharing what they saw or heard on the streets. Meanwhile, Ankara-based social media users posted images and footage of F-16s flying low over residential areas, while Istanbulites spread the word that soldiers in Beylerbeyi, a residential district on the Asian coast, were stopping cars and blocking bridges with tanks. Before pro-coup soldiers stormed the public broadcaster TRT to force an anchorwoman to read their statement, a video showing a military commander had begun circulating on social media: “Go back home! The military has seized power!”

Coup plotters took over media outlets including Turkey’s national public broadcaster TRT with the goal of declaring a premature victory, informing the country of their usurpation of political power. They wanted people to believe the coup as a forgone conclusion. In a previous era, the typical strategy of seizing parliament, blocking major bridges and airports, and occupying TRT would have been sufficient. They forced TRT anchor Tijen Karas to read out a coup declaration at gunpoint on air at 12:04AM on Saturday. The Istanbul office of TRT World, the international news platform of TRT was invaded by coup plotters at 12:30AM. Soldiers forcibly halted broadcasting and damage cables and equipment. Other media outlets were also under attack; pro-coup soldiers raided CNN Turk studios at 4:00AM, but they were only able to keep the building under control for a short time. Soon

²² Simon Kemp, “Digital in 2016,” *We Are Social*, January 27, 2016. <http://wearesocial.com/uk/special-reports/digital-in-2016>.

²³ Daily Sabah Centre for Policy Studies, “July 15: Gülenist Coup Attempt,” *DS Centre Report*, no. 3 (2016).

after, Turkish police, with the help of the civilians, took control of the building from the soldiers. A helicopter carrying soldiers tried to land on the rooftop of the Turkuvaz Media Outlet building, but failed due to the satellites placed on top of the building. A group of soldiers shot at the fourth and fifth floors of the same building. From A Haber and CNN Turk to NTV, every media outlet in Turkey showed a hardline stance against the coup attempt and did not back down from a brave broadcasting policy even under harsh pressure.²⁴

Digital distribution platforms were also under attack. 13 armed pro-coup soldiers raided the Golbasi Ground Station of TURKSAT compound, Turkey's state-run satellite operator, before 01:30AM and tried to flush out the officers inside, telling them the compound would be bombed. As staff members resisted, two of them were killed and three were injured by the coup soldiers. Later, an F-16 bombed the compound four times and two cobra helicopters shot at the building and people around it. The coup plotters also tried to invade the Turkish Telecommunications company office located in Istanbul at 4:00AM on Saturday. Later in the day, coup plotters, by now facing firm resistance from civilians, shot at civilians, killing and injuring many. Around the same time, other soldiers raided Turkish digital broadcasting platform provider Digitürk. Later in the day, the compound was recaptured by Turkish police forces.²⁵

With the proliferation of private media outlets, and particularly the widespread ownership of mobile phones and access to new media mediums, the public was almost immediately mobilized on an unprecedented scale. Numerous live broadcasts were made through applications such as FaceTime, Facebook Live and Periscope. People informed each other about the whereabouts of military forces, where rebels were located and where civilians could gather through applications like Whatsapp.

²⁴ Daily Sabah Centre for Policy Studies, "The Night: Uncovering Details of the Failed Coup," *DS Centre Report*, no. 4 (2016).

²⁵ "The Night: Uncovering Details of the Failed Coup."

It took only a few minutes for social media chatter to be picked up by mainstream news outlets in Turkey and around the world. On an otherwise slow-news night, TV stations broke the news of an unusual movement of troops in Istanbul and Ankara and informed the public that there was “possibly a coup underway.” It was the individuals, who responded to the news by taking to the streets in an effort to resist that eventually thwarted the coup attempt.

At 10:20PM, Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım appeared on national television to acknowledge that there was a coup attempt underway. He pledged “not to allow it to succeed.” Echoing the Prime Minister’s remarks, a commander of the Second Army stated that the coup attempt was illegal and noted that the coup plotters had broken the chain of command. In other words, the Turkish people, and perhaps more importantly soldiers, bureaucrats, and politicians received word early on that the Turkish military was opposed to the power grab. In this regard, the media played an important role in the resistance by helping the legitimate authorities communicate their message to the public.

A few minutes past midnight, pro-coup soldiers stormed TRT, the public broadcaster, to hold an anchorwoman at gunpoint and force her to read a written statement on air. In addition to announcing that the government had been removed from power, the putschists ordered all TV channels to circulate the statement – an order these channels disobeyed. This was a trick out of the junta playbook, seizing official media was a classic move intended to strike fear in the hearts of ordinary citizens. In the past, the tactic had worked primarily because there were a limited number of media outlets. Although the incident confirmed that a coup d’état was indeed underway, it also strengthened the people’s resolve to resist the plotters.

Seventeen minutes later after the coup statement was read on TRT, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan President Erdogan addressed the nation via FaceTime, another application, and called on the people

to take to the streets and defy the coup plotters. “There is no power higher than the power of the people,” he said, . “Let them do what they will at public squares and airports. I will join the nation there.”²⁶ It became clear later that the President had held a press conference outside his hotel in Marmaris earlier, only to find out that there was a technical problem with the satellite connection. When it became clear that his message had not been broadcast, Erdoğan opted to appear on national media via FaceTime. Right after his address to the public through FaceTime, Erdogan’s messages were repeated on his personal and official presidential Twitter accounts. In retrospect, Erdogan’s address to the nation proved to be a crucial factor behind the peaceful resistance. Many participants in the nationwide protest stated that they left their homes after the iconic FaceTime call and that they were encouraged by his personal appeal to them. The live broadcast from the President’s phone also helped clear up rumors circulating about a possible assassination of the President.

In essence, there were two fundamental contributions made by both the conventional and the social media during the coup attempt. First, politicians, military personnel, and bureaucrats who opposed the coup plotters were able to communicate their messages to the general population – thereby encouraging activists and forcing plotters to reconsider. Secondly, social media, in particular, made it easier for activists to share updates and coordinate their actions. In many cases, reports on social media about attacks against civilians, government buildings, and TV channels were met by an influx of protestors to affected areas in an attempt to help fellow activists.²⁷ Furthermore, chat groups on messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Tele-

²⁶ “Erdoğan’ın Darbe Girişimi Gecesi Yayınlanamayan Konuşması,” *Haber Türk*, July 23, 2016. <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1270894-cumhurbaskani-erdoganin-yayinlanamayan-aciklamasi>.

²⁷ Yusuf Devran and Ömer Faruk Özcan, “15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi: Gelenekselden Yeniye Medya Araçlarının Kullanımı,” *AJIT-e: Online Academic Journal of Information Technology* 7, no. 25 (2016).

gram were used by protestors to convince their friends and colleagues to take to the streets and defy the junta-imposed curfew. In addition to ordinary citizens, members of the security forces, including soldiers and police officers, as well as bureaucrats and politicians, used WhatsApp to communicate securely.

Twitter was one of the most used social media platforms throughout the night. “Twitter and social media may have prevented the coup from taking place,” Andrew Selepak, director of the social media master’s program at the University of Florida, told CNBC.²⁸ He emphasized that there are more than 1.6 billion users on Facebook, saying “No traditional media outlet can broadcast to that size of an audience at one time where world leaders and politicians can directly reach the people unfettered by traditional media.”²⁹ Other experts also put special emphasis on the impact of social media on the prevention of the coup. “Twitter and the like enabled he [Erdogan] and his followers [military included] to counter-punch and react effectively,” said Former FBI assistant director Chris Swecker. “Time and time again we see situations around the globe” he continued, “where normal communication modes are compromised and social media comes through as a vehicle for mass communication.”³⁰

It should be noted there was a throttling of connections to Facebook and Twitter in Turkey on Friday night after 10:50PM on July 15. The global public policy team at Twitter announced in a tweet that “We have no reason to think we’ve been fully blocked in #Turkey, but we suspect there is an intentional slowing of our traffic in country.” While 6 million tweets are posted daily on average in Turkey, when

²⁸ Uptin Saiidi, “For someone who doesn’t like social media, Erdogan used it effectively to put down coup,” *CNBC*, July 18, 2016. <http://www.cnbc.com/2016/07/18/for-someone-who-doesnt-like-social-media-erdogan-used-it-effectively-to-put-down-coup.html>.

²⁹ Saiidi, “For someone who doesn’t like social media, Erdogan used it effectively to put down coup.”

³⁰ Saiidi, “For someone who doesn’t like social media, Erdogan used it effectively to put down coup.”

Twitter was back to normal after 01:00AM the following morning, 18 million 666 tweets were posted on July 16 alone.³¹

The hashtags that were the most widely used during the coup night were #NoCoupInTurkey, #TurkeyCoup, #TurkeyCoupAttempt. More than 7 million messages were posted under these titles in rapid succession. The tweets that were posted on July 16 increased 223 percent, and from July 15 to 17 there were 34,818,329 total tweets posted. These tweets reached an audience of 15 billion people.³² The uncensored visuals from the anti-coup protests, such as videos and photos, were perhaps the strongest and most positive motivators that drove the people that night. In particular, messages regarding unity raised the number of people who went out onto the streets. In this regard, social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Periscope were the most widely used applications. When compared to the use of social media, mainstream media like television, radio, and newspapers lagged behind. President Erdogan and PM Yıldırım asked citizens not to leave streets until the coup attempt was completely over on Twitter. People were able to gather on streets and squares using the hashtag #MilletçeMeydanlardayız (“We are on the streets as a nation”).

Before jumping to conclusions about the significance of messaging applications and social media, it is important to recall that the same applications/tools were used by pro-coup soldiers to discuss operational details, receive instructions, and share information with others.³³ To be clear, the use of encrypted messaging applications among the coup plotters goes back to 2014, when the terrorist organization led by Pennsylvania-based Fethullah Gülen started using ByLock, another application that requires an eight-digit password to sign up, to avoid

³¹ Şükrü Oktay Kılıç, “Sosyal Medya Nasıl Darbeye Direnişin Aracı Oldu?,” *Al Jazeera Türk*, July 19, 2016. <http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/al-jazeera-ozel/sosyal-medya-nasil-darbeye-direnisin-araci-oldu>.

³² Kılıç, “Sosyal Medya Nasıl Darbeye Direnişin Aracı Oldu?”

³³ “Darbecilerin WhatsApp Konuşmaları,” *Milliyet*, July 18, 2016. <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/darbecilerin-whatsapp-konusmalari-gundem-2279798/>.

scrutiny and communicate securely. In addition to this, WhatsApp was one of the most important communication tools for the coup plotters during the coup night. From the beginning of the coup attempt, the putschists organized each step through instructions given in a WhatsApp group they had formed. In their conversations, the plotters discussed how to interrupt all communication and issued orders to cut off all lines of communication in the country as soon as possible to prevent the protestors from coordinating their actions. When they tried, but ultimately failed to slow the speed of social media in order to hinder the resistance, the pro-coup soldiers moved to seize control of conventional media outlets.

From examining the power and speed of social media in mobilizing the masses, it can be concluded that the coup plotters and their supporters also had a specific social media strategy of their own. As such, it is crucially important to properly analyze the ways in which propaganda was utilized by the coup plotters, primarily on Facebook and Twitter, when the people took to the streets to resist the coup. In doing so, the focus should not only be on the supporters of the coup, as this group by and large were silent. Rather, the important focus must be on those who did not necessarily openly support the coup, but subtly assisted in creating an air of confusion by releasing fake news to demoralize those resisting. It is quite clear why the supporters of the coup remained largely silent, as they were well aware of the general anti-coup sentiment in Turkey. Due to the country's turbulent past, the general public in Turkey has developed a very negative perception on anything coup related especially since 2002. As such, even anti-government opposition do not have a favorable view of coups, and this was clearly demonstrated in the national unity Turkey saw when resisting against the putschists.

This explains the logic behind coup plotters' propaganda strategy to release rumors and photos to demoralize the civilians resisting the coup plotters. One major photo circulating on social media claimed that

the anti-coup civilians were torturing the ‘soldiers of the nation,’ in an attempt to cause alarm and way of justifying the coup. Or alternatively, to create some sort of caution and illusion of a moral high ground such as the ‘I do not support the coup but one should not attack soldiers of this country’ argument. Though, for the most part, they did not succeed in disuniting the people and galvanizing them in support of the coup, they did succeed in creating some sort of discussion and speculation – which lead some people, particularly those who were already anti-government, to sit on the fence and have second thoughts.

The question which begs to be answered, however, is how and why the concentrated social media campaigns supporting and legitimizing the coup attempt failed on July 15? As was seen previously during the Gezi Park protests and other anti-government movements, it is generally easy to create and develop campaigns and discourses against the government via social media. Why is it that, in this particular case, the careful propaganda efforts failed to create the desired effect, and if anything, further motivated the people to resist? Perhaps the answer is in the strength of collective memory, which renders the Turkish people more aware of the detrimental effect of the coup – regardless of how they might feel about the government. This is ironically also in addition to the silence of coup supporters, who were afraid of voicing their support given that coups are criminalized in Turkey.

Although ultimately this anti-coup sentiment had an effect on people’s decision to take to the streets, to claim that it is the only reason would be underestimating the entire resistance. Naturally, in events like this there would be many causes – however it must be noted that a major motivation for the people was the trust in Erdogan and his strong leadership. This is of course fundamentally tied to the protection of democracy, which the Turkish people went through much pain and effort to achieve. There is no doubt that the safeguarding of this value which cost the nation many years and lives, would be a great motivation against any threat of harming it.

After the coup attempt failed, millions of ordinary people continued to gather on the streets for 'democracy watch' events every night for almost a month. The events were often covered by media outlets, which produced and aired documentaries about the failed coup as well as the experiences of those who helped thwart the attempt. Citizen journalists continued to document their experiences with amateur videos and photos taken with their phones. They often published their own photos on Facebook and Twitter and invited their friends to join them. As a result, like-minded individuals came together through social media while cyber activists launched blogs to tell the world what happened and share videos, photos and news articles online.

Despite all the efforts of coup plotters to stop people from communicating with each other on the night of the coup attempt, there were numerous live-streaming all across the country through Facebook Live and Periscope. Traditional methods that had been used to censor mainstream media did not work this time. Clay Shirky, an American writer on the impact of new internet technologies and journalism says that when there is a discrepancy between what is going on and the messages the authorities wish to deliver to the public, the traditional response would be censorship; however, this is becoming less and less effective in silencing citizens who have access to social media.³⁴ In sum, the people challenged traditional sources of information and used social media to advance the views of alternative voices, mobilizing and organizing to challenge the coup. People were proactive participants in the fight against the coup instead of being passive recipients, which was the plan of coup plotters. These developments show that the media had a significant role both on the night of the attempted coup and in its aftermath.

³⁴ Clay Shirky, "The Political Power of Social Media: Technology, the Public Sphere, and Political Change." *Foreign Affairs* 90, no.1 (2011): 28-41.

CONCLUSION

It is important to recall Craig's comments on the nature of media as a part of, rather than a neutral observer of public life. In this regard, specifically when reflecting on media during and after coups in Turkey, Turkish media is deeply relevant as a site where political and public life intersect. As such, the role of media in July 15 is a good example that can be used to illustrate the role of new media in a global world.

This article has outlined how the Turkish media experienced a symbiotic relationship developed between the military and the mainstream media establishment in Turkish political history with many reporters, columnists and editors acquiescing to the paternalistic, hegemonic role played by the military in politics and public life, creating an echo chamber which marginalized dissenting voices.

The power of social media highlighted a new reality. The necessity of new policies in a new world to guide new media was clearly seen that night. On the night of July 15, audiences all around the world, with access to various social media platforms, reacted to the actions of the coup plotters in Turkey. While the international media's reporting on the coup in its aftermath was biased, it was ordinary global citizens who accurately reported on the events of that night. This shows us political actors, political parties, or even the coup plotters no longer only address local audiences but they also address global audiences. They are no longer followed by their own audiences but by a wider mass.

The arrival of the AK Party as a new political power in 2002 altered and rebalanced not only Turkish politics but also civil-military relations in Turkey. The Turkish military tried to play an oversized role in Turkish politics even during AK Party governments, but many of the AK Party leaders had learnt to be prudent and cautious following their previous experiences and reinvented their democratic politics, appealing to human rights and normative principles of democracy to challenge the hegemony of the military establishment and its civilian

allies³⁵. A major shift in political discourse followed after AK Party's attempts to prevent involvement of military in politics.

In addition to these shifts in Turkish media and political culture, the proliferation of private media outlets, the introduction and availability of new technologies and platforms made possible by smartphones, further facilitated interactions among civil society actors and democratization in Turkey. Decentralized in nature, the more interactive social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Whatsapp shifted media patterns in Turkey from being primarily a consumer activity to making individuals content producers. This shift from the vertical to horizontal, created reciprocal and interactive communications patterns making it easier for citizens to share views in free spaces, organize themselves and mobilize in a space where, as Clay Shirky reflects, their voices could not be easily censored.

When the coup began on July 15, the new media freedoms gained by Turkish citizens was put to the test, both conventional and social media. Conventional media took an anti-coup position, in line with a growing consensus that the military should remain out of politics. Social media however, really outstripped its capacity to create an active space for citizens to mobilize, share information, challenge official discourses released by comprised officers and thwart the coup.

Regarding the importance of media, we might say that, although the media in the July 15 case was not the main actor, it was an important tool of resistance against the coup. However, while social media played a vital role as a medium and platform to organize resistance to the coup, it remains a means through which Turkish citizens took the initiative and exercised agency.

As such, it is a good example that can be used to illustrate the role of new media in a global world. While manipulations and fabricated

³⁵ Cemil Aydin, "Between Occidentalism and the Global Left: Islamist Critiques of the West in Turkey," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 26, no. 3 (2006): 446-61.

news were met with a poor response on July 15, it is still worth considering the opposite scenario. Despite social media's positive role on the night of July 15, the lack of limits on what you post, for example, can carry its own risks. In this sense, it is crucial to specify the legal infrastructure in a more comprehensive manner.

Turkey's new media landscape, facilitated this direct challenge in a way that the media of previous generations could not. However, this development would not have been possible without a desire by Turkish citizens to mobilize and protect their democracy, a view which clearly had the sympathy of existing independent media platforms. What the July 15th coup attempt demonstrates is a rebalancing of existing relations between a media often co-opted and used to legitimize coup attempts, and a new media, where Turkish citizens play an active role in protecting the integrity of civilian institutions in Turkey's modern democracy.

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CHAPTER 7

EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF COUPS IN TURKEY

KILIC BUGRA KANAT*

The July 15 coup attempt was one of the most dramatic turning points in the history of the Turkish Republic. Since the establishment of the multiparty system, Turkey has encountered several different types of military interventions. Some of them were successful while others failed. Some took the shape of a memorandum issued to force the democratically elected government to adopt certain measures determined by the military or otherwise resign while others were full military interventions that overthrew the democratically elected government and dismantled the political and social structures in the country. In most instances, the military was very strategic in terms of the timing of their interventions and waited until the moment was ripe in order to gain the consent and support of the ordinary people. During such interventions, even those who were against the coup often acquiesced to the coup attempt. The political leaders were mostly obedient to the coups and did not resist the intervention or arrests. There were not any calls to resist the demands of the putschists. In the 1980 coup, the leaders of major political parties, including Suleyman Demirel, Bulent Ecevit, and Necmettin Erbakan, were detained on the morning of the coup. The only leader of a major political party

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who resisted the junta to surrender was Alparslan Türkeş, who went into hiding in Ankara before surrendering two days after the coup. This is as a pattern in civil-military relations of Turkey. While the politicians avoided making comments about the coup even after the junta, the public usually waited until the first elections after the military intervention to respond to the coup makers by voting against the military's preferred candidates.

However, the July 15 coup attempt represented a significant aberration in terms of the reactions of the political leaders and the broader society. For the first time on July 15, the coup attempt was prevented and stopped by the Turkish people through nonviolent resistance. The rapid civilian mobilization against the coup attempt was probably one of the most defining characteristics of that night together with the reactions of the political leaders. Citizens who had never attended public rallies or demonstrations, even before the call of the political leaders, occupied the streets, bridges, squares and key transportation hubs of major Turkish cities in order to prevent the coup attempt. This kind of mobilization and heroic resistance surprised many analysts of Turkey. Although there were debates in regards to the increasingly active civilian control of the military in the political realm, there was not much discussion on the potential societal reaction to coups and military interventions in politics in Turkey. In most previous coups, the Turkish public did not contest the declaration of martial law by the junta and obeyed the curfew. In the case of the 1980 coup, those who faced the danger of being detained or prosecuted and did not want to surrender preferred to go into hiding and leave the country in the first opportunity.

There are different potential explanations for the rapid civilian mobilization during the July 15 coup attempt and the public resistance to the coup attempt by the mostly Gulenist members of the military. In another piece about the July 15 coup attempt, I mentioned some

of these issues.³⁶ Social media and its effective use during the coup attempt certainly played a major role on July 15.³⁷ The first calls to resist the coup attempt came from social media users. Especially after the escalation of the situation, social media users were very effective in spreading information about the coup attempt to the world and later they again effectively used social media platforms, such as Twitter, to organize, assemble, and launch rallies against the coup. President Erdogan's message through Facetime, broadcast by CNN Turk, also had a major impact, emboldening and mobilizing large segments of the Turkish people against the coup attempt. For a little while after the coup attempt began, the putschists tried to give the impression that Erdogan had left the country and was seeking asylum from other countries, such as Germany and Britain. The emergence of President Erdogan on TV during the critical hours of the coup gave hope and determination to the people. In the meantime, several other political and military leaders used media and social media in order to express their opposition to the putschists.³⁸

As mentioned in the chapter in this volume by Pinar Kandemir and Serdar Karagoz, the recent coup in Egypt and the violence and repression that took place during the coup and in its aftermath also played a significant role in the rapid mobilization of the Turkish society.³⁹ When the Egyptian coup took place in the summer of 2013, the Turkish people watched the violent suppression of the rallies against the coup by the military of Egypt. There were widespread demonstra-

³⁶ Kilic Kanat, "Understanding the July 15th Failed Coup," in *Turkey's July 15th Coup: What Happened and Why*, ed. Hakan Yavuz and Bayram Balci (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018).

³⁷ Yasmeen Abutaleb, "Coup bid in Turkey carried live on social media despite blockages," *Reuters*, July 15, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-social-media-idUSKCN0ZV2OY>.

³⁸ Jared Malsin, "This Is What Istanbul Was Like As Turkey's Attempted Coup Played Out," *TIME Magazine*, July 16, 2016, <http://time.com/4409152/turkey-coup-istanbul-army-police-explosions/>.

³⁹ Cite Pinar and Serdar's article here

tions in Turkey against the military intervention and the massacre that took place in the streets of Cairo and other cities. During this time, Turkey was cited as the country that demonstrated the strongest reaction against the coup in Egypt both through its society and its political leaders. The reaction of the Turkish people was not only against the putschists in Egypt, but equally against those Western countries who did not react to the coup strongly and even avoided using the “c” word in order to describe what happened in the country.⁴⁰ Thus, the symbol of Rabia became a very popular gesture in Turkey not only because of the coup in Egypt but also as a result of the silence of the international community. The coup in Egypt and the Western reaction to it resulted in a widespread belief that the people of a country will be on their own during a military intervention while Western countries will try to continue business as usual with the junta regime. When the coup attempt took place on July 15, the memories of the coup in Egypt were still fresh in the social psyche of the Turkish people.

In addition to the impact of these factors, there were several other important reasons for the active participation of thousands of individuals in the resistance against the coup attempt in Turkey. The confrontation that took place on the night of July 15 can also be interpreted as a result of the delayed social response to previous military interventions in Turkey. As mentioned previously, the Turkish public typically responded to coups with silence and obedience to the orders of the junta councils. For instance, even after the execution of charismatic Prime Minister Adnan Menderes in 1960, who had received almost 50 percent of the votes, there were no protests against the coup. Following the 1980 coup, the reaction of Turkish public society was more or less the same. Despite the detention of all of the political figures that had the support of millions of people in Turkey, the public did not

⁴⁰ Kilic Bugra Kanat, “Vice President Biden’s visit to Turkey,” *Daily Sabah*, August 19, 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/columns/kilic-bugra-kanat/2016/08/20/vice-president-bidens-visit-to-turkey>.

demonstrate an immediate resistance to the coup in September 1980. Witnesses of the coup commonly described it as if they had woken up and the military was in power. There was a general understanding that it would be futile to attempt to resist the orders of the military.

During and in the aftermath of the February 28 ‘postmodern coup’ in 1997, there were some rallies against the “recommendations” of the National Security Council. However, the number of demonstrators remained limited and tended to only come from certain groups. More significantly, these demonstrations took place after the adoption of security measures accepted at the National Security Council. For instance, when the military sent tanks in the town of Sincan to threaten the democratically elected civilian government through a show of force in the streets, there was no open confrontation with these tanks and military servicemen. During this process, high ranking members of the military also became very visible social actors. In different social gatherings, including concerts and receptions, higher echelons of the military regularly showed up and made statements against the civilian government. During these public appearances, there were no protests or reactions to the military’s intervention in Turkish politics. Later, Sevket Kazan, who was a deputy of the Welfare Party, which was the main target of the February 28 coup, reported a conversation between himself and Necmettin Erbakan, who had been the prime minister during the soft coup. According to Kazan, he had asked Erbakan to make a speech to call the supporters and sympathizers of the Welfare Party to the streets to demonstrate against the ‘recommendations’ of the National Security Council. However, Erbakan reminded Kazan that during the 1960 coup and after the execution of Menderes, the Turkish people had displayed inaction to the coup and thus such a call would be futile to stop the influence of the military in the politics in Turkey. Later, the organizers of the coup characterized their actions as a ‘postmodern coup’ in which the military utilized public mobilization, the media, and institutions of the state in order to force the democrat-

ically elected government of Turkey to resign.⁴¹ In the various coups prior to 2016, the people's reactions to the coups had presented a clear pattern of acquiescence to military interventions in Turkey.

The July 15 coup attempt represented a dramatic deviation from this pattern of silence, obedience, and consent to the rule of the military. A large segment of the Turkish society went out into the streets to stop the military takeover of the government. Although social media and the impact of President Erdogan were important factors in stopping this attempt, another important factor in this process was the growing public awareness of the historical trend of coups, a development that emerged particularly in the early 2000s. This awareness and debates took place in part as a result of significant political reforms that took place within the framework of the EU integration process after the Helsinki Summit. In this period, the Turkish government took important steps to create conditions guaranteeing active civilian control of the military by changing some institutions that were established by the junta regime in order to provide full control of the civilian government. For instance, the structure of the National Security Council was changed in order to place civilians in the majority of positions.

Another major factor was the increased recognition of the detrimental effects of coups on social and political life as a result of the production of movies and TV series about the previous coups. Starting in the early years of the 2000s, there was almost a sudden explosion of cultural products such as movies and TV series that dealt with the previous coups. Although the last successful coup was considered to be a "postmodern coup," since the architects of this coup were still alive and occupied key positions of power, the producers of these movies and TV series preferred to focus on the 1960 and 1980 coups. Previously, documentaries had been produced on the coups in Turkey and its political history which became extremely popular. However, the new wave of

⁴¹ "28 Şubat post-modern darbesine giden süreç," *Sabah*, February 28, 2016, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/28-subat-postmodern-darbesine-giden-surec>.

coup related popular culture products involved in particular movies and TV series that gathered large audiences.

For Turkish people of different generations, these products of popular culture represented different meanings. For the generation who actually experienced the coup and its aftermath, these movies and series recalled memories from the past and the trauma of military interventions. The interruption of their lives by the coup was probably the most significant dimension of this remembering. For the younger generation, on the other hand, the movies and TV series visualized the impact of coups on social life. For many years, this impact had been discussed in different circles but these movies helped the trauma become more understandable particularly for the younger generation.⁴² These films and TV series contributed to the public's understanding of the years of military interventions and junta regimes, even among those who had never lived through those periods.

The topic of the coup was initially more prevalent among the more conservative segments of the society, which had been the target of the last two military interventions; the February 28 postmodern coup and the April 27 e-memorandum. However, other groups in Turkey increasingly became interested, especially with the diversification of these popular culture products. Initially, predominantly former leftists and liberals started to show interest in these movies as the main protagonists tended to be leftist young men and women who were brutally beaten and tortured under military rule. Later, other victims of the coups in Turkey also started to provide their own narratives of their suffering under the same junta regimes. As a result, a deeply coup-sensitive population emerged in Turkey prior to the July 15 coup attempt, which aroused a widespread sentiment of “never again” in regards to military interventions in Turkish politics. The stories were violent, harsh, and disruptive to the lives of ordinary people and the junta re-

⁴² See Ozan Tekin, “Factories of Memory: Remembering the 12 September Military Coup In Beynelmillel and Bu Son Olsun,” (2012), for further discussion.

gimes were depicted as unfair, repressive, dark, and full of torture and inhumane treatment. This dark picture of the coup periods was crucially important in uncovering and remembering the negative legacy of the successful military interventions. In this article, some examples of products of popular culture and the related emergence of the anti-military intervention discourse will be discussed in order to explain the rapid reaction of the people against the coup attempt on July 15.

TURKISH PUBLIC'S ATTITUDE TOWARD PREVIOUS COUPS

The coups have been an important determinant of social and political life in Turkey. Since the beginning of multiparty democracy in Turkey, the military interventions have been a constant phenomenon of political life. The military involved itself in Turkish politics under numerous different circumstances for various reasons, leading to a traumatized society which had different type of memories in regards to the coups and junta regimes in Turkey. The inhumane treatment of political prisoners and violation of the rights of individuals under martial law left deep scars in the minds of the Turkish people.⁴³ Political figures who went through torture and mistreatment often talked about their experiences and memories from the days of the military junta. From both the political left and right, almost all of the major political figures experienced some form of this treatment. Yet, this trauma had been often a less visible part of social life. For many years, memories of the junta years seldom found a large audience. Some of the movies that depicted the violence and repression of the coups and the junta regimes were either prohibited by the state or found only a limited audience, often among more educated classes of Turkish people. Debates and discussions about the coups and the junta regimes did not constitute a predominant issue for the ordinary people. Of course, this also had

⁴³ See Elifcan Karacan, "Remembering the 1980 Turkish Military Coup d'État," (2016), for further discussion.

something to do with the strength of the institutions that the coup makers established following the 1980 coup. The state apparatus made it difficult for the people to commemorate junta days. Years of dramatic change along with economic development and growth during the tenure of Turgut Ozal in the 1980s contributed to this period of amnesia. Thus, closure about the trauma of the coup did not happen for many years.

The fact that the 1980 coup took place after a civil war that cost the lives of thousand from both the right and the left made some citizens even willingly adopt this selective amnesia. In fact, the trauma of the civil war in the 1970s mostly overshadowed the coup and the junta regime that came in its aftermath. When most people spoke of the coup, they inadvertently started to talk about the 1970s and often commended the military for stopping the “bloodshed” and “anarchy” of these years. Many people compared the chaos of 1970s with the stability of 1980s and considered the coup to be the lesser evil. This situation was of course in part a result of the indoctrination of the public by the instruments of the state. As a result of the successful adoption of this policy, for a long time after the coup, Turkish society could not directly come to terms with the trauma of the coup. There were not many products of popular culture during this period about the coup and its aftermath. The outflow of intellectuals from Turkey also contributed to this lack of productions. Many prominent political elites from the left and right wing of the Turkish political spectrum left and settled in different countries around Europe. Although they did not have to confront the military in person, they told the stories of their friends and other victims of the coup in these countries. Thus, they carried the trauma of the coup to these countries and formed groups to support each other in the diaspora.

The failure to confront the military once more during the postmodern coup of February 28, 1997, generated yet another major shock to Turkish society. Yet again, the military intended to engineer social and

religious life in Turkey by establishing strong regulations. The National Security Council's "recommendations" generated a new trauma particularly for the more conservative segments of the society. The adoption of a strict ban against wearing headscarves in the colleges and the regulation of the Imam Hatip schools forced a generation, in particular female students, to drop their dreams for their future.⁴⁴ The Western world's silence against the coup and military interventions only further alienated the Turkish public from the Western world. According to many in Turkey, the Western countries endorsed the military by failing to criticize the intervention by the military, which strengthened the already existing skepticism in regards to the Western countries' position about coups and their commitment to democracy. During this period, another debate started about how long the period of military tutelage would continue. The Chief of Staff Kivrikoglu responded to these debates by stating that the effects of the February 28 intervention would continue for "1000 years," indicating the military's intention to exert influence over civilian politics endlessly.⁴⁵

After the beginning of the EU integration process following the Helsinki Summit in 1999, Turkey entered a new era of democratization and political reform. Most of the EU's requirements for active civilian control of the military were fulfilled by the Turkish government in a very short period of time. The military found itself in a serious dilemma. For years, the military had considered itself to be the bastion of modernity and Westernization in Turkey. The military not only presented itself as the first Westernized institution in the country but also considered Westernization to be its institutional mission, and at the same time, the source of its legitimacy. With the EU reform process, the military found the Westernization process at

⁴⁴ Bülent Arınç, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, Avni Özgürel, and Fehmi Kuru, "Bin Yıllık Darbe": 28 Şubat," *The SETA Foundation*, no. 5 (February 2013).

⁴⁵ Abdullah Kilic, "Kıvrıkoğlu'dan Ecevit'e: '28 Şubat daha bitmedi!'," *Haberturk*, February 28, 2012, <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/720006-kivrikoglugdan-ecivite-28-subat-daha-bitmedi->.

odds with its corporate interests. The changes in the composition of the National Security Council and several other political reforms that took place during this period brought active civilian control of the military into the legal framework, though the military demonstrated that it still had expansive influence in Turkish politics. At critical junctures of the political reform process, the Turkish military made sure that its voice was heard and its opinions were taken into consideration by the civilian government.

One of the most pivotal confrontations between the Turkish military and the civilian government in the new millennium took place during the 2007 presidential elections. Amid demonstrations by those who opposed the election of a president from the AK Party, the military once again stepped in and released a memorandum expressing “sensitivity and concern” of the Turkish military about secularism in Turkey.⁴⁶ There was general surprise among large segments of Turkish society, because the political reforms were thought to have ended the military’s superior role in Turkish politics. While such an intervention was hoped for by some, a great majority of the society thought that the period of military interventions was over. The government’s response to the memorandum was very assertive, describing the situation as unacceptable in a democracy. The response also reiterated that the Chief of Staff was supposed to be an institution under the control of the civilian government and that its roles and mission were described in the constitution, including the fact that the Chief of Staff takes their orders directly from the government.⁴⁷ This was the first time that a Turkish government reacted so strongly to a military intervention. While the societal reaction followed the reaction of the government, it was not definitive in confronting the military’s involvement and interference in

⁴⁶ “Excerpts of Turkish Army Statement,” *BBC News*, April 28, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6602775.stm>.

⁴⁷ “27 Nisan Bildirisi’ne tepkiler nasıldı?,” *Dunya Bulteni*, April 27, 2012, <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/haber/207705/27-nisan-bildirisine-tepkiler-nasildi->

the presidential elections. Instead, the Turkish public preferred to go with the standard reaction and waited until the referendum and early elections to respond.

In the elections, the AK Party increased its vote share by 12 percent from 34 percent in 2002 to 46 percent. Following this, the government decided to take up the issue of presidential elections, which had become one of the bottlenecks of the Turkish parliamentary system in Turkey and had previously provided the military grounds for interventions. Especially before the 1980 coup, the inability of the parliament to elect a president was considered a serious cause of the coup by the putschists. In order to prevent another instance of military intervention, the government took action by calling a referendum on an amendment to the constitution to directly elect the president by a popular vote. 69 percent of the people voted “yes” in this referendum, which was interpreted as the Turkish people’s opposition to military intervention and a direct response to the April 27 memorandum.

EVOLUTION OF POPULAR CULTURE AND PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF COUPS

In the ten-year period between the military intervention in 2007 and the coup attempt of July 15 there were obviously significant changes in the behavior of the Turkish public. As mentioned above, while the Turkish public avoided a direct confrontation with the Turkish military following the publication of the memorandum in 2007, the Turkish public of 2016 chose to confront the tanks and artillery of the putschists. Whatever changed in the sociology of the Turkish people during this period indicated a dramatic transformation of civil-military relations in the country. While the elected officials resisted the coup attempt and led the Turkish public in 2007, large segments of society came out in direct resistance against a more direct military coup attempt even before politicians made statements in 2016. Social media and the impact of Erdogan’s call for the mobilization

of masses were important determinants of this sudden outpour of the people to the streets. However, there was also more widespread recognition among the Turkish people in regards to the impact of coups on society. One of the most significant instruments that made this recognition possible were the products of popular culture that were produced in Turkey and widely circulated in these first years of the new millennium. Although they were not the only determinant of this change, these movies and series generated serious discussions about the effects of coups over the society.

Coups and military interventions have been an important topic in the movies of many countries that have suffered under junta regimes. The movies on coups in Latin America have been an especially important subgenre of this field. Movies such as Andres Wood's *Machuca* (2004), Luis Puenzo's *The Official Story* (1985) and Costa Gavras's *Missing* (1982) reached audiences numbering in the millions. In Turkey, this genre blossomed in a much later period. The boom period of movies on coups and military interventions overlapped with the sudden growth in the film industry in Turkey. During this period, different TV series became one of the most important export goods of Turkey. Due to the immense volume of audience and viewership in other countries, some scholars even started to call Turkish soap operas the new "soft power" of Turkey.⁴⁸ They were also considered by some scholars as instruments of public diplomacy.⁴⁹

Movies and TV series also played different social functions in Turkey. Especially in regards to the political history of Turkey, some TV series became the most significant source of remembering and commemorating. These movies also impacted the public perception of

⁴⁸ Owen Matthews, "Turkish Soap Operas Are Sweeping the Middle East," *Newsweek*, September 5, 2011, <http://www.newsweek.com/turkish-soap-operas-are-sweeping-middle-east-67403>.

⁴⁹ B. Senem Cevik, "Turkish soap opera diplomacy: A western projection by a Muslim source," *Exchange: The Journal of Public Diplomacy* 5, no. 1 (2014): 6, <http://surface.syr.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=exchange>.

the coups and the significantly impacted the relationship of Turkish society with the military juntas. One of the most significant of these roles was in changing the public perception of the junta commanders and shaping the perception of the military coups. The military and its interventions were long considered to be “red lines” that should not be violated by any other institution or sector of the society. Large segments of society avoided any direct criticism of the coups and the generals that were involved in the coup, allowing the putschists to enjoy relative immunity from criticism. In addition to the constitution crafted after the 1980 coup, the norms that were established as a result of society’s fear of the putschists played a role in shaping these standards. Some of the movies of this period played an important role in destroying the threshold of fear over the society and normalizing civil-military relations in the country. Instead of being an object of fear and silent grievance, the putschists and elements of the junta regimes turned out to be an element that could even be ridiculed by the Turkish society.

The comedy movies whose scripts revolved around the periods of military interventions played an important role in this process. These comedy films, such as *Vizontele Tuuba*, which tells the story of a town in Anatolia before and during the coup of 1980, became instrumental in presenting the ridiculousness of the attitude and mode of thinking of those who claimed to save the state by organizing the military coup. In this movie, the military and the repressive state apparatus before the coup became a source of comedy and an object of satire. This repression was ridiculed together with the ignorance of the people representing the state in this town. For instance, a political dissident from a big city was sent to serve as the head librarian in a town without a library. In another scene, the commander of the military post in the town, after arrest of the leftists due to the infighting among the different factions in the town, had a conversation with the elected mayor of the city who came to ask that the detainees be pardoned.

Mayor: Be generous and sort this out without going to the court. Most are from the leading families of our city.

Commander: What are they thinking? Both the local small-town jokers and the big city ringleaders. Who do they think they are? They want socialism. God. If it was any good, the state would create it!

Commander then turns to the librarian

Commander: You're the library director?

Librarian: That's right.

Commander: What kind of books do you have?

Librarian: We don't have any yet.

Commander: Then there is nothing for me to worry about. Even you will do a decent job there.⁵⁰

The commander in a short scene was portrayed as a person that lacked basic reasoning with a very bad temper. In other parts of the movie, some other putschists were also represented as paranoid and ignorant. Towards the end of the movie, the coup of 1980 took place. Immediately after the coup, most of the political figures in the town were rounded up by the military. As the librarian was also among those who were arrested, his wife and his daughter had to leave for Istanbul. The joker of the town Deli Emin (Mad Emin), who had a crush on the librarian's daughter, wrote her name TUUBA on the mountain while she was leaving the town. At the end of the movie a bunch of soldiers try to decipher the name since they think it is an abbreviation of a political group.

Soldier: Commander, our friend fixed it up right. "The Turkish National Civilized Peace Academy."

Commander: Letters have to go or else you will go.

Beynelmilel (International), which was produced in 2006, is another example of movies that satirized the post-coup period and the rule of junta regime. Set in Adiyaman during the rule of the junta council in

⁵⁰ The translation is from the subtitles on Netflix.

1982, a group of local musicians who used to “illegally” perform were detained and forced to perform in the parade welcoming the members of the junta council. In one of the tragicomic scenes, after the martial law command center prohibited some of the most popular local songs most probably because they are in the Kurdish language, the locals insist that the musicians play these songs at a wedding. As a solution, the musicians try to play these songs “silently” and those who want to dance with these songs dance “silently” as well. There is a prevalent fear among everybody in town including the musicians. So, the moment they see some soldiers patrolling in town they start playing national marches loudly in order to avoid the anger of the commanders. The scene brings to mind the anthropological case studies of other authoritarian regimes that found that people try to act as if they obey the rules regardless of how ridiculous it sounds but in the meantime they also find different ways to demonstrate resistance to the repression and at the same time not to be caught by the authorities.⁵¹ The situation that the martial law created in the movie leads to a similar form of symbolic politics by the citizens of the town as they try to find different ways to maneuver around the limitations and prohibitions adopted by the junta regime and live normal lives. The tragicomedy of the movie provides a clear-eyed portrayal of the junta regime in Turkey in the 1980s.

The commander of the martial law in *Beynelmilel* also decreed that the local folk music was prohibited and asked the musicians of the town to become “an orchestra” and to play “modern music” in town, even making the local musicians play tango for military balls. The paradoxical relation of the military regimes in Turkey with the modernization and Westernization was a frequently repeated issue that was raised by scholars of civil-military relations in Turkey. The movie also portrays this awkward situation of forced cultural westernization of the people

⁵¹ Lisa Wedeen, “Acting “As If”: Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 40, no. 3 (1998): 503-23, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/179273>.

of Anatolia. The movie also portrays the negligence of the commanders in town in the midst of this forced westernization. In a critical part of the movie, the local musicians played the “International”, a left-wing anthem at the march welcoming the junta council. After they claimed that they composed the music and dedicated it to the council, they received no protest from the commander, who obviously did not know about this song. When the council members arrived, they figured out the music is actually a leftist anthem and considered it to be a conspiracy against the military council in Turkey.

These portrayals of the junta regimes generated an important factor for breaking the threshold of fear over the society. Just like in other instances, humor became an important instrument of resistance in movies against the junta regimes.⁵² This definitely played an important role later in the societal perception of putschists in Turkey. Another frequent topic of these movies was the interruption of the lives of ordinary people during coups. Although few movies of the previous decade made about the coups focused on the lives of the political characters and their suffering under the military junta, the new generation of movies focused on the lives of ordinary people during this period. One of the most popular among those has been the TV series called *Seksenler*, which has been running on Turkish televisions since 2012. Directed by Murat Aras and Birol Guven, the series presents the lives of ordinary Turkish people in an ordinary town in Turkey in the 1980s. Most of the characters are from the lower middle class of Turkish society and most are fairly apolitical. Until the coup of September 12, other than the seldom appearance of several political figures from the left and right of the political spectrum, everybody is merely trying to make ends meet in the neighborhood. However, the coup on the night of the September 12 significantly altered the

⁵² Majken Jul Sorensen, “Humor as a Serious Strategy of Nonviolent Resistance to Oppression,” *Peace & Change: A Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 2 (2008): 167–190, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0130.2008.00488.x/abstract>.

lifestyles of the people. In addition to the political figures, some apolitical personalities in the movie were also detained by the police. The martial law and curfew altered the general atmosphere of the town. The coup ended the cheerfulness of the people as the prohibitions even limited the celebratory gatherings, darkening the mood in the neighborhood. The families with young children became extremely concerned following the arbitrary arrests of young men without any form of political or ideological allegiance. For the commander who started to run the affairs in the town, everything became cause for suspicion. The name of books and the shape of the beards of individuals could be a cause for the arrest. The houses of the ordinary people were searched and since all political books were considered illegal, people started to burn their books. The questions of the martial law commanders became increasingly unreasonable and illogical, making it difficult for people to respond. The tragicomedy becomes obvious when one of the theatre students from the town, Niyazi, who did not know that the coup had occurred, was arrested as a result of arbitrariness and ignorance of the commander.

Commander: Give me your ID? What are these books all about?

Niyazi: These books are all Shakespeare. The sonatas of Shakespeare.

Commander's aide: Commander, the face resembles to a communist.

Commander: Whose face?

Commander's aide: Shakespeare's.

Niyazi: Commander no. Shakespeare is not a communist. He is a humanist.

Commander's aide: What is humanist.

Niyazi tries to explain humanist. While explaining he reads the 66th sonata of the Shakespeare. There are "dangerous" words in this sonata such as poverty, labor and cowards.

Commander's aide: He said poverty and he claimed that we are cowards.

Commander: Did he tell coward to us?

Commander's aide: Yes sir. He is definitely a separatist. Shall we arrest him? The lieutenant asks us to arrest at least 150 today.

Commander: Arrest him.

Niyazi's desperation and the commander's carelessness represented a picture of Turkish society during the coup. Among the people in town, there was a silent opposition to what was happening. Many in the neighborhood were very critical in private but in front of the soldiers they became very obedient. For more than a season, the series told stories of the changes in the lives of ordinary people. Those who were detained were interrogated and most of them were tortured or faced enhanced interrogation techniques. When they left the prison, many came back with significant psychological scars. The people in town all witnessed this change in the life of these political prisoners.

In *Vizontele Tuuba* and *Beynelmilel*, the lives of the people following the coup were never the same due to the dramatic impact of the coup on almost every aspect of their lives. One of the most notable movies of this genre was *Babam ve Oglum* (2005), directed by Cagan Irmak, which presented the effect of the September 12 coup on the life a single family. In the movie, the wife of the leftist political character had to deliver her baby in a park on the night of September 12 because of the curfew and impossibility of finding a car or an ambulance. During the delivery, she died and shortly after that the husband was imprisoned because of his political background. He left the prison extremely ill and had to leave his child to his parents, with whom he did not have relations because of his political activities before he died. The movie depicts the loss of a generation - both wife and husband- because of the military coup of September 12.⁵³

This impact of the coup and junta regime on the daily life of the people was also presented in the movie *Bu Son Olsun* (2012), directed by Orcun Benli, which told the story of five homeless people living on

⁵³ See Ozan Tekin, "Factories of Memory: Remembering the 12 September Military Coup In *Beynelmilel* and *Bu Son Olsun*," (2012), for further discussion.

the streets during and after the coup. The homeless five find themselves in an awkward position when they are arrested accidentally and sent to prison because of their violation of the curfew. They try to survive in the prison by following different tactics. In a short period of time, it became a comedy of errors. The military regime was once more presented as violent, aggressive, and harsh.⁵⁴ This notion is also seen in some other movies such as *Hukümet Kadın* (2013), directed by Sermiyan Midyat, although it did not deal directly with the military coup. At the end of the movie, the impact of the coup over the lives of the people in the village turns out to be dramatic. The dynamism of social and political life in the village was dramatically disrupted following the coup.

Produced concurrently with these movies were an increasing number of TV series on the coups which also had significant effects on the perception of the military coups in the minds of the Turkish people. These long-running series generated a great deal of debate and discussion among the Turkish people. The increasing quality of the film industry in Turkey drew a broad audience that was reintroduced to the subject matter. Especially for the younger generation who did not witness the coup of September 12, these series were a way of learning about the coup and junta regime. In addition to *Seksenler*, which is mentioned above, there was a number of similar TV series that were broadcast during this period. *Cemberimde Gul Oya* (2004-2005), directed by Cagan Irmak, was one of the first TV series in this genre. Although the series primarily focused on the lives of people in the late 1970s, it also demonstrated the impact the coup had on their lives. The fear of the people during the coup of 1980 made the rounds in different debates and in discussion platforms, forcing people to rethink the political developments of the 1970s.

Hatirla Sevgili (2006-2008), directed by Ummu Burhan and Faruk Tebes and produced shortly after *Cemberimde Gul Oya*, became a ma-

⁵⁴ See Ozan Tekin, "Factories of Memory: Remembering the 12 September Military Coup in Beynelmillel and Bu Son Olsun," (2012), for further discussion.

major hit in Turkey. *Hatirla Sevgili* was the story of several families during the most tumultuous periods of Turkish history during the last years of the Adnan Menderes' term as Prime Minister. It covered the coup of 1960 and the execution of Adnan Menderes and his colleagues in Yassıada in the first season. In the following seasons, it covered the 1970s and the civil war that Turkey went through. The series eventually covered the coup of 1980, drawing major attention to this period of Turkish history and the coups in Turkey. It was watched by millions, and like *Cemberimde Gul Oya*, it launched major debates on the political history of Turkey. It sparked a further recognition of the legacy of the coups and their impact on ordinary families as well as raising serious questions about political developments in those years.

Shortly after the end of *Hatirla Sevgili*, "*Bu Kalp Seni Unutur mu?*" (2009), directed by Aydin Bulut, was launched due to high demand from Turkish audiences. "*Bu Kalp Seni Unutur mu*" aimed to present the years between the junta regime and the new millennium. Although the series was cut short due to production problems, the first episodes of this drama focused on the repression and violence under the junta regime. Throughout the series, the torture detainees experienced was a prominent topic. All of these TV series were followed by large audiences in Turkey and each episode generated major discussions about the coups.

Through all of these movies and TV series, Turkish people were able to understand the potential impact of the coups over their daily life. They realized that one does not need to be actively involved in politics in order to be a victim of the repression of the junta regimes. The unfairness and unruliness of the coups made everyone in the country a potential usual suspect. A high number of people during this period were wrongly accused by the military courts and sentenced to years of prison terms. Those who were detained were never the same again. The physical and psychological scars of the coup to the society and individuals became a frequently addressed topic in these movies.

REJECTION OF TORTURE AND INHUMANE TREATMENT

Another very important feature of these movies and series on the coup during this period was the torture and inhumane treatment of political prisoners. As in *Seksenler*, *Bu Son Olsun*, and other movies, the torture of political prisoners became a very frequently repeated phenomenon. While the lives of the ordinary people in the movies were disrupted, the mental and physical health of the imprisoned people went through dramatic deterioration. Torture scenes and graphic imagery of interrogations became common in these movies. For instance, in one of the first scenes of *O... Cocuklari* (2008), directed by Murat Saracoglu, there is a graphic image of political prisoners being tortured, threatened, and killed by the interrogators. The movie takes place in Istanbul in 1981, shortly after the coup. It is a story of a young couple wanted by the police who are trying to flee Turkey. The movie starts with a torture scene in which one of the prisoners cannot take it anymore and dies in the interrogation room. The interrogators then throw him from the balcony of the police station in order to present it as a suicide. Although the second prisoner does not appear again, it is obvious for those who are running from the security forces that his fate will not be much different.

In another movie *Eve Donus* (2006), directed by Omer Ugur, the torture and inhumane treatment under the junta regime was the main focus of the movie. The movie not only presented a very dramatic and graphic picture of torture in the prisons during this period but also demonstrated tortured people's trauma even after they left the prisons. It is a story of a wrongly detained prisoner and the torture he went through during his detention. After his release, he became a broken personality and went through significant signs of post-traumatic stress syndrome with hallucinations and dreams. The movie was released on the 17th anniversary of the September 12 coup. It was intended to remind the millennials of the violence and challenges that the previ-

ous generation went through under the junta regime. When a similar movie, *Gulun Bittigi Yer* (1999), which also focused on the torture of a wrongly detained prisoner, was released in 1999, it was censored shortly after its release. However, the theme of torture became a very frequently mentioned theme in the movies in 2000s.

Most of these movies portrayed the leftists in Turkey as the primary victim of the 1980 coup and its aftermath. Although the audience of these movies were the general public, the more nationalist segments of the society preferred to stay away from these movies. However, the nationalists were also among the victims of the military coups in Turkey. The September 12 coup and the junta regime caused significant trauma for Turkish nationalist groups also, and it was sometimes more dramatic than the shock to the leftists. For many years, the violence and torture that the detained nationalists experienced was not common knowledge. While there were some low budget movies which portrayed the torture and mistreatment that the leftists went through by the 1990s, the nationalists of the 1980s usually told their stories in private gatherings. One of the most dramatic and widely circulated of these was the torture of Muhsin Yazicioglu in Ulucanlar prison.⁵⁵ He frequently told the stories of his prison days to the media, arguing that the nationalists went through the same form of inhumane treatment by the junta regime as the leftists did.

More recently, popular culture products that focus on nationalists during and after the coup have also been produced. One such movie is *Kafes* (2015), directed by Mahmut Kaplan. The torture and inhumane treatment of nationalist prisoners by the junta regime in Ulucanlar Prison is the focal point of the movie. Although the movie did not get a very positive critical reception, it was one of the first to demonstrate the impact that the junta had on the lives of many nationalists and their families, an important milestone collective remembrance of the

⁵⁵ "Yazicioğlu'na yapılan işkenceler," *Sabah*, June 15, 2012, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2012/06/15/yaziciogluna-yapilan-iskenceler>.

military regime by the nationalists in Turkey. While the nationalists thought that they were fighting against the leftists in Turkey in order to protect the state, the military junta turned the oppressive apparatus of the state against the nationalists as well. Thus, in addition to the trauma of the torture and imprisonment of the junta regime, the nationalists felt betrayed by the state.

COLLAPSE OF THE MYTH OF SEPTEMBER 12, 1980 COUP

In another movie *Ankara Yazı- Veda Mektubu* (2016), directed by Kemal Uzun, the main theme was the story of Mustafa Pehlivanoglu, the first nationalist victim of the junta council who was executed in the aftermath of the coup. Although he maintained on numerous occasions that his statement was taken under harsh torture during the interrogation and that he was innocent, the judge gave him the death penalty. The junta council approved this harsh punishment immediately after the coup. Later in a documentary on the coup, the leader of the coup General Evren argued that they were trying to be fair in the executions by maintaining a form of “balanced executions,” one left and one from the right. Later, other documentaries also focused on the nationalists in Turkey and the impact of the junta regimes on them. Because of the investigations of the nationalists in the 1940s and the torture they went through during their interrogations, the nationalists were familiar with the issue. However, the debates around the September 12 coup further raised the issue of torture and inhumane treatment they experienced.

Both the widespread torture and inhumane treatment at the prisons became a symbol of the September 12 coup for all political groups across the spectrum. It was an important moment for these groups when Ulucanlar Prison was converted into a museum to commemorate the victims of the September 12 coup. Since September 12 and its aftermath had been reintroduced into the collective memory of Turkish society, the junta and the coup had been remembered only temporal-

ly as a period of violence, repression, and torture. However, with the beginning of the commemorations of September 12 and the opening of different exhibitions and Ulucanlar Museum, it gained a spatial dimension as well.⁵⁶ Similarly, Yassiada, where the victims of the 1960 coup, most prominently former Prime Minister Adnan Menderes, were imprisoned and executed, was converted in a site of remembrance for those years. Later, when their bodies were moved to Istanbul, a memorial was erected to memorialize these victims of the 1960 coup.

HIJACKING OF THE TURKISH PUBLIC'S ANTI-COUP ATTITUDE

Of course, an important development in these years was the referendum of 2010 which took place on the anniversary of the September 12 coup attempt. The constitutional amendment that was voted on in the referendum changed the institutions and rules that had been established in order to consolidate military control of the civilian government. The jurisdiction of the military courts was constrained and the decisions of the Higher Military Council were made subject to judicial review following the referendum. Most importantly, the temporary Article 15 of the constitution, which made it impossible to prosecute the officers that led the coup of September 12, was annulled as a result of this referendum. Although most members of the council had already passed away, the symbolic dimension of the decision was very important for the Turkish public. During the campaign for the constitutional amendment, then Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan read the last letter of Mustafa Pehlivanoglu and mentioned other victims of the coup from both the political left and right.

This period also overlapped with the beginning of several different coup investigations in Turkey. During this period, it was revealed that some of the generals within the military were planning to organize a

⁵⁶ See Elifcan Karacan, "Remembering the 1980 Turkish Military Coup d'État," (2016), for further discussion.

coup against the government, which was reportedly stopped by then Chief of Staff General Hilmi Ozkok. Later, when asked about the reports, General Ozkok neither confirmed nor denied the allegations of a coup plan prepared by former General Sener Eruygur.⁵⁷ A large investigation was launched during this period, called Ergenekon, in which people from different sectors of society, including former generals, were prosecuted. The process of the investigation attracted a lot of interest from the Turkish public and gained huge support from large segments of the society. It was considered an important instance of societal reckoning with the coups and military intervention into Turkish politics. Most of the prosecutions at that time were run by the Gulenist prosecutors and police officers who gained public recognition and praise from large segments of society.

However, the investigation soon lost its earlier motivation and started to become more controversial. The public started to react to the waves of arrests and allegations of the wrongdoings of the prosecutors began to be reported in the media. Although it was initially believed to be a reckoning with the history of military coups, the investigations disappointingly turned into power play by the Gulenist prosecutors. Later, it was revealed that some of the investigations into a number of the officers were intended to pave the way for the fast track promotion of Gulenist officers within the military. In addition to the coup planners, some other officers were put in the same basket and arrested by the courts.

This hijacking of the coup investigations hurt the opportunity of the Turkish people to settle their accounts with the coup plotters in Turkey. In a paradoxical turn of events, when the Gulenists were regarded as a national security threat by the Turkish government, those who had taken advantage of the Ergenekon trials and were promoted rapidly became the organizers of the coup attempt on July 15, 2016.

⁵⁷ Fikret Bila, "Hilmi Özkök: Ne vardır, ne yoktur derim," *Milliyet*, July 9, 2008, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/-/fikret-bila/siyaset/siyasetyazardetay/09.07.2008/891400/default.htm>.

It turned out that the group was organized within the military and formed a separate chain of command that critically hurt the integrity and harmony of the Turkish military. On the night of the coup attempt, they faced the very strong reaction of the Turkish people against the coups, coup attempts, and any grouping that aimed to generate a parallel structure outside to run the affairs of the state. The investigations into the FETO structure within the military and other state institutions, established in the wake of the coup attempt, are still ongoing.

CONCLUSION

The Turkish people's brave reaction to the coup on July 15 will be discussed and studied for the foreseeable future by scholars. For those scholars who study and write about the nonviolent resistance to repression and tyranny, the sudden, unorganized, and unplanned reaction of the Turkish people against the putschists of July 15 will be an important case to study. The fact that the Turkish people continued to resist the coup through nonviolent means despite armed assault from the putschists and constant provocations was an emblematic instance of nonviolent resistance around the world. Just like the "Tank Man" of the Tiananmen Square incidents, the Turkish people that night stood in front of tanks with their bare hands and demonstrated with utmost courage to protect their rights and their children's future. The interviews with those who attended these rallies and demonstrations show genuine motivations of the ordinary people in regards to democracy and their rights. As many foreign observers privately or publicly admitted, nobody was expecting such resilient resistance against the putschists from the Turkish people.

The commitment of the Turkish people to their rights and their support for the democratically elected government during such a critical time will be a landmark case in terms of civil-military relations in countries with histories of coups and military interventions. This "never again" moment demonstrated that in addition to legal

and constitutional reforms, constraints and limitations, there is a need for the civil society to oppose military interventions in the political sphere. The reaction of the people demonstrated that the Turkish people reached a point where it no longer considered coups to be legitimate actions and instead saw them as something that needed to be averted as soon as possible. Instead of waiting to respond in the first elections for the first time Turkish people decided to stop it even before it could succeed.

There will be many debates in regards to this sudden outpouring of the people to defend their democracy. As mentioned above, social media and the president's exhortation for public mobilization will be among the most frequently stated causes of it. However, there are also some other causes of the resistance of the Turkish people. The impact of the products of popular culture on the coups and military interventions which were released over the last two decades in Turkey is one of those causes that may not be mentioned as much. Collective remembrance of the junta periods in the movies and TV series made their dangers easier to recognize and understand for people, even those who did not witness previous coups. As argued in this chapter, through their portrayals of the putschists as characters with significant defects and ridiculousness, these movies made their into less fearsome personalities. This helped the Turkish people overcome the threshold of fear in order to stand against the coup on July 15. Secondly, the impact of the coups on the lives of ordinary people in these movies made it easier to understand the possible aftermath of a coup and the emergence of the junta regime. Because of that mothers and fathers were on the streets in order to protect the future of their children on the night of July 15. Finally, recognizing the torture and inhumanity of the behavior of the putschists against the Turkish people left a major mark on the people in Turkey. It was a past that was reproduced by the popular culture and a past that people in Turkey does not want to live or experience again. Understanding of this

history made the Turkish people more determined in their resistance against the coup.

It should also be remembered that for Turkish people, the resistance against the putschists was more than their reaction to the coup. Turkish people that night fought against all forms of the tutelage system that held Turkish politics hostage for decades. The tutelary regime in previous decades used different instruments of the state in order to shape public opinion and engineer popular will in the country. In the 1990s, the judiciary shut down political parties and tried to punish political leaders that earned the votes of millions of citizens. The military coups used the judiciary to try and even execute political leaders in the coups. The intervention of outside actors in Turkish politics generated serious reactions among the people. When the December 17-25 operations took place against the government, the operations were perceived by the society as a political intervention of the judiciary and police and an attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Turkey. The debates about the parallel state structure became prevalent as a result of these operations. It was never considered an acceptable form of intervention. The state's attempt to eliminate any form of parallel structure within the government elicited major support from society during this period. Soon after, many investigations that were run by the same group came under skepticism. When the July 15th coup attempt took place, the actions of the Gulenists became suspect even before the investigations against the coup plotters started. The fact that a predominant majority of Turkish society resisted the coup and opposed the Gulenists' intervention in politics demonstrated that there is no tolerance among the Turkish people for the tutelage system. Participation by the relatively low number of officers in the coup attempt demonstrates that large segments of the military also understood Turkish people's broad opposition to coups and military interventions.

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THIRD

SECURITY AND
FOREIGN POLICY



CHAPTER 8

**NEITHER REALIST NOR LIBERAL:
TURKEY'S FOREIGN AID POLICY
DURING THE AK PARTY ERA***

VEYSEL KURT**

INTRODUCTION

One of the most important indicators of Turkey's increasing active-ness in foreign policy in the past fifteen years is the performance it has displayed in foreign aid. During the term in which factors such as competition, conflict, alliance and power accumulation are the underlying aims of international politics, a serious increase can be noted in Turkey's development and humanitarian assistance. Increasing trend in Turkey's foreign aid did not slowdown dramatically in times of COVID-19 breakout in spite of economic constriction around the world. Turkey has sent aid, medical supplies, and protective equipment to five continents, including countries badly hit by the virus, such as the UK, Italy, and Spain, US, Somalia, Sudan, Iraq and many others.

The aim of this article is to assess and evaluate Turkey's foreign aid strategy in reference to the questions below. Would one country help another without expecting any benefit in return? If so, what's the reason for this? Is foreign aid an aspect of foreign policy or is it an act that

* First Version of this article appeared in "AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı Dış Politika, Seta Kitapları, (491 – 508), 2017.

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should be assessed independently due to its humanitarian dimension? In this regard, how should Turkey's rapidly increasing foreign assistance be assessed? Foreign aid is an issue that is debated on both theoretical and practical levels of international politics.

Because of its geographical location and historical ties, Turkey maintains intense relations with the Islamic or Turkish, or on a narrow understanding, old Ottoman geography. Besides the fact that these countries under this category are important in terms of global geopolitics, they are also positioned as Turkey's hinterland. From the aspect of foreign aid, it is not right to position this region or countries in the same context. Especially countries in the Middle East that are rich in terms of oil and natural gas have remained outside of the scope of foreign aid. However, due to the civil wars and conflicts that have occurred in the Middle East in the past years, and due to the need of urgent humanitarian assistance, Turkey has also deployed a helping hand to countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Libya.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) are two important references for research in the issue of foreign aid. The scope of ODA is expressed in the following way: Provided by any official state agency, the assistance made is administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of the receiving country and that the aid is concessional in character and conveys a grant element of at least 25%. The assistance is made through international organizations.¹ There is no difference between humanitarian assistance and development aid. Assistance for development is made for the long-term, and is concerned with the technical, social and economic developments of a country. Humanitarian assistance on the other hand aims to compensate the emergency need required during events such as natural di-

¹“Official Development Assistance – Definition and Coverage”, <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/officialdevelopmentassistancedefinitionandcoverage.htm>, (Date of Access: 20 June 2017).

sasters or wars. However, the re-structure of infrastructure after such disasters or the assistance made in areas such as health are also taken under the heading of development aid. Thus it is necessary to state that although these two headings are observed separately from time to time, the ODA also includes data from humanitarian assistance. Development aid can be said to have three main objectives:

- To ensure that citizens in developing countries reach a basic social standard
- To bring the income and welfare of disadvantaged countries closer to developed ones.
- To help and support the developing country in reaching international goods and services.²

The development aid provided by Turkey is divided into two – official and private – and encompasses many different types of assistance under these two headings.³ When looked at from the different objectives pursued, while urgent/humanitarian assistance aims to help solve the humanitarian crises that occurs after a natural disaster, development aid aims to, for instance, develop infrastructure in the long and short term and ensure a sustainability and continuity in services such as health.

THE CONCEPT OF FOREIGN AID

There are various definitions of foreign aid. Morgenthau sees foreign aid as a modern invention under foreign policy and observes foreign aid under six headings: These are humanitarian assistance, subsistence help, bribery, military assistance, prestige assistance and economic development assistance. Morgenthau describes the intersection point of these different types of assistance as “the transfer of money, goods and

² “What is Development Cooperation?”, *2016 Development Cooperation Forum Policy Brief*, February 2015, Volume: 1.

³ For the technical differences of assistance; Nurçin Yıldız, Emre Yüksek, Enver Resuloğlu vd., *Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu 2015, TİKA Yayınları, (2016)* p. 11.

services from one nation to another.” We can conduct a different definition to this and new headings can be added. Technical assistance, project, programme, grants and credit are a couple of these headings. Assessing all these headings may make it difficult to analyse a country’s foreign aid strategy from an institutional perspective. Having been accepted as a tool of global development after the end of the Cold War, foreign aid has been attributed a significant importance.

The fact that foreign aid is used as a factor of foreign policy is not new.⁴ Foreign aids that provided by the U.S. to Venezuela in 1812 and the U.K. to its own colonies in 1929 and 1940 are examples of assistance in the modern age, foreign aid. Nevertheless, the term entered the literature with the start of the Cold War. Foreign aid especially became a mechanism utilized by the two super powers at the time – the U.S. and Soviet Union – with the aim to increase their sphere of influence. During this time, foreign aid went ahead under a security axis. The most striking example is the Truman Doctrine that launched in order to prevent the European continent from falling into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. As part of the Truman Doctrine, most of it being military, Turkey and Greece were foreseen to receive 400 million dollars throughout the span of 3 years.⁵ Thus, this prevented these two countries from becoming close with the Soviet Union and prevented them from going into combat with each other. The Marshall Plan also aimed at preventing European countries from falling into the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. In addition to granting this kind of assistance on the basis that countries in Europe will not go to conflict with each other and will cooperate,⁶ the assistance provided by the U.S. were the first milestones for stability and consolidation in the region.

⁴ The relationship between foreign aid and foreign policy; Meliha Benli Altunışık, “Turkey as an “Emerging Donor” and the Arab Uprisings”, *Mediterranean Politics*, Volume: 19, Is: 3, (2014), p. 335–337.

⁵ Barış Ertem, “Türkiye-ABD İlişkilerinde Truman Doktrini ve Marshall Planı”, *Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, Cilt: 12, Sayı: 21, İstanbul: (June 2009), p. 387.

⁶ Yavuz Güler, “II. Dünya Harbi Sonrası Türk–Amerikan İlişkileri (1945-1950)”, *Gazi Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi*, Volume: 5, Issue: 2, (2004), p. 220.

Likewise, during the Cold War, another important aid that comes to the forefront in terms of U.S. regional strategy was the aid provided to Egypt. The fact that the U.S. has since been providing Egypt 1.3 billion dollars military assistance and around 500 million dollars in economic assistance on an annual basis should not be assessed from a humanitarian or development aid perspective, but rather from the axis of security.⁷ This is because the aid provided by the U.S. to Egypt was directly related to the peace deal with Israel.⁸ As it can be understood from these examples, the foreign aid provided by the U.S. during the Cold War era is directly related to the country's security strategy.

Due to the fact that Turkey's economic and foreign affairs position did not have such a bet, the country was not at the fore of foreign aid until the 1990s. One of the steps taken towards Central Asia states that gained independence with the end of the Cold War was foreign aid. The establishment of TİKA in 1992 was an important step in the institutionalization of foreign aid. Being a recipient of aid during this time, Turkey was not in the position to provide foreign aid due to its economic and political circumstances. However, it is still possible to speak of Embassy missions during the republic years. For instance, in 1957, military aid was provided to Algeria. The first planned foreign aid packet came in 1985 with newly regulated laws and was regulated for Africa. The fact that the packet was prepared and coordinated by the State Planning Organization points to the institutionalization in the field.⁹

⁷ Jeremy M. Sharp, "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", Congressional Research Service Report, 5 Haziran 2014. , p. 16.

⁸ Fuat Sekmen, "Dış Yardım ve Ekonomik Büyüme Arasındaki Karşılıklı İlişkinin Eşbütünleşme ve Granger-Nedensellik Testleri Çerçevesinde İncelenmesi: Mısır Örneği", *Ortadoğu Yılığ 2006*, ed. Kemal İnat, Muhittin Ataman, (Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, Ankara: 2008), p. 500-501.

⁹ "Turkey's Development Cooperation: General Characteristics and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Aspect", http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa, (Date of access: 2 July 2017).

THE THEORETICAL DIMENSION OF FOREIGN AID

The main approaches in international relations have conceptualized foreign aid under three headings. Accordingly, while realists argue that foreign aid should reduce the security risk of the donor country, liberals emphasize humanitarian values.¹⁰ Constructivist perspectives evaluate the issue based on identity. To individually evaluate the positions held by these three paradigms on foreign aid is out of the scope of this study. Therefore, this study will only summarize what foreign aid comes to mean for the main arguments of these paradigms and then will assess Turkey's foreign aid strategy accordingly.

Realists believe that foreign assistance, whether pursued under humanitarian or development aid is a tool of foreign policy and therefore assess this from a profit/security perspective.¹¹ In opposition to this, idealists assess foreign aid in terms of the development of humanitarian values, economic development and democratic values.¹² Constructivist approaches emphasize the role of identity and culture in shaping foreign policy and thus argue that foreign aid comes to the forefront with its identity dimension as part of foreign policy.¹³

Foreign aid has extended 'power' as a term and has caused for its re-definition with different tools.¹⁴ For this reason, foreign aid has been assessed within the scope of power. In this regard, foreign aid can be evaluated within the framework of "soft power" and "smart

¹⁰ Peter J. Schraeder, Steven W. Hook, ve Bruce Taylor, "Clarifying the Foreign Aid Puzzle: A Comparison of American, Japanese, French, and Swedish Aid Flows", *World Politics*, Volume: 50, Issue: 2, (1998), p. 4.

¹¹ Gilles Carbonnier, "Official Development Assistance Once More under Fire from Critics", *International Development Policy*, Volume: 1, (March 2010), p. 2.

¹² John P. Tuman, Craig F. Emmert ve Robert E. Sterken, "Explaining Japanese Aid Policy in Latin America: A Test of Competing Theories", *Political Research Quarterly*, Volume: 54, Issue: 1, (2001), p. 89.

¹³ Tuncay Kardeş ve Ramazan Erdağ, "Bir Dış Politika Aracı Olarak TİKA", *Akademik İncelemeler Dergisi*, Volume: 7, Issue: 1, (2012), p. 184.

¹⁴ Talha Köse, "Türkiye'nin Kuzey Afrika ve Ortadoğu Bölgesindeki Gücü: Zorlayıcı Olmayan Gücün İmkan ve Sınırları", *Uluslararası İlişkiler*, Volume: 11, Issue: 41, (Spring 2014), p. 32-35.

power.” In his study on evaluating the power of the U.S. in a new perspective, Joseph Nye assesses power within the framework of new tools. According to this, power and the ability to influence cannot be defined only through traditional military techniques. More, Nye’s argument claims that in the new era, besides the state, the alliances made with non-state actors, transnational networks and multifaceted interactions are all tools of global influence. While states remain the main actors of the international system, the functionality of civil society is not denied. Thus, media, art, tourism, education and trade relations have become new tools and interaction factors.¹⁵ What needs to be emphasized here is that these factors are not alternatives to military and economic power, but instead should be assessed as completing factors.¹⁶ From this point of view, foreign aid is a feature of “transformational diplomacy.” Pointing to the transformation of diplomacy, this perspective argues that foreign aid should be considered as a supporting factor in diplomatic relations and aims to add functionality to diplomacy by doing so.¹⁷

FROM THE COLD WAR TO THE AK PARTY ERA: TURKEY’S FOREIGN AID

An interesting table emerges when we look at the course of aid that Turkey has provided to other countries in terms of development or humanitarian assistance. During the immediate aftermath of World War II, Turkey was recipient of aid through the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan. Turkey carried on receiving aid until the early 2000s under the status of ‘developing country’.

¹⁵ Joseph S. Nye, “The Future of American Power”, *Foreign Affairs*, Volume: 89, Issue: 6, (December 2010), p. 2-13.

¹⁶ Talha Köse, Mesut Özcan ve Ekrem Karakoç, *Türkiye’nin “Arap Baharı Sonrası” Yumuşak Gücünün Etkisi ve Boyutları*, (ASAV, İstanbul: 2013), p. 25.

¹⁷ Engin Akçay, *Bir Dış Politika Enstrümanı Olarak Dış Yardımlar*, (Turgut Özal Üniversitesi Yayınları, Ankara: 2012), p. 9-10.

The systematic change that occurred after the Cold War created new empty gaps and gave the opportunity for international actors to pursue new foreign policy instruments. In this sense, foreign aid was not only an activity for big powers, but became a function of middle-sized powers too. The establishment of TİKA in 1992 – during a time when Turkey’s economy was deteriorating – reflects the fact that foreign aid had become utilized on an institutional basis. TİKA’s establishment during this date is not a coincidence. It can be interpreted as Turkey’s opening to Central Asia and an attempt to develop newly-formed Turkic states after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

TABLE-1: THE AMOUNT TURKEY SPENT ON FOREIGN AID (IN MILLION USD): 1992-2002*										
1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
1.182	283	54	149	188	383	400.8	446.5	202.2	139,6	144.76

* Engin Akçay, *Bir Dış Politika Enstrümanı Olarak Dış Yardımlar*, p. 73-79.

As seen in the table above, the amounts of foreign aid made during 1992-2002 are valve. After exceeding over 1 billion dollars in 1992, in the following years this figure rapidly decreased and saw 54 million dollars in 1994. While rapidly increasing after 1996, the amount of foreign aid reached 446.5 million dollars in 1999 yet rapidly decreased once again after the economic crisis. The amount of foreign aid a year before the AK Party came into power (2002) was 144.7 million dollars. As interpreted from the table above, while following the end of the Cold War Turkey took steady steps in this regard, the country failed to sustain its motivation. Focusing on helping Central Asian states during these years, throughout the 1990s, Turkey was a recipient and contributing country of aid.

During this era Turkey’s foreign aid was geographically focused on Central Asia and was pursued within the framework to help these countries develop. In other words, during the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey entered the empty space left by the Soviets as

part of the rhetoric and political opening in the region. However, Russia's strategic attempt to keep these countries under its influence and the U.S.'s increasing settlement in this region limited the influence of Turkey's foreign policy. Another factor limiting Turkey's ability to put its foreign policy discourse into practice was the political and economic instability that the country was facing during the 1990s.¹⁸ This is the fundamental reason why TİKA only had 12 offices and was only active in 28 countries throughout 1992 and 2002.¹⁹ However, it cannot be stated that all foreign assistance made was dysfunctional. In short, it can be stated that foreign aid remained in the framework created by foreign policy rhetoric and practices.

TURKEY'S FOREIGN AID POLICIES DURING THE AK PARTY ERA

In comparison to previous years, after 2002, an increase in the amount of foreign aid made, an increase in the geographies this aid was provided to and the difference in the level of institutionalization is seen. The new initiatives pursued in Turkey's foreign policy since the early 2000s has had a direct influence on the institutionalization of TİKA and the amount of offices that it holds. The amount of Programme Coordination Offices, which was 12 in 2002, increased to 25 in 2011 and 33 in 2012. Today, TİKA operates with 56 Programme Coordination Offices in 54 different countries.²⁰ While the amount of Official Development Assistance in 2003 was 91.7 million U.S. dollars, this figure increased to 395 million dollars in 2004.²¹ Thus, the change in figures is a clue in regards to the change that occurred during these years. Especially

¹⁸ Cemalettin Haşimi, "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy and Development Cooperation", *Insight Turkey*, Volume: 16, Issue: 1, (2014), p. 131.

¹⁹ "TİKA Faaliyetleri ve Resmi Kalkınma Yardımları," Issue: 1, (August 2013), p. 4.

²⁰ "TİKA, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/sayfa/hakkimizda-14649>, (Date of access: 3 July 2017).

²¹ "Net ODA", OECD, <https://data.oecd.org/oda/net-oda.htm>, (Date of access: 3 July 2017).

having undertaken a role during emergency situations after crises and having undertaken the responsibilities of refugees, while Turkey still receives aid by some countries and international organizations, the country has become an aid supplier. In 2013, Turkey entered the list of the OECD's 'Donor Countries,' an organization that it was already a member of.²² So should this change be evaluated alone, be evaluated as part of Turkey's economic growth or be argued within the transformation of Turkish foreign policy?

FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVISM AND FOREIGN AID

In the last 15 years, Turkish foreign policy has been party to many different studies. The main reason for these arguments is the transformation of Turkey's foreign policy during these years. By presenting choices within an institutional framework, foreign policy decision makers created the foundation for such arguments to increase and vary from institutional perspectives. "Central Country," "zero problems with neighbors," "proactive foreign policy," "rhythmic diplomacy," "win-win," "multidimensional foreign policy, and "soft power" became the most referenced phrases by foreign policy decision makers, academics and analysts. While during his time as Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul emphasized a "value-based" foreign policy outlook,²³ Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was during this same time the Foreign Policy Senior Advisor expressed that "the most important factor in Turkey's soft power is democracy."²⁴ Similarly, once acting as the Public Diplomacy Coordinator, Ibrahim Kalin also emphasized, "Turkey's slim power."²⁵ The meanings of these phrases and the change in Turkey's foreign policy

²² Gül Kireklo ve Tuna Çam, "Türkiye Donör Ülke Oldu", *Sabah*, 30 March 2013, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2013/03/30/turkiye-donor-ulke-oldu>, (Date of access: 3 July 2017).

²³ Abdullah Gül, "Yeni Yüzyılda Türk Dış Politikasının Ufukları", (T.C. Dış İşleri Bakanlığı Yayınları, Ankara: 2007).

²⁴ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007", *Insight Turkey*, Volume: 10, Issue: 1, (2008), p. 80.

²⁵ İbrahim Kalın, "Türkiyenin İnce Gücü", *Sabah*, 23 January 2010.

were all attempts and answers – late but eventually given – to adapt to the changing international conditions after the end of the Cold War.

In order to be able to put its foreign policy choices into practice and in order to obtain more effective results, the AK Party also applied to new openings in different areas. From this point of view, the changes made in the statutes of institutions such as the Foreign Affairs Ministry and TİKA can be underlined. In addition, symbolically declaring some years in South America or Africa as “opening years” is also a matter that draws attention. In parallel to this, the variety of instruments used as foreign policy instruments also increased. In addition to classical diplomacy and the pursuit of bilateral or multilateral cooperation, the most important instrument added to the circuit was the potential of “non-coercive power.”²⁶ In this sense, human diplomacy, conflict resolution, economic integration and foreign aid were all used especially within the potential power parameter in these new openings.

Following the regional instability after the Iraq invasion in 2003 and the U.S.’s settlement in the Middle East, Turkey displayed “medium-sized power activism.”²⁷ Instruments such as foreign trade, human diplomacy, mediation and foreign aid opened the way for new gains in foreign policy and economics. Turkey’s increasing foreign aid in the past 15 years is taken into consideration with “transformation of foreign policy capacity”²⁸ that occurred during the same time.

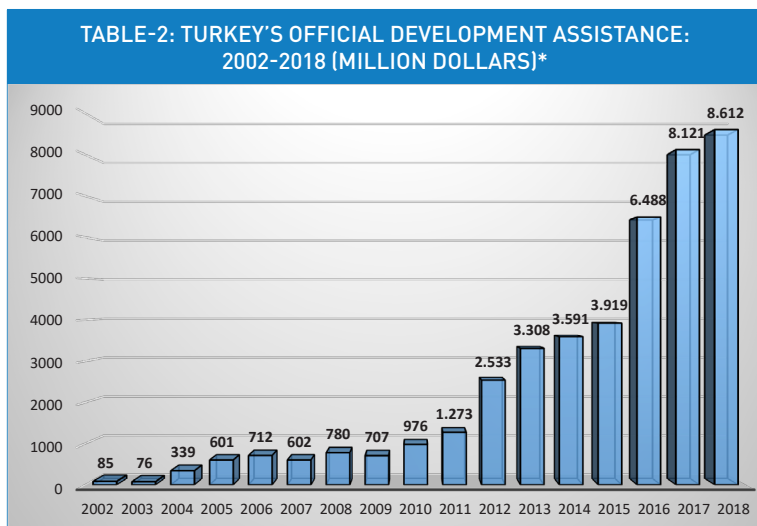
Between 2002 and 2010, Turkey’s humanitarian assistance, human diplomacy and mediation were severely active in North Africa, the Middle East and African countries. The increase of trade volume between Turkey and these states, the increase of trade volume, the increase of the number of visits from these regions alongside

²⁶ Talha Köse, “Türkiye’nin Kuzey Afrika ve Ortadoğu Bölgesindeki Gücü: Zorlayıcı Olmayan Gücün İmkan ve Sınırları”, p. 30.

²⁷ Bruce Gilley, “Turkey, Middle Powers, and the New Humanitarianism”, *Perceptions*, Volume: 20, Issue: 1, (Bahar 2015), p. 37.

²⁸ Kemal İnat, “Türk Dış Politikasının Kapasitesinin Dönüşümü: AK Parti Dönemi”, *Türkiye Ortadoğu Çalışmaları Dergisi*, Volume 1, Issue 1, p. 1-24.

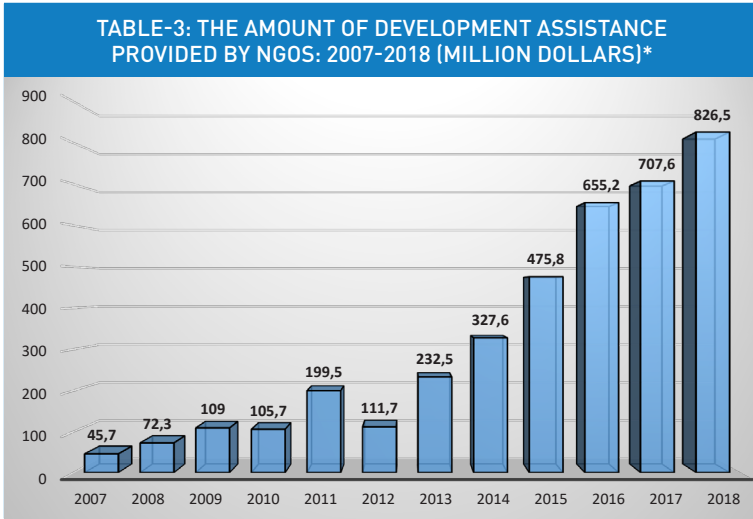
the increase of Turkish Airlines flights, and finally, the increase of diplomatic missions are all concrete evidence in this regard. In addition to this, the establishment of the Prime Ministry Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities in 2010, the increase of bursaries provided for foreign students via the Directorate of Religious Affairs and the institutionalization of this act are also other important indicators.



* Ersin Çopur, M. Fatih Sever, Said Serkan Kara vd., *Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu 2018*, (TİKA Rapor, Ankara: 2019), p. 15.

Diversity within the institutions that are involved in coordinating humanitarian and infrastructure assistance and delivering them to relevant regions can also be spoken about. Although since 2005 the coordination of foreign aid has been passed on to TİKA, the services and activities Turkey provided within foreign aid is not only limited to public institutions. These services are also provided with the help of non-governmental organizations and the private sector. While public institutions kept in line with foreign policy, the dynamism and mobilization experienced within society helped civil society organizations to assume important initiatives.

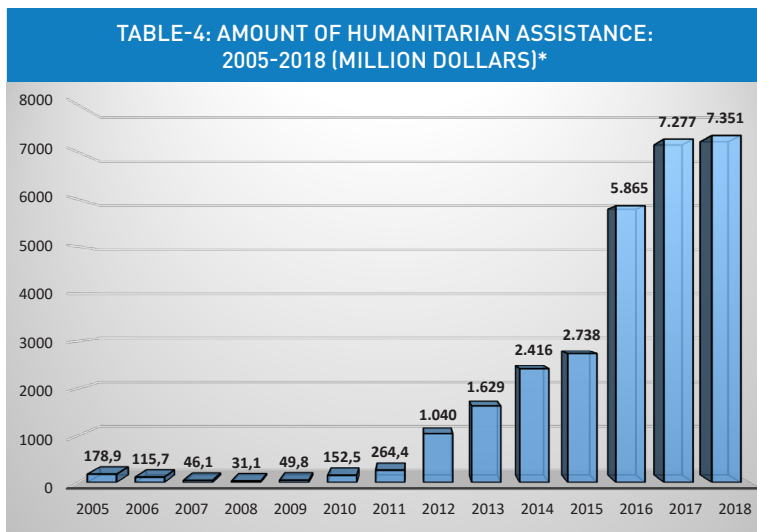
Thus, when observing foreign aid as an important foreign policy instrument, non-governmental organizations should also be remembered as significant instruments. Alongside public institutions such as TİKA, Red Cross, AFAD, the Directorate of Religious Affairs, and TOKİ, charitable funds related to non-governmental organizations also entered as aid providers and practitioners. It can be argued that in some cases of emergencies, NGOs can act quicker than public institutions. However, it is difficult to locate the exact amount of aid provided by NGOs. The table below illustrates the level of aid provided by such organizations according to data received from TİKA.



* Ersin Çopur, M. Fatih Sever, Said Serkan Kara vd., *Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu 2018*, (TİKA Rapor, Ankara: 2019), p. 26

The chaos and conflict that has occurred in recent years due to military power and direct interventions has restricted Turkey's non-coercive power parameters. Nevertheless, an alteration in the direction Turkey has pursued in regards to foreign aid has not been witnessed. The fact that the country has taken on the responsibility of refugees, which has become a global issue due to the Syrian crisis, is a reflection

of this. The strategy that Turkey has pursued in foreign aid has made the country much more apparent.



* Ersin Çopur, M. Fatih Sever, Said Serkan Kara vd., *Türkiye Kalkınma Yardımları Raporu 2018*, (TİKA Rapor, Ankara: 2019), p. 22.

As can be understood from the table, Turkey's figures in development and humanitarian assistance have generally increased. The effect of the humanitarian crisis that increased with the Arab Spring in 2011 cannot be denied. According to the amount of aid provided, Turkey's listing within OECD countries had not changed much until 2015. However, in the report published in 2016, Turkey was listed sixth in the general list in regards to its assessment in 2015 and was listed first according to its GDP. Referencing to the Global Humanitarian Assistance Report, in a statement made by AFAD, the institution announced that in 2016 by providing 6 billion dollars worth of aid, Turkey had become second on the international arena after the U.S., which had provided 6.3 billion dollars of aid.²⁹

²⁹ "En Cömert Ülke Yine Türkiye", AFAD, 21 July 2017, <https://www.afad.gov.tr/tr/19319/En-Comert-Ulke-Yine-Turkiye>, (Date of access: 12 July 2017).

It is difficult to explain the performance Turkey has displayed in human diplomacy, mediation and foreign aid in the past 15 years within the framework of international relations theories. It cannot be argued that Turkey has transformed its foreign aid moves into military or political profits as a whole. In this regard, the discourse utilized by policy makers is the premise of this. While it can be observed that relations developed between states that received aid, this did not occur within a realist framework. Likewise, it is difficult to argue that the foreign aid provided only remained as humanitarian assistance and did not provide other outcomes. Thus, the liberal perspective is also limited in its explanation. Constructivist approaches however give reference to historical rhetoric and provides a coherent framework for some regions. However, it is also undeniable that this approach also falls short from explaining all the foreign aid made to different regions within the same argument. This is precisely the reason why Turkey's humanitarian assistance strategy is reflective of power and conscience and is presented as the consensus of realism and idealism.³⁰ Therefore, a theoretical explanation is only able to offer an eclectic framework and in essence is moving away from being theoretical.

The Somalia example stands out as a striking example in this sense. After the disasters that occurred due to drought in 2011, the campaign that Turkey began targeting Somalia³¹ led to the revival of economic, political and social relations between the two countries. The visit that Erdogan made to Somalia with a large delegation when he was Prime Minister³² and when the health and security risks in Somalia had not yet been thwarted, and the amount of aid that Turkey had

³⁰ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Humanitarian Diplomacy: Objectives, Challenges and Prospects", *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity*, Volume: 41, Issue: 6, (2013), p. 866-867.

³¹ "Türkiye Somali için Seferber Oldu", *Dünya Bülteni*, 19 August 2011, <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/m/haber/171602/turkiye-somali-icin-seferber-oldu>, (Date of access: 10 July 2017).

³² "Başbakan Somalî'de", *Sabah*, 19 August 2011, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/dunya/2011/08/19/basbakan-somalide>, (Date of access: 10 July 2017).

granted sat on the international agenda. From this day onwards, the projects and assistance that Turkey put into practice³³ opened the door for the “re-structure of Somalia without using force.”³⁴ While Turkey’s attempts to establish a military base in Somalia continues, the relationship wasn’t originally based on security concerns. However, concrete outcomes have been produced in both economic and security terms.

Former Special Representative to the U.S. and Somalian foreign policy analyst Abukar Arman emphasized the effectiveness of Turkey’s foreign assistance provided to Somalia and argued that Turkey’s approach was different from the incoherent and degenerate international model. Arman relied his argument on concrete evidence. According to this, while the 55 billion dollars aid provided to Somalia by the United Nations and associated organizations lacked concrete achievements, the 500 million dollar aid provided by Turkey created effective and sustainable infrastructures in areas such as health, security and emergency needs. Arman also argues that the relationship that has been developing between the two states has become one of strategic partnership.³⁵ In short, the humanitarian assistance model that Turkey has pursued in Somalia and across Africa has not been interpreted as soft or hard power but rather as “virtuous power.”³⁶

As the country’s economy developed, the budget Turkey had for foreign aid also increased. Another important fact in regards to economic factors is that economic relations also steadily developed and increased with countries that foreign aid was provided to. For instance, there is a parallel between the increasing political initiatives, economic relations and the development and humanitarian assistance provided

³³ Geniş bir analiz için bkz. Mehmet Özkan, *Turkey’s Involvement in Somalia Assessment Of A State-Building in Progress*, (SETA Yayınları, İstanbul: 2014).

³⁴ Bruce Gilley, “Turkey, Middle Powers, and the New Humanitarianism”, p. 38.

³⁵ Abukar Arman, “Erdogan: The Hero of Somalia”, Al Jazeera, 21 January 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/01/visit-erdogan-somalia-2015121124331818818.html>, (Date of Access: 02 July 2017).

³⁶ Julia Harte, “Turkey Shocks Africa”, *World Policy Journal*, Volume: 29, Issue: 4, (2012), p. 29.

to the African continent.³⁷ For instance, the following statement made by a former TİKA coordinator in 2007 illustrates how aid made by Turkey contributes to the receiving country and how it develops a relationship between the two countries: “With the aid that Turkey is providing, the country is gaining a serious foundation... we are also bringing them to a better standard.”³⁸

Addressing the parliament during his visit to Gabon in 2013, President Erdogan’s, “we didn’t come here for gold or diamonds like others,”³⁹ words reflected that bilateral relations were pursued in a framework of mutual profit. Again, during his visit to Guinea in 2016, the President made similar statements. During the visit in which 50 buses were given as grants, the two presidents openly expressed that they aimed to increase the volume of trade between the two countries.⁴⁰ It is well known that Turkey’s selection as non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council in 2008 was due to the aid provided to countries in the Middle East and Balkans.⁴¹ In relation to gaining the support of countries in Africa, alongside foreign aid, the effect of Turkey’s soft power is also great.

COVID-19 AND TURKEY’S FOREIGN AID

Turkey’s foreign aid activism did not stop even after COVID-19 outbreak. Yavuz Selim Kıran, Deputy Foreign Minister stated that “Turkey met help requests of 131 countries worldwide amid pan-

³⁷ Mehmet Özkan, “Does “Rising Power” Mean “Rising Donor”? Turkey’s Development Aid in Africa”, *Africa Review*, Volume: 5, Issue: 2, p. 139-147.

³⁸ “TİKA Hakkında”, *Telekom Dünyası*, (September 2007), p. 22-23.

³⁹ “Başkaları gibi Altın Elmas için Gelmedik”, *Türkiye*, 8 January 2013, <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/Genel/a560833.aspx>, (Date of Access: 3 Temmuz 2017).

⁴⁰ “Erdogan’ın Otobüs Hediyesi Gine Devlet Başkanını Duygulandırdı”, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pCiC9Y1fWg>, 04 March 2016, (Date of access: 3 July 2017).

⁴¹ “Türkiye BM’de Geçici Üyeliğe Seçildi”, CNN Türk, 17 Ekim 2008, <http://www.cnnturk.com/2008/dunya/10/17/turkiye.bmde.gecici.uyelige.secildi/497124.0/index.html>, (Date of access: 4 July 2017).

demic around the globe to help their fight against the coronavirus outbreak” With this numbers Turkey is the third-largest medical aid and support country in the world.⁴² Upon these demands, Turkey has provided medical equipment including mask, medical glove, ventilator and other protective equipments. The Balkans, where Turkey has emerged as a key player since AK Party took the power has been one of the primary region delivered Turkey’s medical aid. Then, Turkey provided help to countries that spread over several continents including less and most developed countries. Turkey’s aid to less developed countries has continuation with its traditional foreign aid policy.

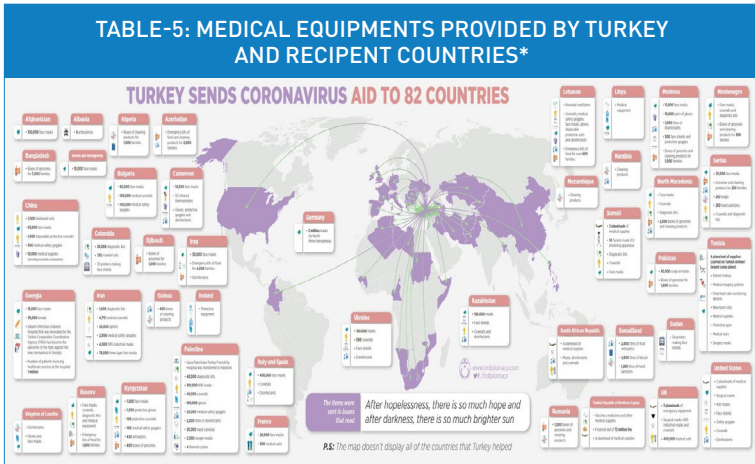
Some researchers evaluates Turkey’s aid diplomacy amid the pandemic, as an effort to end the isolation in foreign policy and “improves its shattered image”.⁴³ These comments ignore Turkey’s traditional soft power aspiraton. Turkey’s tension with France and other Western countries is a clue that Turkey’s foreign aid policy has not function enough to improve its relations. President Erdogan’s statement, “nothing will be the same after the pandemic”⁴⁴ reflects his expectation of change in World politcs and traditional relations. Turkey offers a new beginning and new form of relations with other countries based on equality and mutual solidarity.

⁴² Muhammet Tarhan “Dışişleri Bakan Yardımcısı Kıran: Dünyanın üçüncü en büyük tıbbi yardım ve destek sağlayıcı ülkesiyiz”, Anadolu Agency, 22.06.2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/politika/disisleri-bakan-yardimcisi-kiran-dunyanin-ucuncu-en-buyuk-tibbi-yardim-ve-destek-saglayici-ulkesiyiz/1886152#>

⁴³ Gönül Tol, Dimitar Bechev, “Can corona diplomacy cure Turkey’s foreign policy isolation?”,MEI, April 29,2020, <https://www.mei.edu/publications/can-corona-diplomacy-cure-turkeys-foreign-policy-isolation>

⁴⁴ Dilara Hamit, “Turkey ready for all scenarios: Erdogan”, AA, 25.03.2020, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/latest-on-coronavirus-outbreak/turkey-ready-for-all-scenarios-erdogan/1779720>

TABLE-5: MEDICAL EQUIPMENTS PROVIDED BY TURKEY AND RECIPIENT COUNTRIES*



* <http://trdiplomacy.com/>

CONCLUSION

Within the foreign policy activism that Turkey has witnessed in its foreign policy in the last 15 years, power instruments that are termed as “low politics” in international relations come to the forefront. These include economic relations, human diplomacy and foreign aid. There are many reasons for this. However, the primary reason is the fact that these were convenient instruments that Turkey could utilize for the areas that it wanted to open up in. It is well known that Turkey was more disadvantaged than developed countries in terms of its arms industry, technology transfer and military engagement up until the 2000s. More, even after the end of the Cold War, entering into the 2000s, Turkey’s foreign policy coalitions, the instruments it adopted and its rhetoric had not changed much from the Cold War era. Even though new discourses and rhetoric was adopted in regards to Central Asia following the collapse of the Soviet Union, it is accepted that these did not produce the expected influence and result. The sole reason for this was because Turkey did not have the political and economic capacity to fulfill the phrases such as “From the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China, the Turkish world,” or “Turkey’s big brother role.”

With the political and economic stability that began with the reign of the AK Party, the foreign policy position that was drawn in line with the hegemonic position of the U.S. and the transformation of the mentality of foreign policy made it easier to use new instruments. In this regard, projects began to be put in practice in regions ranging from the Middle East, South America, Balkans and Africa – areas that were neglected during the Cold War and throughout the 90s. Alongside the development of trade relations, human diplomacy and soft power, foreign aid also comes to the forefront as an important instrument used.

Foreign aid increased during the AK Party governments and this trend have not stopped amid the pandemic in spite of economic difficulties that Turkey faced. It has been observed that the increase of aid has created economic and political outputs in some countries. Especially in countries that Turkey has pursued an opening initiative and increased the amount of aid given, a sincere respect for Turkey has emerged within society. However, the extent to which this respect has been earned on the state and decision making level is still suspicious. For example, it can be stated that in Somalia, both within the public and decision making level, there are positive stances about Turkey and with the contribution of the foreign aid made, Turkey and Somalia developed economic, political and strategic relations. While in comparison to countries such as Iraq and some others, although there is a positive stance about Turkey within the public, it can be seen that decision makers hold a different perspective. Therefore, Turkey should search for ways to deal with this dilemma.

The second aspect that needs to be watched out for is the false belief that soft power instruments will be enough on their own. Hence, theorists that brought this conceptualization have revised their works to argue that soft power will only be effective together with instruments of hard power. The conflict and civil wars that have been occurring in proximity to Turkey confirms this approach. Therefore, conjunctionally, concrete results that are obtained from foreign aid ought to be transformed to political and strategic partnerships.

CHAPTER 9

TURKISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS DURING THE AK PARTY GOVERNMENTS

KİLİC BUGRA KANAT*

Turkish-American relations during the AK Party has been one of the most often discussed, debated, and analyzed issues in Turkey in the past fifteen years. Bilateral relations during this period went through a significant degree of instability. The best period of the relationship and the worst crisis in the history of bilateral ties both occurred during the last fifteen years. The relations during this period were impacted by factors including the decline of US power around the world and the rise of Turkey as a regional actor in the Middle East. However, it is safe to say that the most significant developments in bilateral relations during this period were related to the convergence and divergence of the two countries' interests in the Middle East. This 15-year period is marked by both Turkey's increasing involvement in Middle Eastern politics and economics and the beginning of the US military intervention in Iraq in 2003. The beginning of the AK Party's tenure in government following the November 2002 elections overlaps with the beginning of debates in regards to the US invasion of Iraq. Since then, Ankara and Washington have tried to find a common ground for their policies in the Middle East. The most significant crises in bilateral relations have been caused by disagreements in the Middle East. The fallout before and during

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the Iraq War, the disagreement over the Tehran declaration, and later the divergences in regards to the 2013 coup in Egypt and the civil war in Syria led to a critical juncture in bilateral relations. Although both countries constantly reiterate their commitment to NATO, work together to fight against terrorism, and cooperate on some significant geopolitical areas, including Afghanistan and crisis in Ukraine, strategic differences in their approaches to important issues in the Middle East, public diplomacy crises, and legal problems including the extradition of Fethullah Gulen brought the relations to the lowest point in decades. In this chapter, the critical turning points of the bilateral relationship in the last fifteen years will be provided. Analysis of these last fifteen years reveals an important pattern for bilateral relations which will be discussed in the conclusion.

When the AK Party won the November 2002 general elections with an overwhelming majority, none of the political analysts working on Turkey were expecting such a significant transformation in the composition of the parliament and among the actors of the Turkish political life. In a rather short period after its foundation, the AK Party established a single party government in Turkey. The 2002 Turkish elections overlapped with the debates in the United States over the expected invasion of Iraq. Despite protests from its major allies around the world, the Bush administration decided to launch a military operation against Saddam Hussein's Iraq. In this invasion plan Turkey was considered as a key country in order to launch US troops from its soil and form a northern front against Iraqi army. However just like in different parts of the world. Iraq War was not very popular at the public level in Turkey.¹ The newly formed AK Party government had inherited the most serious financial crisis in the history of Turkey and destabilization in the region could make it difficult for the country to

¹ Carol Migdalovitz, "Iraq: Turkey, the Deployment of U.S. Forces, and Related Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, May 2, 2003, https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metacrs8186/m1/1/high_res_d/RL31794_2003May02.pdf.

recover from this economic crisis. Furthermore, following the first Iraq War, Turkey had faced a significant amount of economic losses due to the sanctions placed on Iraq and the PKK had started to use northern Iraq to launch attacks into Turkey.^{2,3} In addition, Turkey had become host to a number of refugees fleeing from the Saddam regime following US operations. Thus, while US was planning a war against Iraq in 2002 and 2003, Turkey was considering the political, economic, and humanitarian outcomes of such an operation for Turkey.

The debates between Turkey and the US over Turkish support for the operation generated major turbulence in the bilateral relations. The Turkish government, despite public protests, voted to allow the transit of US troops and sent the resolution to the Turkish parliament for a vote. One of the most significant motivators for the Turkish government was the economic aid that the US administration offered in return for Turkey's cooperation. However, the Parliament unexpectedly did not approve the resolution, causing a major crisis in bilateral relations between Turkey and the US.⁴ While the Bush administration made statements expressing their respect for the constitutional procedure in Turkey, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz criticized the Turkish military for not showing "sufficient leadership" in the process.⁵ This statement generated a huge reaction among the Turkish

² Ahmet Demir, Özgür Özmen, and Areej Rashid, "An estimation of Turkey's export loss to Iraq," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, no. 150 (2014): 1240 - 1247, https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042814051891/1-s2.0-S1877042814051891-main.pdf?_tid=0cea97cd-fcc7-4438-a32b-6d8c3bf3e38f&acdnat=1527179759_61b036b55b3fa822d76a765fcde43575.

³ Soner Gagaptay and Ali Koknar, "The PKK's New Offensive: Implications for Turkey, Iraqi Kurds, and the United States," *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, June 25, 2004, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-pkks-new-offensive-implications-for-turkey-iraqi-kurds-and-the-united-s>.

⁴ Dexter Filkins, "Threats and Responses: Ankara; Turkish Deputies Refuse to Accept American Troops," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2003, <https://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/02/world/threats-and-responses-ankara-turkish-deputies-refuse-to-accept-american-troops.html>.

⁵ "Wolfowitz: Accept your mistake, our partnership shall continue," *Hurriyet*, May 7, 2003, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/wolfowitz-accept-your-mistake-our-partnership-shall-continue-145127>.

public and was considered proof that the US preferred the continuation of the tutelage system and military rule in Turkey.

The negative reaction of the Turkish public to the US decision to go to war continued as the war in Iraq began and the Turkish public witnessed the killing of civilians and growing sectarian violence in Iraq. The Turkish government also raised concerns about PKK activity in northern Iraq which was directly targeting and threatening the national security of Turkey. However, the US administration's priority was the civil war and Sunni insurgency in the country and the Turkish government's requests as a NATO ally fell on deaf ears in Washington, DC. In the meantime, one of the worst crises in bilateral relations took place when the headquarters of Turkish military personnel in Suleymaniye was raided by American soldiers and hoods were placed on the heads of Turkish soldiers who were arrested on July 4, 2003, an incident that came to be known as the 'Hood incident.'⁶ The initial lack of any action on the part of Washington for two days after the raid heightened tensions over the incident. Large demonstrations were organized in front of the US embassy in Turkey. Although the Turkish military personnel were released in a few days, the attitude of the US military left a serious dent on the US image in Turkey. Popular culture, including movies such as *Kurtlar Vadisi, Irak*, was filled with references to the US treatment of the Turkish soldiers and the mistreatment of Iraqi political prisoners in Abu Ghraib. Although Turkey passed another resolution in fall 2003 in order to allow the Turkish soldiers to contribute to the stabilization efforts in Iraq, the fallout following the Iraq War not only destabilized the Middle East but also generated major security crises for the surrounding countries. As the US forces failed to find weapons of mass destruction and Al-Qaeda entered Iraq, the Turkish public became much more anxious about the end goal of the

⁶ Michael Howard and Suzanne Goldberg, "US arrest of soldiers infuriates Turkey," *The Guardian*, July 7, 2003, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/jul/08/turkey.michael-howard>.

US in the region and potential outcomes of the war for the security and stability of Turkey.

People in different parts of the world reacted negatively to the Iraq War and US relations with numerous countries around the world were strained as a result of the Iraq War. For Turkey however, the 2003 decision to invade Iraq was not just an irresponsible invasion that generated a major civil war and humanitarian disaster on Turkey's border, it also raised serious concerns about the future of the PKK and its activities in northern Iraq. The regional destabilization that ensued from the invasion also threatened to derail Turkey's ambitious goal of economic integration with the region. After the March 1st crisis with the US, the US administration constantly approached Turkey with skepticism. As the cost of the war increased, some in the Bush administration even accused Turkey of extending the war. The divergence between US and Turkish policies in the Middle East started with this war, though it would later come to encompass a number of issues over time.

In the face of growing concerns over the "loss of Turkey" due to the undiplomatic attitudes of US foreign policy makers and the Hood incident, the administration in Washington tried to take some steps in order to control the damage. There were substantial issues where the two countries want to further their cooperation, including Afghanistan and US support for Turkey's membership to EU. At the 2004 NATO Summit in Istanbul, Prime Minister Erdogan and President Bush made it clear in remarks after their meeting that Turkish and US interests in Iraq were parallel.⁷ Both leaders also reiterated the "strategic partnership" between two countries. However, this did not ameliorate Turkey's concerns over the deteriorating situation in Iraq. Because of that, Turkey launched initiatives in order to peacefully resolve conflicts among

⁷ Susan Sachs and Eric Schmitt, "Bush Meets With Leader of Turkey Ahead of NATO Summit," *The New York Times*, June 27, 2004, <https://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/27/international/europe/bush-meets-with-leader-of-turkey-ahead-of-nato-summit.html>.

differing fighting groups in Iraq and organized the neighbors of Iraq in order to contain the crises and prevent its spillover.

The optimism about the Turkish-American relations continued when the foreign ministers of two countries signed “The Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Partnership.”⁸ Following the extremely destructive first three years of Iraq War, the two countries agreed to increase dialogue in order to contain potential crises and resolve the existing challenges between two countries. This was followed with the appointment of General Joseph W. Ralston as the special envoy to counter the PKK.⁹ However despite this appointment, defeating the insurgency remained the US’ priority in Iraq and despite targeting some Kurdish groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda, the US avoided directly attacking the PKK in Iraq. This decision by the US generated a significant amount of distrust between the two countries throughout the Iraq War.

President Obama’s election in 2008 was considered a welcome development in Turkey due to the problems that had remained unresolved throughout the Bush administration. The bad chemistry that had started over the Iraq War had continued throughout the Bush administration and the two countries had also disagreed over a number of additional issues in the Middle East, including Syria and the Israel-Palestine problem. In regards to Syria, Turkish foreign policy makers launched a major rapprochement following the crisis with Syria in 1999. However US increased sanctions against Syria. The visit of a Hamas delegation to Ankara following the elections in Gaza also demonstrated the disagreement between Turkey and US in regards to the Palestinian-Israeli dispute.¹⁰

⁸ “Shared Vision and Structured Dialogue to Advance the Turkish-American Strategic Partnership,” *US Department of State Archive*, July 5, 2006, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/68574.htm>.

⁹ Sean McCormack, “TURKEY: Special Envoy for Countering the PKK,” *US Department of State Archive*, August 28, 2006, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/71563.htm>.

¹⁰ “Hamas leaders visit Turkey,” *United Press International*, February 16, 2006, <https://www.upi.com/Hamas-leaders-visit-Turkey/42871140112629/>.

President Obama was expected to provide a different viewpoint in regards to the Middle East and US-Turkey relations. The fact that President Obama visited Turkey on his first foreign trip as president was a significant development for Turkey.¹¹ President Obama made a speech at the Turkish National Assembly and offered the concept of “model partnership” in order to describe the nature of partnership between two countries.¹² President Obama’s opposition to the Iraq War as senator and his speech in Cairo signaling a new approach to the Middle East also generated positive reactions from Turkey. In a very short period of time the relations between Erdogan and Obama improved and President Obama named Erdogan as one of the leaders that he most frequently interacted and communicated in 2012.¹³ The only important setback in these first years of the Obama administration was the result of a Turkish attempt to broker a deal over the nuclear program of Iran in order to prevent another military confrontation in the region that can destabilize the entire region. After the US refuted the Tehran Declaration, which had been mediated by Brazil and Turkey, Turkey voted against further sanctions against Iran at the UN Security Council in 2010.¹⁴ Despite the existing positive atmosphere between the leaders of the two countries, disagreements between the US and Turkey over how to address a problem in the Middle East led to a serious crisis between Turkey and the US.

The beginning of the Arab Spring challenged bilateral relations between Turkey and the US more than ever. First of all, the sudden rise of people’s movements in the Middle East was not expected. When the

¹¹ Scott Wilson, “Obama Trip to Include Turkey Visit,” *The Washington Post*, March 8, 2009, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/07/AR2009030701788.html>.

¹² Barack Obama, “President Obama’s Remarks in Turkey,” *The New York Times*, April 6, 2009, <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/06/us/politics/06obama-text.html>.

¹³ Fareed Zakaria, “Inside Obama’s World: The President talks to TIME About the Changing Nature of American Power,” January 19, 2012, <http://swampland.time.com/2012/01/19/inside-obamas-world-the-president-talks-to-time-about-the-changing-nature-of-american-power/>.

¹⁴ Carol Migdalovitz, “Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views,” *Congressional Research Service*, November 28, 2010, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34642.pdf>.

mass protests started to spread to different parts of the Arab world, most countries around the world were surprised by the rapid progression of events. Second, since the first Gulf War in the last days of the Cold War, Turkey and the US had yet to adopt a new common strategy to deal with the challenges of the issues in the Middle East. The lack of a long-term US strategy and its dependence on tactics instead of a comprehensive strategy left US allies in the region in limbo in regards to the regional crises. In the face of the Arab Spring, as with every prior crisis throughout the 90s and 2000's in the Middle East, the two NATO allies had to try to establish a working relationship from scratch.

When the Arab Spring started in North Africa, the two countries tried to make sense of the events and attempted to adopt a common tone in reaction to the developments. Following some initial discord, both countries supported the people's movements and regime change in Tunisia and Egypt. In Libya, the first signs of the difficulty the US and Turkey faced in coordinating their reactions emerged when the Turkish government initially opposed a NATO intervention in Libya, though it eventually came to support the operation.¹⁵ More than any of the other Arab Spring revolutions, the crisis in Syria however paved the way for the most significant strategic divergence between the two countries.

When the protests started in Syria in 2011, both countries took similar steps in regards to their reactions to the crackdown of these protests. While both countries had invested in relations with Syria during the previous years, Turkey had become especially invested in improving relations with Syria after the Adana protocol was signed by the two countries in 1999 following the Ocalan crisis.¹⁶ Since

¹⁵ Ayla Jean Yackley, "Turkey opposes any NATO operation in Libya," *Reuters*, March 14, 2011, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-turkey-idUSTRE72D49D20110314>.

¹⁶ "Statement Made By İsmail Cem, Foreign Minister, On The Special Security Meeting Held Between Turkey And Syria October 20, 1998 (Unofficial Translation)," *Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, October 20, 1998, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/_p_statement-made-by-ismail-cem_-foreign-minister_-on-the-special-security-meeting-held-between-turkey-and-syria_br_october-20_-1998_br__unofficial-translation__p_.en.mfa.

then, customs duties had been eliminated, minefields along the border had been cleared, and the two governments had organized joint cabinet meetings. Turkey even tried to broker a peace agreement between Syria and Israel.¹⁷ The trade volume and economic interactions had also increased between the two countries. The Obama administration meanwhile considered Syria an important linchpin of its policy goals in the Middle East. Immediately after President Obama's inauguration in 2009, the administration established diplomatic contacts with the Syrian regime.¹⁸ By the end of 2010, President Obama had appointed an ambassador to Damascus, the first since 2005.¹⁹ Additionally, Senator John Kerry, then the chairman of Senate Foreign Relations committee, visited Damascus and met with Bashar Assad in April 2010.²⁰ When protests broke out, both Turkey and US were in favor of convincing Assad to reform Syria's political systems.²¹ For the first few months of the crisis, both Turkish and US policymakers tried to persuade the Syrian president to stop the use of force against the peaceful demonstrators. However, all the calls from Turkey and US were ignored by Bashar Assad and the violence intensified.

By late 2011 however, both the Turkish government and the US government had lost their hope for reforms. In August, the US called for Assad to step down, a demand Turkey similarly expressed in No-

¹⁷ Cam Simpson, "Israel, Syria Reveal Indirect Peace Negotiations," *The Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2008, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121136419354110263>.

¹⁸ David Kenner, "Tough love for Syria from Obama," *Foreign Policy*, March 3, 2009, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/03/03/tough-love-for-syria-from-obama/>.

¹⁹ Perry Bacon Jr. and Karen DeYoung, "Obama names ambassador to Syria," *The Washington Post*, December 30, 2010, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/12/29/AR2010122904631.html>.

²⁰ George Baghdadi, "U.S. Sees Talks with Syria as a Priority," *CBS News*, April 1, 2010, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-sees-talks-with-syria-as-a-priority/>.

²¹ "Readout of the President's Call with Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey," *The White House Archives - President Barack Obama*, August 11, 2011, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/11/readout-presidents-call-prime-minister-erdogan-turkey>.

vember.^{22,23} This coordination of reactions led many to believe that there was a long term joint strategy between the two countries. But like the previous crises, it soon became obvious that the US had no strategy in Syria and President Obama's statement about Assad was mostly a rhetorical statement with no action to follow. However, such a statement by the US president could and did generate repercussions throughout the Middle East. Turkey was deeply disappointed and confused by the US' inaction in Syria after the diplomatic attempts by the two countries to resolve the problem failed to bring any solution. When the first reports of the movement and use of chemical weapons in Syria were published, alarming not only Turkey but also most of the neighboring countries to Syria, President Obama's "red line" statement was seen by Turkey as a serious warning to Assad regime. However, in early 2013 there was an increasing number of reports of the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime. In May 2013, despite the evidence of the use of chemical weapons in Syria provided by the Turkish delegation during Prime Minister Erdogan's visit to Washington, President Obama preferred inaction.²⁴ When the use of chemical weapons became undeniable following the Ghouta attack in August 2013, the US administration openly raised the potential use of air strikes against targets in Syria for the first time. Turkey, like a number of US allies, offered support for possible military operations against the Assad regime.²⁵ However, in an abrupt reversal, President Obama announced

²² Steven Lee Myers, "U.S. and Allies Say Syria Leader Must Step Down," *The New York Times*, August 18, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/19/world/middleeast/19dipl.html>.

²³ Jonathon Burch, "Turkey tells Syria's Assad: Step down!," *Reuters*, November 22, 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-syria-idUSL5E7MD0GZ20111122>.

²⁴ Office of the Press Secretary, "Joint Press Conference by President Obama and Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey," *The White House Archives - President Barack Obama*, May 16, 2013, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2013/05/16/joint-press-conference-president-obama-and-prime-minister-erdogan-turkey>.

²⁵ Ayhan Simsek, "Turkey weighs military options in Syria," *Deutsche Welle*, August 28, 2013, <http://www.dw.com/en/turkey-weighs-military-options-in-syria/a-17050564>.

that he had decided not to strike Syria.²⁶ Not only did the US not follow through on a red line statement made by its president, but President Obama also made the decision not to attack without informing US allies and partners around the world.

The real divergence of US and Turkish strategies started following this decision by President Obama. Following this decision, US allies in the region as well as members of the Syrian opposition came to believe that the US would not provide any long-term strategy in regards to the future of Syria. This diversion of interests later deepened with the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. The two countries' approach to the conflict in Syria dramatically changed following the expansion of ISIS. While Turkey considered ISIS to be a product of the larger conflict in Syria and believed that a comprehensive plan was the best way to resolve the problem, the US saw ISIS, and eventually the broader Syria issue as a whole, as a counter terrorism problem. These differing understandings of the Syrian conflict led Turkey and the US to adopt drastically different policies from one another in Syria. The disagreement over how to address Syria was not limited to the one issue but impacted broader US-Turkey relations. Following the realization that the US administration was not willing to make a serious effort to resolve the conflict, the Turkish government continued its endeavors to find a diplomatic solution to alleviate the humanitarian tragedy in Syria. Together with Russia and Iran, Turkey has launched the Astana Process to try to find a solution to the conflict in Syria. In conjunction with the Turkish decided to purchase S400 missiles from Russia following the failure of Turkish authorities and Raytheon to reach an agreement, Turkey's cooperation with Russia and Iran has caused further anxiety about the nature of Turkish-American relations. The Turkish-Russian cooperation in the Astana process and later during Turkey's operations in Afrin

²⁶ Paul Lewis, "US attack on Syria delayed after surprise U-turn from Obama," *The Guardian*, August 31, 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/31/syrian-air-strikes-obama-congress>.

province in Syria have generated anxiety in Washington, DC about the future of the US partnership with Turkey.

The real turning point in bilateral relations took place following the emergence of a US policy to deal with ISIS. The support of the US led international coalition for the YPG, the Syria branch of the PKK, generated one of the most serious crises between Turkey and US. This crisis was different than previous tensions in bilateral relations. Since the AK Party's rise to power, the two countries had had serious disagreements over various issues pertaining to the Middle East, including the 2003 Iraq War and the Iranian nuclear program. However, none of these issues had been directly related to the core national security concerns of Turkey. When the Obama administration decided to support the YPG in order to defeat ISIS, the crisis reached to a new height. As mentioned above, the YPG is a branch of the PKK, which is considered as a terrorist organization by the US and EU. Despite harsh protests from the Turkish government, the Obama administration decided to go forward with this plan and started to arm the YPG.²⁷

Following the initial US support for the YPG in the battle in Kobani, the partnership between the US and the YPG continued to grow as the YPG served as a partner force on the ground in Syria for the US air forces. A new name was invented for the group, Syrian Democratic Forces, and some Sunni elements were also added to this group in order to quell the criticisms about the demographic composition of the group. Turkey maintained three key objections to US support for the YPG at this time. First was the overlap between the YPG and the PKK in terms of ideology and human capital. The artificial distinction drawn by the US administration was not considered acceptable by the Turkish government who was concerned that the empowerment of a proxy of a terrorist organization would generate serious security problems for the Turkish government. Considering the relaunching of terrorist attacks

²⁷ "Kobane: US drops arms and aid to Kurds battling IS," *The BBC*, October 20, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29684761>.

by the PKK in 2015, any military assistance for the YPG was regarded as a major problem for Turkey. Second, the policies of the YPG in the Northern Syria that aim to change the demographic composition of the region generated serious concern about the future of the region. This ethnic engineering attempt by the YPG, according to Turkey, could destabilize the whole region by bringing about a new civil war between Kurds and Arabs. Thirdly one of the critical problem for Turkish foreign policy makers was the lack of a long term comprehensive US strategy about Syria. The focus was primarily on defeating ISIS. The lack of a strategy provided a condition that the tactics on the ground shape the strategy and policy of the US administration. This has generated a major confusion and unpredictability in bilateral relations.

The US insistence about the military assistance to the YPG later created further distrust and skepticism about the US objectives in the region. When Turkey declared that the west bank of the Euphrates river would be its “red line” and any YPG incursion towards the West would be considered as a security threat for Turkey, the US administration mostly underestimated Turkey’s warnings.²⁸ The Manbij operation, where the US once more used YPG forces to defeat ISIS, led to another crisis in relations. Contrary to reassurances by the US administration, the YPG did not return to the east of the Euphrates river following the capture of the city.²⁹ Together with the presence of ISIS in Jarablus, the YPG presence in Manbij meant Turkey’s southern borders were occupied by terrorist groups. Turkey organized Operation Euphrates Shield in 2016 in order to eradicate these threats.³⁰

²⁸ Humeyra Pamuk, “Turkey struck Kurdish militia in Syria twice: PM Davutoglu,” *Reuters*, October 27, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-kurds/turkey-struck-kurdish-militia-in-syria-twice-pm-davutoglu-idUSKCN0SL0SP20151027>.

²⁹ “Turkey expects Syrian Kurdish forces to withdraw after Manbij operation: minister,” *Reuters*, August 15, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-syria-turkey-manbij/turkey-expects-syrian-kurdish-forces-to-withdraw-after-manbij-operation-minister-idUSKCN10Q11R>.

³⁰ Patrick Markey, “U.S. seeks to soothe Turkey ties, press fight against Islamic State,” *Reuters*, August 26, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-usa/u-s-seeks-to-soothe-turkey-ties-press-fight-against-islamic-state-idUSKCN1112BN>.

The day that Operation Euphrates Shield started, Vice President Biden visited Turkey where he reiterated the US commitment to send the YPG forces east of the Euphrates.³¹ He openly stated that if the YPG forces did not return to the eastern side of Euphrates, the US would stop all military assistance. However, these promises and commitments which were constantly repeated by the members of the US administration were never fulfilled.

The US attitude to the YPG did not change despite the change in the administration in 2017 as the Trump administration continued the policies that were designed by President Obama. This was a major disappointment for Turkey, as many Turks expected a major rupture in US policy in Syria and the Turkish government expected the new administration to be more sensitive and considerate to the Turkey's national security concerns. However, the Trump administration did not only continue the Obama era policies towards the YPG but also started to arm the YPG with heavy weapons.³² In May 2017, just days before President Erdogan's trip to Washington, DC for his first meeting with President Trump, the US administration announced its decision to further arm the YPG for the capture of Raqqa, the capital of ISIS in Syria. Turkey's offers to organize the offensive to Raqqa together with the US was ignored by the US administration.³³ The use of YPG units in order to capture a Sunni Arab dominated city increased the skepticism towards the US goals in the region.

³¹ Office of the Vice President, "Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden and Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yildirim at a Press Availability," *The White House Archives - President Barack Obama*, August 24, 2016, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2016/08/25/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-and-turkish-prime-minister-binali>.

³² Michael R. Gordon and Eric Schmitt, "Trump to Arm Syrian Kurds, Even as Turkey Strongly Objects," *The New York Times*, May 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/09/us/politics/trump-kurds-syria-army.html>.

³³ Humeyra Pamuk, "Turkey sets out Raqqa operation plans to U.S.: report," *Reuters*, February 18, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-crisis-turkey-syria/turkey-sets-out-raqqa-operation-plans-to-u-s-report-idUSKBN15X0C7>.

In the meantime, especially CENTCOM caused very serious public diplomacy disasters with Turkey. The pictures of Brett McGurk with YPG members in Kobani was a shocking incident for Turkey. When the CENTCOM made American soldiers on the ground to use YPG armbands it created huge reaction in Turkish society. In addition to all these, the CENTCOM irked the Turkish government by constantly glorifying the YPG members and constantly promoting group as the only solution for the problems in Syria. Its tweets about the group generated diplomatic crises between two countries. As mentioned above the lack of any comprehensive strategy made the CENTCOM as the most important actor in policy making in the region.

As this article is being written, the issue of the YPG still constitutes one of the most serious problems between Turkey and the US. It has generated the biggest problem in trust between two allies in recent years. Public opinion in Turkey has become increasingly negative in reaction to the US military assistance to a group that is recognized as a terrorist organization. The artificial distinctions, the explanations by the US – the tactical, temporary and limited nature of partnership with the YPG- did not fix the situation. As the Trump administration continues the policies that were initiated by the Obama administration, the Turkish government has started to look for potential resolution of the problem through unilateral military operations against the YPG. For most of the observers of the US-Turkey relations, the YPG issue is the most significant crisis in bilateral relations.

The tension in bilateral relations due to the YPG issue reached to a new height following the failed coup attempt by the fringe elements within the Turkish armed forces loyal to Fethullah Gulen. The coup was prevented by the rapid mobilization of the Turkish society and the Turkish government against the putschists. The coup impacted Turkish-American relations in two different ways. The reaction of the US government to the coup attempt generated a major disappointment in Turkey. In its first statement after the beginning of the coup

attempt, Secretary of State John Kerry, instead of denouncing such an attempt, stated that US is expecting stability and continuity in Turkey.³⁴ Considering the recent memory of the US disregard to the coup in Egypt, the statement was interpreted as the US support for the coup or insensitivity to an attack against the democratically elected government in Turkey.³⁵ While the US tried to fix this mistake with another statement, this time the fact that the statement did not include the word “coup” became a reminiscent of the 2013 Egyptian coup, in which the US administration avoided using the word coup to describe the situation. Secondly, the critical issue following the coup attempt was to identify and prosecute those responsible for the coup attempt. After determining that Gulen’s followers were responsible for the attempt, Turkey asked the US administration to extradite Gulen to Turkey. In addition to the coup attempt, there were multiple different indictments prepared by the prosecutors holding Gulen and his group, referred to as FETO, responsible for different crimes and criminal enterprises in Turkey. However, despite multiple different attempts by the Turkish government, the US administration failed to extradite Gulen or stop his group’s activities in the US. This has generated a serious tension in relations.

For Turkey, there were three main national security threat recognized by the National Security Council. The PKK and its affiliates in Syria were considered the biggest national security problem. The arming of its affiliate by the US was a serious challenge for bilateral relations. The Gulenists in Turkey, also named as FETO, was the second major threat for Turkey and the group’s leader was in US and the group continue its activities around the US. The fact that two major

³⁴ Nolan D. McCaskill, “Kerry: I hope there will be ‘stability, peace, continuity’ within Turkey,” *Politico*, July 15, 2016, <https://www.politico.com/story/2016/07/john-kerry-turkey-coup-225632>.

³⁵ Tim Arango and Ceylan Yeginsu, “Turks Can Agree on One Thing: U.S. Was Behind Failed Coup,” *The New York Times*, August 2, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/03/world/europe/turkey-coup-erdogan-fethullah-gulen-united-states.html>.

threats to Turkey had direct US support or tolerance generated a very negative atmosphere in Turkey in regards to the US. Instead of the disagreements between two countries in regards to the regional issues, in the last few years US-Turkey relations were disrupted primarily by the problems pertaining to direct national interests and security of Turkey. This has been the trend at least for the last three years in bilateral relations between Turkey and the US. Probably one of the only exceptions of this has been the decision of the US administration to move the US embassy to Jerusalem. Since this decision was announced in December, 2017, the Turkish government has been the biggest critic of this decision. Turkey convened the Organization of Islamic Conference twice in six months and co-sponsor a resolution in UN General Assembly about the US decision.

CONCLUSION

Turkish-American relations during the AK Party era have always been in a volatile state. Shortly after the 2002 Turkish elections, the US invasion of Iraq generated a serious crisis in bilateral relations which continued for years as the war turned into a civil war. The lack of US focus on the PKK in Iraq, the hood incident, and the human rights violations in Iraq generated a major reaction in Turkey against the US, both at public and government level. Later, the attempts to fix ties between two countries during the first years of Obama administration also failed after the Arab Spring. The conflict in Syria generated the biggest strategic divergence between two countries in decades. Following the rise of ISIS and the US assistance for the YPG, the strategic divergence reached to a whole new level. Following the coup of July 15th, relations reached a new low from which the two countries have yet to recover. Following these repeated blows to US-Turkish ties, Turkey started to diversify its foreign policy, including increasing cooperation with Russia in Syria and in the defense industry, a move that generated anxiety in DC. Although the US has so far failed to respond

to the demands of Turkey, any attempts by Turkey to diversify its relations have caused concern in Washington, DC. The ties between the leaders of two countries, which has been an important determinant of bilateral relations for decades, also could not resolve the problems. Despite positive chemistry between President Trump and Erdogan, the two leaders failed to reach an agreement on significant issues. With the increasing unilateral inclinations in US foreign policy, such as the Jerusalem decision, and Turkey's increasingly proactive and assertive foreign policy and its readiness to use military instruments when its national security is threatened, it will be harder to manage the relations between the two countries. The descriptors that had been used describe bilateral relations, including strategic partnership, enduring partnership, and model partnership, have become less meaningful when the mutual trust is so low in Turkey about US intentions in the region.

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CHAPTER 10

THE RISE OF TURKEY'S 'MILITARY ACTIVISM': THE CAUSES, CONTEXT AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS*

MURAT YEŞİLTAŞ**

Turkey's security and foreign policies have experienced significant transformations regarding the country's changing regional and international role since the AK Party came to power in 2002. The transformation in Turkish foreign policy has been much studied in relation to the concept of "foreign policy activism."¹ This concept has indeed become the central component of the AK Party's foreign policy program in the post-2002 agenda of Turkey's international affairs.² Following the AK Party's accession in 2002, Turkey's security policy has also evolved to the point that its armed forces started engaging in different types of national and international military operations not only to deter the regional threats against Turkey, but also to recalibrate Turkey's hard power as an inte-

* This article is part of the ongoing project titled *Turkish Military Missions Abroad: Changing Dynamics and Strategic Implications*.

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¹ Murat Yeşiltaş and Ali Balcı, "The Dictionary of Turkish Foreign Policy: A Conceptual Map," *SAM Policy Papers*, no. 7 (2013): 20.

² Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Stratejik Derinlik: Türkiye'nin Uluslararası Konumu* (Istanbul: Küre Publication, 2001).; Burhanettin Duran, Ali Aslan and Kemal İnat, *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Dış Politika*, (Istanbul: SETA, 2018).; Murat Yeşiltaş, "The Transformation of the Geopolitical Vision in Turkish Foreign Policy," *Turkish Studies* 14, no. 4 (2013): 661-87.; Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique," *Insight Turkey* 13, no.1 (2011): 47-65.

gral part of Turkish foreign policy. Despite the fact that a considerable amount of research has been conducted regarding Turkish foreign policy activism³ under the AK Party administration, not enough attention has yet been paid to the military aspect of Turkey's foreign policy activism. This article focuses on "Turkish military activism" in relation to the military and security aspects of the Turkish foreign policy in the AK Party era. In the context of this article, the concept of military activism underlines the rise of Turkey's extra-territorial military presence and its contribution to international peace operations.

In the scope of foreign policy activism, when compared to the previous eras of Turkish foreign policy in the regional and international context, there has been a shift in scale.⁴ Turkish foreign policy has transitioned from a territorial and nationally defined geopolitical vision that is geographically fixed by its national boundaries to an expanded vision that includes wider regions such as the Middle East, Caucasus, the Balkans and North Africa. More importantly, unlike the defensive foreign and security policies, which tended to emphasize intra-territorial conceptualization of geopolitics of Turkey, the new foreign policy activism emerged with a distinctive vision as a result of Turkey's regional and international expansion.⁵ The new foreign policy activism

³ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring," *SAM Vision Papers*, no.3 (2012).; Burhanettin Duran, "Understanding the AK Party's Identity Politics: A Civilizational Discourse and its Limitations," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 1 (2013): 91-109.; Ali Balcı, *Türkiye'nin Dış Politikası: İlkeler, Aktörler ve Olaylar* (Istanbul: Alfa Publication, 2017).

⁴ Ali Balcı and Murat Yeşiltaş, "Turkey's New Middle East Policy: The Case of the Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Iraq's Neighbouring Countries," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 4 (2006): 18- 37.

⁵ Ali Balcı and Nebi Miş, "Turkey's Role in the Alliance of Civilizations: A New Perspective in Turkish Foreign Policy?," *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 3 (2008): 387-406.; Ziya Öniş, "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique," *Insight Turkey* 13, no.1 (2011): 47-65.; Ahmet Sözen, "A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges," *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 1 (2010): 103-23.; Faruk Yalvaç, "Strategic Depth or Hegemonic Depth? A Critical Realist Analysis of Turkey's Position in the World System," *International Relations* 26, no. 2 (2012): 165-80.; Güneş Murat Tezcür and Alexandru Grigorescu, "Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy: Balancing European and Regional Interests," *International Studies Perspectives* 15, no. 3 (2014): 257-76.

encompasses a dramatically different vision of Turkey's international position and marks a remarkable break from the previous foreign policy discourses and practices.

Compared with the foreign activism, not enough attention has been paid to the increasing role of military activism of Turkey in the last decade. Turkey is an important NATO ally that has often engaged in international military operations, especially the peace operations since the Cold War. Turkey has also become an important geopolitical player in maintaining regional and international stability and security by contributing with its military forces in the post-Cold War era. The AK Party administration has also maintained close attention to Turkey's role in international peace operations before the Arab spring, as part of its foreign policy activism in international politics. Other than that, Turkey has contributed to international peace operations as part of its objective to acquire a new international role.⁶ When it comes to fulfilling its new role, Turkey seeks to achieve this through its military strategy by deterring security threats such as the PKK and DAESH terrorist organizations. The Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has been actively engaging with counter-terrorism operations abroad, particularly in Northern Iraq. However, since the Arab spring, and due to the changing security landscape of the Middle East-North African region (MENA), Turkish military activism has become more assertive in order to gain a greater strategic autonomy and flexibility in containing security and geopolitical obstacles emanating from violent non-state, international, and other regional actors. This has led the TAF to engage in direct and indirect military operations to proclaim its regional and international interests.

In order to contextualize the rise of military activism under the AK Party administration within Turkish politics, it is necessary to examine the main contributing factors behind Turkey's strategic ambition of

⁶ Murat Yeşiltaş, "Turkey's Quest for New International Order," *Perception: Journal of International Affairs* 9, no. 4 (2014): 43-75.

becoming a regional player and an influential international actor by increasing its military capacity. Here, the military capacity not only refers to the ability to achieve a desired effect in a specific operational environment such as combat readiness, sustainable capability, and force structure⁷, but it also highlights the importance of defending Turkey against all adversaries, foreign and domestic, while simultaneously enabling Turkey to pursue whatever interest it wishes within and beyond its state borders. This article examines how Turkey's military activism manifested itself through different types of military operations, including international peace operations, combating terrorism, contribution to regional and international security, and post-conflict stability operations. The article argues that the increasing military activism of Turkey stems both from the post-Arab spring era and Turkey's changing security environment, especially in the Middle East. The reasons behind the increasing military activism of Turkey also include a desire to gain political influence in the international arena and improve Turkey's military capabilities to deter emerging security threats near its borders and abroad. In the first section, the article contextualizes the concept of military activism in relation to the Turkish military history. In the second section, it historically analyzes Turkey's military activism under the AK Party administration, and empirically examines Turkey's military activism regarding its strategic missions. In the last section, the article sheds light on the main findings in order to coherently define the main driving factors that shape Turkey's military activism.

MAKING SENSE OF THE RISE OF TURKEY'S MILITARY ACTIVISM

As the main component of national security, the concept of military activism has many dimensions. Historically speaking, the concept of

⁷ Ashley J. Tellis, Janice Bially, Christopher Layne, and Melissa McPherson, *Measuring National Power in the Postindustrial Age* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2000), 133-76.

military activism as a part of the military doctrine was first utilized and operationalized by the Israel Defense Forces, which “promoted disproportionate military retaliation as the most effective deterrence” against the Arabs in the 1950s.⁸ From an Israeli invention as a military doctrine to contemporary usage, the concept of military activism has been transformed through the Cold and post-Cold war eras. In the context of this research, the concept of military activism under the AK Party administration underlines the rise of Turkey’s extra-territorial military presence and its contribution to international peace operations. Here, Turkey’s attempt to relocate itself as a regional player as well as an influential international actor encapsulates its desire to protect its national security interests and to contain security threats by adopting a security-centric strategy as part of its foreign policy understanding. Even though Turkey has militarily contributed to international peace operations abroad areas since the end of the Cold War, the military strategy that takes military activism into consideration has undergone a remarkable change, especially in the post-Arab spring geopolitical landscape of Turkey. One of the main driving forces behind the rise of military activism within Turkish politics in its immediate surroundings has actually emerged as a result of combination of different considerations.

In the early years of the AK Party administration, Turkish foreign policy was constructed around the idea that Turkey could only redefine its international role by transforming its foreign policy identity towards its near and far abroad. In that context, the main aim was to reevaluate Turkey’s international activism and transform the country from the concept of “central country” to a “global player.”⁹ According to this foreign policy goal, Turkey’s central role in the regional and global geopolitical picture is not only a geographical fact; but it is also a cultural

⁸ “Military Activism,” *The Reut Institute*, July 14, 2009, <http://reut-institute.org/en/Publication.aspx?PublicationId=3676>.

⁹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, “Türkiye Merkez Ülke Olmalı”, *Radikal*, February 26, 2004.

fact that cannot be separated from the historical experience of Turkey.¹⁰ Gaining Turkey's "strategic autonomy" was the primary goal of this new foreign policy understanding.¹¹ Thus, reconfiguration of Turkey's proactive and multi-dimensional foreign policy required Turkey's involvement in international peace operations to construct an emerging power identity.¹² During this time, Turkey's national security concerns have been heavily influenced by the PKK, a terrorist organization which has been conducting irregular attacks against Turkey since the 1980s. The main objective of the new security strategy was to contain the threat of terrorism on a domestic and regional level by redefining Turkey's military strategy. With the reformulation of Turkey's relations, especially with Middle Eastern countries in the near abroad, the AK Party government aimed to undermine the PKK's outside support by minimizing its military capacity and delegitimizing the PKK's ideology and politics on the regional level.

While the formation of the new foreign policy understanding in the wider context was one of the essential elements of the AK Party government's platform, the strategic evaluation of international politics and the reformulation of Turkey's military and defense strategies have become necessary components of the post-2002 goal of obtaining a new role in the international arena.¹³ The military and defense objectives manifested themselves through protecting the territorial integrity

¹⁰ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy: An Assessment of 2007," *Insight Turkey* 10, no. 1 (2008): 77-96.

¹¹ According to S. Kalyanaraman strategic autonomy "denotes the ability of a state to pursue its national interests and adopt its preferred foreign policy without being constrained in any manner by other states."; "Aravind Devanathan asked: What is 'strategic autonomy'? How does it help India's security?," Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, January 20, 2015, https://idsa.in/askanexpert/strategicautonomy_indiasecurity.

¹² Nil. S. Satana, "Peacekeeping Contributor Profile: Turkey," Providing for Peacekeeping, accessed March 20, 2018, <http://www.providingforpeacekeeping.org/2014/04/03/contributor-profile-turkey/>.

¹³ Merve Seren, "AK Parti Döneminde Savunma Sanayinde Yerlilik ve Millilik" in *AK Parti'nin 15 Yılı: Dış Politika*, ed. Burhanettin Duran, Kemal İnat and Ali Aslan (Istanbul: SETA Publication, 2018).

and sovereignty of the country. The main security priority of the AK Party government in this period was to contribute to the establishment of regional and international stability. However, the new security landscape in the post-Arab spring and the emerging security threats, especially emanating from state and non-state armed actors, shifted Turkey's national security concerns dramatically and forced Turkey towards a more "offensive security" and military strategy. This also reconstructed Turkey's military activism, particularly in the Middle East. The rise of DAESH and the PKK's changing strategy in Turkey and Syria accelerated and reshaped Turkey's military activism. More importantly, in this period, the rising regional geopolitical antagonisms among the regional countries such as Saudi Arabia and Iran, and the steady escalation and diversification of the Syrian civil war engendered a shift in Turkey's perception of military power as a tool of foreign policy.

The Turkish military and defense strategy is defined as the art of distributing and applying military means to fulfill the aforementioned policy objectives. This has a number of dimensions; including increasing military capacity and deterrence by investing in the national defense industry. These new objectives encapsulated the compartmentalization of defense policies in accordance with Turkey's changing role in international politics. This was accomplished by contributing to international peace operations in order to consolidate Turkey's place in the international system and cooperation with NATO and other regional and international alliances. Overall, this new perspective of military strategy sought to stabilize Turkey's forward defense in order to detect national and regional threats across borders and carry out preventive interventions before threats reach Turkish territory. In this regard, with the rise of threat perception, Turkey has begun to reassert its material capacity with military and defense means not only to contain the security threats but also to redefine the politics of power projection in the near abroad. As stated earlier, the politics of military activism in Turkish strategy can be examined through the power

projection principle. Accordingly, military activism can also be interpreted as “the ability of a nation to apply all or some of its elements of national power - political, economic, informational, or military - to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain forces in and from multiple dispersed locations to respond to crises, to contribute to deterrence, and to enhance regional stability.”¹⁴

In addition to the increasing diversification of Turkey’s politics of military activism, there are three interrelated factors that shape Turkey’s strategy under the AK Party administration. The first one is security-related factors in the regional and international levels, which mainly changed Turkey’s perception of military politics. Historically, the security-related factors have shaped Turkey’s formulation of its military influence for different reasons. For example, international systemic changes throughout the Cold War and the post-Cold War era shifted from a solid understanding of bipolarity to multipolarity and multilateralism.¹⁵ This shift in the international system also changed Turkey’s perception of military politics. On the other hand, the emergence of new values and norms such as human security, responsibility to protect, and humanitarian intervention have influenced the degree of Turkey’s commitment to international peace operations.¹⁶

The new security environment; the transformation of the political and strategic landscape of Eastern Europe and the MENA region has also transformed Turkey’s role in international and regional military operations. Up until the Korean War, Turkish foreign policies were determined by Turkey’s need for a security alliance in the western bloc; and against the impending security threat from the Soviet Union.¹⁷

¹⁴ The US Department of Defense, “Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” last modified February 15, 2016, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1_02.pdf.

¹⁵ Uğur Güngör, “The Analysis of Turkey’s Approach to Peace Operations,” (Doctoral Dissertation, Bilkent University, 2007), 133-75, <http://www.thesis.bilkent.edu.tr/0003253.pdf>.

¹⁶ Güngör, “The Analysis of Turkey’s Approach to Peace Operations,” 133-75.

¹⁷ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014).

Following Turkey's membership to NATO in 1952, Turkey's contribution to international peace operations began to revolve around NATO's strategic priorities. Nevertheless, the participation in international peace operations has become an integral part of Turkey's strategic competition with the countries in the region and its ambition for strategic leverage in regional politics.¹⁸ This strategy has evolved throughout the Cold War and in the post-Cold War periods towards a strategy of finding the appropriate opportunity to exercise its military capability. However, the diversification of security issues and the increasing ambiguity within the structure of the NATO alliance have affected Turkey's perception of military activism, as the commonality of the threat perception has transformed. Therefore, while the common understanding within the NATO alliance against the increasing security threats provides greater opportunities for Turkey to become a multilateral partner of international military operations, the less shared threat perception between Turkey and Western countries increases independently initiated military operations by Turkey.

The second explanation with regard to the driving factors behind Turkey's policy of military activism can be examined within the context of organizational factors, through which the Turkish military tries to improve its military capacity. During the AK Party era, with the advancement of the Turkish Military Forces' operational capabilities, a more professional army capable of high mobility and more technologically equipped military units were desired. In that context, as the second largest army within the NATO security structure, maintaining Turkey's military prestige has become one of the important components of Turkey's military activism, and it is determined to earn a reputation among other countries' armies by acquiring international experience and skills.¹⁹ In addition to organizational factors, certain operational factors have also shaped Turkey's military

¹⁸ Güngör, "The Analysis of Turkey's Approach to Peace Operations," 133-175.

¹⁹ Güngör, "The Analysis of Turkey's Approach to Peace Operations," 133-175.

perception since 9/11 as well. In this regard, Turkey's normative and institutional commitment to the international fight against terrorism as well as the maintenance of its close strategic security relations with the European powers within NATO, are the main determining factors in formulating Turkey's military activism in line with the operational dimension.²⁰

The third driving factor that shapes Turkey's approach to military activism can be explained through the domestic political concerns and the perception of the TAF within Turkish society. In this regard, the public opinion and security elites determine an important role in reasoning Turkey's military activities abroad.²¹ The protection of the Turkish/Muslim minorities in conflict zones as well as the historical/cultural perception of the Turkish people toward conflict zones may become the main driving forces behind Turkey's involvement in international peace operations. The legacy of the Ottoman Empire, ethnic and religious ties have played a critical role in Turkey's contribution to international peace operations, so that Turkey has gained a mediator role in the conflicts between Christian and Muslim societies. It is possible to argue that Turkey's presence among the multinational peacekeeping forces has become a *sine qua non* for operational success. Reframing Turkey's international role regarding its Muslim identity under the AK Party administration also has become the main reference point in defining Turkey's involvement in international peace operations, and was seen as an assets by Western international organizations for the missions conducted in countries such as Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Sudan. Considering the cultural ties with these Muslim communities, Turkey calculates that these peace operations would exert influence on regional stability and legitimacy of the government in the eyes of its people and the government would take advantage of this percep-

²⁰ Güngör, "The Analysis of Turkey's Approach to Peace Operations," 133-175.

²¹ Güngör, "The Analysis of Turkey's Approach to Peace Operations," 133-175.

tion to pursue its strategic goal in redefining its international role.²² Consequently, the peace initiatives that Turkey has contributed to and conducted, especially during the post-Cold War era, should be seen both as an instrument of foreign policy and a source of inspiration in contributing to regional and international stability.

Against this background, Turkey's politics of military activism can be divided into three domains of military activities in regional and international politics. The first group of military activity, as part of Turkey's strategy, is security cooperation with international or regional organizations in order to enhance partner willingness to participate in coalition operations, which strengthens existing partner capabilities and provides training benefits from security cooperation activities. These operations are mainly carried out via international organizations such as NATO and the UN. During the AK Party era, Turkey's commitment to NATO's international peace operations has been diversified and intensified due to the increasing number of security threats, especially in the post 9/11 period. As the number of international peace operations has increased since the 9/11 incident, Turkey's contribution to international military operations aimed at improving regional stability and security is crucial to understand Turkey's military activism. The second category of Turkey's military activism strategy is Turkey's fight against terrorism, which has been the main component of Turkey's historical security strategy. However, the new understanding of combating terrorism through the lens of military activism assumes a natural offensive security rationale and employs new military tools due the changing character of warfare and the operational environment. The main rationale behind this new military strategy is to combat and deter terrorism

²² Tarih Oğuzlu and Uğur Güngör, "Peace Operation and the Transformation of Turkey's Security Policy," *Contemporary Security Policy* 27, no. 3 (2007): 472-488; Hüseyin Bağcı and Şaban Kardaş, "Exploring Turkey's Role in Peace Operations," in *Contemporary Issues in International Politics* (Ankara: FPI, 2004).; Uğur Güngör, *Why States Contribute to Peace Operations: Motivations Behind Turkey's Involvement* (Lambert Academic Publishing, 2011).

and asymmetric threats by showing a dedicated commitment in the operational environment.²³

The third category in Turkey's rising military activism is the forward military deployment in the context of military base politics. Base politics is defined as "the interaction between 'basing nations' and 'host nations' on matters relating to the status and operation of local military facilities in the host nations, together with related transnational interactions involving non-state actors."²⁴ The strategy of establishing bases in the near and far abroad is the most significant and tangible strategic move in Turkish military politics and should be examined as an integral part of Turkey's new strategic priorities in Turkey's Middle Eastern and North African foreign and security policies.²⁵ Turkey also seeks to build a sphere of political-military influence in order to calibrate or proclaim its foreign policy objectives. Turkey's policy on establishing military bases has many dimensions, but in this case it can mainly be understood under the pretext of Turkey's security and political commitments to prevent the possibility of destabilization of balance of power in a competitive geopolitical environment. Forward military deployment is also integral part of Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy especially it has gained prominence and has also become a main tangible change in the post-Arab spring era.

TURKEY'S MILITARY ACTIVISM IN THE AK PARTY ERA: CAUSES, CONTEXT AND CONSEQUENCES

This section explores Turkey's military activism by focusing on three different, yet interrelated transfrontier military missions that the TAF conducted during the AK Party era. The section deals with the

²³ Burhanettin Duran, "Turkey's New Security Concept," *Daily Sabah*, October 26, 2016.

²⁴ Kent E. Calder, *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

²⁵ Can Kasapoğlu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture," *EDAM Foreign and Security Policy Series*, no.4 (July 2017): 1-23.

causal and contextual dynamics as well as the strategic consequences of Turkish military activism abroad. On this basis, Turkey's military activities are examined in terms of the structure/nature of the operation that the TAF involves in (i.e low-intensity, medium-intensity, high-intensity, and no-intensity) and the main strategic missions of Turkey's military activism are categorized as combating terrorism (CT), contribution to regional and international security (CRIS), and power projection (PP). Mainly, this section takes the following variables into consideration; the number of military personnel involved, the duration and scope of the military operation, the type of military involvement (independent or multilateral), and the strategic consequences of the military presence. Within the scope of this research, a total of 36 military operations²⁶ were examined in total to explore how the AK Party government defines Turkey's national interests regarding its military activism strategy.

MISSION TYPE 1: COMBATING TERRORISM (CT)

Combating terrorism (CT) is one of the most important components of Turkey's military activism in its immediate surroundings. Over the last forty years, the fight against terrorism has become a significant security concern for Turkey. Since the 1980s, Turkey has been combating terrorist groups, such as the PKK (1980), the YPG/PYD (2012), DAESH (2013) and Al-Qaeda (2001), and other terror-affiliated formations that threaten Turkey's national security. Particularly, the PKK and DAESH have become the most important security threats pressuring Turkey's domestic and regional security priorities in the post-Arab spring era.²⁷ In the most basic sense, CT

²⁶ Please see Appendix Table 11.2: List of Military Operations in the AK Party Era.

²⁷ Murat Yeşiltaş, Rifat Öncel and Bilgehan Öztürk, "Turkey's Fight Against DAESH," *SETA Policy Analysis*, no. 23 (November 2016).; Necdet Özçelik, "Fighting Terrorism and a Clashing Alliance: The Case of Turkey-U.S. Security Relations," *SETA Perspective*, no. 29 (May 2017).; Necdet Özçelik, Sibel Düz and Rifat Öncel, "One Year After July 15: Turkey's Fight Against Terrorism," *SETA Policy Analysis*, no.36 (July 2017).

refers to the actions of the Turkish military taken to prevent, defeat, and terminate terrorist organizations and activities on regional and global scales. Given the rapidly escalating nature of terrorist activities in the Middle East in the post-Arab spring period, it is possible to argue that the CT mission has become a stronger motivation for the transfrontier operations of the Turkish military in Iraq and Syria. Turkey has been carrying out its CT missions on the grounds of both the global anti-terror coalitions and independent military initiatives. The UN, NATO, and multilateral international ad-hoc alliances such as the Global Coalition Against DAESH constitute some of these global-anti terror coalitions.

Conversely, Operation Euphrates Shield (OES), Operation Olive Branch (OOB)²⁸ and Turkey's various military operations in northern Iraq against the PKK set excellent examples of autonomous military actions in which the TAF acted as the main military body. These military operations aimed to degrade and defeat DAESH and halt the ongoing PKK/YPG expansionism in northern Syria and northern Iraq. OES and OOB most effectively demonstrate how military operations have become a central component of Turkey's foreign policy strategy, particularly in the wake of the July 15 military coup attempt. This shift is a result of the need to overcome the disturbed security landscape along Turkey's borders with Syria, as well as the geopolitical necessity of establishing a cross-border operational depth.²⁹ In conformity with Article 51 of the United Nations (UN) Charter, Turkey exercised its "right of self-defense" and launched OES on August 24, 2016; and

²⁸ Murat Yeşiltaş, Merve Seren and Necdet Özçelik, *Operation Euphrates Shield: Execution and Lessons Learned* (Istanbul: SETA Policy Report, 2017).

²⁹ Murat Yeşiltaş, Rıfat Öncel and Bilgehan Öztürk, "Turkey's Fight Against DAESH," *SETA Policy Analysis*, no. 23 (November 2016); Can Kasapoğlu and Sinan Ülgen, "Operation Euphrates Shield and the al-Bab Campaign: A Strategic Assessment," *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, no. 4 (July 2017): 13.

OOB on January 20, 2018.³⁰ However, the military, political, and strategic reasons put forward by Turkey regarding OES and OOB are more important than the legal reasons. Turkey's primary objectives in OES were to strengthen border security, to push DAESH away from the border (and, therefore, to disrupt the organization's center of gravity and prevent DAESH attacks, particularly against border provinces),³¹ and to block the PKK/YPG from carving out a corridor by taking control of the east-west line in northern Syria.³² DAESH's main goal was to drag Turkey and the PKK into a gradually deepening and transforming fight, thereby consolidating its operational center of gravity in Syria and protecting it from outside attacks. Prior to OES, DAESH controlled a vast geographical area along the Turkish border including districts, notably Dabiq, in which the group vigorously implemented its messianic and caliphal policy; and other strategically important areas, which enabled maneuverability and protection for DAESH forces.³³

Following OES, Turkey carried out OOB along with the Free Syrian Army (FSA) to curb the PKK's influence in northern Syria and to "de-territorialize" it in northern Syria. More importantly, Turkey

³⁰ Turkey remarked that Operation Euphrates Shield was conducted in the scope of the UNSC resolutions for the fight against DAESH as stated in Article 51 of the UN Charter. See The Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey, "Başbakanlık Koordinasyon Merkezinden 'Fırat Kalkanı Operasyonu' Hakkında Yapılan Basın Açıklaması", accessed August 11, 2017, https://www.basbakanlik.gov.tr/Forms/_Article/pg_Article.aspx?Id=2a0e4e31-1a6d-4d65-9074-cc8b7097d0f6. ; For Article 51 of the UN Charter, see "Birleşmiş Milletler Antlaşması ve Uluslararası Adalet Divanı Statüsü", *Ombudsman*, accessed August 11, 2017, <https://www.ombudsman.gov.tr/contents/files/6535501-%20Birlesmis-Milletler-Antlasmasi.pdf>.

³¹ Between April and May 2016, DAESH intensified rocket attacks (mostly Katyusha-type), almost daily, by targeting Kilis with 54 Katyusha rockets. As a consequence, 19 people died - 12 Turkish nationals and 7 Syrian nationals - and 67 were wounded. Although Katyushas have about a 20-kilometer target range, the group increased the range by modifying these rockets and, therefore, further increasing the threat against Turkey's southern border. Arda Mevlutoğlu, "Katyuşa'lar, HIMAR'lar ve Ötesi," *Siyah Gri Beyaz*, April 29, 2016, <https://www.siyahgribeyaz.com/2016/04/katyusalar-himarlar-ve-otesi.html#more>.

³² "30 Kasım 2016 Tarihli Toplantı," *Turkey National Security Council General Secretariat*, accessed August 11, 2017, <https://www.mgk.gov.tr/index.php/30-kasim-2016-tarihli-toplantı>.

³³ Adam Withnall, "Isis loses 'prophesied' town of Dabiq to Syrian rebels after short battle," *The Independent*, October 16, 2016.

aimed to position itself as a strong and consequential actor in the Syrian civil war via OOB. Turkey wanted to recalibrate its hard power to enhance its role in the slated negotiations on Syria's future, and wanted to demonstrate its military power to convince the US to stop backing the PYD.³⁴ Prior to OOB, Turkish security forces primarily focused on the PKK elements within Turkish territory, conducting 'search and destroy' counterterrorism operations and enlarging internal security operations along the Syrian and Iraqi borders in order to dominate the security environment. Firmly securing the borders against terrorists' infiltration through preventive military, police, and intelligence operations helped Turkey eliminate many terror networks within the country.³⁵ With the advent of OOB, Turkey's military activity spread to a wider geographical area in the western bank of the Euphrates. The strategic reasoning behind Turkey's military operation against the PKK presence in Afrin is to prevent terrorist attacks against Turkish territory, to maintain border security, and to secure Syrian territorial integrity.³⁶

In the scope of OES, Turkey's decision to launch a direct military operation at the end of the sixth year of the Syrian crisis set a breaking-point in Turkish foreign policy toward Syria, and the operation had a crucial success as it was one of the most comprehensive cross-border operations led by the TAF in the history of the Republic. From this as-

³⁴ Can Kasapoğlu and Sinan Ülgen, "Operation Olive Branch: A Political – Military Assessment," *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, (2018): 11-13.

³⁵ Necdet Özçelik, Rifat Öncel and Sibel Düz, "One Year after July 15 Turkey's Fight against Terrorism," *SETA Analysis*, no. 36 (July 2017).

³⁶ An offshoot organization of the PKK, the YPG controlled 65% of the Turkey-Syria border and used its position to attack Turkey before operation was launched by the TAF. More importantly, the YPG was playing a vital role in the PKK's ongoing terrorist attacks inside Turkey. It is also well-known that the YPG is tactically used by the PKK as an integral part of its irregular warfare strategy both in terms of manpower and military equipment in the fight against the Turkish Armed Forces in the southeastern part of Turkey. Therefore, first and foremost, Operation Olive Branch (OOB) is an integral part of Turkey's counter-terrorism strategy, which Turkish security forces have adopted against the PKK since 2015.; Kyle W. Orton, "The Error of Arming the Syrian Kurds," *The New York Times*, June 6, 2017.; Murat Yeşiltaş and Necdet Özçelik, "Turkey, US and PYD: Strategic Ally or Local Partner?," *Daily Sabah*, February 17, 2016.

pect, the nature, characteristics, scope, and timing of OES are extremely significant since they changed the security environment in Syria. Moreover, OES was not simply a military offensive with national and international dimensions - its mission also included a humanitarian aid perspective, the coordination of international and local alliances, and the elements of a stability operation. With the participation and coordination of many state and public institutions and non-governmental organizations, Turkey has initiated a process of multidimensional reconstruction in DAESH-cleansed territories. In this sense, the process and management of stability-building have been shaped, in different ways, by the idiosyncrasies of the region and the strategic priorities of other actors. After all, Turkey's efforts to establish stability in the post-operation period consisted of collective activities. These activities encompassed the areas of security,³⁷ humanitarian relief support, economic stability, infrastructure and superstructure services, building the judicial state and justice, food supply, sheltering services, medical assistance, and educational services.³⁸

Turkey conducted OES in an operational environment that was largely described as a "future operational environment" such as increased velocity and momentum of human interaction and events; demographics and operations among populations.³⁹ OES was conducted with the participation of multiple military units and was actualized within the concept of a joint operation. A joint operation enables an

³⁷ Kemal Karagöz and Halit Süleyman, "Bab Mayınlardan Temizleniyor," *Anadolu News Agency*, February 24, 2017.; Rauf Maltaş, "Güven Ortamı Azez'de Nüfusu Artırdı," *Anadolu News Agency*, 29 May 2017.; "Jarablus Court Report," *The Free Syrian Governorate Council Stability Committee*: 1.; "Public Services Status," *The Free Syrian Governorate Council Stability Committee*: 2.; Kerem Kocalar, "Cerablus'ta Nüfusun Yarısı Kadar Poliklinik Hizmeti Verildi," *Anadolu News Agency*, November 16, 2016.

³⁸ Murat Yeşiltaş, Merve Seren and Necdet Özçelik, *Operation Euphrates Shield: Execution and Lessons Learned* (Istanbul: SETA Policy Report, 2017).

³⁹ Jeff Jager, "Turkey's Operation Euphrates Shield: An Exemplar of Joint Combined Arms Maneuver," *Small Wars Journal*, October 17, 2016, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/jnl/art/turkey%E2%80%99s-operation-euphrates-shield-an-exemplar-of-joint-combined-arms-maneuver>.

operation commander to take initiative, to impose the conditions of the operation on the opposing force, and to create opportunities to eliminate the reaction capabilities of the opposing force. The TAF components that joined OES seized the opportunities afforded through adaptability by taking, maintaining, and manipulating the initiative. In this vein, mechanized infantry, armored and artillery units, unmanned aerial vehicles and air force platforms, as well as engineering and signal units joined the operation.⁴⁰ OOB was also carried out in the joint operation concept that combines different military capabilities together. The operation forces include units of the Turkish Air Force, Army, and Special Forces, as well as the FSA elements.⁴¹ The force generation is made in accordance with the weather and terrain condition, and the assessed capacity and capability of the PKK/YPG elements.

In general, OES and OOB were carried out through operational and tactical initiatives. The TAF components gained a physical and psychological edge over DAESH and the YPG/PKK elements, through synchronous engagement, the execution of a deep operation, and the operational sustainability. OES and OOB aimed at sustaining field control to capture a vast territory, keep the area under control, and preclude terrorist organizations' hybrid elements from reusing the region. On the other hand, in order to beat the opposing force, OES and OOB were materialized as joint operations to control and protect the operation field, local residents, and resources as well as the mobility, fire-power, and survivability of the TAF. Beyond the unity of ardor in these matters, OES and OOB also concentrated on public perception within the operation field, political opposition, and the fight against crime. Turkey has accomplished its priority goals in the scope of OES: it removed the DAESH threat from its borders and hampered the

⁴⁰Can Kasapoğlu and Sinan Ülgen, "Operation Euphrates Shield and the al-Bab Campaign: A Strategic Assessment," *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, (2017).

⁴¹Can Kasapoğlu and Sinan Ülgen, "Operation Olive Branch: A Political—Military Assessment," *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, (2018).

PKK's westward territorial expansion and attempts to position terrorist elements in the area stretching from Kobani to Afrin. In this regard, it is possible to argue that OOB aimed to consolidate Turkey's strategic gains from OES.

With OES and OOB, the TAF tested its capacity for combat readiness. Through the lessons learned from the course and outcomes of the operations, it realized the need for developing its mobility at tactical, operative, and strategic levels. First and foremost, OES and OOB have proven the capability of the Turkish military to perform joint offensive operations in a multi-domain, high-intensity conflict. In the course of the operations, the TAF also tested its capacity to execute an operation with irregular local partners; and following the operation, it observed some drawbacks. The Turkish military identified discrepancies between the implementations of target acquisition and fire support and improved the related capabilities. Additionally, the need for close air support to counter irregular and unexpected targets has come to surface as a stark reality. The TAF also acknowledged the need to improve cooperation between armored vehicles and light infantry and commando units.⁴² Turkey ended after accomplishing its goals in seven months. Turkey removed the DAESH threat from its border, which was the reason for the operation in the first place and prevented the PKK from forming a corridor that would have stretched from the west of the Euphrates River to the town of Afrin. The Turkish campaign was proven effective in terms of operational tempo and military-geostrategic progress in OES. In military and geostrategic terms, the operation cleared an area of 1,100sq km in the first 50 days, and subsequently controlled an area of 2,000sq km.⁴³

⁴² Murat Yeşiltaş, Merve Seren and Necdet Özçelik, *Operation Euphrates Shield: Execution and Lessons Learned* (Ankara: SETA Policy Report, 2017), 43-49.

⁴³ Can Kasapoğlu, "Operation Euphrates Shield: Progress and scope," *Al Jazeera*, February 3, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/02/operation-euphrates-shield-progress-scope-170201133525121.html>.

TABLE 12.1 EXAMPLES OF COMBATING TERRORISM MISSIONS

	Number of Military Personnel	Operational Environment	Conflict Structure	Target	Mission Type	Framework of Operation	Major Partner	Major Supportive Country
OES	5000 +	Multi-domain	High-intensity	DAESH	CT	Independent	FSA	Global anti-DAESH Coalition
OOB	10000+	Multi-domain	High-intensity	PKK, DAESH	CT	Independent	FSA	Russia

MISSION TYPE 2: CONTRIBUTION TO REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (CRIS)

Contributions towards regional and international security (CRIS) constitute a crucial component of Turkey's military activism. Each one of the military operations examined for the purpose of this article has revealed a motivation to comply with the CRIS strategic mission. In the most basic sense, the CRIS mission can be described as a significant aspiration of the Turkish military activism, which is conducted through intergovernmental coalitions and independent military initiatives to ensure security on regional and global scales. It is fair to argue that Turkey prioritizes security issues that take place in its immediate surroundings. Hence, in collaboration with regional and international coalitions, as a highly capable and geographically suitable regional state actor, the Turkish military addresses a variety of regional security threats in the Middle East, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, Caucasia, and the Balkan peninsula.⁴⁴ During its past decade under the AK Party, Turkey has become a much more prominent international actor, and transformed its IGO-oriented international security and peace approach into a

⁴⁴ Turkish Military Forces, "Mission," accessed March 14, 2018, <http://www.tsk.tr/AboutTaf/Mission>.

more independent national strategy. Consequently, its international peace and security efforts have expanded beyond these regions, and gained a global perspective.

Cooperation with established IGOs, such as the UN, NATO, and the OSCE, as well as leading international actors, such as the United States, has long lied at the heart of Turkey's international and regional security perspectives. In the AK Party era, multilateral anti-terror platforms gained vital importance for Turkey due to the emergence of various domestic, regional, and international terrorist organizations that threaten Turkish national security and territorial integrity. Today, Turkey participates in a number of anti-terror coalitions including the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).⁴⁵ Apart from these IGOs and anti-terror coalitions, Turkey has independently conducted military initiatives, such as the operations Olive Branch and Euphrates Shield, aimed at countering security threats directly concerning Turkey, and projecting Turkey's individual power as an international actor.

As a founding nation of the United Nations and a member of NATO, Turkey continues to participate in international peacebuilding and peacekeeping operations under the AK Party administration. Turkey's current approach to peace operations puts an emphasis on non-conditionality and favors bilateralism.⁴⁶ A newly emerging trend is that independent military actions carried by the Turkish military abroad also aim at improving bilateral relations with non-NATO members and traditional allies.

⁴⁵ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Contributions to International Community's Efforts to Fight Terrorism," Electronic Visa Application System, accessed August 11, 2017, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-contributions-to-international-community_s-efforts-to-fight-terrorism.en.mfa.

⁴⁶ Gizem Sucuoğlu and Onur Sazak, "The New Kid on the Block: Turkey's Shifting Approaches to Peacebuilding," *Rising Powers Quarterly*, (December 2016): 73.

The CRIS mission consists of a wide range of military activities including high-intensity conflict operations, post-conflict stabilization initiatives, and humanitarian assistance efforts. From Turkey's point of view, peacebuilding encompasses a vast range of activities from development projects to humanitarian assistance and peace-keeping operations.⁴⁷ In order to demonstrate a better outline of the CRIS mission type, it is possible to break these military activities down into two broad categories: combatant and noncombatant. The combatant category covers jointly or independently conducted high, medium, and low intensity military operations waged against international state or non-state actors. Operation Unified Protector (OUP) in Libya and Operation Ocean Shield (OOS)⁴⁸ in the Horn of Africa constitute great examples in that regard. The noncombatant category mostly incorporates Post-Conflict Stability Efforts (PCSE) and Humanitarian Assistance (HA) missions executed overseas by the Turkish military staff.

PCSE efforts include a wide range of military activities conducted by Turkish military personnel to provide security and stability, promote shared values, and project Turkey's soft power abroad, specifically in areas vulnerable to conflict. These activities generally aim at capacity building, social and economic development as well as political stability. The Turkish military's involvement in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kosovo best demonstrate the relevance of these PCSE efforts to the CRIS mission. Turkey has been actively engaged with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Mission (RSM) in Afghanistan since 2001. With the 'Afghanistan for Afghans'⁴⁹ motto in

⁴⁷ Sucuoğlu Sazak, "The New Kid on the Block," 72.

⁴⁸ Operation Ocean Shield is NATO's counter piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden and off the Horn of Africa. NATO has helped to deter and disrupt pirate attacks, while protecting vessels and increasing the general level of security, in the region since 2008.; NATO Allied Maritime Command, "Operation Ocean Shield," Operations Archive, accessed March 18, 2018, <https://mc.nato.int/missions/operation-ocean-shield.aspx>.

⁴⁹ Nilufer Karacasulu, "Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Turkey," *USAK* 5, no. 10 (2010): 48.

mind, Turkey has made enormous efforts to provide security and stability in this country through Turkish military channels. After the 9/11 incident, Turkey sent troops to Afghanistan on the condition that they would not take part in combatant operations.⁵⁰ Under the ISAF and RSM frameworks, Turkey assumed regional command of Kabul twice, trained the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Police (ANP), launched a comprehensive sustainable assistance program, and made remarkable contributions to the infrastructural reconstruction and social development in the country.⁵¹ Likewise, in Iraq and Kosovo, Turkey trained domestic security forces and made significant efforts to provide security through the NATO Training Mission-Iraq (NTM-I) and NATO Kosovo Force. It is important to mention that the PCSE efforts of the Turkish Military are not limited to these operations. Turkey has also provided personnel support and military equipment to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Georgia, East Timor, Palestine, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in the AK Party era.

Turkey has long carried out its humanitarian efforts through its military channels, which has greatly contributed to the image of the Turkish Military abroad. In 2015, Turkey became the second largest provider of humanitarian assistance with a total expenditure of 3.2 billion USD, while ranking first in generosity with a ratio of 0.37% in terms of the proportion of humanitarian aid provided to gross national income.⁵² Humanitarian aid is described by the OECD Development Assistance Committee as assistance and actions designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain and protect human dignity during and in the aftermath of emergencies.⁵³ Meanwhile, within the scope of this research, the HA mission incorporates military operations -in which the estab-

⁵⁰ Karacasulu, "Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Turkey," 49.

⁵¹ Karacasulu, "Reconstruction of Afghanistan and the Role of Turkey," 50.

⁵² "2015 Turkish Development Assistance Report", TİKA, (2015): 72, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2017/YAYINLAR/TKYR%202015%20ENG/KALKINMA%20.pdf>.

⁵³ "2015 Turkish Development Assistance Report", TİKA, 72.

lishment of safe zones and NFZs took place- with basic humanitarian aid incentives.⁵⁴ Turkey's participation in Operation Unified Protector (OUP) is worth discussing in that regard: Due to the fact that the turmoil in Libya created security issues in the region, Turkey joined the NATO Operation Unified Protector in 2011, which was authorized by the UN Security Council resolutions to impose an arms embargo against the Gaddafi regime and to establish a no-fly zone to protect Libyan civilians and civilian populated areas. Turkey contributed to OUP with four frigates, a submarine, two tanker aircrafts and four F-16s fighters; and the operation was successfully concluded on October 31, 2011.⁵⁵

Humanitarian action has always been a highly political activity.⁵⁶ It is possible to argue that the AK Party administration has utilized the HA mission to sustain and strengthen its global foreign policy objectives. Today, along with the purpose of providing humanitarian aid and development, Turkey has established independent military bases overseas. Among the international community, Turkey currently maintains one of the highest numbers of diplomatic missions in Africa, for instance.⁵⁷ Constituting one of the strongest pillars of the AK Party's Africa policy, Turkey continues to carry out a great deal of humanitarian assistance in Somalia; which not only provides agency for Somalis affected by the ongoing instability in their country, but also contributes to Turkey's rising global influence as an international actor. In addition, it is important to highlight that the Turkish military also conducted various HA missions in Sudan, Lebanon, and Afghanistan along with the UN.

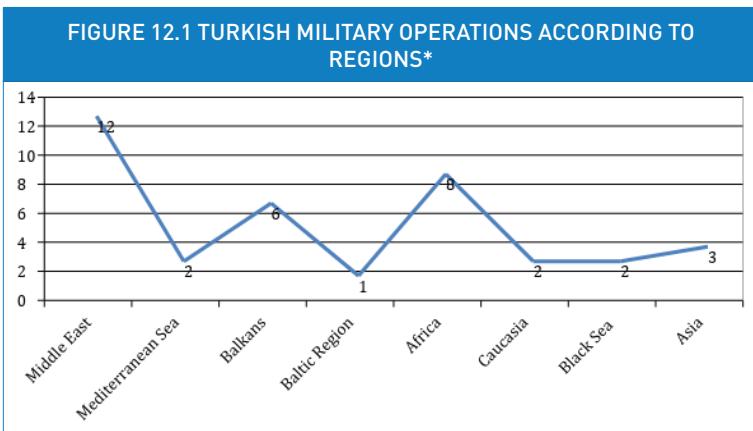
⁵⁴ For further information on Humanitarian Intervention and Humanitarian Assistance, please visit: <http://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e306>

⁵⁵ Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "IV. Turkey's International Security Initiatives and Contributions to NATO and EU Operations," Electronic Visa Application System, accessed March 14, 2018, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/iv_-european-security-and-defence-identity_policy_esdi_p_.en.mfa.

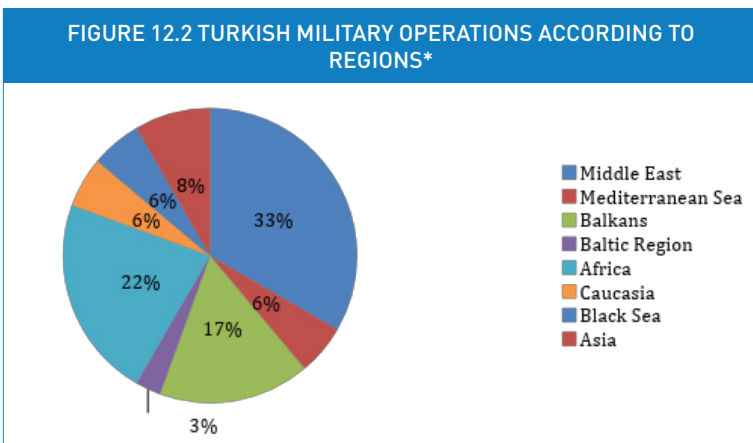
⁵⁶ Joanna Macrae and Nicholas Leader, "The Politics of Coherence: Humanitarianism and Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," *Humanitarian Policy Group*, (July 2000): 1.

⁵⁷ Sinem Cengiz, "What Is at Stake for Turkey in Somalia?" *Arab News*, October 20, 2017. <http://www.arabnews.com/node/1180881/columns>.

Under the AK Party administration, the Turkish military has engaged in attempts to provide security for vulnerable religious, ethnic, and even political minority groups overseas. Specifically, in the Balkans, the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea, the Turkish military has been involved in various operations to support international efforts to enhance peace and stability throughout the AK Party era. The chart below illustrates the geographical distribution of the CRIS operations that were subject to this research:



* Source: NATO, OSCE, UN, Turkish Armed Forces, Turkish Naval Forces.



* The US Department of Defense, “Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms,” last modified February 15, 2016, https://fas.org/irp/doddir/dod/jp1_02.pdf

MISSION TYPE 3: POWER PROJECTION (PP)

The third characteristic of Turkey's military activism is power projection (PP), defined as "the ability of a nation to apply all or some of its elements of national power to rapidly and effectively deploy and sustain forces to respond to crises, to contribute to deterrence, and to enhance regional stability."⁵⁸ In other words, while power projection is the self-perception of Turkey's determined short and long-term military objectives and capabilities, it is also a means of projecting Turkey's national power through both soft and hard power. It should also be understood that power projection is a strategy that is integral to Turkey's desire to become a regional power. In this context, power projection has been instrumental in displaying Turkey's national power by advancing Turkey's political and economic interests through the TAF, discrediting nation states targeting Turkey, and contributing to Turkey's national security objectives via coercive measures.⁵⁹

In compliance with the political objectives involved and level of force deployment, military power projection missions can be examined in two categories: operations that utilize soft military power, and operations that utilize hard military power. The protection of sea lanes of communication, the evacuation of non-combatants in a state of turmoil, humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of a natural catastrophe, and peacekeeping operations constitute soft power projection missions. On the other hand, the symbolic military presence showing political interest, the use of threat of military force in deterring potential adversaries, and the punitive or offensive use of force and military interventions illustrate hard power projection missions.⁶⁰ Turkey's forward military deployment strategy is also the most significant and

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⁵⁹ Gábor Vörös, "US Global Power Projection: Is the World's Policeman still Credible?," *Institute for Foreign Affairs and Trade*, (2016.)

⁶⁰ Walter C. Ladwig III, "India and Military Power Projection: Will the Land of Gandhi Become a Conventional Great Power?," *Asian Survey* 50, no. 6 (2010): 1162–183

tangible strategic move in Turkey's power projection which should be examined as an integral part of Turkey's strategic priorities in the near and far abroad.

Located in a geography surrounded by various irregular and conventional threats, Turkey has conducted a wide range of PP missions. One of those missions is Combined Naval Task Force 151, in which Turkish Navy has been participating in counter-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and Somalia since 2009. There has been an increase in piracy activity in the region following the political turmoil in Somalia. Aspiring to build capacity for partner countries to preserve global maritime commerce and secure freedom of navigation, CTF 151 was initiated under the authority of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), based in Manama/Bahrain.⁶¹

The Horn of Africa has become a theatre of strategic competition between Turkey, the UAE, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran in the aftermath of the Arab spring. These countries have shaped the regional politics through their competitive political, economic, and military assets. The early interactions between Turkish and Somali administrations were based on Turkey's regional investment policy.⁶² Moreover, since 2011, Turkey, as a strong and active ally, has contributed to So-

⁶¹ Combine Maritime Forces (CMF), "CTF 151: Counter-piracy," accessed March 18, 2018, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-151-counter-piracy/>; Turkish Naval Forces took the responsibility of commanding the mission between May 3-August 13, 2009; September 1-December 1, 2010; September 19-December 13, 2012 and August 27-December 21, 2015. Turkey participated in countering piracy efforts by assigning frigates in the region and embarked helicopters and Turkish Navy's Amphibious Assault Team stationed onboard. The Turkish Navy handed over the command of CTF 151 to the Royal Bahrain Navy in November, 2017.; Turkish Naval Forces, "Combined Task Force (CTF-151)," last modified February 8, 2016, Accessed March 14, 2018. https://www.dzkk.tsk.tr/icerik.php?icerik_id=19&dil=0&ctf=1; "Turkey Hands over to Bahrain in CTF 151 Change of Command Ceremony," *Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)*, November 2, 2017, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/2017/11/02/turkey-hands-over-to-bahrain-in-ctf-151-change-of-command-ceremony/>.

⁶²Timothy Williams, "The Middle East's Scramble for Africa: Building Bases and Instability," *RUSI*, February 26, 2018, <https://rusi.org/commentary/middle-east%E2%80%99s-scramble-africa-building-bases-and-instability>.

malia's efforts against disease, drought, and famine.⁶³ Signaling Turkey's soft power projection, Turkey has conducted a range of trade and aid programs in Somalia, which is considered to be the geopolitical gate to the Horn of Africa. However, this interaction has gradually turned out to be the manifestation of Turkey's proactive foreign policy.⁶⁴

The construction of a military training facility in the Wadajir district of Jazeera in Somalia began in March 2015 amid security and development related bilateral agreements with Mogadishu.⁶⁵ In August 2017, the first group of Turkish military personnel responsible for training the Somalia National Army (SNA) arrived in Wadajir. The Turkish military facility in Somalia is Turkey's first and largest overseas base in Africa. Turkey has deployed over 200 officers and soldiers as trainers, who will contribute to the improvement of relevant capabilities of the Somali National Army (SNA) against the threat of the terrorist organization Al-Shabab. Despite the fact that it has been targeted by al-Shabab several times, Turkey perceives Somalia as a projection of Ankara's enlarged geopolitical and economic presence in the Horn of Africa, in particular.⁶⁶ In other words, Turkey's forward military presence in Somalia is the extension of a diplomatic approach to Africa, projecting Turkey's both soft and hard power influence. Characteristically, it can be said that the Somalia initiative is a security partnership built around the objective of partner capacity-building.⁶⁷

The Qatar move is another military initiative which boosts Turkey's soft power-driven stature in the Gulf region via hard power features. Turkey established a military complex in Qatar, as a consequence of a military

⁶³Shaul Shay, "Turkey Set to Launch Military Base in Somalia," *Israel Defense*, September 4, 2017, <http://www.israeldefense.co.il/en/node/30971>.

⁶⁴Williams, "The Middle East's Scramble for Africa."

⁶⁵"Turkish Government to Construct a Modern Military Training Base for Somali Army," *Horn Observer*, February 18, 2018, <http://hornobserver.com/articles/754/Turkish-Government-to-Construct-a-Modern-Military-Training-Base-for-Somali-Army>.

⁶⁶Shay, "Turkey Set to Launch Military Base in Somalia."

⁶⁷Can Kasapoğlu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture", *EDAM Foreign Policy and Security Paper Series*, no. 4 (July 2017): p.8.

deal between the two countries in 2014, following a diplomatic dispute in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) relations.⁶⁸ This strategic move of Turkey, first and foremost, is an integral part of Turkey's changing strategic approach to its power projection tools in the Middle East.⁶⁹ It is also about the fundamental challenges that have negatively influenced Turkey's national and regional security priorities due to the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars. As a consequence of these experiences, Turkey has acknowledged that diplomatic efforts and Turkey's soft power alone are not enough to address Turkish national security interests in the region. Turkey has changed its course of action with regard to the regional crises by gradually taking the military dimension into consideration to effectively tackle the many security threats it faces. Therefore, it can be argued that the Turkish way of utilizing military means is heavily shaped by the Arab Spring experience, in which maintaining the balance between diplomatic and military means was a vital necessity. This perspective emerged during the Qatar crisis, especially; and Turkey perceived the crisis in July 2017 as the continuation of the new regional struggle among the major regional powers.⁷⁰

The initial Turkish troop deployment to Qatar was in 2015,⁷¹ and it was expected that the military facility would eventually host more than 3000 personnel, including ground troops, special operations teams and military trainers.⁷² Following that, the December 2015 deal allowing a military drill as well as the April 2016 deal on Turkish military deploy-

⁶⁸ Birce Bora, "Analysis: Why is Turkey Deploying Troops to Qatar?," *Al Jazeera*, June 11, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/06/analysis-turkey-deploying-troops-qatar-170607174911372.html>.

⁶⁹ Murat Yeşiltaş, "Making Sense of Turkey's Strategy towards the new Gulf Crisis," *Al Jazeera*, June 22, 2017, <http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/reports/2017/06/making-sense-turkeys-strategy-gulf-crisis-170622103850597.html>.

⁷⁰ "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Katar Krizi Konusunda Açıklama," *Milliyet*, June 6, 2017, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-dan-katar-krizi-ankara-yerelhaber-2091244/>.

⁷¹ "Turkey Sends More Troops to Qatar," *Al Jazeera*, December 27, 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/12/171227051912500.html>.

⁷² Heather Murdock, "Turkey Opens First Middle East Military Base in Qatar," *VOA News*, May 10, 2016, <https://www.voanews.com/a/turkey-opens-first-middle-east-military-base-in-qatar/3323653.html>.

ment were ratified in the Turkish Parliament in June 2017.⁷³ It is also reported that Turkey and Qatar have agreed upon the construction of a naval base, which will include a training center to primarily take on maritime patrols and monitoring duties.⁷⁴ It appears that the alignment of foreign policy issues, such as support for the Egyptian revolution and similar attitudes towards the regional conflicts, e.g. Syria and Palestine, sparked an emerging mutual defense culture between Turkey and Qatar.

While the Qatar move symbolizes Turkey's recalibration of its foreign policy priorities to play a larger role in the Middle East, and a balancing act to prevent prospective regional clashes, it also provides Turkey a forward military position to project power in the Gulf.⁷⁵ Additionally, this assertive and strategic military posture allowed Turkey to capture a share of the Gulf defense market, which was a part of Turkey's long-term Gulf strategy.⁷⁶ Qatar has ordered various land, naval and air military equipment and systems produced by Turkey such as the Bayraktar TB-2 armed UAV, the Ares 150 Hercules, two training warships, armored combat vehicles, and multi-radar and electro-optic camera systems to secure its borders.⁷⁷

⁷³ "Turkey Sends More Troops to Qatar."

⁷⁴ "Qatar Signs Turkey Naval Military Base Agreement," *Middle East Monitor*, March 14, 2018, <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20180314-qatar-signs-turkey-naval-military-base-agreement>.

⁷⁵ Muddassir Quamar, "The Turkish Military Base in Doha: A Step towards Gaining 'Strategic Depth' in the Middle East," *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, September 26, 2017, https://idsa.in/idsacomments/the-turkish-military-base-in-doha_mmquamar_260917.

⁷⁶ "Turkish Defense Industry Showcases Products at Defense Fair in Doha," *Daily Sabah*, March 13, 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/defense/2018/03/13/turkish-defense-industry-showcases-products-at-defense-fair-in-doha>.

⁷⁷ Dylan Maylasov, "Qatar Received Batch of New Ejder Yalcin Armoured Vehicles from Turkey," *Defence Blog*, December 18, 2017, <http://defence-blog.com/army/qatar-received-batch-of-new-ejder-yalcin-armoured-vehicles-from-turkey.html>.; "Exportation de 85 blindés turcs vers le Qatar," *TRT Français*, March 13, 2018, <http://www.trt.net.tr/francais/moyen-orient/2018/03/13/exportation-de-85-blindes-turcs-vers-le-qatar-928843>.; "Turkey to build 2 training warships for Qatar navy," *Anadolu Agency*, March 14, 2018, <https://aa.com.tr/en/energy/energy-security/turkey-to-build-2-training-warships-for-qatar-navy/19215>.; Mohammed Najib, "DIMDEX 2018: Qatar Coast Guard Orders More Ares Vessels," *Janes 360*, March 13, 2018, <http://www.janes.com/article/78532/dimdex-2018-qatari-coast-guard-orders-more-ares-vessel>.; "Milli SİHA İlk Kez İhrac Edildi: 6'sı Katar'a Satıldı," *Yeni Şafak*, March 14, 2018, <https://www.yenisafak.com/ekonomi/milli-siha-ilk-kez-ihrac-edildi-6si-katarata-satildi-3177879>.

In brief, by positioning a brigade-level joint force by the 2020s and constructing a naval base, Turkey has enlarged its realm of political activity in the Gulf. Moreover, the Turkish-Qatari strategic partnership is expected to provide Turkey and Qatar with a mutual understanding regarding key defense issues. Secondly, with its forward military presence in Qatar, Turkey is able to operate in a key center of military activity, one in which the US also has a strong air and naval posture.⁷⁸

On the other hand, while the planned Turkish troop deployments to Qatar and Somalia were announced in early 2015 as components of a proactive Turkish foreign policy, the Turkish military presence in Bashiqa, Iraq is mostly related to the preservation of Turkish national security interests in the Middle East. Turkey's military presence in Northern Iraq is a continuation of a shift from a defensive strategy to actively search and destroy the PKK threat. Cross-border counter-terror operations in the 1990s resulted in a brigade-level presence in Northern Iraq.⁷⁹ Today, the main Turkish army facilities are located in the Bashiqa region of Iraq, about 30 kilometers to northeastern Mosul. These facilities were established in 2015 as a product of the cooperation with the KRG and Sunni Arabs, under the leadership of Atheel al-Nujaifi for a training mission against the DAESH threat.⁸⁰

In Northern Iraq, the initial motivation behind the Turkish military presence in the 1990s was the adoption of a low-intensity conflict strategy against the asymmetric threat of the PKK. The changing nature of the operational environment from a low-intensity conflict to a more small war-like crisis led Turkey to rethink its forward military pres-

⁷⁸Can Kasapoğlu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture," *EDAM Foreign and Security Policy Series*, (2017): 4-7.

⁷⁹ Kasapoğlu, "Turkey's Forward-Basing Posture," 15-17.

⁸⁰ "Turkish Forces Go into Iraq to Train Forces Fighting ISIS," *The Guardian*, December 4, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/dec/04/turkish-troops-iraq-train-forces-fighting-isis>.

ence in Northern Iraq.⁸¹ Turkey's military posture in Bashiqa has served Turkey's objectives to stabilize the volatile region disputed among the main Kurdish factions, reassure Turkey's KDP partners, deter potential rivalries with Iran and the PKK, secure logistics and defense communication lines during counter-terrorism operations,⁸² and most recently after the independence referendum in the KRG, to establish ties with the Baghdad administration.⁸³

CONCLUSION

Turkey has been trying to recalibrate its hard power as part of its foreign policy activism since the AK Party came to power in 2002. From a wider perspective, Turkey has a strong military presence in Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, and Qatar. However, its military activities do not serve a harmonized and well-structured agenda or geopolitical motivation in regional and international politics. Each military mission outlined in this article has its own political and military goals. As mentioned earlier, it can be argued that there are three broad categories in Turkey's military activism. Combating terrorism (CT) is, perhaps, the most important component of Turkey's military activism, especially in its immediate surroundings. It symbolizes the changing nature of Turkey's threat perception with regard to the increasing role of terrorist organizations in the wider Middle East region. It also demonstrates Turkey's changing mentality over the use of military power in deterring terrorist threats abroad. OES, OOB, and Turkey's military involvement in Northern Iraq are the main examples of how Turkey operationalizes its military power and projects

⁸¹ Can Kasapoğlu and Soner Cagaptay, "Turkey's Military Presence in Iraq: A Complex Strategic Deterrent," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, December 22, 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/turkeys-military-presence-in-iraq-a-complex-strategic-deterrent>.

⁸² Kent E. Calder, *Embattled Garrisons: Comparative Base Politics and American Globalism*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2007).

⁸³ "Turkey's Foreign Minister Strengthens Bilateral Ties in Baghdad," *Rudaw*, January 22, 2018, <http://www.rudaw.net/english/middleeast/iraq/210120181>.

its military capacity in the fight against terrorism. CT is not limited to Turkey's immediate geopolitical surroundings. Turkey maintains a military presence to counter terrorism in a number of countries, including Afghanistan. In the mid-term, some of the main outcomes of Turkey's military activism in terms of counterterrorism will be the institutional reconstruction of the TAF, which will contribute to Turkey's regional power projection, especially over Syria and Iraq. In terms of the military reconstruction process, Turkey needs to reformulate its civil-military relations, as well as the TAF's organizational structure in accordance with the changing nature of the security environment and dynamics in its region.

All 36 military operations examined for the purpose of this article have shown close proximity to the CRIS mission, which proves its significance for the Turkish military activism. Turkey, along with established IGOs, plays a vital role in contributing to regional and international security since the Cold War. When it comes to Turkey's regional and international security efforts in the AK Party era, it is possible to argue that the new military activism wave has broken the mold in Turkey's peacebuilding approach through the bilateralized PCSE and HA efforts abroad. There is no doubt that the TAF has moved beyond its robust military involvement practice and adapted a multidimensional and civilian oriented strategy in its peacebuilding operations, as can be drawn from the cases of Afghanistan, Iraq, Kosovo, and Somalia. The TAF is highly capable of expanding its peacebuilding efforts to new regions while effectively addressing security threats directed at Turkish national security. However, it is important to note that Turkey still lacks effective monitoring and evaluation programs that can ensure the sustainability of Turkish CRIS efforts overseas.

The PP mission is the third form of Turkey's ascending military activism. Each military base is an ingredient of a larger and complex defense ecosystem which creates a shared strategic culture with the host nations. Turkey's current base politics, alongside its security

partnerships, fosters common interests and solidarity between Turkey and the host states akin to an alliance relationship. In addition, Turkey's overseas posture serves as an interface between military force and diplomatic considerations in a smart power manner,⁸⁴ establishing a less costly form of political-military influence. In other words, Turkey may be able to achieve the optimum mix of hard and soft power across several regions via a carefully planned basing strategy and force generation. Last but not least, with power projection missions as an identity-constructing tool, Turkey has legitimized its image as a security-provider country, that is, Turkey has emerged as a proactive contributor to peace, as well as a guarantor against antagonistic regionalism.

In conclusion, it can be safely argued that in the AK Party era, Turkey's military activism has emerged as a consequence of Turkey's quest for a new regional and international role which has also affected its reformulation of military power. Following the rise of threats to regional stability emanating from the 2003 Iraq war and the Syrian crisis, Turkey's participation in international military missions has considerably risen as the TAF's military activities have diversified. Secondly, the TAF's fight against terrorism has deepened as Turkey's new national security strategy has transformed. Finally, the power projection aspect of the military activism has gained an even more strategic aspect for Turkey's new role in the regional and international politics as part of its foreign policy activism under the AK Party administration.

⁸⁴ Alan Chong, "Smart Power and Military Force: An Introduction," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 38, no. 3 (2015): 233-44.

Appendix

TABLE 12.2 LIST OF MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE AK PARTY ERA			
MILITARY OPERATIONS			
Country	Military Activity	Duration	Frame- work
Iraq	UN Iraq-Kuwait Military Observation Mission (UNIKOM)	1991-2003	UN
	NATO Training Mission Iraq (NTM-I)	2004-2011	NATO
	Operation Sun	2008-2008	Inde- pendent
	Bashiqa Military Base a Bilateral Se- curity Partnership	2014-P	Inde- pendent
Palestine	Temporary International Presence in Hebron (TIPH)	1997-2008	Inter- govern- mental Org.
Syria	Operation Euphrates Shield	2016-2017	Inde- pendent
	Operation Olive Branch	2018-P	Inde- pendent
Syria & Iraq	The Global Coalition To Defeat ISIS	2014-P	Inter- govern- mental Org.
Lebanon	UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)	2006-2013	UN
	UN Interim Force in Lebanon Maritime Task Force (UNIFIL MTF)	2006-P	UN
Libya	Operation Unified Protector (OUP)	2011-2011	NATO
Qatar	Qatar Military Base a Bilateral Security Partnership	2014-P	Inde- pendent
The Medi- terranean Region	NATO Maritime Group-2 (SNMG-2)	1992-P	NATO
	Operation Active Endeavor	2001-P	NATO

Macedonia	Operation Allied Harmony	2002-2003	NATO
	Operation Concordia	2003-2003	EUFOR
	Operation Proxima	2003-2005	EUPOL
Bosnia-Herzegovina	EU Operation ALTHEA	2004-P	EUFOR
Kosovo	NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR)	1999-P	NATO
	UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)	2010-P	UN
Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania	NATO Baltic Air Policing	2006-2006	NATO
D.R. of Congo	UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)	2006-2006	UN
	EUPOL Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EUPOL KINSHASA)	2006-2007	EUPOL
Sudan	UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS)	2005-2011	UN
	UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID)	2006-2011	UN
Somalia	United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM)	2013-P	UN
	Military Base	2017-P	Independent
Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin and the Indian Ocean	Combined Task Force (CTF-151)	2009-P	UN
Gulf of Aden & Horn of Africa	Operation Ocean Shield (OOS)	2009-2016	NATO/UN

Georgia	UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UN-OMIG)	1997-2009	UN
	OSCE Border Monitoring Operation in Georgia (OSCE BMO)	2000-2009	OSCE
Black Sea	The Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group (BLACKSEAFOR)	2001-P	BLACK-SEAFOR
	Operation Black Sea Harmony	2004-P	OBSH
East Timor	UN Mission of Support in East Timor (UNMISSET)	2000-2004	UN
Afghanistan	International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Resolute Support Mission (RSM)	2001-P	NATO
	United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)	2012-P	UN

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CHAPTER 11

TURKEY'S HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN POLICY UNDER THE AK PARTY

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Turkey's foreign policy has adopted humanitarianism as a major cause under successive AK Party governments since 2002. Turkish foreign policy activism and its humanitarian aid efforts globally have often gone hand in hand, creating an aid model that refused to impose political conditionality while serving its national interest. Turkey responded to regional instability quickly and effectively, developing a humanitarian response capacity at par with most developed nations. Turkey developed a robust national humanitarian aid policy and passed comprehensive legislation focused on creating a progressive and a humanitarian migration approach. In addition to building capacity and improving its legal infrastructure, Turkey pursued a "humanitarian diplomacy" approach in foreign policy that provided unprecedented levels of foreign development aid to countries in need.

When confronted with international humanitarian crises, most specifically in Syria, Turkey refused to treat the humanitarian challenges as the problem of the international community only. Instead of deferring the burden and responsibility to the international organizations and find an unmanageable situation in its hands as many countries around the world have tended to do, Turkey set out to assume direct responsibility to care for the refugees with its own resources. The over-

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all international failure in burden sharing¹ has been coupled with failed attempts to find a political solution to the civil war.

This chapter analyzes the intersection between Turkey's evolution from an aid recipient to a major international donor since the early 2000s. By examining Turkish humanitarian and development aid policies, Somalia and the Syrian refugee issue as case studies, this analysis demonstrates an organic convergence of foreign policy and humanitarian goals. The overarching argument presented here is that Turkey pursued a humanitarian foreign policy not simply out of good will but because it defined humanitarianism as a genuine component of its national interest. This approach has provided Turkey with prestige as a major international actor while developing political clout around the world especially in aid receiving countries.

FROM AID RECIPIENT TO DONOR COUNTRY

Turkey's transformation from an aid recipient country to a major donor competing with traditional donor countries in recent years has been remarkable. Turkey had been an aid recipient country since the end of World War II, receiving technical assistance and development aid from the U.S. as part of the Marshall plan. By December 2005, Turkey had received a total of \$12.5 billion in economic aid. Japan, Germany, and UNDP were the other national and international major donors to provide technical assistance and economic development aid to Turkey. In 1985, by starting its own development aid program directed toward African countries, Turkey became both a recipient and a donor country.

According to the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), "Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by Turkey, which was 85 million USD in 2002, has reached 3.919 billion

¹ Kemal Kirişçi and Elizabeth Ferris, "Not Likely to Go Home: Syrian Refugees and the Challenges to Turkey and the International Community," *Brookings Institution*, September 29, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/not-likely-to-go-home-syrian-refugees-and-the-challenges-to-turkey-and-the-international-community/>.

USD in 2015, representing a forty-five-fold increase.”² Turkey ranked as the second largest donor country in the world in 2015 with a total ODA of 3.2 billion USD.³ In terms of the ratio of total humanitarian aid to gross national income (GNI), Turkey could be considered the most generous donor country in the world based on the 2015 figures.⁴ In 2016, Turkey spent 0.75% of its GNI as humanitarian assistance while the US – with the highest volumes of funding – spent only 0.03% of its GNI.⁵

The 1999 earthquake in Turkey led to the rise of humanitarian non-governmental organizations in the wake of the government’s serious shortcomings in disaster response. This disaster exposed the vulnerabilities and the level of unpreparedness that essentially served as a catalyst in Turkish society’s overall disaster management awareness and humanitarian response. Many NGOs that emerged in the wake of the 1999 earthquake started operating in various disaster regions around the world.⁶ In fact, this does not appear to be an exception when compared to the emerging powers’ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, Mexico, Indonesia, South Africa) rapid and forceful entry into the humanitarian aid arena in the 2000s. These countries’ interest in international disaster response was at least partly due to the “high disaster risk with which many of these countries are confronted themselves.”⁷ Having

² “Turkish Development Assistance Report 2015,” *Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)*, 2015, <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2017/YAYINLAR/TKYR%202015%20ENG/KALKINMA%20.pdf>.

³ “Turkish Development Assistance Report 2015.”

⁴ See Figure 18.5. It should be noted that Turkey includes the domestic humanitarian aid spending on Syrian refugees, such as the maintenance of refugee camps inside the country, in these calculations.

⁵ United Nations Development Initiatives: Global Humanitarian Assistance, “Global Humanitarian Assistance Report 2017,” *United Nations*, 2017, 44.

⁶ “Turkey and Somalia: Making Aid Work for Peace,” *Briefing, Saferworld & Istanbul Policy Center at Sabanci University*, March 2015.

⁷ Stacey White, “Emerging Powers, Emerging Donors,” *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*, February 2011, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/emerging-powers-emerging-donors>.

experienced it themselves, Turkish public has become ever more sensitive about natural disasters beyond the country's borders and it has become commonplace to mobilize resources through organization of aid campaigns at home and abroad.

In the 2000s, Turkey virtually competed in and distinguished itself as a major donor and relief provider in the wake of various natural disasters and conflicts. Some of these were the 2003 earthquake in Bam, Iran, the 2004 Southeast Asian tsunami, the 2005 Kashmir earthquake, the 2008 Gaza war, the 2010 Pakistan floods.⁸ In the 2010s, the Arab Spring produced the biggest humanitarian crisis of the 21st century in Syria, next door to Turkey. Turkey's humanitarian aid grew exponentially both in the form of taking care of internally displaced persons (IDPs) inside Syria and taking in millions of refugees.

Much of the Turkish response was focused on emergency aid but as the conflict prolonged, Turkish humanitarian aid especially in northern Syria became a sustained activity. Turkey established and helped run camps for IDPs inside Syria, built hospitals, schools, and even small factories to respond to the need for basic necessities. These activities may not appear as part of a traditional development aid model but they definitely helped many local populations sustain themselves in the middle of a conflict zone for years. Various international humanitarian crises since the 2000s and the wars in Iraq and Syria have led to Turkey assuming the role of a major humanitarian actor and an international development aid mega-donor.

DEVELOPMENT AID

Turkish development and humanitarian aid model significantly differs from the traditional economic development aid models of established donors. It is no secret that traditional economic development aid and

⁸ David Lapeska, "Turkey's Rise from Aid Recipient to Mega-Donor," *Al Jazeera English*, April 25, 2014, <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/4/turkey-internationalaidaf-rिकासomaliameastereastdorgan.html>.

humanitarian assistance have been criticized for a variety of reasons. The most significant of these has been the fact that established donors have tended to tie humanitarian aid to specific political and even military conditions. They have required concessions from the aid recipient countries that were focused on “nation building” in conflict-ridden regions. Turkey’s humanitarian aid model has been unique in the sense that it “does not tie its aid to political, military, economic conditions”⁹ unlike other traditional donors. Even when compared to other emerging players in development aid, “Turkey does not primarily pursue foreign economic interests with its development cooperation, even if the interest in new export markets plays a certain role alongside humanitarian and foreign policy concerns.”¹⁰

As opposed to the nation building model that tends to impose political conditions and national security interests, Turkey is committed to “state building,”¹¹ prioritizing the local needs and capacity building for long term sustainability. Furthermore, preferring the bilateral model, Turkey avoids pitfalls of multilateral aid structures, resulting in a more dynamic response focused on local priorities. For instance, when local conditions require more peacebuilding efforts instead of infrastructure building, Turkey is able to shift its focus to bringing “conflicting parties together in order to transform the conflict,”¹² resulting in more sustainable stability. It can be argued that this particular flexibility and knowhow is owed to the fact that Turkey’s development aid included a sustained and comprehensive engagement with the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), many of which had been severely impacted by conflict and natural disasters.¹³

⁹ Fuat Keyman and Onur Sazak, “Turkey as a ‘Humanitarian State,’” *Policy Paper (Project on the Middle East and the Arab Spring (POMEAS))*, (July 2014): 2.

¹⁰ Jeannine Hausmann, “Turkey as a Donor Country and Potential Partner in Triangular Cooperation,” *Discussion Paper, German Development Institute*, (2014): 1.

¹¹ Keyman and Sazak, “Humanitarian State,” 6–7.

¹² Keyman and Sazak, “Humanitarian State,” 8.

¹³ “Turkey’s Development Cooperation with the Least Developed Countries: A Report on the Turkey’s Economic and Technical Cooperation Package for the LDCs,” *Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA)*, 2016.

The Turkish humanitarian aid model is not without its pitfalls. Absence of an interagency structure makes coordination difficult and can result in duplication of similar activities. TIKA as the coordinating agency fulfills this role to a large extent but coordination of aid activities remains a challenge. Addition of a civilian component to the aid process through utilization of universities and think tanks to better identify strengths and weakness has been suggested as one way of overcoming this challenge.¹⁴ Additionally, striking a healthy balance between bilateralism and multilateralism can potentially strengthen Turkish humanitarian aid model. Turkey has justifiably insisted on the benefits of bilateral aid model as a dynamic one able to respond to real-life needs of the recipient country, however, multilateral aid model has well-established “pre-deployment analyses and strategies,”¹⁵ which can strengthen the efficiency and effectiveness of Turkish humanitarian aid activities.

However, while Turkey appears interested in strengthening its aid model through engagement with traditional donors, it does not “wish to be tied too closely to the traditional Western donors” in order to maintain its “freedom of action.”¹⁶ It has also been suggested that Turkey should focus more on “long-term development challenges” in addition to the much-needed urgent emergency aid delivery in order to “institutionalize peace” in fragile state environments.¹⁷ Yet again, it seems that prioritizing emergency aid is tied to Turkey’s conscious choice to maintain its rather effective bilateral model based on local needs as opposed to distributing aid according to a preset model with limited maneuverability and adaptation. It has been suggested, based on a case study of Turkey’s aid activities in Somalia, that this sort of

¹⁴ Keyman and Sazak, “Humanitarian State,” 11.

¹⁵ Keyman and Sazak, “Humanitarian State,” 12.

¹⁶ Hausmann, “Turkey as a Donor Country and Potential Partner in Triangular Cooperation,” 11.

¹⁷ Deniz Gole, “Turkey’s Development Assistance to Fragile States: From Sporadic Actions to System Building Practices,” *Turkish Journal of International Relations*, (2014).

dynamic and conditions-based approach makes it difficult to identify a “clear-cut Turkish development policy.”¹⁸ Turkey’s development aid policy’s inherent flexibility and adaptability allow it to provide aid into corners of the world that would otherwise be unreachable if strict conditions were imposed. This approach appears to be a deliberate choice by Turkish policymakers, which distinguishes Turkish development aid from many other traditional donors.

HUMANITARIAN AID

Turkey has promoted humanitarianism as a central tenet of its foreign policy and diplomacy. As the host of the United Nation’s World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, Turkey’s position paper stated that it views humanitarian diplomacy as a “human-centered and conscience-driven policy with particular attention to human dignity and development.”¹⁹ This perspective has dominated the government agencies’ declarations and aid practice. This approach became part of Turkish public diplomacy efforts with aid agencies participating in a collective, albeit imperfect, effort in building Turkey’s positive image at home and abroad.²⁰

Dissenters have argued that Turkey’s humanitarianism was selective in practice and it did not go beyond being a discursive tool, as the country still has not had a comprehensive integration policy guaranteeing the permanent residence of Syrian refugees in Turkey.²¹ However, it should be recognized that the humanitarian discourse surrounding the issue of refugees has been effective in creating goodwill and sympathy

¹⁸ Mehmet Ozkan, “The Turkish Way of Doing Development Aid?: An Analysis from the Somali Laboratory,” in *South-South Cooperation Beyond the Myths: Rising Donors, New Aid Practices?* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

¹⁹ World Humanitarian Summit 2016, Turkey Position Paper.

²⁰ Senem Çevik, “Turkey’s State-Based Foreign Aid: Narrating ‘Turkey’s Story,’” *Turkey in Global Governance: Searching for Alternatives Between the West and the Rest* 1, no. 2 (December 2016): 55-67.

²¹ Umut Korkut, “Pragmatism, Moral Responsibility or Policy Change: The Syrian Refugee Crisis and Selective Humanitarianism in the Turkish Refugee Regime,” *Comparative Migration Studies* 4, no. 1 (March 2, 2016): 2.

for the plight of the Syrian refugees in Turkish public opinion and for the international audiences. More importantly, difficulties in crafting and implementing a comprehensive integration policy should not be considered as disqualifying in the use of a humanitarian discourse either for public diplomacy or for foreign policy purposes. Humanitarian discourse can be a discursive tool as well as serving to promote humanitarianism among the general public, these two cannot be considered mutually exclusive.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that the foreign policy outlook of the country in general has had an impact on the public perception of humanitarian activities. Scholars have scrutinized the correlation between the positive policies on immigration and asylum policies and the overall foreign policy approach. It has been suggested that Turkey's "assertive" foreign policy especially at the beginning of the Arab Spring resulted in an open-door policy toward refugees. However, as the Syrian crisis turned into a prolonged conflict, the emphasis shifted toward a more securitized language underlining "non-arrival," "temporary protection," "voluntary return," and "burden share."

Yet, the conclusion that "security concerns and the isolation in international relations along with the growing burden of refugees necessitated Turkey to recalibrate its immigration policy towards a more traditional direction"²² falls flat. If anything, Turkey had to take a deep look at its immigration and asylum policies and passed legislation that was in fact more progressive in certain respects when compared to the existing laws in Europe. Despite the continuing deterioration of the situation along the border in terms of security and rise of terrorism, Turkey continues to receive refugees from Syria. It is true that the Syrian refugee issue has sparked different reactions from the various segments of the Turkish society and the state. Nevertheless, Turkey has not

²² N. Ela Gökalp Aras and Zeynep Şahin Mencütek, "The International Migration and Foreign Policy Nexus: The Case of Syrian Refugee Crisis and Turkey," *Migration Letters, Special Issue: Syrian Crisis and Syrian Movers* 12, no. 3 (2015), <http://www.tplondon.com/journal/index.php/ml/article/view/502>.

adopted an anti-immigrant or anti-refugee policy like many European states. Turkey continued to keep its doors open, a policy the UNHCR applauded and showed as an example to the other countries, including the EU and the Gulf countries.²³

Turkey's humanitarian aid policy has been shaped by civil society organizations in addition to government's policies. Civil society played a significant role in providing development and humanitarian aid both at home and abroad alongside various government agencies. Turkish humanitarian NGOs (HNGO) continue to play a prominent role and their activities are often seen, at times, as complementary to the government's aid policy. Scholars have pointed out that Turkish government officials and HNGOs participate in a virtual "division of labor," in which the government focuses on "high-level peacebuilding" whereas HNGOs focus on "low-level peacebuilding" efforts such as rehabilitation, reconstruction and development.

Among these civil society organizations, the central problem seems to be lack of effective coordination and planning despite some of the advantages they enjoy, such as flexibility, aid non-conditionality, and reliance on private donations as independent organizations.²⁴ It is also pointed out that the perception among many Turkish HNGOs that they are representing and promoting Turkey abroad carries with it the risk of politicizing humanitarian aid.²⁵ Nevertheless, absence of conditionality of humanitarian aid is a common practice across Turkish government agencies and civil society organizations, rendering the country's aid policy significantly less political compared to traditional donors of the international community.

²³ "UNHCR Says West Should Follow Turkey 'example' on Syria Refugees," accessed March 6, 2018, <http://news.yahoo.com/unhcr-says-west-turkey-example-syria-refugees-154926556.html>.

²⁴ Bülent Aras and Pinar Akpınar, "The Role of Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey's Peacebuilding," *International Peacekeeping* 22, no. 3 (May 27, 2015): 237.

²⁵ Aras and Akpınar, "The Role of Humanitarian NGOs in Turkey's Peacebuilding," 241–42.

Despite the complaints from both the state institutions and civil society actors about failures in coordination and effective aid delivery, on the whole, humanitarian responsibility discourse has broadly been adopted by both state and civil society actors. Virtual explosion in the number of humanitarian organizations in Turkey in recent years has been deeply impactful, as it has created an “humanitarian aid culture” so to speak. It has become common place to see humanitarian aid campaigns organized constantly for both domestic and international humanitarian crises. The discourse of humanitarianism has become prevalent, making it easier to call for humanitarian action.

AFRICA

In line with a bold new foreign policy opening to the continent, Turkey’s foreign aid to Africa reached unprecedented levels under the AK Party governments. Turkey had already drafted a policy document titled, “Opening up to Africa,” in 1998 but its true opening to the continent came in full force in 2005 with Turkey’s announcement of that year as the “Year of Africa.” Turkey acquired an “observer” status to the African Union in April 2005, and by 2008, the Union declared it a “strategic partner.”²⁶ Turkey’s trade volume with African countries more than doubled from \$5.4 billion in 2003 to over \$12 billion in 2007.²⁷ Gearing up its presence in the continent starting from 2003, the Turkish International Cooperation Agency (TIKA) was already supporting development projects in 37 countries by 2008.²⁸ After having virtually abandoned the African continent for more than a century, and in line with its growing economy

²⁶ Mehmet Ozkan, “Turkey Discovers Africa: Implications and Prospects,” *SETA Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research, Policy Brief*, no. 22 (September 2008), <https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=1434740>.

²⁷ Ozkan, “Turkey Discovers Africa,” 4.

²⁸ Ozkan, “Turkey Discovers Africa,” 6.

as a rising power, Turkey has significantly increased its development aid profile in Africa.²⁹

Turkey's humanitarian aid to Somalia has been the most significant in its outreach to Africa. In August 2011, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan made a historic visit to Mogadishu and announced the opening of an embassy at a time when the country was suffering from the worst famine in 60 years, travel to the capital was considered highly dangerous, and most international actors including NGOs were avoiding the country. In contrast, Turkey established a presence in Mogadishu and Turkish Airlines started to operate flights when international actors would not venture to even travel to the country. Moreover, by appealing to the international community, Turkish leadership continued to draw international attention to the plight of the Somalis.³⁰

Turkey's forceful entry into Somalia was generally well-received as a peacebuilding activity but there were also some warnings. For example, the International Crisis Group recommended in 2012 that Turkey should remain impartial in internal politics of the country and manage high Somali expectations about how much aid it could provide.³¹ Nevertheless, Turkish attention to Somalia was sustained and visits to the country by Turkish leaders have become frequent especially in times of difficulty. For instance, in the wake of a terror attack on a hotel, Turkish President Erdogan visited Mogadishu in 2016, producing police training, education, and energy agreements. Somalis' expectations from Turkey have been high as the ICG report predicted. On the Turkish side, reports even indicated "Somalia fatigue" among Turkish

²⁹ Mehmet Ozkan, "Does 'Rising Power' Mean 'Rising Donor'? Turkey's Development Aid in Africa," *Africa Review* 5, no. 2 (July 1, 2013): 139–47.

³⁰ "Turkey PM Visits War-Torn Somalia," *BBC News*, August 19, 2011, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-14588960>.

³¹ "Assessing Turkey's Role in Somalia," *International Crisis Group*, October 8, 2012, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/horn-africa/somalia/assessing-turkey-s-role-somalia>.

NGOs,³² as the engagement was so strong and consistent for a few years.³³ Despite such warnings, however, it can be argued that Turkey's long-term commitment to the country has mitigated risks that could emanate from a mismatch of expectations on both sides. Both sides benefited from the relationship while Turkey boosted its image and soft power while Somalia received humanitarian and development aid as well as projecting stability due to Turkish willingness to deploy staff in the face of security risks.³⁴

Turkey's humanitarian investment in Somalia led to the establishment of strong political and security relations with the African country. In 2017, Turkey established a military base in Mogadishu to train Somali soldiers, taking the relationship to a new level. It is hard to miss the connection between Turkish humanitarian diplomacy and military capacity building activities. It would be a stretch to argue that Turkey intended from the beginning to establish military ties with Somalia but Turkish leaders understood that running to the aid of a fellow Muslim country in Africa could produce foreign policy gains in the future. At the same time, it is difficult to argue that humanitarian aid was simply a tool of foreign policy, particularly because it carried so many risks that it may not have led to a positive political outcome at all.

SYRIAN REFUGEES

Turkey is the largest refugee hosting nation in the world today. Since the start of the Syrian uprising in 2011, Turkey has implemented an open-door policy toward Syrian refugees. This policy has protected millions of Syrians from being caught in the middle of fighting be-

³² Kathryn Achilles, Onur Sazak, Thomas Wheeler, and Auveen Elizabeth Woods, "Turkish Aid Agencies in Somalia: Risks and Opportunities for Building Peace," *Saferworld and Istanbul Policy Center*, (March 2015): 44.

³³ "Turkey and Somalia: Making Aid Work for Peace."

³⁴ Gizem Sucuoglu and Jason Stearns, "Turkey In Somalia: Shifting Paradigms of Aid," *South African Institute of International Affairs and NYU Center on International Cooperation*, (November 2016), <http://cic.nyu.edu/publications/turkey-somalia-shifting-paradigms-aid>.

tween the Assad regime and the opposition as well as various terror groups fighting for control of territory in northern Syria. Turkey's open-door policy has been challenged multiple times by serious security challenges, which required limited suspension of refugee crossings. However, Turkey prioritized the humanitarian needs on the ground and recognized that the Syrian refugees had nowhere else to go. Turkey's frustration with the international community's attitude, especially the rise of the anti-immigrant and anti-refugee sentiments in the West, has not prevented the country from continuing to admit refugees.

Today, Turkey hosts more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees. This number does not include refugees from other nations including Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Somalia and others. Receiving and hosting such a large number of refugees as a result of the Syrian civil war has pushed Turkey to make dramatic changes in many areas such as security, legal framework, education as well as health among others. Turkey has long been a major transit as well as target destination for international refugee movements but with the Syrian civil war the overall scale of the challenge has been overwhelming. Meeting this challenge has required nothing short of a national mobilization effort led by the government and state bureaucracy joined by civil society organizations.

In order to respond effectively, Turkey had to increase its capacity to handle safe passage and registration of millions of refugees into its territory. The country's capacity to host refugees in refugee camps has increased but stabilized over time as Turkey recognized that hosting the refugees in camps was neither feasible in the long run nor humanitarian in principle. Today, around 15 percent of the Syrian refugee population lives in camps.³⁵ Back in September 2013, when the number of registered Syrian refugees reached near half a million, Turkey

³⁵ "Syrian Refugees in Turkey Surpasses 3.5 Million," *DailySabah*, accessed February 20, 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2018/02/15/syrian-refugees-in-turkey-surpasses-35-million>.

was hosting around half of this number in camps.³⁶ Despite calls for sealing its border due to potential spillover risks,³⁷ Turkey insisted on its “open-door policy” largely on humanitarian grounds by admitting all the refugees headed for the Turkish borders.

At the same time, instead of keep building more refugee camps, which often exceeded international standards, Turkey tried its best to implement an effective registration system, which allowed the refugees to benefit from government services in the cities they were registered in. This, in turn, ensured both that the inflows of Syrian refugees could be managed in an orderly manner and that they could benefit from health and education services. Through the coordination of the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD), the Turkish state institutions have participated in providing services to Syrian refugees, preventing social and economic isolation or exclusion of refugees from the rest of the society.

Turkey insisted on managing the overall response in Turkish territory on its own. Treating the Syrian refugees as “guests” at first, Turkey did not immediately resort to the international aid regime. The downside to this approach was receiving little international humanitarian assistance. At the same time, Turkey exceeded international standards to the extent that its approach has been described as “far more humane and practical,” especially in comparison to Lebanon and Jordan where international aid regime has been much more active.³⁸

³⁶ Elizabeth Ferris, Kemal Kirişçi, and Shaikh Salman, “Syrian Crisis: Massive Displacement, Dire Needs and a Shortage of Solutions,” *Brookings* (blog), November 30, 2011, 21, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/syrian-crisis-massive-displacement-dire-needs-and-a-shortage-of-solutions/>.

³⁷ “Blurring the Borders: Syrian Spillover Risks for Turkey,” *International Crisis Group*, April 30, 2013, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/eastern-mediterranean/syria/blurring-borders-syrian-spillover-risks-turkey>.

³⁸ Dawn Chatty, “The Syrian Humanitarian Disaster: Disparities in Perceptions, Aspirations and Behaviour in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey,” *Refugee Studies Centre*, (December 2015).

Turkey has also made fundamental changes to its immigration law by passing the Law on Foreigners and International Protection in April 2013.³⁹ The law introduced various reforms and especially focuses on “integrating immigrants into the country and treating asylum seekers and irregular migrants in accordance with international norms.”⁴⁰ The law also established the General Directorate of Migration Management (GDMM), which would gradually assume all migration-related policies and implementation, including refugee registration and inter-agency coordination between various ministries.⁴¹ The law not only modernized and updated the Turkish migration laws but also allowed for a more rational division of labor between government agencies by allowing AFAD, which had hitherto been the lead agency, to return to its main function as the disaster and emergency management authority.

With full support and resources from the government, AFAD quickly developed capacity and expertise on refugees while effectively coordinating government response. Its efforts put the agency on the map in terms of international humanitarian aid and made it a leading voice in humanitarian efforts around the world. At the same time, experts have argued that most of the refugees would likely stay and Turkish hospitality needed to be coupled with a broader policy.⁴² It was clear that the Syrian refugee issue had to be handled through a comprehensive policy with political, social, economic, and security dimensions.⁴³

³⁹ “Turkey: New Law on Foreigners and International Protection,” *Global Legal Monitor*, accessed February 12, 2018, <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/turkey-new-law-on-foreigners-and-international-protection/>.

⁴⁰ Ahmet İçduygu, “Syrian Refugees in Turkey: The Long Road Ahead,” *Migration Policy Institute*, (April 21, 2015), 6, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/syrian-refugees-turkey-long-road-ahead>.

⁴¹ Laçın İdil Öztuğ, “The Syrian Conflict and Turkey’s Humanitarian Response,” *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 15, no. 3 (Fall 2016).

⁴² Kemal Kirişçi, “Syrian Refugees and Turkey’s Challenges: Going beyond Hospitality,” *The Brookings Institution*, May 2014, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/syrian-refugees-and-turkeys-challengesgoing-beyond-hospitality/>.

⁴³ Kılıç Buğra Kanat and Kadir Üstün, *Turkey’s Syrian Refugees: Toward Integration* (SETA, 2015).

The constantly changing dynamics on the ground and failed attempts at finding a political solution to the conflict in Syria have made the devising of a comprehensive policy difficult, to say the least.

Relative calm achieved in certain pockets in northern Syria, such as those liberated through Turkey's Euphrates Shield Operation, resulted in the return of tens of thousands of refugees.⁴⁴ Additionally, Turkish public opinion largely favored Syrians' return to their country although many also recognized this was not going to be readily possible. Despite occasional and localized tensions against the Syrian refugees, particularly in larger cities with sizeable refugee populations, inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions have remained manageable. At the very beginning of the crisis, there was very little public debate about the refugees, predominant perceptions being generally positive.⁴⁵

As the conflict transformed into a protracted civil war and refugees appeared there to stay, relatively neutral or positive perceptions have changed with the past six years of real-life experiences and interactions with large numbers of refugees. Today, neither the Turkish government nor the public seems ready to accept that Syrian refugees are in Turkey for the long haul, which appears to be the main obstacle before developing a comprehensive "adaptation" policy toward Syrian refugees.⁴⁶ At the same time, it needs to be noted that the public's changing views on the refugees over time has not resulted in significant violence, a fact attributable to efforts by the government and the NGOs to further an understanding of the plight of the Syrian refugees couched within a humanitarian discourse.

⁴⁴ "Turkey Facilitates Repatriation of Syrian Refugees," *Anadolu Agency*, accessed February 20, 2018, <http://aa.com.tr/en/middle-east/turkey-facilitates-repatriation-of-syrian-refugees/1011388>.

⁴⁵ Juliette Tolay, "Türkiye'de Mültecilere Yönelik Söylemler ve Söylemlerin Politikalara Etkisi," in *İltica, Uluslararası Göç ve Vatansızlık: Kuram, Gözlem ve Politika* (Birleşmiş Milletler Mülteciler Yüksek Komiserliği, 2011).

⁴⁶ Due to the problematic history of the term "integration" in migration debates in Europe and the West more broadly, Turkish officials prefer the term "adaptation" or "harmonization."

A HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN POLICY

Turkish foreign policy under the AK Party has emphasized humanitarianism as a core principle and attempted to make it a central tenet of its international activities as well as foreign policy. Especially in the wake of the Arab Spring, Turkey couched its foreign policy discourse around the theme of humanitarianism as well as humane-ness. When the uprisings reached Egypt, Turkey called on Mubarak to “listen to the people” and avoid harsh measures against protestors. In Libya, Turkey sought a common ground between the Qaddafi regime and the international coalition citing humanitarian consequences and prioritizing evacuation of 20,000 Turkish nationals from the country. In Syria, Turkey tried, for nine months, to convince the Assad regime to implement meaningful reforms to avoid bloodshed and warned against a potential conflict with humanitarian consequences. Much of this was treated as simply “rhetoric” but it needs to be recognized that humanitarianism and human costs of foreign policy issues have become a central concern for Turkish policymakers.

As some scholars have argued, this brand of foreign policy can be understood within the context of Turkey’s ambition as an emerging power to become a key contributor to global security and international peacebuilding.⁴⁷ At the same time, Turkey’s humanitarian diplomacy has contributed to increasing the country’s political influence, which brings with it the potential criticism of being perceived as simply being a tool of foreign policy goals.⁴⁸ For some scholars, there is no difference between the goals of emerging nations like Turkey and traditional developed country donors. For example, Turkey increased its foreign aid to African nations when it sought a non-permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. Turkey also prioritized its immediate neigh-

⁴⁷ Reşat Bayer and E. Fuat Keyman, “Turkey: An Emerging Hub of Globalization and Internationalist Humanitarian Actor?,” *Globalizations* 9, no. 1 (February 1, 2012): 73–90.

⁴⁸ Federico Donelli, “Features, Aims and Limits of Turkey’s Humanitarian Diplomacy,” *Central European Journal of International and Security Studies* 11, no. 3 (2017): 59–83.

borhood and Turkic-speaking countries in its foreign aid programs.⁴⁹ There is a strong connection between Turkish foreign policy goals and its stated humanitarian approach but this is true for many countries. More importantly, it does not make Turkish foreign policy less humanitarian to be accomplishing national interests and humanitarian goals at the same time.

Foreign aid programs are broadly political in nature especially in terms of their goals, priorities and target countries. Turkey's humanitarian aid policy is no exception as humanitarian diplomacy has become a centerpiece of foreign policy. For instance, Turkey's rather liberal open-door policy in hosting millions of Syrian refugees has enabled it to demand recognition of its new status as a "responsible" regional power.⁵⁰ It has also been argued that the risks and the security issues emanating from the Syrian civil war pushed Turkey to recalibrate its security needs and humanitarian diplomacy to adopt a policy of "forced humanitarianism."⁵¹ It is true that especially in the wake of the rise of ISIS, Turkey focused on border security and terror risks. However, Turkey continued to admit Syrian refugees despite security concerns, particularly because its humanitarianism continued to hold significant sway over its overall approach to the conflict.

It can be argued that Turkey has sought to leverage its humanitarian outlook in achieving some foreign policy goals. However, the country's foreign aid model is rather exceptional in the sense that it refuses to tie aid to political conditions. Turkish foreign aid remains focused on achieving, first and foremost, humanitarian goals on the ground. The political "perks" that would come with developing friendly relations

⁴⁹ Ferda Karagöz, "Bir Kalkınma Reçetesi Olarak Dış Yardım: Türkiye'nin Verdiği Resmi Kalkınma Yardımlarının Değerlendirilmesi," *Türkel Minibaşa Armağan - Kriz, Kalkınma ve Türkiye Ekonomisi Seçme Yazılar*, 2013.

⁵⁰ Juliette Tolay, "Mass Migration and Images of State Power: Turkey's Claim to the Status of a Responsible Rising Power," *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (2016): 135–49.

⁵¹ Ariel Gonzalez Levaggi, "Forced Humanitarianism: Turkey's Syrian Policy and the Refugee Issue," *Caucasus International, Displacement, Refugees and Migration in the Caucasus and Eurasia* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2015).

through the springboard of humanitarian diplomacy are assumed but not imposed upon when delivering humanitarian aid to refugees or aid receiving nations. Thus, Turkish foreign aid differs substantially from the model used by the developed nations in that there is no conditionality, which is often criticized as a mechanism that tends to strengthen the aid institutions of the aid giving nations, rather than those at the receiving end. Turkey has committed much of its foreign aid to capacity building and economic development to help aid receiving nations sustain themselves in the long run. In the meantime, good political relations are developed but they are not conditionally tied to aid.

There is no denying that Turkey reaped political benefits from its humanitarian activism, especially in Africa. The continuously strengthening political ties with Somalia is a good example of this. Prioritizing the local needs and political realities and refusing to tie aid to political conditions, Turkey has gained a lot of goodwill among the Somalis. Sustained long-term engagement with the country and addressing their specific needs have distinguished Turkish humanitarian model in Somalia. The success story in Somalia helped economic and political engagements with other African nations, turning Turkey into a serious and credible partner in the sub-continent. Turkey has adopted humanitarianism as an integral part of its foreign policy and pursued a confluence between foreign policy goals and humanitarian needs.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that Turkey has emerged as a major international donor and a humanitarian actor as a result of several factors. Turkey's own domestic experience dealing with natural disasters and humanitarian challenges in its neighborhood allowed it to develop capacity and acquire experience over the past two decades. As a result of making humanitarianism a central theme domestically and in devising its foreign policy, Turkey made a concerted effort to integrate humanitarian causes as part of defining its national interest. Non-gov-

ernmental organizations have played a large role in the development of Turkish humanitarianism, particularly beginning with the 1999 earthquake. Successive AK Party governments certainly played a critical role in raising awareness, mobilizing government resources, coordinating aid campaigns, and prioritizing humanitarian concerns in conducting foreign policy.

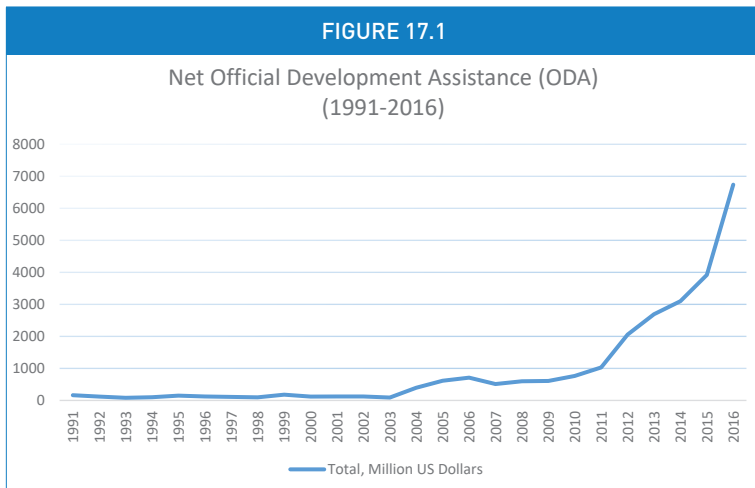
The biggest challenges as a test for Turkish humanitarianism came with the prolonged conflicts in Syria and Iraq. By hosting more than 3,5 million refugees today, Turkey has become the largest refugee hosting nation in the world. While conducting military operations in northern Syria against the PKK-linked YPG, Turkey continues to receive refugees and deliver humanitarian aid across the border. It also creates local governance structures based on its development model focusing on local capacity building. By refusing to place conditions on aid, Turkey developed a rather flexible approach that took into consideration the local context, including political dynamics and socio-economic differences on the ground. Thanks to this approach, Turkey was able to deliver aid directly and rapidly while committing to the region – be it in Syria or Somalia - for the long haul.

Early in Turkish humanitarian activism, Turkey's commitment and sustainability of its aid in the long run were being questioned. Yet, we see today that they have proven durable precisely because – this chapter argues – humanitarianism has become a genuine component of Turkish foreign policy. It is difficult to find an example of Turkish foreign policy activism without a serious humanitarian commitment. Most crucially, this kind of convergence of humanitarianism and foreign policy has distinguished itself from the humanitarianism and development aid models of the traditional donor countries.

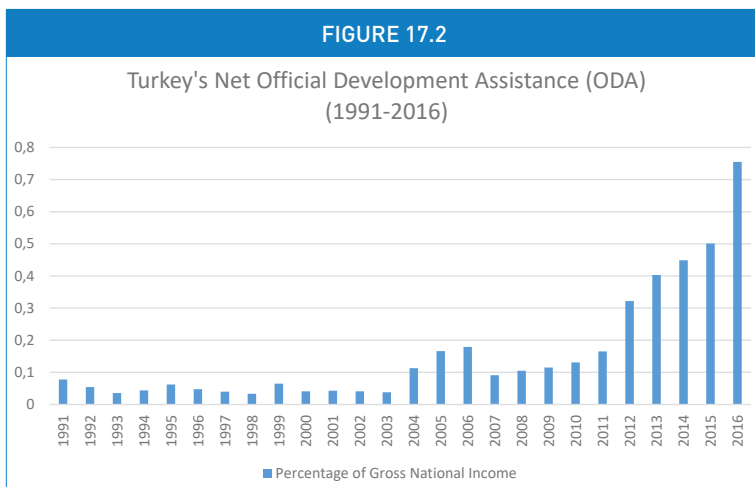
What remains to be seen in the coming years is whether the traditional donors would adopt some of the unique aspects of Turkish model or Turkey would end up revising its aid based on the traditional donors' models. Further research is also needed to explore specific

practices of Turkish humanitarian foreign policy to answer questions of sustainability, capacity building, and public opinion among others. If Turkey continues to insist on humanitarianism as a central tenet of its foreign policy in the coming years, it might present a unique case study of risks and opportunities of pursuing a humanitarian foreign policy.

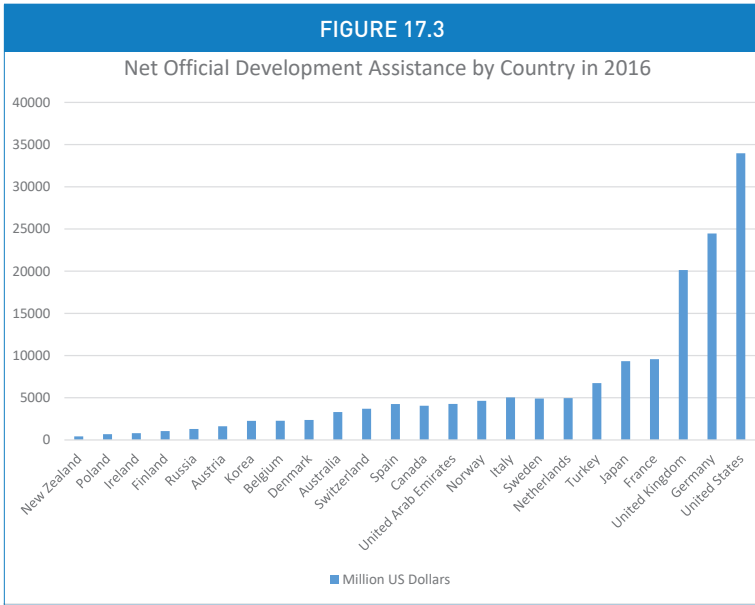
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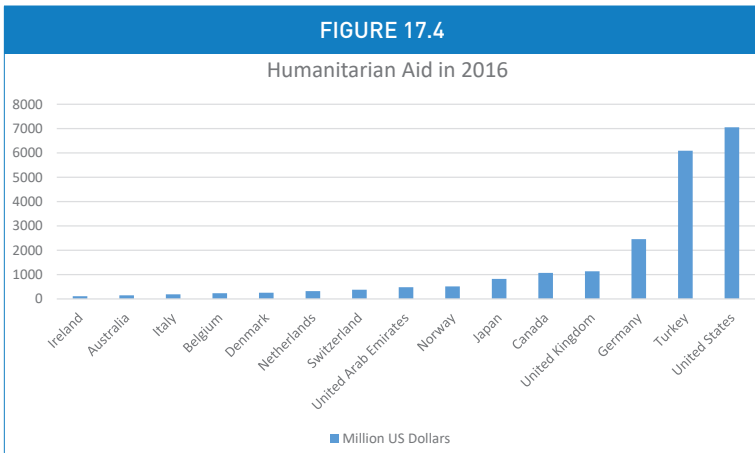
Source: OECD (2018), Net ODA (indicator). doi: 10.1787/33346549-en (Accessed on 20 February 2018)



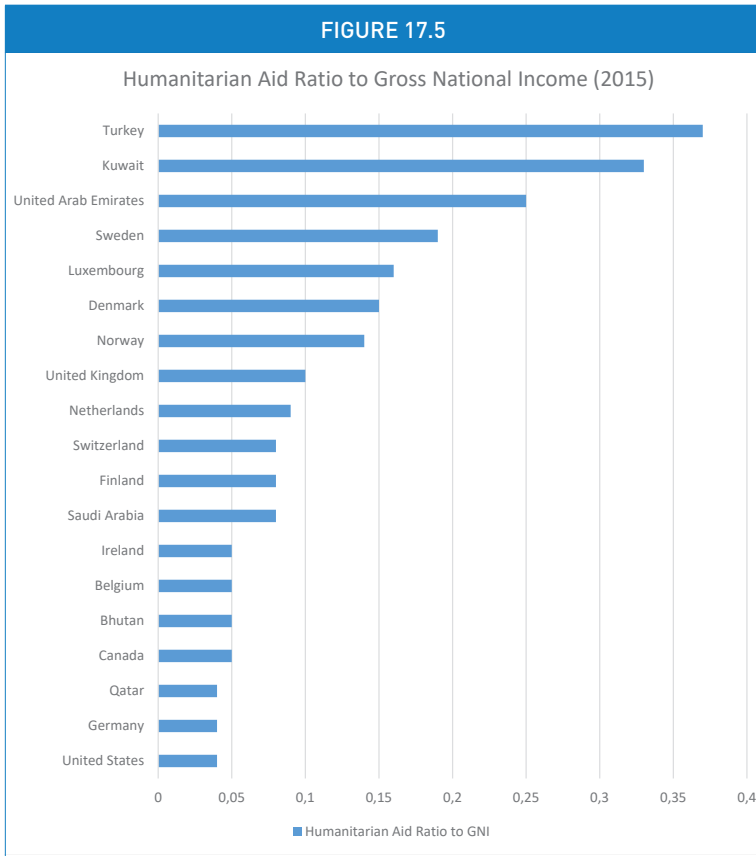
Source: OECD (2018), Net ODA (indicator). doi: 10.1787/33346549-en (Accessed on 20 February 2018)



Source: OECD (2018), Net ODA (indicator). doi: 10.1787/33346549-en (Accessed on 20 February 2018)



Source: OECD (2018), ODA by sector (indicator). doi: 10.1787/a5a1f674-en (Accessed on 20 February 2018)



Source: <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2017/YAYINLAR/TKYR%202015%20ENG/KALKINMA%20.pdf>

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CHAPTER 12

**THE RISE OF THE TURKISH DEFENSE INDUSTRY
IN THE AK PARTY ERA:
CAUSES, CONTEXT,
AND STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS**

MERVE SEREN*

The AK Party era (the era beginning after the November 3, 2002 general elections) represents a milestone in Turkish political history. Since then, there has been an exponential increase in the range of risks due to internal and external threats to the Turkish state. Due to the early political awareness of this era, Turkish security and defense policy has recognized the urgent need for adapting preventive and preemptive measures beyond risk management. The necessity to revise the means and capabilities to mitigate security risks and threats against Turkey at a national, regional, and global level was born as a result as part of a two-stage process. Turkey's geostrategic security environment were surveyed in the first stage; risk and threat priorities were subjected to preliminary considerations later on by the AK Party administration.

In the subsequent period, Turkey's urgent needs and medium and long-term interests in the security and defense domains, as well as its strategic plans have been determined accordingly. Though one cannot extract a linear, causal narrative from all the related stages of this process charted chronologically, with respect to analysis of the present

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discourse regarding the defense and security policies of the past fifteen years, private and governmental reform processes have been a concrete manifestation of this direction.¹ In this regard, the AK Party administration's efforts to revive the domestic defense industry after 2002 should not only be interpreted as an attempt to improve Turkey's competitiveness in the international arena and to anticipate and neutralize potential threats, but also as the outcome of an ambition that envisions the country as a dissuasive regional and global power in terms of its military, economic, scientific, and technological capacities.

Undoubtedly, the ambition to emerge as a dissuasive power and "center state" in foreign affairs in the early 2000s has primarily required the execution of policies concerning political stability and economic recovery. To that end, the AK Party comprehended a more realistic point of view: desired plans and programs regarding the defense industry could be brought to life only if the negative political and economic course was reversed — that is, the AK Party's decision-making mechanism has abstained from expanding stalled or postponed medium or long-term projects started under previous coalition governments. The defense industry initiative towards domestic production and national products became a profound policy through the political and economic confidence that was secured in the 2007 popular elections. To this purpose, the AK Party has abandoned both foreign provider firms and one-way institutional and political dependency on NATO. In this regard, the Defense Industry Executive Committee (SSIK)'s decision in 2004 represents a turning point for the Turkish defense industry. In May 2004, the SSIK adopted important decisions under the chairmanship of then-Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and cancelled

¹ While assessing the Turkish defense industry, the 1941 Lend-Lease Act, 1947 Truman Doctrine, 1948 Marshall Plan, and its 1952 NATO membership must be taken into account with regards to donations, Foreign Military Funds/Foreign Military Sales credits, commercial credits, and training support provided to Turkey deepened the dependency on NATO allies, especially the USA. On the other side, the traditional coups of 1960, 1971, 1980, the post-modern coup of 1997, and latest coup attempt in July 2016 provide an insight both to civil-military relations as well as the national security and defense mindset.

projects worth \$20.5 billion, including a new generation of main battle tanks, attack helicopters, and unmanned aerial vehicles. This cancellation was the first indicator of a shift in strategy away from co-production under license towards local design and production.²

Turkey has begun a transformation process to become a self-sufficient country that can govern and direct its domestic resources by itself self-sufficiency away from relying on the United States and other NATO allies to supplement its military needs. It is important to note that since the beginning of the 2000s, Turkey has faced a wide range of issues that have obliged the country to reconsider its NATO-centric security and defense strategies and policies due to shifting perceptions of domestic, regional, and global security threats. For instance, in the early 2000s, due to the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF)'s urgent need for Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft, Ankara called for direct procurement and then contracted with Boeing, one of the biggest defense contractors in the US. However, the AWACS project experienced significant delays and Boeing delivered the first AWACS in January 2014, 4 years later than the deadline. Turkey similarly suffered because of US-based Sikorsky Aircraft's 'unexpected' delays in the T-70 Turkish Utility Helicopter project.

Each negative incident since the AK Party came to power has revealed that the Turkish defense industry should have been nationalized and localized sooner. These incidents have highlighted how Turkey's dependency on NATO, European allies, and especially the USA has created serious security gaps and weaknesses. Each time Turkey has countered national threats in its strategic security environment, Turkey has had to reevaluate its ties with allies and regional and international organizations. These incidents have also led to the reevaluation of the means and capabilities that Turkey's deterrent power possesses against conventional, asymmetric, and concurrent threats posed by state or

² "Savunma ihaleleri iptal," *Milliyet*, May 15, 2004, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2004/05/15/ekonomi/eko02.html>.

non-state actors acting in concert or individually. Under such circumstances, Turkey has had to reexamine and improve its national security and defense policies, by certain evaluation criteria, to determine its defense capacity.

A number of factors have unearthed the need for optimizing national defense ability. These include the destructive results of the experiences collected while combatting historical threats; the geopolitical chaos caused by regional escalations, conflicts, and civil wars; asymmetric threats contained within cyberspace; and the presence of state and non-state actors. The AK Party has evaluated this need not only as a burden of the past, but also as a condition for its quest to consolidate its rising power profile. Meanwhile, Turkey has moved within the new security and defense policy framework to establish a more independent, national, domestic, powerful, modern, and influential defense mechanism. Hence, this tendency has appeared in its most concrete form in election declarations. The defense industry has attracted more attention by decision makers through these declarations.

THE AK PARTY'S DEFENSE APPROACH: DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND NATIONAL PRODUCTS

Though it is difficult to argue that there has been a rich variety of sectorial and institutional approaches towards the Turkish defense industry, when viewed from a historical point, the AK Party era shows a distinct stance in this regard for a number of reasons. In this period, Turkey embarked on an ambitious goal of moving from a medium-scale power to a “center,” — or, in a more assertive sense, a “global” power — which has necessitated that Turkey overcomes its self-sufficiency problem. Thus, this situation has required Turkey to develop strategic autonomy in the defense domain. This model has been further necessitated by Turkey's fight against terrorism since the 2000s and by regionally-scaled threats caused by an environment characterized by

mistrust — which has resulted from the Arab Spring and the periphery that identifies with this environment of mistrust and instability. Furthermore, the distribution, diversification, and changes needed by the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have necessitated the urgent adaptation of a new approach by the Turkish defense industry. The fast and stable growth trends in the economy have also contributed to the advancement of this industry during the AK Party era, unlike during the previous eras.

Considering all the aforementioned points, the AK Party has put a greater emphasis on revisions and reforms concerning national security and defense policy, as well as on the autonomization of the defense industry, than previous governments. In the General Election Declaration published in 2002, the AK Party's national security and defense perception appeared to be a vague continuation of Turkey's conventional security and defense policies emphasizing confidence in the presence of the regional alliances provided by the EU and NATO. This framework stressed that Turkey, besides contributing to NATO, would make the necessary effort to be part of the European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI). The 2002 Declaration did not dismiss Turkish-American relations, which were deemed a "strategic partnership" during the Clinton and Bush administrations.³ Former Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's visit to the White House on January 16, 2002 was a remarkable move that created a dialogue to deepen and expand Turkish-American relations. When the AK Party first stepped into the election arena, its intention was to strengthen relations with Washington. Discourse related to enhancing economic and trade relations apart from the Özal and Ecevit administration's security zone was also

³ William Hale, *Turkey, the United States and Iraq* (London: SAQI & London Middle East Institute-SOAS, 2007), 90-91.; Mark R. Parris, "On the Future of US-Turkey Relations," in *The EU and Turkey: A Glittering Prize Or a Millstone?*, ed. Michael Lake (London: Federal Trust for Education and Research, 2005), 142-45.; Nuh Yılmaz, "Stratejik Ortaklıktan Model Ortaklığa: Türkiye'nin Bağımsız Dış Politikasının Etkileri," *Türk Dış Politikası Yılığ*, (2010): 551-77.

present in the AK Party's agenda. In this respect, the 2002 Declaration ensured the continuation of the mostly defense-oriented cooperation with the US, as well as a widening of cooperation in economics, investment, science, and technology.

The defense mentality outlined in the 2007 General Election Declaration displayed major differences concerning the minimum cyclical changes in the economic and political conditions of 2002. The "Foreign Policy and Defense" section in the 2007 declaration, which was more extensive and detailed than in the 2002 Declaration, is the most profound indication that the defense domain would have a greater focus in the AK Party's agenda. Moreover, the 2007 Declaration made it obvious that in the defense domain the AK Party's had adopted an "integration model" as part of the "2023 Goals." In this regard, the following remarks were highlighted in the 2007 Declaration: any act against Turkey's unitary state structure and indivisible integrity will be countered uncompromisingly; all the policies which are vital to the establishment and maintenance of national security will complete each other; national security will be handled from a wide perspective including military, diplomatic, economic, cultural, and societal aspects; and all the defense mechanisms will be enhanced to improve neglected and vulnerable domains of the country.⁴ Besides national security, the importance of Turkish contributions to the establishment of regional and international security and peace were also mentioned; and it bore a reminder that Turkey had played substantial roles, through the country's strong military and defense industry, in protecting peace and providing security in various countries tied to the EU, UN, and to NATO especially. In this context, the AK Party defined one of its main goals as, "creating a defense and power mechanism that will make Turkey's presence be felt under any circumstance and in any location; will be able to carry out conventional and asymmetric wars, will have

⁴ "2007 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannameşi," AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, February 2015, 32-33.

a high survivability and offensive power, and will possess dissuasiveness.”⁵ Apart from those, the necessity of improving the capacities and means to prevent and diffuse international threats, to track technological changes in the world, and to reform the defense industry on the basis of the TAF’s primary needs and objectives were also stated. The AK Party made a promise that Turkey would decrease the TAF’s external dependency and indicated that Turkey would foster research and development (R&D) efforts, besides TAF oriented objectives, through the formation and advancement of the domestic defense industry.

It is worth noting that the AK Party’s economic reform programs and financial policies, which were implemented after the November 3, 2002, general elections, have rapidly improved the dire economic situation that emerged in 2001 — one of the worst eras of the Turkish economy. The AK Party’s improvement initiatives regarding the economic crisis in 2001 have since resulted in positive outcomes in a short span of time: since 2003, the Turkish economy, owing to favorable regional and global circumstances, has stabilized and entered a promising growth process. Factors such as low inflation rates from 2002–2007, increased production and export rates, and high growth volumes have provided Turkey with political and economic stability and increased confidence. As the AK Party overcame the economic challenges left from previous administrations, it pushed Turkey beyond becoming a self-sufficient state towards having a competitive stance in international markets. The promising economic development trends and political stability in 2007 led the AK Party to declare that it would sustain its “national defense policy,” which prioritized the improvement of the national defense industry as well as R&D efforts. It can be argued that the AK Party’s efforts to create opportunities and resources to motivate domestic industry have played an important role in bringing autonomy to the Turkish defense industry.

⁵ “2007 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannamesi,” 251.

In the 2007 Declaration, the increase in Turkish industry's participation and production was portrayed as a source of pride. As an example of this well-deserved pride, the declaration stated that the ratio of the TAF's domestically provided needs had risen to 50 percent in 2007 from 25 percent in 2002. Moreover, the defense industry had increased its international market share; the value of exported military assault boats, ships, weapons, and other defense equipment as well as the command-control and electronic war systems reached \$320 million. On the other hand, the AK Party conducted many projects modernizing the TAF that require advanced technology, engineering, and design. Among these projects, the "Modern Tank Enhancement," "Attack, Tactic/Exploration Helicopter," "National War Ship," "Jet Training Plane," "Combat Drone," and "New Generation Warplane" projects bear the most significance.⁶ Another important move was the activation of a satellite and space policy leading to the creation of Turkish satellites. For instance, the "National Defense Research" and "National Space Research" programs have been designed and put into action. The budget to realize these plans reached 500 million Turkish Lira by 2007. As seen in the 2007 Declaration, the AK Party's increased transparency regarding Turkey's national defense policies was an outcome of increased political and economic harmony.⁷ Based on the increase observed in R&D activities and product variety, it is clear that the election promises of 2002 have turned into reality.

THE FORTIFICATION OF DOMESTIC PRODUCTION AND NATIONAL PRODUCT IN DEFENSE PRACTICES AND PERCEPTION

One could argue that the 2011 General Election Declaration represents a milestone: despite the Global Finance Crisis in 2008 and the decline in the growth rate of the Turkish economy in 2009, the AK

⁶ "2007 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannamesi," 250-51.

⁷ "2007 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannamesi," 209, 212.

Party showed a determined attitude towards the completion of defense projects. Turkish defense policy, which was built on the domestic production and national product principles, gained a different momentum through this declaration. The determined attitude of the AK Party administration has pushed the country towards a partner and vendor-oriented position in the global defense arena. The two defense-related titles, “Defense Industry” and “Defense” under the “Macro Economy” and “Leader Country” sections in the 2011 Declaration demonstrated the AK Party’s willingness to advance the Turkish defense industry. The national defense strategy has gained more leverage through economic and political means in Turkey.

The 2011 Declaration drew attention to the notable progress made in the defense industry throughout the AK Party era and expressed the fact that Turkey has begun to produce most of its defense equipment within its borders. The declaration also mentioned that the R&D efforts and innovation-oriented projects with unique military equipment and systems have made significant contributions to the Turkish defense domain. Meanwhile, as the external dependency declined, the performance and potential of the defense industry increased. Moreover, the favored practice of domestic production has caused a significant increase in defense exports, bringing economic gains to the country. The output of the defense sector increased from \$247 million in 2002 to \$1 billion in 2010. From an institutional point of view, the Mechanical and Chemical Industry Corporation rose from \$2 million to \$33 million by 2011 through a remarkable acceleration in performance. The percent of the TAF’s weapon and military equipment needs satisfied by domestic production increased to 50% in 2011 from 25% in 2002 (a declared goal in the previous election). Along with these developments, during the AK Party era, \$24 million were spent within the framework of TAF modernization projects, and 90% of these projects were realized through the participation of the domestic industry. Meanwhile, direct foreign procurement declined by 10%. From a sectoral point

of view, R&D spending increased by a factor of ten, increasing from \$50 million in 2002 to \$500 million. Additionally, defense industry revenue increased from \$1 billion in 2002 to \$2.3 billion in 2011. In this context, it must be stated that a high sensitivity towards the distribution of the sufficient work share was shown by the AK Party administration, especially through the new industrial participation and offset regime initiated in 2011.⁸

In 2011, the design of many national products was completed. Many more were already in the process of production and delivery. For instance, the design concept of the ALTAY — an extraordinary engineering success, a unique third generation Main Battle Tank (MBT), whose main contractor is Otokar — was completed and the substructure for the first nationally produced modern tank was built. It is important to mention here that a 1500 horsepower German engine produced by MTU was used in the ALTAY tank (the MTU engines was recently acquired by Britain's Rolls-Royce.)¹⁰ MTU is one of the pioneers of the global defense sector known for its marine applications (e.g., heavily armored ground, marine, railway and defense vehicles, diesel engines designed for the oil and gas industry, electronic control and surveillance systems, as well as drive and operator systems). Turkey faced severe obstacles both for the mass production of the ALTAY and in international tenders due to Otokar's obligation to comply with the trade permissions of the associated governments and all the other producer firms in the country. Turkey was subjected to the limitation of exports enforced by Germany from the very beginning.⁹

⁸ "2011 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannameşi," AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, February 2015, 84.

⁹ "Koç'a Altay tankı şoku," *Hürriyet*, June 10, 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/koca-altay-tanki-soku-40485552>; Göksel Yıldırım, "Altay'da rekabet ihaleye taşınacak," *Anadolu Ajansı*, June 10, 2017, <http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/altayda-rekabet-ihaleye-tasinacak/838620>; "15 Altay tankı 2020'de sahada," *Sabah*, June 28, 2017, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2017/06/28/15-altay-tanki-2020de-sahada>.

It should be noted that the 1000 horsepower engine of “T-155 K/M OBÜS” (as known as FIRTINA) was the first self-propelled howitzer artillery weapon system developed by Turkish engineers through the use of domestic resources (its mass production is operated by the TAF’s First Main Maintenance Center in the Arifiye town of Sakarya). Its engine, however, is manufactured by MTU. We should note here that besides the FIRTINA vehicles (of which there are 280 currently available in inventory), which were placed around and within the Syrian border providing effective support fire during Operation Euphrates Shield, the mass production of the PANTER vehicle (a 40 km ranged T-155 towed howitzers) was finalized and was delivered to the TAF.

Today, besides the high-tech FIRTINA and PANTER vehicles, the domestic defense industry’s success in air defense and military aviation domains is also worth mentioning. Software and design for Turkey’s first combat helicopter (Attack and Tactical Reconnaissance Helicopter) known as the T129 ATAK were completed and prototype production stage has started. Two different types have been designed, one suited for close air support (CAS) missions (the T129-A model) and one suited for multirole operations (the T129-B model) which is integrated with modern electronic warfare systems. The first T129A prototype was produced in Turkish Aerospace and Space Industries Corporation (TUSAŞ) facilities and achieved its first flight on August 17, 2011. Right after the completion of its qualification and levee processes, the first T129A EDH was delivered to the Turkish Land Forces Command on April 22, 2014.¹⁰

Likewise, in a similar manner in March 2006, with the signing of the agreement between the Under Secretariat of Defense (SSM) and the Turkish Aerospace and Space Industries Corporation (TUSAŞ) came the framework and completion of the New Generation Basic Trainer Plane Development Program (HÜRKUŞ) which possessed great maneuvering capabilities. The program included two different configu-

¹⁰ “T129 ATAK Helikopteri,” TAI, <https://www.tai.com.tr/tr/proje/atak>.

rations named HÜRKUŞ-A and HÜRKUŞ-B; TUSAŞ has acknowledged HÜRKUŞ-A's first flight mission in Kazan facilities that lasted around 33 minutes after completion of ground and taxiing tests. Upon obtaining the necessary certificates (EASA Validation Type Certificate) from the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), HÜRKUŞ has been recognized as the first Turkish indigenous aircraft certified by EASA. Additionally, it is the very first time that EASA certified a canopy fracturing system and ejection seat in one single aircraft.¹¹ The Defense Industry Executive Committee (SSIK) decided to start contract negotiations with TUSAŞ on September 26, 2013 with the intent of supplying Turkish Air Force's demand for fifteen next generation training aircrafts (HÜRKUŞ). Upon the approval of the decision, on December 26, 2018, the HÜRKUŞ-B agreement was signed, and its production, as well as the installation processes, has been activated.¹² Additionally, in August 2017, the director of TUSAŞ (TAİ), Temek Kotil announced the beginning of a new plane project called HÜRJET — a jet engine-operated model of HÜRKUŞ.¹³

Another major domestic defense project, the production of long-range surface-to-surface rockets was completed by 2011. The development of anti-tank missiles and surface-to-air missiles is still underway. For instance, the new generation air-to-surface stand-off missile 'SOM-J' is being indigenously developed by TUBITAK-SAGE and produced by major Turkish weapons manufacturer and defense contractor ROKETSAN. ASELSAN and ROKETSAN are also developing the low and medium altitude air defense missiles 'HİSAR' (HİSAR-A

¹¹ "HÜRKUŞ: Turkish Basic And Primary Training Aircraft", SSM, <https://www.ssm.gov.tr/Website/contentlist.aspx?PageID=357&LangID=2> ; "Hurkus earns type certificate", http://www.airframer.com/news_story.html?release=34313

¹² "HÜRKUŞ," TAİ, [https://www.tai.com.tr/tr/proje/hurkus.](https://www.tai.com.tr/tr/proje/hurkus;); "“HÜRKUŞ-A” testi geçti," *Anadolu Ajansı*, March 31, 2016, [http://aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/hurkus-a-testi-gecti/546884.](http://aa.com.tr/tr/ekonomi/hurkus-a-testi-gecti/546884); "Silahı da kendisi de yerli! Hürkuş görücüye çıktı..." *Milliyet*, January 16, 2017, [http://www.milliyet.com.tr/silahi-da-kendisi-de-yerli-hurkus-ekonomi-2379401/.](http://www.milliyet.com.tr/silahi-da-kendisi-de-yerli-hurkus-ekonomi-2379401/)

¹³ "Hürkuş jet motorla uçacak," *Dünya*, August 10, 2017, [https://www.dunya.com/gundem/hurkus-jet-motorla-ucacak-haberi-377139.](https://www.dunya.com/gundem/hurkus-jet-motorla-ucacak-haberi-377139)

and HISAR-O), both of which are milestone programs designed to meet the defense requirements of the TAF. The tactical ballistic missile 'BORA' (export name KHAN) is another great production success of ROKETSAN. BORA is the third phase of a joint missile systems production that has been accomplished with Chinese cooperation, after the first phase 'KASIRGA' and the second phase 'YILDIRIM'. While the project was begun between 2006 and 2008, the first deliveries were made in 2014, and the BORA missile system project for was finally finally publicly revealed on February 6, 2017.¹⁴

In addition to the missile technology, domestically produced UAVs have altered the course of Turkey's fight against terrorism and given the TAF a significant advantage on the battleground in terms of operational tactics and strategic superiority. As an example, the Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) class unmanned aerial vehicle system ANKA (ANKA Block-A, ANKA Block B, and ANKA-S) is designed and developed by Turkish Aerospace Industries for tactical surveillance and reconnaissance missions in order to meet the requirements of the TAF. The domestically developed engine developed by TEI for the ANKA has completed initial testing and the engine qualification and civil certification is expected to be completed by the end of 2018. Moreover, an armed variation of the ANKA, "Plus A," which is expected to carry ROKETSAN's Cirit missiles, and a High Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) version of the ANKA, "ANKA-TP" (SIHA- Strategic Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) are also being planned.¹⁵ Another significant step to be counted within the context of Turkey's UAV/UAS industry is the development of the Bayraktar systems. Apart from the Bayraktar

¹⁴ Merve Seren, "Turkey's Quest For A National Missile Defense System: Prospects & Challenges," *SETA Analysis*, no. 26 (April 2017), https://setav.org/en/assets/uploads/2017/04/Analysis_26.pdf.

¹⁵ "ANKA Received Indigenous Engine," *CF Defence*, February 20, 2018, <http://en.c4defence.com/Agenda/anka-received-indigenous-engine/5753/1>; "TAI'nin ANKA-S modeli ilk deneme uçuşunu başarıyla tamamladı," *CF Defence*, September 26, 2016, <http://www.c4defence.com/Arsiv/tainin-ankas-modeli-ilk-deneme-ucusunu-basariyla-tamamladi/2588/1>; "ANKA," TAI, <https://www.tai.com.tr/tr/proje/anka>.

Mini Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, the Bayraktar Tactical UAS, and the Malazgirt Mini Unmanned Helicopter System, Bayraktar's TB2 Tactical UAV has been the most prominent system.¹⁶ The TB2 system played a crucial role in the fight against terrorism both within Turkey's borders and in cross-border operations. TB2 armed UAVs were effectively used in Operation Euphrates Shield as well as in Operation Olive Branch. During Operation Olive Branch, TB2s flew for 4916 hours, conducted 382 sorties, including 449 direct hits and 680 indirect hits, and neutralized a total of 1,129 terrorists. As of April 7, the total number of terrorists neutralized by the TAF during Operation Olive Branch reached 3,991. TB2 operations have directly accounted for 11.3 percent of terrorists neutralized, and indirectly for 17 percent, totaling 28.3 percent of all terrorists neutralized during the operation.¹⁷

When evaluated from the perspective of the Naval Forces, it is essential to mention the success of the first Turkish national corvette warship project, MILGEM (National Ship), which was entirely designed and built in Turkey. Its offensive military systems are a national product that were developed and installed onboard by domestic firms in Turkey. Here under the Naval forces, the strategic needs of all the Turkish warships are being produced mostly at the shipyards of the private sector firms in the country. With the recorded developments of 2016, 2017, and 2018, the SSIK's decision in 2004; the MILGEM Project was brought to life with the aim of producing domestic warships. As part of the MILGEM project, construction on Turkey's first indigenous warship, the TCG Heybeliada (F-511), commenced in January 2007 at Tuzla (Istanbul) Shipbuilding Yard Command, and

¹⁶ "Systems," Baykar, <http://baykarmakina.com/en/sistemler-2/>.

¹⁷ "Turkish drone 'Bayraktar' guides warplanes to destroy Daesh terrorist targets in north Syria operation," *Daily Sabah*, September 7, 2016, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2016/09/07/turkish-drone-bayraktar-guides-warplanes-to-destroy-daesh-terrorist-targets-in-north-syria-operation.>; "Turkey's Bayraktar TB2 drones enable swift, precise victory against YPG/PKK in Syria's Afrin," *Daily Sabah*, April 19, 2018, <https://www.dailysabah.com/war-on-terror/2018/04/19/turkeys-bayraktar-tb2-drones-enable-swift-precise-victory-against-ypgpkk-in-syrias-afrin>.

the ship was commissioned on September 27, 2011. Also designed, developed, and built by the Tuzla Naval Shipyard, the second warship of the project, the TCG Büyükada (F-512), was laid down on January 22, 2008, launched on September 27, 2011, and commissioned on September 27, 2013. In 2015, the TCG Büyükada completed a three month voyage where it visited ports in Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Pakistan, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Sudan, and Djibouti. It was also involved in the successful evacuation of 55 Turkish citizens from Yemen in 2015.¹⁸ Additionally, the F-512 TCG Büyükada conducted several exercises within the context of NATO's Counter Piracy Operation Ocean Shield.¹⁹ The Turkish Navy's third MILGEM corvette, the Burgazada (F-513), was built in the Istanbul Naval Shipyard and launched in June 2016. In March 2018, the TCG Burgazada started her sea trials. According to the Turkish Undersecretariat for Defence Industries (SSM), the G Burgazada is set to be delivered to the Turkish Navy between June and September 2018. The fourth domestically produced warship of the MILGEM Project, the TCG Kınalıada Corvette (F-514), was launched in July 2017 and is expected to enter service in 2020. Meanwhile, the first national landing ship within the Landing Ship Tank (LST) project, the TCG Bayraktar, passed all required tests in April 2017.²⁰ In addition to all these, Turkey's first indigenously built "multipurpose amphibious assault ship," the TCG Anadolu, which might be configured as a light aircraft carrier, is also under construction. The

¹⁸ "Yemen'den Tahliye Edilen Türkler, Yurda Getirildi," *Haberler*, April 4, 2015, <https://www.haberler.com/yemen-den-tahliye-edilen-turkler-yurda-getirildi-7158312-haberi/>.

¹⁹ "TCG Buyukada Joins Operation Ocean Shield," *Naval Today*, March 30, 2015, <https://navaltoday.com/2015/03/30/tcg-buyukada-joins-operation-ocean-shield/>; "TCG Büyükada Rejoins Operation Ocean Shield," *Bosphorus Naval News*, April 1 2015, <https://turkishnavy.net/2015/04/01/tcg-buyukada-rejoins-operation-ocean-shield/>.

²⁰ "MİLGEM Ada Sınıfı Korvetlerin 3.Gemisi TCG BURGAZADA denize indirildi," *STM*, June 21, 2016, [https://www.stm.com.tr/tr/haberler/duyurular/milgem-ada-sinifi-korvetlerin-3gemisi-tcg-burgazada-denize-indirildi](https://www.stm.com.tr/tr/haberler/duyurular/milgem-ada-sinifi-korvetlerin-3gemisi-tcg-burgazada-denize-indirildi;); "Milli tank çıkarma gemisi 'TCG Bayraktar' tüm testlerden geçti," *TRT Haber*, April 14, 2017, <http://www.trthaber.com/haber/gundem/milli-tank-cikarma-gemisi-tcg-bayraktar-tum-testlerden-gecti-309338.html>; "KINALIADA Korveti (F-514) Denize İndirildi," *Milli Savunma*, July 3, 2017, <http://www.millisavunma.com/news/kinaliada-korveti-f-514-denize-indirildi/>.

ship, which is 68 percent indigenous, is expected to start sea trials by February 2019.²¹ Another recent development is the formation of a consortium to locally develop Turkey's first indigenous ship engine. All five privately owned Turkish shipyards; Sedef, Anadolu, Sefine, Selah, and Istanbul; have formed the Turkish Associated International Shipyards (TAIS) to design, develop, and produce engines for military vessels. The consortium is reportedly set to produce the first engine prototype within two and a half years and start serial production within four and a half years.²² Over the past 15 years, Turkey has completed fourteen military ship programs and the number of Turkish shipyards has increased from 37 in 2003 to 80. Turkey has also become capable of domestically producing between 70 and 80 percent of all naval needs and is listed as one of the top 10 shipbuilding nations globally.

A number of other Turkish defense projects include 2.5-megapixel electro-optic intelligence satellites which Turkey began producing in 2011 that perform significantly better in comparison to their 1-megapixel counterparts. Likewise, domestic sources have begun to produce computers found in planes, helicopters, and tanks as well as their software. It should be noted that jet engines were domestically produced and tested for the first time in 2011. Mine resistant armored vehicles were domestically produced for the first time in 2011 as well.²³

²¹ "Turkey's indigenously-built warship to be ready in 2019," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 24, 2018, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkeys-indigenously-built-warship-to-be-ready-in-2019-129239>.

²² Burak Ege Bekdil, "Turkish shipyards join forces to develop first locally made ship engine," *Defense News*, April 16, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/naval/2018/04/16/turkish-shipyards-join-forces-to-develop-engine/>.

²³ The remarks on the domestic production of jet engines in the 2011 Declaration are limited to the design, integration, testing, and certification processes. However, the present progress in the Turkish jet engine production is notable: In May, 2017 the Kale Group announced that they would cooperate with the biggest plane engine producer in the world -Rolls-Royce- on a joint plane engine project. "Kale Grubu ve Rolls-Royce uçak motoru üretecek," *NTV*, May 8, 2017, [http://www.ntv.com.tr/ekonomi/kale-grubu-ve-rolls-royce-ucak-motoru-uretecek,Yn_ZUim6OE6z3Ltpjje6w](http://www.ntv.com.tr/ekonomi/kale-grubu-ve-rolls-royce-ucak-motoru-uretecek,Yn_ZUim6OE6z3Ltpjje6w;).; Also, regarding the TEI's engine production effort, see "TJ90 Turbojet Motoru Geliştirme Projesi," TEI, <https://www.tei.com.tr/detay/tj90-turbojet-motoru-gelistirme-projesi>.; "Türkiye'nin ilk yerli ve milli jet motoru üretildi," *Sabah*, July 31, 2017, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2017/07/31/turkiyenin-ilk-yerli-ve-milli-jet-motoru-uretildi>.

Undoubtedly, the Turkish defense industry has managed to accomplish many other developments domestically that deserve admiration. These include the articulated helicopter cannon project,²⁴ the modernization of F4 Phantoms in Turkey, the opening of Turkey's F16 modernization center, and the avionics modernization of the C-130 delivery and T-38 trainer jets through the technologic capabilities that Turkey possesses. Moreover, Turkish defense corporations have begun to export armored vehicles, air defense systems, rocket systems, simulators, coast guard ships, and military communication systems, as well as command and control systems and software. Currently, the Turkish defense industry exports to countries such as Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Jordan, Pakistan, and South Korea.

The AK Party's 2011 General Election Declaration represents a crucial turning point regarding the growing confidence of the Turkish defense sector and the transformation of defense perception. The AK Party had often proudly spoken of the Turkish defense industry's success in domestic production within the past eight and a half years — 50% of the TAF's arms, munitions, vehicles, and systems are produced domestically. In keeping with this renewed sense of pride and confidence in Turkey's military self-sufficiency, the AK Party also indicated in its 2011 Declaration that by 2023 Turkey would design and produce its own rifles, field guns, tanks, helicopters, unmanned aviation vehicles, and satellites.

Examining the 2015 General Election Declaration, one can see that the AK Party has managed to realize the majority of these goals. Moreover, it must be highlighted that the value of defense and aviation exports increased to \$1.4 billion in 2013 from \$331 million in 2003. The rate of domestic production in the defense industry has increased to 55% from 24% since the AK Party came to power. However, these

²⁴ The F4 and F5s in the TAF's inventory have been scrapped in 2017.

improvements were not solely based on the enrichment of the defense infrastructure but were also supported by the changing mindset regarding the defense industry and the trend towards economic stability. The defense industry served not only military purposes but was also positioned as a field of opportunity in regards to the improvement of domestic production and R&D efforts.

At this point, it might be useful to elaborate on the main defense projects that were present in the 2015 Declaration and to evaluate the last fifteen years of the AK Party administration in contrast to previous administrations. First, it is possible to argue that via the Kirpi (Hedgehog) vehicles (mine resistant ambush protected vehicles [MRAP]), fully equipped and safe deployment of military personnel was made possible. Additionally, products that required high-tech manufacturing, such as the Göktürk-2, the National Cruise Missile, and Bunker Busters, were also successfully produced.²⁵ The national cruise missile SOM-A, which has a 250 km range and possesses a precision guidance mechanism, has entered the TAF's inventory and that the delivery of SOM-B1s continues.²⁶ While the declaration promise that at least fifteen more HÜRKUŞ-A planes would be produced by Turkish engineers by 2019, the modernization of the ANKA, ATAK, target aircraft systems, tactical unmanned aircraft, miniature unmanned aircraft, the C-130 and F-16, as well as various rocket and air system projects continue.

For example, the integration efforts of the domestically produced ATAK helicopters and the field testing of the L-UMTAS (Laser Guided Long Range Anti-Tank Missile System) have been successful. However, in this period, the main source of pride is the MILGEM Corvette, which has been produced with a 65% domestic production rate, enabling the advancement and the development of the Turkish ship

²⁵ "2015 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannameesi," AK Parti Tanıtım ve Medya Başkanlığı, February 2015, 256–57.

²⁶ Savunma Bakanlığı, Twitter, June 13, 2017, <https://twitter.com/tcsavunma/status/874599719540072448>.

building industry's manufacturing capabilities and the design process of all sea bearing ships. Beyond the MILGEM, new types of fast patrol boats, amphibian ships, rescue ships, fast amphibian ships as well as the frigate modernization projects continue to be pursued. The coast guard search and rescue ships, which are produced in Turkish shipyards, set an excellent example of Turkey's improvement in this field. Efforts towards obtaining national anti-tanks missiles, torpedoes, tanks, new submarine types, landing crafts, hospital ships, airplanes, and helicopters continue.²⁷

When it comes to Turkish aviation and space advancement, a delay in the development of these domains can be observed. In the 2007 General Election Declaration, it was indicated that Turkey had enabled its satellite and space policy program and that important steps towards the "National Space Research" programs were taken. However, despite the fact that satellite production has started, the promised "National Space Agency," which would facilitate the integration of new space technologies and the coordination of space projects, has yet to be established.²⁸ In the 2011 General Election Declaration, it was mentioned that the Turkish Space Institute would be established by 2012, a central policy regarding all the potential space activities would be determined, and the matters of coordination and international representation would be improved, as well. It is frustrating to note that these objectives had not been met by 2017. However, a state resolution with the 446 ordinal number, "1/823: The Establishment of the Turkey Space Agency, and the Regulation of Space Activities", was put into effect in February 2017, which was an encouraging move regarding the publicizing of the issue and arriving at a political decision.²⁹ On the other hand, besides

²⁷ "2015 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannamesi," 257-61.

²⁸ "2015 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannamesi," 225, 361.

²⁹ For the resolution 1/823: The Establishment of the Turkey Space Agency, and the Regulation of Space Activities and the full script of the report published by the Committee on industry, trade, energy, natural resources, information and technology, see: <https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/sirasayi/donem26/yil01/ss4466.pdf>

the ongoing Göktürk-3 satellite efforts, Turkey plans to launch a new satellite initiative by 2019, which will increase the number of Turkish satellites to seven and will cover the area between the American West Coast and the Chinese Eastern coastline — with the condition of at least two of them being domestically produced.³⁰ At this point, it must be kept in mind that aviation, satellite, and cyber developments follow one another and that the countries that have won influence in scientific and technological domains continue to simultaneously improve their developments in other fields.

SELECTED MAJOR PROJECTS OF TURKISH DEFENSE INDUSTRY OF THE AK PARTY ERA³¹

The following defense projects are classified by domains of warfare (land, sea, air, space and cyber) and weapon & missile systems. These are the most prominent projects (across 600 ongoing projects) that have entered the inventory in the 2000s or have a project start date during that period.

Land

- Altay Main Battle Tank
- MKE Yavuz 155mm Self-Propelled Howitzer
- T-155 Self Propelled FIRTINA (Thunder) Howitzer Project
- Ammunition Vehicle for Self-Propelled Howitzers (POYRAZ)
- New Generation Crime Scene Investigation Vehicles (KIRAÇ)

³⁰ “2011 Genel Seçimleri: Seçim Beyannameşi,” 118-19.

³¹ The projects indicated here and their current status can be found on the official websites of the Command Forces, SSM, STM, TUBITAK, HAVELSAN, ASELSAN, ROKETSAN, and TAI.

- New Generation Armored Infantry Fighting Vehicle KORHAN
- CIRIT Laser Guided Missile
- Ejder Yalçın 4X4 Armoured Combat Vehicle
- SAMUR Mobile Amphibious Assault Bridge(SYHK)
- Anti-tank Guided Missile Mızrak-O,(also known as OMTAS)
- Long Range Anti-Tank System MIZRAK-U (also known as UMTAS)
- Low Attitude Air Defense System HİSAR-A
- Medium-Altitude Air Defence Missile System HİSAR-O
- TULPAR Armoured Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV)
- Kirpi MRAP (Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle)
- TRG 300 TIGER Missile
- Railgun Weapon System
- Tactical Wheeled Vehicles
- Cobra II Armored Tactical Vehicle

Air

- Bayraktar TB2 Armed UAVs
- ANKA Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
- HÜRKUŞ Turkish Basic and Primary Training Aircraft (HÜRKUŞ-B)
- HÜRKUŞ-C Aircraft Development and Serial Production Project
- TF-X National Combat Aircraft
- ATAK Reconnaissance and Tactical Attack Helicopter

- T-70 Turkish Utility Helicopter
- Bunker-Buster Bomb
- Wing Assisted Guidance Kit
- Penetrator Bomb
- Precision Guidance Kit

Weapon & Missile Systems

- STAMP Guns and Gun Systems Modernization for Coast Guard Boats
- MPT-76 National Infantry Rifle
- UMTAS Long Range Anti-Tank Missile System
- OMTAS Medium Range Anti-Tank Weapon System
- CİRİT Laser Guided Missile
- SOM-A/B Cruise Missile
- SOM-J Cruise Missile - F-35 Integration
- Bora (Khan) Missile

Navy

- MİLGEM National Ship (TCG-HEYBELIADA, TCG-BÜYÜKADA, TCG-BURGAZADA, TCG-KINALI)
- Landing Ship Tank (LST) Amphibious Ship (TCG BAYRAKTAR, TCG SANCAKTAR)
- TCG ALEMDAR Submarine Rescue Mother Ship (MOSHIP)
- TCG ANADOLU Multipurpose Amphibious Assault Ship (LHD)
- TCG İŞİN (A-583) Auxiliary Rescue and Salvage (ARS) Ship

- Coast Guard Search and Rescue Boats
- New Type Fast Patrol Boats
- New Class Submarines
- LEVENT Unmanned Surface Vehicle
- AKYA Heavyweight Torpedo
- ATMACA Anti-ship Missile
- TEMREN Short-Range Anti-Ship Missile
- Landing Craft Tank (LCT) Project (also known as Fast Amphibious Landing Ship)
- MTA Oruc Reis Research/Survey Vessel

Cyberspace

- Cyber Security Institute, TUBİTAK BİLGEM
- Turkey Computer Emergency Response Team (TR-CERT)
- Cyber Defense Command, Turkish Armed Forces
- Cyber Defense Technology Center (SISATEM), HAVELSAN
- Cyber Fusion Center, STM
- National Satellite Assembly, Integration and Test (AI&T) Facility, TAI
- DÖNENCE Project
- GOKTURK-2 Project
- BILSAT Project
- RASAT Project
- İMECE Project
- TURKSAT-6A Project
- Hall Effect Thruster Development Project (HALE)

- Satellite Image Processing and Geoportals Development Project (GEOPORTAL)
- USTAR Project, RF Module

CONCLUSION

Today's Turkey gives much more importance to the concepts of domestic production, nationalization, self-sufficiency, and competency in matters of security and defense. Over the past fifteen years, Ankara has coped with growing concerns related to foreign-source dependency that have evolved and deepened since Cold War period. Ankara is struggling to obtain strategic autonomy in the domain of defense while continuing to uphold its obligations and commitments as a member of NATO.

There are three main considerations that are vital to the AK Party's national defense and security principles, goals, and strategy: domestic production, national products, and strategic autonomy. Domestic production constitutes one of the main dynamics of Turkish defense policy, which has been neglected for many years. Within the context of the AK Party's security and defense perception, it is also the first stage of the formation of a new national strategy. After its entry to NATO in 1952, Turkey shaped its national defense policy in the framework of the Atlantic Alliance and sourced the majority of its security and defense needs from its NATO allies through foreign procurement. However, defense cooperation between Turkey and NATO, and the US in particular, has been interrupted many times. Even though Turkey's quest for autonomy was verbalized during the Cold War period, primarily because of the problems experienced with the US, its localization strategy was not realized in a timely manner due to the Occidental and Americentric policies of the West's security bureaucracy. This situation limited Turkey to a one-way dependency relation, occasionally left the country alone in its fight against threats whose identification, preven-

tion, and neutralization are essential for national defense and security purposes. The Cyprus issue (US President Johnson's letter warning Turkey not to use NATO equipment for intervention in Cyprus), the 1974 Peace Operation (which led the US Congress to impose an embargo on arms transfers to Turkey), and the political differences between the US and Turkey, especially in regards to the fight against terror, are the first example that come to mind.

Despite the move towards industrial demilitarization since the beginning of the 1980s during the Özal era, the military's role and function in politics was still strong. Additionally, key structural inadequacies regarding the democratic control of the civilian-military nexus remained unaddressed, preventing the resolution of the domestic production problem. In the 1990s, the TAF dominated the political agenda, especially within the context of security and defense policies. The tank modernization agreement with Israel was carried out without the consent of the Welfare Party-True Path Party coalition government, a striking example of the TAF's domination over the defense agenda.³² Since then, specific developments concerning Turkey's security environment in the 2000s, such as the Arab Spring and the ongoing war on terror in the Middle East, have proven the vital importance of domestic production. These developments have demonstrated that domestic production of defense technology and equipment is not only a

³² According to claims, Erbakan insisted on realizing the tank modernization through national knowledge, expertise and financial resources. However, he could not resist the generals' decisions in TAF and had to approve the Israeli firm for the modernization of M60s. See. "Erbakan'dan tank resti", Habervaktim, April 18, 2012, <https://www.habervaktim.com/haber/237703/erbakan-dan-tank-resti.html> . ; " *With the impact of the Turkish army, for example, Erbakan could not suspend the negotiations, which had already begun between Turkey and Israel. Instead, Erbakan signed an agreement on cooperation in the defense industry on August 28, 1996. Together with the Military Training Cooperation Agreement of 23 February 1996, this agreement provided for joint air and naval exercises, access to port facilities and training for the air forces. The agreement aimed at strengthening the collaboration of the two countries in the fight against terrorism. The agreement also provided for a joint system of surveillance with the help of the US military technology. Besides the agreement, Erbakan also approved the F-4 modernization program and accordingly, Israeli aircraft did continue its training in Turkey* ", See. Derviş Fikret Ünal, Turkey's Relations with Israel in the 2000s: A Constructivist Perspective, Astana Yayınları, 2017.

conventional need but also a requirement that is closely tied to national defense. In the purest form, “domestic production” may be defined as a country’s ability to produce its essential defense needs via domestic facilities and capabilities, and on the condition of using its resources to minimize its external dependency.

The “Turkish Long-Range Air and Missile Defense System (T-LORAMIDS)” project is a powerful example of the importance of having domestic national defense systems. The tender process of T-LORAMIDS revealed how Turkey’s national goals and interests sometimes significantly differed from those of the US and its other NATO allies and the many new security vulnerabilities faced if Ankara sought alternative suppliers such as China or Russia. In any case, both during the tender process of T-LORAMIDS and following the its cancellation, the AK Party administration stated its determination to lower its external technological and resource-wise dependency by activating nationally and domestically sourced low and medium altitude missile projects; and by indicating its external procurement criteria as follows: technology transfer, co-production condition, domestic contribution margin, delivery time, and price advantage.³³

Turkey’s defense policy is not limited to the domestic production principle. There is also the national product factor that can be considered a subsidiary of domestic production. Thanks to successful mechanisms that have integrated systems and subsystems, the range of national products was diversified and improved by combining foreign and domestic procurement. The crucial point is to obtain important technologies from a limited number of foreign providers to prevent potential problems in the production process while developing new skills and influence in this domain and developing integrated mechanisms that can compete in international markets and will rely entirely on national designs.

³³ Seren, “Turkey’s Quest For A National Missile Defense System.”

The ongoing strategic and political uncertainties on the regional scale continue to enhance Turkey's national security risks. It is possible to argue that a defense industry built on the principles of domestic production and national product has become a necessity. It is crucial that Ankara, as drawn from the S-400 discussion, not neglect national missile production while purchasing foreign missile platforms. Purchasing a platform such as S-400 cannot sustain Turkey's long-term needs and might even increase Turkey's external dependency in the defense domain.

The ultimate goal of both domestic production and the development of national products is strategic autonomy (which is clearly seen in the government programs of 2011 and 2015). It is highly possible for Turkey to reach its long-term goal — to increase its dissuasive military power — if the country manages to minimize its external dependency by obtaining an independent air and missile defense system developed through the use of national resources. In this light, autonomy can be defined as the ability to defeat national threats by sustaining the essential needs of the TAF, while constructing a strategically and practically independent defense industry, which is also compatible with the national security strategy and doctrine.

The complex procurement process of the air and missile defense systems has revealed that Turkey has an externally dependent dynamic in its defense domain. Turkey is an integral part of the Missile Defense Project of NATO despite the fact that it obtains its security needs from Russia on a technical level. This situation poses various complications for Turkey and clearly demonstrates the importance of the autonomy principle. Turkey's NATO allies were baffled when Ankara announced the \$2.5 billion S-400 deal with Russia. It seems that the effect of this agreement on Turkey's NATO allies will not easily be forgotten. Despite all the negative criticism, achieving autonomy in its air and missile defense systems will strengthen Turkey's position in NATO and will legitimize its active defense capabilities and feasibility in case of political or strategic conflicts.

While Turkey aims to gain strategic autonomy by developing and using domestically produced weapon systems and platforms, the economic aspect of this policy is also important. Even if the domestic production costs 15% more than foreign procurement, Ankara prefers to invest at home which circulates the money inside the borders. In addition to this, Turkey wants to develop cutting-edge technology companies that will be internationally recognized and respected around the world. Although Turkey has a long way to go to become capable of competing at high-tech levels, it has already gained a considerable level of good reputation by selling defense systems and weaponry to countries ranging from Chile to Pakistan. From this point of view, the AK Party's will and power to support and strengthen the Turkish defense industry has increased Turkey's bargaining power.

On the other side of the coin, regardless of the fact that Turkish defense industry has risen in the AK Party Era, there are plenty of security and defense issues remaining to be dealt with.³⁴ In the simplest term, despite the steps taken towards renewing the mindset of military bureaucracy (and diminishing the military dominance in the decision-making bureaucracy) in security and defense policies, the defense reform which merges all the actors of the ecosystem has not been effectively put into action as it was foreseen. Considering the aforementioned problems and potential pitfalls throughout the article, some findings and recommendations might be outlined as follows:

First and most importantly, Turkey must form a "grand strategy" which is the most challenging form of planning of a long-term strategic objective of the country. Civil-military relations should be redefined in the political mechanism while the new system must re-determine the duties and tasks of civil and military actors in the security and defense

³⁴ Articles criticizing Turkish defense industry from different angles. Hüseyin Bağcı and Çağlar Kurç, "Turkey's strategic choice: buy or make weapons?," *Defence Studies* 17, no. 1 (December 2016): 38-62.; Arda Mevlütoğlu, "Commentary on Assessing the Turkish Defense Industry: Structural Issues and Major Challenges," *Defence Studies* 17, no. 3 (July 2017): 282-94.

domains. This grand strategy is a crucial necessity for Turkey in order to prevent cancellations and delays in completion of defense projects stemming from the changing mindset and approaches towards national defense and security policies of each new government. On the other hand, this approach is significant for smart power projection. If Turkey develops its own conceptualization and doctrine based on grand strategy, then Ankara will better know and be able to decide which instruments of power is best employed at any given time. Lastly, another aspect of developing a grand strategy is the issue of determining which institution should be responsible of this. In the past, the Secretariat-General of the National Security Council (MGK) was responsible for forming Turkey's strategies at different domains and levels. As a suggestion, Ankara might revive the "traditional strategy process" and task the MGK to work on a grand strategy. Turkey needs an institution which will function as an office of "national security advisor" that will be responsible for the organization and coordination of inter-agency mechanisms. A grand strategy is crucial to assessing threats and determining what capabilities are best used to counter those threats.

Second, coordination and cooperation mechanisms across the private sector and defense bureaucracy should be strengthened. These mechanisms are key to executing the supply & demand chain and improving relations between customers, main contractors, and subcontractors. Also within this framework, the dialogue between the civil and military bureaucracies, as well as the interaction, communication, and cooperation between military leaders and civilian technocrats, which is vital during crisis management and cross-border operations, should be redesigned and strengthened.

Third, Turkey must adopt an interdisciplinary perspective in its national security and defense policies. Although civilian authorities have reasserted their role in approving defense projects in recent years, input from the civil bureaucracy and academics is still sorely lacking from the planning process on defense and security needs, developing national

defense strategy, and defense management. Ankara must invest more in human resource development and intellectual capital.

Fourth, Turkey's national security and defense policy must not be determined by reactive but rather proactive measures. Certainly, this approach shapes the future defense projects as well. On the other side, Turkey must improve its strategic planning and recognize that defense planning does not only consist of military concerns. For a long period of time, Ankara's strategic defense plan was penned in order to meet the requirements of TAF to prevent and respond to threats/risks in Turkish territory. In other words, Turkey applied threat-based planning rather than capabilities-based planning. However, over the last 15 years the fight against terrorism both inside and outside the borders has revealed that Ankara must adopt and apply a hybrid defense planning model.

Lastly, Turkey has to solve the frequently encountered problems of burdensome bureaucracy burden, management cadres, procurement planning, execution process, and budget estimations and overruns.

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The AK Party years in Turkey have been truly transformational. When the party was established in 2001, the country was going through major economic and political crises. Today, under the leadership of President Erdogan, Turkey is a middle power with serious global ambitions. In the nearly two decades since its inception, the AK Party has been confronted with major domestic and foreign policy challenges. At home, major improvements in religious freedoms, ethnic relations, and cultural rights have been realized. Abroad, Turkey has emerged as a major power to reckon with in the region while playing a role as a critical partner in global issues. From tackling the Kurdish issue to daring to take on authoritarian regimes during the Arab Spring, the AK Party under President Erdogan's leadership has already left the most significant mark on Turkish modern political history.

This volume addresses the domestic and foreign policy transformations in Turkey that took place over the course of the past two decades under the AK Party.

