CONTESTING DEMOCRACY: A RELATIONAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF REGIME CHANGE IN TURKEY UNDER THE JDP GOVERNMENTS UNTIL 2013

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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The history of Turkey since 2002 when it has been governed by Justice and Development Party (JDP) offers an interesting puzzle for the students of regime change. JDP, which has initially been hailed as the champion of democracy, is now criticized for its authoritarian tendencies. The trajectory of JDP creates problems for dominant theoretical perspectives that focuses on deep societal/structural changes or institutional learning. Both views are incompatible with a sudden reversal by the same actors. I argue that conceiving the dominance of the norm "democracy" on a global level as a key determinant enables us to understand both JDP's transformation to a pro-democratic force in early 2000's and the subsequent turn to a majoritarian form of democracy by reinterpreting the norms that it deployed earlier to connect to the global normative order. To show the importance of this link, I develop a dialogical discourse analysis that tracks the interaction between narratives produced by the JDP and Western actors.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-2000s, Western-minded analysts hailed the Justice and Democracy Party (JDP) as a democratizing force and celebrated the long-awaited normalization of Turkish democracy. A decade later, they generally perceive the JDP as an authoritarian force and view Turkish democracy as in recession. How could the way an actor has been identified change diametrically in such a short time? Why did the observers' optimism prove to be false? Were they deceived, with the JDP showing its true colors once it became powerful enough, or did the JDP's ideology undergo a transformation? Was it the effect of an unforeseen event or an unobservable variable?

This dissertation argues that the cause of this transformation is none of those things. I argue that the answer lies in a neglected phenomenon: that what the JDP meant by democracy was not identical with its Western observers even though it was connected. This does not mean that the JDP simply took a Western concept and adopted it to its own context. Simply talking about *isomorphism* [1], that is, an institution travelling from one context to another while transforming to answer the needs of this new environment, would be misleading here. Rather, the JDP has sought to connect with the West by building a democratic identity, but it also reinterpreted it in the process. The way the JDP adopted a democratic identity was not mechanical process in which the emergence of a new institution inevitably led to some adjustments. It was a dynamic and dialogic process where the JDP sought both the recognition

[1] John W. Meyer and Brian Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures as Myth and Ceremony," in *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1991), 41–62.

of the West as a fellow democrat and re-interpreted the concept both in relation to its connection to the West and how it might be used domestically.

The optimism of the observers in the mid-2000s, as well as their inability to explain the subsequent transformation beyond *ad hoc* analyses a decade later, stemmed from a conceptual short-coming that ignores this dialogic process, attempts to define democracy as a static concept, and grounds the analysis on an essentialist taxonomy. This dissertation attempts to explain the JDP's trajectory through the lenses of a dynamic conceptual strategy. Once this is adopted, one can see that, even from its formative years, the identity of the JDP has been shaped by its interaction with the West. This has had two dimensions. On one hand, the party connected to the West by using its vocabulary of democratization; on the other, it re-interpreted and contested the meaning of democracy. This association with the West has enabled the JDP to overcome resistance from the army. However, the wedge between the two dimensions (the relationship with the West and the interpretation of the democratic ideal) has always been present, and it gradually became more apparent as the JDP has taken steps to realize its vision of society.

The optimism of the 2000s should be understood against the backdrop of contradictions in the Turkish regime in the 20th century and the rise of Islamism in the 1990s. The relationship between democracy and Turkish governance has been entangled in a dialogic way with Western perceptions and pressures from the very beginning. The Turkish Republic, born from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, was the product of the ambitious project of nationalist, secularist Westernization spearheaded by the military leader who oversaw the War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal Pasha. The Kemalist regime took the form of a single-party

system until the end of World War II. After that, the government transitioned to a multi-party democracy in response to the international climate and divisions within the party. In 1950, there was the first peaceful transfer of power. However, the young democracy proved to be unstable throughout the second half of the 20th century because of the powerful role of the army, which overthrew the government in 1960 for the first time in Republican history. Beginning then, the army became the self-appointed guardian of Kemalist principles. They developed into a veto-point within the institutional architecture, occasionally shaping the government directly, such as when they suspended the democratic administration entirely between 1980 and 1983. The tenacious role of the army within the regime has made the Turkish regime hard to classify. Most democratic institutions were functional, but they operated within the boundaries drawn by the military, though even those were often negotiable. Turkey, until the beginning of the 21st century, seemed to be stuck with a flawed democracy that operated within the paradigm defined by the army.

The Islamists had been a significant fringe force since 1970, but their rise in the 1990s generated new tensions. Unlike other significant political parties, they were openly opposed to Westernization and posited themselves as an anti-West group seeking to build a new Islamic civilization based on traditional values. In the 1990s, the Islamists' share of votes increased. In 1996, their leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became the prime minister, which sent shockwaves through the system. A year later, the army forced Erbakan to resign and reasserted its influence in order to defend secularism. This intervention was followed by a period of instability. Turkey was governed by weak coalition governments and was hit by successive economic crises until 2002. The Islamic movement itself was also destabilized; the tensions between the younger

generation, which advocated a more democratic and moderate stance, and the old guard, true to the movement's radical identity, surfaced. Finally, in 2001, the reformist wing of the party decided to splinter off, establishing the JDP under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The creation of this party and the transformation of their ideology, as well as the heritage of the Islamist movement, have shaped the trajectory of the Turkish regime since then.

In the 2002 election, the JDP scored a sound victory and, because of the extreme fragmentation in the electoral arena, managed to form a single-party government despite getting only 34 percent of votes. After coming to power, the JDP adopted a posture markedly different from its Islamist predecessors, presenting itself as the champion of Western democracy. To that end, it advocated closer ties with the West and full membership in the European Union (EU), embarking on an ambitious reform project to meet the political criteria (known as the Copenhagen Criteria). Most important, it triumphed where its predecessor failed. In a series of political battles, it managed to defang the Turkish army and destroy its role as *de facto* veto player within the regime.

The overwhelming majority of the scholarly endeavors that have sought to explain the JDP's success in the 2000s focused on medium to long-term factors: the society had become more mature and/or Islamists had gone through an institutional learning process. Many argued that the flourishing of the civil society, a more complex economy, and the emergence of a bourgeoisie independent from the state were the causes of the emergence of the JDP as a democratizing actor. Institutionalists have argued that the Islamists were taught to play the democratic game by their domestic and international institutional environments, which taught them that there were severe limits on how much they could accomplish without respecting the

rules of the democratic game. Both lines of arguments implied that the JDP's transformation was supported by long-term developments within Turkish society.

If democratization in the early 2000s reflected long-term societal evolutions, however, it becomes hard to explain how Turkey could shift sharply away from democracy only a decade later. The perceived identity of the JDP as a democratic force was gradually reversed. The JDP had put several restraints on the freedom of expression, punishing dissenting voices in the media and academic world. As the JDP replaced judges in the High Courts who were sympathetic to the opposition with loyalists, the politicization of the judiciary and concerns about the rule of law became rampant. The polarizing and uncompromising language of Erdogan was seen as a risk for the future of democracy in Turkey.

In tandem with these developments, scholars started to emphasize the stifling of opposition and the erosion individual rights and liberties. However, the ambitious theoretical frameworks seeking to explain the democratization process were not replaced by equally ambitious theories of authoritarianization. Instead, the progression was explained by ideational idiosyncrasies, such as the JDP's tendency toward a majoritarian interpretation or democracy, the celebration of authority, and the personality traits of Erdogan.[2] In the 2000s, scholars did not pay close attention to the JDP's interpretation of democracy, viewing it as a residue of the past. In the 2010s, for lack of any coherent account based on long-term analysis, they quickly shifted to prioritizing the theme of majoritarianism and interpreting the same actors and themes

[2] Menderes Çınar and Çağkan Sayın, "Reproducing the Paradigm of Democracy in Turkey: Parochial Democratization in the Decade of Justice and Development Party," *Turkish Politics* 15, no. 3 (2014): 365–85; Ergun Özbudun, "AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift," *South European Society and Politics*, 2014.

as the face of authoritarian forces. The literature in Turkey at large put forward theories that disregarded dynamics which would be decisive later in 2000s, and then, once the predictions of such theories failed to materialize, produced *ad hoc* explanations rather than theoretical accounts.

Though it seems easy to see that the literature has failed to provide strong theoretical accounts of the developments in Turkey since 2002, explaining the failure is more complex. This dissertation argues that the difficulties in making sense of Turkish politics reflect fundamental flaws in the conceptual tools provided by the general theoretical literature on democratization. This can be seen when looking at the link between the literature of democratization in the 2000s and that of authoritarianization in the 2010s. The latter explains the failure of the earlier optimism by emphasizing the role of the JDP's majoritarian vision of democracy (aside from a few other variables to be discussed below). These ideological tendencies were neither absent nor unnoticed in the literature of 2000s. They were simply exiled to the conclusion chapters and footnotes of those studies as a possible risk factor, but left out of the explanatory schemes. The same failure to theorize is there in authoritarianization literature as well; unlike the democratization literature that deployed the theoretical tools of the democratization theory in every imaginable way, it provided *ad hoc* explanations. The way it conceptualized democracy and deployed democratic narratives seemed impossible to be articulated in a theory of regime change.

The difficulty stems from the conceptual strategy prevalent in the study of political regimes. The most common is the Aristotelian essentialist strategy, classifying regimes according to some features deemed essential. There is no consensus over what those

characteristics are; however, there is an agreement that to study democracy, scholars first need to define it robustly. This uncontroversial strategy has a downside. It does not allow us to see the complex ideational dynamics that the concept of democracy entails. Studies mention the difficulties in defining democracy at their introduction chapter, preferably in a footnote, and then forgets about it. If we start by deliberately overlooking the "essentially contested"[3] nature of the concept democracy, the narratives of democracy that are deployed become invisible in plain sight.

The essentialist conceptualization of democracy ignores two important factors: The first is the legitimizing effect of being recognized as democratic actor at the international level. The second is the contested nature of the concept democracy, and the real world impacts of this. Both of these dynamics have been central to the JDP's trajectory. If we try to decipher the various uses of democracy instead of defining it *a priori*, we can see multiple narratives of democracy shaping actor's actions. Given the centrality of the idea of democracy in legitimizing political actions, one can identify a large number of narratives. For our purposes, we can focus on two narratives that are important both for the JDP's identity and political science's attempts to define democracy. One is, obviously, the narrative produced by the JDP itself. When we analyze this, however, we see that it developed in dialogue with another: the universalistic narrative mainly produced in the West. Of course, it is impossible to talk about a homogenous Western, let alone a truly global, narrative. As we do not seek to compare the two narratives, but their interaction, there is no need to choose a body of material that allegedly represent the Western perspective. The strategy assumed here is to choose texts which indeed

[3] W. B: Gallie, "Essentially Contested Concepts," *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, no. 56 (1956): 167–98.

refer to each other explicitly, forming a dialogue. Therefore, only sources that the JDP has directly engaged with consistently will be used.

This dissertation will argue that the JDP's trajectory can only be understood when we recognize a dialogic process between domestic narratives of democracy in Turkey and Western narratives with a global reach. The JDP forged its identity in dialogue with the West, using democracy as a connector. Its legal reforms were informed by this dialogue, and the international legitimacy it accumulated was crucial in defeating the army and its allies in the crisis of 2007-8. However, the domestic and Western narratives did not only connect and converge; they also contested each other's views and actions. From the very outset, the JDP placed the concept of "National Will" at the center of its narrative, and equated the expansion of the government's authority with the advancement of democracy as long as the majority of people were behind it In contrast, the Western narrative often saw the JDP's attempts as violations of fundamental rights. The disparity between these two interpretations caused some friction, which increased after 2008 when the JDP, realizing the limits of the army's power, pushed the boundaries of its authority more aggressively. In June 2013, this bellicose posture triggered a major wave of protest, and the JDP chose to react brutally. As a result, the party was given a more authoritarian identity in the Western narrative. The protests effectively ended the dialogical process; the JDP stopped engaging with the narrative constructed by the West, disconnecting from the common identity of democracy

In this introduction, I will outline the major theoretical thrust of the dissertation. In the first section, I will offer a literature review and illustrate the shortcomings of the existing literature. In the second section, I will examine how the essentialist concept-building strategy

made some important dynamics invisible and why we need a different conceptual strategy. In the third section, I will lay down the basis of a dialogical theoretical approach that focuses on the interaction of global and local narratives of democracy and its role in shaping the way authority flows in the institutional architecture. In the fourth section, I will address the methodological issues and show how the dialogue and the way it shapes actions can be shown empirically. I will conclude with a final section which narrates an outline of the dissertation and main empirical arguments.

1. The Literature and Its Impasse

The first task then is to dissect the literature on democratization and the JDP. The explanations that were popular in the earlier phase of the JDP's rule can be grouped under three rubrics: societal-structural, institutional, and European Union-centered. Of course, they are not mutually exclusive. For example, Öniş argues that those three factors should be taken together to explain Turkey's democratization in a holistic fashion[4]. However, they can be separated analytically, and most authors emphasize one at the expense of the others.

Societal arguments are probably the oldest within political science. From the perspective of Modernization Theory, the occurrence of a democratic regime in a country is related to a few crucial independent variables connected to modernization, such as level of education, urbanization, and industrialization, as in Lipset's seminal study *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*[5]. Those developments produce the civic culture that a functioning

[4] Ziya Öniş, "Globalization and Party Transformation: Turkey's Justice and Development Party in Perspective," in *Globalizing Democracy*, ed. Peter Burnell (London: Routledge, 2006), 122–40.

[5] Martin Seymour Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy," *American Political Science Review* 59, no. 1 (1959): 69–105.

democracy needs[6]. A competing, yet equally society-centered argument is Barrington Moore's inquiry on the causes of democracy. In his account, democracy is not the result of a linear development, but the result of a long historical evolution, which is shaped by pre-modern class relations and the resulting class coalitions during the industrialization phase[7]. Although the theoretical premises of these two explanations are polar opposites, both are uncompromisingly focused on the idea of democracy as the result of deep, structural changes within the society. Although these perspectives have been challenged by institutionalist perspectives, they still have a place in the democratization literature[8].

In explaining the situation in Turkey, similar society centered arguments have been used by several authors. Broadly speaking, they tell a story of societal maturation, of a society which becomes more complex with a robust civil society which cannot be dominated by a paternalistic, authoritarian state anymore.[9] Before the 1980s, the middle class and civil society were not sufficiently developed, and the bourgeoisie was dependent upon the state in the framework of Import-Substitution Industrialization. After the 1980s, as Turkey moved toward an export-oriented economic development strategy, a new bourgeoisie emerged, which was more distinguished from the old elite by its traditionalist cultural inclinations and its

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[6] Gabriel Almond and Sydney Verba, *Civic Culture* (London: Sage, 1989).

[7] Barrington Moore, *The Social Origins of Democracy and Dictatorship* (Boston: Beacon, 1967).

[8] Ronald Inglehart and Christian Walzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); D. Rueschemeyer, E.H. Stephens, and J.D. Stephens, *Capitalist Development and Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

[9] Fuat Keyman, "Modernization, Globalization and Democratization in Turkey: The AKP Experience and Its Limits," *Constellations* 17, no. 2 (2010): 317–20.

independence from the state[10]. This new bourgeoisie was pivotal in creating a civil society which developed no-confrontational forms of contestation with the state,[11] and it was this bourgeois wing of the Islamist movement that pushed for a more democratic, pro-EU stance after 1997[12].

Since the 1980s, such society-centered explanations have been challenged by transitology literature. Here, the work of O'Donnell and Schmitter has been ground-breaking. In their work, democracy was not explained via deep societal transformations, but rather the political process that leads to the breakdown of authoritarian regimes. Those regimes did not necessarily democratize as a result of deep societal evolutions, but because of institutional deadlocks among relevant actors. O'Donnell and Schmitter pay special attention to pacts between the elites of the *Ancien Regime* and the opposition; if both of these two actors manage to agree on the conditions of transition, it is more likely to develop into a healthy democracy[13]. Przeworski, using the tools of game theory, formalized this approach and drew a decision tree

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[10] Mustafa Bölükbaşı, "Milli Görüş'ten Muhafazakar Demokrasiye: Türkiye'de 28 Şubat Süreci Sonrasi Islami Elitlerin Dönüşümü," *İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Araştırmaları Dergisi* 1, no. 2 (2012): 166–87; Ahmet Insel, "The AKP and the Normalizing Democracy in Turkey," *Sothern Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2–3 (2003): 297–300; Anna Secor, "Turkey's Democracy: A Model for the Troubled Middle East?," *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 52, no. 2 (2013): 168; Yüksel Taşkın, "AKP's Move to 'Conquer' the Center- Right: Its Prospects and Possible Impacts on the Democratization Process," *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2008): 58–63; Demet Yalçın Mousseau, "Turkey and the EU: The Importance of Markets," *Government and Opposition* 48, no. 3 (2006): 97–108; Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[11] Berna Turam, *Between Islam and State* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007).

[12] Şebnem Gümüşçü, "Class, Status, and Party: The Changing Face of Political Islam in Turkey and Egypt," *Comparative Political Studies* 43, no. 7 (2010): 833–61; Şebnem Gümüşçü and Deniz Sert, "The Power of the Devout Bourgeoisie: The Case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* 45, no. 6 (2009): 953–69.

[13] Guillermo O'Donnell and Phillipe C Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule v4: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1984).

to determine the type of choices actors face during transition periods and which one's result in democracy[14]. In those agent-oriented, institutionalist explanations, it is the institutional environment that explains the transformation rather than a deeper societal change.

This kind of institutionalist explanation has been used widely to explain the JDP's rise. There are two important factors that are emphasized: the interaction of Islamists with veto points within the establishment[15], and the need to build and maintain broad, cross-class electoral alliances. For example, Tezcür argues that the more moderate, pro-democratic ideology of the JDP that distinguishes it from the earlier Islamist political parties is the result of the 28 February process, when the army, in alliance with a wide variety of bureaucratic and social actors forced the government out[16]. This process demonstrated that only a democratic and pragmatist stance has the ability to preserve and exercise power[17]. Kumbaracibasi makes a similar argument, but he also adds that, in order to maintain its electoral success, the JDP needed to internalize an ideological posture closer to the median voter and keep all elements of its electoral alliance under a single banner[18]. The combined impact of these two processes

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[14] Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

[15] Kamran Bokhari and Farid Senzai, *Political Islan in the Age of Democratization* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 177; Menderes Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation under JDP's Rule," *Muslim World* 96 (2006): 473–74; Ümit Cizre and Menderes Çınar, "Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 102, no. 2/3 (2003); R Quinn Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly* 25-, no. 2 (2004): 339–54.

[16] Hamid argues that moderation via repression is a discernible dynamic in many Islamist movements of the Middle East. Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 44.

[17] Güneş Murat Tezcür, *Muslim Reformers in Iran and Turkey* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010); Güneş Murat Tezcür, "The Moderation Theory Revisited: The Case of Islamic Political Actors," *Party Politics* 16, no. 69 (2009): 69–88.

[18] Arda Can Kumbaracıbaşı, *Turkish Politics and the Rise of AKP* (New York: Routledge, 2009).

led to the emergence of the JDP as a democratic force and softened the resistance from the secular establishment[19]. Particular emphasis is put on political learning; Islamists learned how to deal with contemporary politics, and they transformed their ideological posture accordingly[20].

A third, theoretically less ambitious set of arguments emphasizes the direct involvement of the West to promote democracy. In Turkey's case, the most important promoter has been the EU, which has inspired a large body of literature on the EU's ımpact on Turkish regime. The key concept here has been conditionality: the EU, by making full membership conditional to democratic reforms, has been able to use carrot and stick policies in countries aspiring to become members of the EU.[21] This literature is in general inspired by a form of rationalist view. It asserts that the authoritarian ruling elites tend to see EU-related reforms as costs, engaging in democratizing reforms only if the rewards are big and credible enough. This argument puts forward a strict calculus of costs and benefits in which credible chances to join EU is the only way to exert influence over the behavior of not-so-democratic governing elites.

Although this literature focuses on post-communist Eastern Europe, the conditionality argument was also made for Turkey. When the EU gave the status of candidate country to

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[19] Zeki Sarıgil, "Bargaining in Institutionalized Settings: The Case of Turkish Reforms," *European Journal of International Relations* 16, no. 3 (2010): 463–83.

[20] Zeyno Baran, "Turkey Divided," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 1 (2008): 57; Bora Kanra, "Democracy, Islam and Dialogue: The Case of Turkey," *Government and Opposition* 40, no. 4 (2005): 515–39; Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey"; Murat Somer, "Moderate Islam and Secularist Opposition in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 7 (2007): 1272.

[21] F. Schimmelfennig, "European Regional Organizations, Political Conditionality, and Democratic Transformation in Eastern Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 21, no. 1 (2007): 126–41; M. A. Vachudova, *Europe Undivided* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

Turkey in 1998 at the Helsinki Summit, this created incentives to support democratization for all relevant political actors. The JDP found the process useful to legitimize and consolidate its rule against the military[22] and, also, these reforms were hard to resist for secularists as they were rooted in the discourse of Westernization.[23] Thus, the EU motivated the democratization process with inducements while also decreasing the political costs of reform.

While each of these arguments has seemed relevant to Turkish politics since 2002, all struggle to offer a coherent account of the JDP's rise and fall from grace. Structural-societal arguments fare particularly poorly when considered empirically and read in the light of recent developments. The argument that the new bourgeoisie is less dependent on the state is not empirically grounded[24] and, in any event, its economic might is still dwarfed by the old Istanbul bourgeoisie. If the democratic tendencies of the JDP were the result of deep societal change, it could only have been superseded by a sudden reversal of those societal changes, so an entirely structural hıstory of JDP's trajectory is not possible.

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[22] Gamze Avcı, "The Justice and Development Party and the EU: Political Pragmatism in a Changing Environment," *South European Society and Politics* 16, no. 3 (2011): 409–21; Ihsan D. Dağı, "Transformation of Islamic Political Identity in Turkey: Rethinking the West and Westernization," *Turkish Studies* 6, no. 1 (2005): 21–37; Banu Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Joost Lagendijk, "Turkey's Accession to the European Union and the Role of Justice and Development Party," in *Democracy, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, ed. Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 166–87; Marcie J. Patton, "AKP Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the EU Process?," *Mediterranean Politics* 12, no. 3 (2007): 339–58; F. Schimmelfennig, Stefan Engert, and Heigel Knobel, "Costs, Commitment and Compliance: The Impact of EU Democratic Conditionality on Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 41, no. 3 (2003): 495–518; Ali Resul Usul, "The Justice and Development Party and the European Union," in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 175–99.

[23] Aylin Güney and Petek Karatekelioğlu, "Turkey's EU Candidacy and Civil-Military Relations: Challenges and Prospects," *Armed Forces & Society*, 439-62, 31, no. 439 (2005); Sarıgil, "Bargaining in Institutionalized Settings: The Case of Turkish Reforms."

[24] Evren Hoşgör, "Islamic Capital/Anatolian Tigers: Past and Present," *Middle Eastern Studies* 47, no. 2 (2011): 343–60.

On the contrary, EU-centered explanations did expect a sudden change; the credibility of Turkey's hopes to join the EU dropped dramatically in 2006 when the EU practically froze the accession negotiations, and Turkey's democratization process became fragile. The timing of this, however, cannot be explained by the EU's deeds as the most important democratic reforms of the JDP happened between 2007 and 2010, when it managed to overcome the power of both the army and its allies in the bureaucracy. Therefore, a credible EU anchor was not present when the JDP made its riskiest pro-democracy moves.

Institutional arguments fare better because of the nature of their theoretical premises; Institutionalism conceives its subjects as adaptable, resourceful actors in times when the self-sustaining institutional environment breaks down. When the JDP managed to overcome the hurdles of the established order and build a new one, it naturally adapted to this new environment in which it was the dominant force. Yet, empirically, there is not such a clear distinction between the two phases; observers point out the undemocratic aspects of its ideology and repressive actions in the pre-2008 period, but it did not completely abandon its pro-democracy ideology and attempted some pro-democratic reforms after 2010 and even 2013. Besides, such an explanatory scheme needs to make an unrealistic assumption: the actor inevitably slides toward authoritarianism when the institutional environment that promotes bargaining and compromises fades. Several dominant political parties, ranging from the Indian National Congress Party to the Swedish Social-Democratic Party, kept their democratic credentials for prolonged periods of times while ruling practically unopposed. The transformation is no doubt made possible by the electoral map, but the factors that energize the move should be sought elsewhere.

Even the most optimistic authors warned about the risks of the JDP's democratic process. There were, generally, three risks that were associated with the JDP's success: the fragility of Turkey-EU relations[25], the weakness[26] and authoritarian[27] tendencies of the opposition, and the JDP's own Islamist ideological baggage[28]. Those were only developed into explanatory schemes a decade later when the JDP stopped being perceived as a democratizing actor. However, as I argued above, the EU's impact does not explain the crucial triumphant period of 2008 and 2010. The authoritarian tendencies of the opposition were absent after the defeat of the army, which was symbolized in the abdication of four of the five top generals in 2011. The most convincing reason, the electoral weakness of the opposition, is not an explanation *per se* as many democracies, such as Japan and Sweden, have had dominant party systems for long period of time. It all boils down to the last usual suspect, the JDP's own ideological inconsistencies.

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[25] Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Moment of Inflection," *Survival* 52, no. 3 (2010): 39–50; Fuat Keyman and Ziya Öniş, *Turkish Politics in a Changing World* (Istanbul: Istanbul Bilgi University Press, 2007); Lagendijk, "Turkey's Accession to the European Union and the Role of Justice and Development Party"; Aswini K. Mohapatra, "Turkey's Transition to Liberal Democracy and the Issue of Its EU Membership," *India Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2011): 149–64; Usul, "The Justice and Development Party and the European Union."

[26] Keyman, "Modernization, Globalization and Democratization in Turkey: The AKP Experience and Its Limits"; Sultan Tepe, "Turkey's AKP: A Model 'Muslim-Democratic' Party?," *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 3 (2005): 69–82.

[27] William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey* (New York: Routledge, 2010); Ergun Özbudun, "Turkey - Plural Society and Monolithic State," in *Democracy, Islam and Secularism in Turkey*, ed. Ahmet T. Kuru and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 61–94.

[28] Menderes Çınar, "The Justice and Development Party and the Kemalist Establishment," in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey*, ed. Ümit Cizre (New York: Routledge, 2008), 109–31; Eligür, *The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey*; Paul Kubicek, "Majoritarian Democracy in Turkey: Causes and Consequences," in *Democratic Consolidation in Turkey*, ed. Cengiz Erişen and Paul Kubicek (New York: Routledge, 2016), 123–43; Özbudun, "AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift"; Berna Turam, "Are Rights and Liberties Safe?," *Journal of Democracy* 23, no. 1 (2012): 109–18.

However, in theoretical explanations that do not give priority to ideational factors, the majoritarian and Islamist tendencies of the JDP function as a *deus ex machina.* Whereas democratization was the product of a variety of factors capable of transforming a hitherto non-democratic force into a democratic one, repressed ideological elements return and it is capable to undo the work of the other factors that pushed for democratization. Ideology undoes the work of institutional and structural forces. Unless we analyze complex ideational dynamics behind the JDP's actions, it is impossible to avoid this problem.

Why were the ambiguities of the JDP's ideology not integrated into the theoretical explanations? The answer lies in the conceptual strategies common in democratization theory, which all seek to decipher structural and institutional factors that lead actors to adopt a certain posture. This binary lens makes them oblivious to the complex nature of democracy. There are multiple ways in which actors can relate their identity and activities to the concept; these shape the resulting architecture, that which we call the political regime. How exactly do the concept-building strategies make these dynamics invisible? I will address this question in the next section.

2. Conceptual Impasse

Democracy is a loaded term, commonly conceived of as an ideal and moral compass, as well as an institutional architecture that seeks to realize the values of freedom and equality as much as possible. However, even in regimes commonly accepted as "advanced democracies", not all institutions are designed to serve democratic purposes, and they face dilemmas on balancing democratic values and other goals, such as security and efficiency. Such complexities made a normative definition almost impossible to operationalize for the

purposes of a causal inquiry.[29] This is the reason why comparative literature on democratic regimes avoids a philosophical definition based on normative principles, but instead uses a procedural definition. Concept-building strategies do not focus on whether some normative goals are achieved, but instead, generate a list of institutional features. According to these strategies, a country should be considered democratic if all of these characteristics are in place. However, democracy as an institutional architecture is complex and diverse, and the number of cases which has many of the key features while lacking others is increasing.

The dominant strategy to tackle this issue is to develop an ordinal conceptualization. Although it is not always possible to quantify democracy in a precise way, it can be possible to rank them,[30] or at least classify them to differentiate between full and "diminished" democracies. These approaches are closer to set theory rather than statistical approaches. As such, a country is considered democratic when it has all the elements of x, y, and z. If one of these elements is absent, it is called a diminished democracy of type A, B, or C. From such a perspective, there should be a threshold beyond which a country with mixed institutions should be considered a diminished form of authoritarianism[31]. Turkey has been a challenging case for such approaches as it has remained a borderline case since the 1960s, when such a categorization problem appeared in the scholarly agenda. Dahl classified Turkey as a "near

[29] David Collier and Steven Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," *World Politics* 49, no. 3 (1997): 433; Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971).

[30] Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 21–35; Axel Hadenious and Jan Teorell, "Pathways from Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 1 (2007): 143–57.

[31] Stephan Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 51–65.

Polyarchy" in 1969[32]. Three decades later, Diamond characterized it as an "ambiguous regime"[33]. He revisited the problem of Turkey thirteen years later, and said that authoritarian "trends appear to have crossed a threshold, pushing the country below the minimum standards of democracy."[34] He immediately asked: "If this has happened, when did it happen?"[35]; unfortunately, he did not answer the question. The boundary seems very difficult to nail down.

Collier and Levitsky, in their seminal article "Democracy with Adjectives", set the tone of the literature for the succeeding decade. According to them, the current boom of terms that address the limbo between democratic and authoritarian regimes is not sustainable as it makes communication between scholars and the development of comparative perspectives very difficult. "Scholars should aim for parsimony and avoid excessive proliferation of new terms and concepts. Otherwise, the advantages that derive from the conceptual refinements discussed in this article will be overridden by the resulting conceptual confusion."[36] They are quick to admit the debated nature of the concept. Following the philosopher Gallie, they argue that democracy is an "essentially contested concept", but the analytical task is to create a precise definition that can be understood in its own framework, as well as a set of well-defined sub-types.[37] This point is made even clearer in another article that Collier has co-authored entitled

[32] Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 248.

[33] Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," 31.

[34] Larry Diamond, "Facing Up the Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (2015): 146.

[35] Diamond, "Facing Up the Democratic Recession."

[36] Collier and Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research," 450–51.

[37] Ibid., 433.

"Essentially Contested Concepts". Here, Collier et al. argue that Gallie's understanding of essentially contested concepts is particularly useful as it balances analytic rigor with some degree of relativism. The authors make a crucial move which was already implied in the "Democracy with Adjectives" article. After emphasizing the open and multi-faceted nature of democracy, following Gallie, they argue that progressive competition is possible, that is, the essential contestation does not mean that an intellectual effort aiming to improve existing definitions is in vain. To come up with a single definition is possible[38]. Conceptual strategies should seek to refine the concept, and then operationalize it and use this pre-given definition to assess political phenomena, such as democratization. To put it simply, developing an essentialized definition of democracy is a desirable goal.

The literature on Turkey has, by and large, followed this advice. The dependent variable is conceived as a set of institutional features. As the principal shortcoming of Turkish democracy was civilian oversight by the military, the JDP's struggles with the army and its subsequent success have been seen as quintessential democratization reform. However, as other features associated with democracy, such as the rule of law and freedom of press started to deteriorate, the direction of the change shifted. Even though the key terms from both the scholarly and public debates are democracy and authoritarianism, Turkey "underwent a transition from one hybrid regime to another"[39] from this perspective. Therefore, the theories about democratization and authoritarianism have little to contribute about the change. It seems

[38] David Collier, Fernando Daniel Hidargo, and Andra Olivia Maciucieanu, "Essentially Contested Concepts: Debates and Applications," *Journal of Political Ideologies* 11, no. 3 (2006): 211–46.

[39] Stephan Levitsky and Lucan Way, "The Myth of Democratic Recession," *Journal of Democracy* 26, no. 1 (2015): 45–58.

that the very forces that worked for democratization started to work in the opposite direction. The reasons for this brusque change stay obscure.

The reason why this strategy fails to illuminate the dynamics of change lies in the shortcomings of this conceptual strategy, which makes the idea of democracy and the complex nature of the idea invisible. True, all scholars agree that democracy is a multifaceted concept, and even the title of Collier and Levitsky's article refers to its contested nature of the concept. Yet, the contestation they had in mind cannot be an *explanans.* For Collier, contestation is or should be progressive competition among scholars. The openness of the concept democracy is a nuisance and academics should concentrate their efforts on making it as closed as possible. Therefore, the intricacy and uncertainty of a concept is an epistemic problem, not a political or ontological one. Conceptual strategies should seek to refine the concept, operationalize it, and then use this pre-given definition to assess political phenomena. Although Collier et al., in a later article, emphasize that the domain of the "essentially contested concepts" is best understood as encompassing both scholarly and real world debates[40], there is no mention of the latter in their subsequent analysis. The contestation they see is between scholars over how to define democracy, not among actors who assert multiple claims about what is happening or should happen in the world. Indeed, their understanding of an "essentially contested concept" makes it impossible to extend the debate in a way that will include real world contestation. Ultimately this leads to conceive democracy as a set of institutional features, as opposed to an idea whose meaning can be contested. Therefore, the building of a concept of democracy as

[40] Collier, Hidargo, and Maciucieanu, "Essentially Contested Concepts: Debates and Applications," 215–16.

suggested by Collier and Levitsky makes it impossible to incorporate the debates over what democracy is to the explanatory scheme.

The essentialist strategy has largely dominated theory on political regimes. Even though there are various competing taxonomical systems, all definitions of democracy are procedural, though they disagree on the features that characterize democracy[41]. When scholars choose to conceptualize their *explanandum* without taking into account how the concept is used by actors to define their identity, persuade potential allies, and draw legitimacy to their cause, the contestation that everyone acknowledges its existence disappears in the analyses after a footnote in the first page and its importance in the actual political process becomes invisible. The conceptual strategy that pushed scholars focusing on Turkey to measure the JDP's ideology and policies through an essentialist definition also led them to trivialize the JDP's attempts to re-interpret the concept. To develop a fuller explanation of the JDP's trajectory, academics need a theoretical framework that enables us to see the tension between the global context of democratization and its dialogue with local actors. We need to see that it is not just difficult for observers to communicate how democratic a regime is. The meaning of democracy is vigorously contested among actors, and we can only understand and explain their motivations and strategies by tracking the struggle between local and global contexts on the ground.

[41] The most important conflict is among inspired minimalists, such as Przeworski, and those who seek a more substantial definition, following Dahl. J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1994). Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market*. Dahl, *Polyarchy*., and Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999)..

3. A Dialogical Theory of Democratization

In their work which marked the beginning of the transitology literature and strove to explain democratization through process-oriented, institutional arguments, O'Donnell and Schmıtter mention in passing the global legitimacy environment:

> During the interwar period, authoritarian rulers could aspire to legitimate their government through some combination of the mobilizing imagery of fascism and references to more traditional forms of corporatism. Such regimes could (and did) promote themselves as long-term solutions to the problems of political order and as the best possible modes of governance for their societies, especially when compared to impotent and divided parliamentary democracies elsewhere in Europe and to the prepotent and monolithic regime of the Soviet Union. Authoritarian rulers emerging after 1945 have not been able to count on such a possibility. This is their Achilles' heel, and it explains their ideological schizophrenia. They are regimes that practice dictatorship and repression in the present while promising democracy and freedom in the future. Thus, they can justify themselves in political terms only as transitional powers, while attempting to shift attention to their immediate substantive accomplishments –typically, the achievement of "social peace" or economic development[42]

This paragraph provides a powerful explanation of the way military regimes, especially in Latin America and Turkey, worked. However, neither O'Donnell and Schmitter nor the scholars working on their research agenda elaborate on this point despite the fact that democracy's hegemony as a source of legitimation only increased after the demise of Soviet Union. This is understandable because, following the methodological mainstream, they are more interested in explaining variation among different regimes.

This also explains why Sociological Institutionalists, whose research agenda is driven by a focus on the surprising homogeneity of the institutional configuration of very different countries rather than variation, showed limited interest in the subject. Sociological

[42] O'Donnell and Schmitter, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule v4: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies*, 15.

Institutionalists, drawing upon research on Organizational Sociology, argue that the legitimacy effect of a Western dominated Global Culture causes the other countries to emulate the institutional architecture of the West[43]. They focus on the dissemination of state bureaucracies, even in places where such institutions cannot be efficient; they also detail the importance of bureaucratic rationality, not as a rational problem solving strategy, but as a set of legitimizing myths and ceremonies deriving power from a Global Culture.[44] A democratic dimension of this is implied in their work[45], but it is not explicitly tied to democratization, as the area is too heterogeneous for the Sociological Institutionalist's taste.

Also, the quote above by O'Donnell and Schmitter does not explain the regimes' outcomes, but the ideological "schizophrenia" of military dictatorships. The schızophrenic construction of governments has been a trend that the current literature on political regimes, not to mention that on Turkey, has had difficulties accommodating. The assumptions of transitology literature first led to an optimistic outlook that categorized the "schizophrenic" governments as countries in transition. However, by the late 1990s, it had become clear that the grey area between democracy and authoritarianism was persistent and expanding[46]. A

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[43] Martha Finnemore, "Norms, Culture, and World Politics: Insights from Sociology's Institutionalism," *International Organization* 50, no. 2 (1996): 325–47; John W. Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (1997): 144–81.

[44] Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures as Myth and Ceremony."

[45] John Boli, "Human Rights or State Expansion? Cross-National Definitions of Constitutional Rights, 1870-1970," in *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society and the Individual*, ed. John Boli and George M. Thomas (London: Sage, 1999); Raymond Hinnebusch, "Globalization, Democratization, and the Arab Uprising: The International Factor in MENA's Failed Democratization," *Democratization* 22, no. 2 (2015): 335–57.

[46] Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 3–21; Fareed Zakaria, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy," *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 6 (1997): 22–43.

Sociological Institutionalist would argue that the original institutional architecture was incoherent in its original form[47] and that new institutional environments forced the actors to decouple them from their original narratives. From this perspective, decoupling is a mechanism that enables actors to adapt institutions to new environments and enable them to pursue various, contradictory goals.[48] However, such a view is still too mechanistic to deal with the bewildering variety, as it does not pay attention to how the decoupling occurs.

The political science works that come closest to offering foundations for this study's treatment of democracy are from advocates of Wittgenstein-inspired interpretivism, though this work, too, needs some reorientation to play this role. In its relationship to regimes, and, by extension, countries' national identities, the analysis of democratic myths needs a linguistic scrutiny that reveals the open-ended nature of the concept. A strategy which openly rebels against the Collier-inspired mainstream approach is Wittgenstein-inspired interpretivism. Scholars who follow his linguistic philosophy focus on the ordinary uses of the word 'democracy' and its performative functions. They are critical of positivist concept-building strategies and argue, which cannot capture the word's intricacies. They also argue that the referential philosophy of language used by these methods of interpretation reifies democracy and treats it as an object when it is better understood as a relational concept. These scholars would argue that we need to focus on how the concept is deployed rather than engage in endless

[47] Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State."

[48] Jackson, *Quasi States*; Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures as Myth and Ceremony."

disputes on what the essential features of a democratic regime are[49]. While I wholeheartedly agree with this critique, I believe that the way in which they engage the concept misses the most important aspects and falls short of developing a new research agenda that can challenge the mainstream.

Wedeen, for example, argues that even though the Yemeni polity does not entail key features of democracy that are discussed in the democratization literature, it has one important democratic aspect: a democratic public sphere in the Habermasian sense. She argues that the *qat*-chewing ritual which is an important aspect of Yemeni public life puts a democratic practice in the center of social life even though Yemeni polity at large remains autocratic in many ways, and the positivist approaches make this practice which has an important impact on how Yemeni's experience politics invisible[50]. The positivist response to that perspective would be that she is simply confusing different units of analysis. A practice within a country can be democratic, but this does not make the regime democratic. Of course, Wedeen does not argue that it does, but from a positivist perspective, these two questions are also unrelated. But, the positivist response has also a Wittgensteinian tune in the ordinary language that he suggested we look to in order to overcome philosophical problems, the democratic character of a practice is conceived of as a separate issue from the regime's identity. Yemenis do not

[49] Mark Bevir and Asaf Kedar, "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology," *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 3 (2008): 503–17; Frederic Charles Schaffer, *Democracy in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Lisa Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Lisa Wedeen, "Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Demo," in *Problems and Methods in the Study of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 274–306.

[50] Wedeen, *Peripheral Visions: Publics, Power and Performance in Yemen*, chap. 3; Lisa Wedeen, "The Politics of Deliberation: Qat Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen," *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007): 59–84; Wedeen, "Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Demo," 285–302.

think of their regime as democratic because they discuss politics while chewing *qat.* If an enlightened dictator enacts policies that empower women and create a more equalitarian family life, that does not make the regime democratic in neither the ordinary nor the scholarly use of the language. The identity of a political movement or regime is judged on how it deals with the rules that regulate the flow of state authority. The way the word democracy is used in the context of social practices is different from the way it is used in the sphere of public authority. Therefore, Wedeen misses the most important aspect of the Wittgensteinian philosophy of language, which is the centrality of context[51].

Schaffer, on the other hand, integrates the importance of context to his research carefully. He argues that there is a fundamental divide between the ways in which the Senegalese elites, who are familiar with the French language, and the Wolof-speaking masses deploy the word democracy. While the elites use the word in the same way that Europeans do, as an institutional architecture which has elections at its core, Wolof-speakers associates the word *demokaarasi* with traditional notions of consensus, solidarity, and evenhandedness.[52] This disparity of meaning has caused a trajectory of political development that is not compatible with the assumptions of democratization theory. The dissemination of democracy as a value is mediated through the Wolof worldview, creating clientelist networks and community-centered behavior that are usually thought to be incompatible with modern democracy[53].

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[51] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 25e.

[52] Schaffer, *Democracy in Translation*, 59–64.

[53] Ibid., 129–31.

Even though Schaffer develops a powerful critique of the democratization theory based on an essentialist concept-building strategy and an elegant explanation of Senegalese political development, his explanation does not travel easily. The Senegalese society has low literacy rates, a particularly ineffective public education system,[54] and, most important, the elites and the masses literarily, and not metaphorically, speak different languages.[55] Another aspect of the Senegalese use of the word that Schaffer emphasizes less is more widespread around the world; the way the Senegalese elite use the word is, even though it is well-informed about its original use, differs from it. The Socialist Party, which had been ruling the country for 39 years when Schaffer published his book it lost the elections a year later- associated the term with the existence of multiple parties and freedom of expression; the opposition emphasized that it is also associated with alteration in power, an aspect the ruling party downplayed [56].

This dynamic, elites picking and choosing different aspects of democracy in direct dialogue with Western use, has a wider reach. As Sociological Institutionalists emphasize, the institutional dissemination happens within a framework in which the West is not only the origin, but a dominant player[57]. However, there is another dimension that Sociological Institutionalists do not analyze: the fact that the West is a dominant player means that the local actors who adopt its institutions do so in a dialogic process. Due to this, the perception of the West is important for legitimacy, but can also be difficult because of incoherent or unreliable

[54] Ibid., 32.

[55] Ibid., 16.

[56] Ibid., 24–31.

[57] Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State," 173.

discourse. The West's own interpretation and views are also subject to change as it engages with actors all around the world.

The Wittgensteinian approach shows us that a relational, no-essentialist approach is possible and would reveal many important dynamics, or sources of change, that are undetectable using essentialist approaches. An essentialist approach presupposes that categories are natural and that their essences can be captured by determining its defining features. As such, categories themselves are static and timeless, even though an individual example can travel between categories. A country can transition from democracy to authoritarianism or vice versa, but we can identify the category. Categories are things. A relational approach, on the contrary, does not start with static and pre-given concepts but instead contextualizes and historicizes the concept.[58] The ways in which people use the term, deploy it for a multitude of purposes, and relate it to their own experiences is an integral part of how societies evolve. Reification forces those dynamics out of the analyst's perspective.

However, simply saying that democracy is a relational concept is not enough. The word is not redefined from scratch in each and every situation, by each and every political movement or even individual. The meanings of it can be distinct for each player, but they are generated in a context in which there are relatively stable narratives are available. Moreover, not all narratives are equal; the asymmetry of power among players is reflected in the relationship of different narratives. It is the interaction among them that shapes the meaning of democracy in all of these contexts. To understand the dynamics of democratization, we need to look at the

[58] Mustafa Emirbayer, "Manifesto for a Relational Sociology," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 2 (1997): 287.

dialogue among different narratives, especially the interaction between the dominant one and local players. This is precisely what I mean by the term dialogic: the interaction between different players shapes their narratives and, by extension, their identities and relationship within a power structure. This interaction is crucial, as such narratives function as speech acts which posit actors and define their relationship as allies or rivals.

A cross between a Wittgensteinian and Sociological Institutionalist approach has two methodological benefits that circumvent the problem of defining democracy. On the one hand, such a conceptual approach will make the definition of democracy an empirical problem rather than defining it *a priori*. Thus, we do not consider democracy as an object, but rather a relational term, avoiding the pitfalls of essentialism and reification[59]. On the other hand, we do not need to define democracy in a radically different way in each and every context as we conceive democracy first and foremost as a concept emanating from Western-dominated World Culture. Not only is the open-ended and complex nature of the concept in the Western imagery integrated into our analysis, but also the nature of democracy as a "moving target."[60] As it evolves in response to the challenges of new environments, it becomes an object of our analysis. Applying these ideas to a Turkish context enables us to see how the JDP's seemingly contradictory identity is the result of a dialogical process that brings together the party's own ideological legacy, institutional challenges it has faced, and a global-level understanding of liberal democracy, an interaction that is indiscernible through positivist concept-building strategies.

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[59] Bevir and Kedar, "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology."

[60] John Markoff, "Democracy: A Moving Target," *European Journal of Sociology* 52, no. 2 (2011): 239–76.

From this perspective, the JDP's contradictions are the result of a double movement. On the one hand, the JDP sought to connect with Global Culture in order to overcome the opposition of the army and the Islamic movement's isolation. The JDP's ideological transformation posited it as a pro-West actor, associated it with its normative order, and placed it in a position where the army cannot use coercion against it without harming its long-established ties with the West. On the other hand, it not only carried the ideological legacy of the Turkish Right, which emphasized the majoritarian aspect of democracy over civil rights and liberties, but it also quickly became the dominant power in the party system. This led the JDP to adopt an interpretation of democracy that emphasized the myth of representation, which is the idea that elected officials identify with the nation, over the myth of limited government, or the idea that democracy is a regime that protects individuals against public authority. However, the JDP did not manufacture this re-interpretation in a contemplative, mental process as the expression of its inner self. Instead, as the social psychological theories of dialogical identity suggests, it evolved in the course of a dialogical process.[61]

I do not argue that the conflict between the myth of representation and the myth of fundamentals is the only complication of the democratic narrative. However, this is a key conflict that has preoccupied thinkers since Hamilton and J. S. Mill. Most importantly for this dissertation, the conflict between the two have shaped the JDP's narrative, which has often assumed the form of a "boundary skirmish" between the two myths concerning specific actions

[61] Hubert J. M. Hermans and Agnieeszka Hermans-Kopotka, *Dialogical Self-Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Ivana Markova, *Dialogicality and Social; Representations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

of the government. Thus, it is a narrative that justifies the expansion of the government's authority in order to redefine the proper boundary between these two myths.

I also do not seek to apply Fareed Zakaria's concept of illiberal democracy to the Turkish case. From Zakaria's perspective, the common sense conception that associates democracy with freedom is flawed. Freedom is related to constitutional liberalism, and democracy does not always promote the freedom that liberal constitutionalism seeks. Democracy has a Rousseau-inspired flavor that might lose individual liberty within the general will. Established democracies are often liberal democracies, but younger ones are challenged by the allure of illiberal populism.[62] From such a point of view, this is again a simple question of taxonomy. Some democracies find the proper balance between the myth of representation and the myth of fundamentals, while others are seduced by the tyranny of majority in varying degrees.[63] Also, it is possible that a military dictatorship is more liberal than a democracy, as the example of Pervez Musharraf attests.[64] The forces that build democracies are different from the forces that build liberalism. The common sense that merges these together is analytically wrong. It is possible to fit the JDP's adventure in this framework; the JDP is a democratic force, but not a liberal one. The weakness of Zakaria's argument is apparent from the term he chooses. "Illiberal democracies" are not liberal, but what are they? What are the narratives that replace liberalism? In the JDP's case, what is denied is not the existence of an area of individual liberties that should lie outside of the state's reach. What is contested is the appropriate

[62] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton Co, 2003), chap. 3.

[63] Ibid., 99.

[64] Ibid., 100–101.

boundary between the public authority and individual liberties. These boundaries are not settled in the West, and the countries that are characterized as liberal democracies by Zakaria have different standards. Many in the United States consider the right to bear arms a *sine qua non*, yet this is absurd in most other democracies. What is the objective boundary that distinguishes between a liberal and illiberal democracy? Is it context-dependent? The fact is that there are multiple narratives about this. In the JDP's case, one can see a dominant narrative emanating from the West in which there is a line that the JDP is transgressing more clearly that some Western actors do, and the JDP is proposing to redraw this boundary. (To complicate things further, in the case of capital punishment, the narratives of the EU and the U.S. are markedly different) Simply abolishing the complex relationship between democracy and liberalism, between the myth of representation and fundamentals, creates the illusion that forces are working to create something different. Yet, in the JDP's case, both myths were summoned to challenge the *Ancien Regime*. One major critique of it was based on its interference with religious liberties, but what the JDP did was not breach an obvious boundary, but attempt to renegotiate it.

These constant attempts to redefine boundaries illustrate the existence of a dominant narrative of democracy, though this does not mean that the players who seek to connect their identity with this narrative becomes mere replicators. The dynamics of connection coexist with the dynamics of contestation. In other words, speech acts that seek to identify with this narrative does not annul speech acts that differentiate the local actor's identities. Local players are creative actors that reimagine the dominant narrative in light of their own experiences and for their own purposes. This means that local players craft their narratives in connection to the

dominant narrative, but also reinterpret it. This re-interpretation creates a double movement. On the one hand, there are dynamics of concurrence in which the producers of dominant and local narratives recognize each other's identity. On the other hand, there are the dynamics of contestation where the players put into question the meaning of each other's actions and, in the long-run, their identities. These two dynamics, of concurrence and contestation, can coexist, but they create an unstable relationship.

I am not telling a story of a colonial self that modifies a dominant paradigm to emancipate itself. The narrative of emancipation produced by the JDP indeed resonated with the Western narrative: the emancipation of the pious masses from the rigid secularism of the Kemalist regime safeguarded by the Army. The dynamics of contestation developed when the JDP government challenged the boundaries of those who did not want to ascribe to its conservative, Islamic vision. The way in which the JDP contested the dominant paradigm was not linked to the concept of emancipation, but to the concept of authority. The limits of the authority of the elected government were at stake. This is why the competition between the two narratives, the Western one and that of the JDP, assumed the form of a boundary skirmish.

4. Dialogical Methodology

How can these arguments be validated in a way that is acceptable to the rules of scientific inquiry? The usual comparative methods that seek to identify one-directional relationships between independent and dependent variables are of limited use as the *explanandum* is not a static situation we can use to label democracy, authoritarianism, or anything in between. Rather, we are trying to explain the dynamic interaction between two narratives that converge and diverge simultaneously. Such a dynamic interaction can only be

dissected through interpretive methods as we are trying to decipher how narratives and actions shape each other, something more positivistic methods are designed to see one-directional causal arrows cannot spot. We must look at how the narratives produced to interpret a situation lead to particular actions as well as how they were interpreted through the lens of such narratives. In other words, the relationship between narratives and actions should be traced. One may put this effort under the broad rubric of "discourse analysis".

The classical, Foucauldian methods that the term implies are not fully adequate here. Foucauldian analysis seeks to discover a fundamental change that has altered the way that institutions work and humans act. The typical example is his study of the narratives about crime; the difference between medieval punishments and the disciplinary punishment of the 19th century is explained by a deep change in narratives produced about crime and criminals. Foucault sees a wide-reaching and complete alteration in mentality, which results in a fundamental transformation of how the state authority's is exercised.[65] The difference between these two narratives is reproduced by Foucault as they do not directly engage each other. In other words, his discourse analysis is not about competing narratives, but about a fundamental change where the boundaries of the imaginable are redrawn entirely. In that sense, the discourse Foucault is talking about is a deep change in meaning production. In contrast, the relationship between the narratives that I am analyzing here is superficial: what we see is not a complete transformation of the imaginable, but two images of society that connect and contest each other's identity. The differences, as well as the similarities, are close to the surface, as the players use the same word in an interconnected way and talk directly to each

[65] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

other. This superficiality requires a different approach than the Foucauldian one, as we need to analyze the concrete linkages between the two narratives. This also requires a different approach to language than the post-structuralist view of the system of signs.

This study relies on a relational philosophy of language as opposed to the referential one that Sartori and Collier prescribe. Thus, the meaning of words should not be sought in their relationship with objects, but in their intersubjective use. More concretely, the meaning of democracy should not be sought in the objects it refers to, but in the way the subjects use the word while communicating to each other. However, there is more than one way to approach language in a relational way. Rather than de Saussure's approach, which informs French structuralists and post-structuralists, I deploy a Wittgensteinian approach. I do not assume an abstract *langue* as a system of signs that exists independently from the users of the language[66]. Instead, I conceive of language as a game, as a concrete process in which meanings are constructed by players to communicate particular messages which are dependent on both the context and audience. To analyze a narrative, we need to know its addressee, or, rather, its audience. Also, we need to know the kind of reaction it triggers, such as, the narrative produced by the audience. Thus, what we need is not "discourse analysis", as the true significance of a narrative can only be understood in the context of a dialogue, where narratives confirm and/or challenge each other's interpretations. I call this approach dialogical analysis.

This is important for empirical reasons. The production of a narrative is not the result of a mental process where an identity engraved in the depths of psyche expresses itself. An

[66] Ferdinand De Saussure, *Cours de Linguistique Generale*, Payot & Rivages (Paris: Payot & Rivages, 1995), 25.

identity is built via speech acts in the context of a dialogue[67]. Those speech acts position a player within the context of a power struggle, and they connect the player with some and disconnect it from others. Within a dialogue, those relations are empirically traceable. In the context of the post-Cold War world, the use of the democratic vocabulary of human rights and popular will connects the player with others who use the same terminology, acting as a shared identity and allying them against players who do not share that bond. This does not mean that simply uttering that jargon changes the speaker's identity forever. An oath will make you a member of a secret society only if it is recognized by its members; it is not a speech act that transforms the speaker's identity if the words are said in a bathroom in front of a mirror. To be recognized as a democrat, a politician in power should build a reputation by speaking and acting in an expected way for a long period: hold elections and respect its results, refrain from infringing upon human rights, maintain the independence of judiciary, and so on. The fact that one cannot come up with a finite, universally accepted list of the rules of democratic etiquette is precisely what makes a dialogical method necessary. What action is democratic and what action is not is routinely contested in ordinary language. These contestations can be minor, about the nature of a specific action, which does not lead the questioning of the overall identity and legitimacy of its perpetrator, but it could also lead to broader questions about the connection of players who claims to share same democratic identity.

Empirically speaking, what we need to analyze in order to understand the JDP's relation to democracy is neither how it uses the word nor how its action fits into a pre-made

[67] For the concept speech act, see John L Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

conception of democracy. A simple comparison will not do. To be able to trace the dynamic relationship between the JDP and democracy, we need to track the concrete dialogue and the reactions of the narratives to each other in context as they directly addressed each other. We must look at the moments when the JDP entered into power struggles that would affect the boundaries and distribution of state authority and identify:

1) Whether the JDP sought to delegitimize the position of its adversaries by reference to a narrative of democracy;
2) Whether Global Culture affirmed or contested the JDP's position;
3) Whether the JDP has actively responded to the global perspective, either by deploying the affirmation it gets within the international arena in the domestic realm, adjusting its course, or contesting the interpretation abroad using its own vocabulary.

Thus, a dialogic analysis consists of the analysis of two narratives that posit the identity of its producers vis-à-vis each other, either in the form of recognition or contestation of shared identity.

The first challenge of this method is to select the texts that are representative of two narratives. Each text and speech about democracy in Turkey can conceivably be considered a narrative of its own. How can we identify a text that define an actor's identity and which can be perceived as a coherent whole that signals the actor's positions?

The selection at the local level is easier to determine. The JDP, being a legal entity, is quite clear about who can speak on its behalf and occasionally publishes its views officially. Still, given the fact that Erdogan and other senior figures make speeches almost every day, one

still needs to choose its resources wisely. I relied on the most central, defining texts of the JDP, such as party programs and electoral platforms. To track the more day-to-day reactions, I relied on the weekly parliamentary group speeches made usually by Erdogan and, on some rare occasions, by its senior lieutenant. These also have the advantage of being available in their entirety on the JDP's website. By using these, I avoided the risk of relying on possibly out-of-context and misleading newspaper coverage. I used newspaper reports only when other sources were unavailable, and the report was directly related to the issue at hand.

The "Global Culture" or the Western point of view offers a more formidable challenge. There are many aspiring mouthpieces for Western democracy, but, in their bewildering variety, we cannot speak of an authoritative one. The speeches of Western leaders are not a good heuristic tool as they are complicated by domestic political conflicts and diplomatic rules. I used those only when they are representative of a unanimous reaction. The narrative produced by Western media, with a cosmopolitan reach, is a much more fruitful source as those tend to speak in the name of a united West when the democratization of authoritarian countries is concerned, forgetting internal cleavages. Yet there are many outlets in Western media, from which I must select a subset that can feasibly be tracked in some qualitative detail. Given the fact that I needed to show a concrete dialogue, I picked outlets that the JDP's leaders have directly engaged by responding to criticisms or gave interviews: *The New York Times, The Economist, BBC, and Der Spiegel.* One could add to this list *The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post,* and the *Financial Times,* but these would add to quantity rather than diversity. I also added *Le Monde* to my sources as it adds a crucial layer of diversity; the Anglo-Saxon sources and the JDP shared a critique of French *laïcité* and the French concept of how

religion and politics interact in a democracy is considerably different from Anglo-Saxon countries. *Le Monde* was more important than Anglo-Saxon sources before English completely supplanted French as the *lingua franca.* I excluded some other sources, such as *The Guardian* and *The Los Angeles Times,* given the fact that they are much less frequently mentioned in Turkish sources compared to the papers I mentioned above.

5. Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation consists of four chapters organized in two parts. The first two chapters are background chapters dealing with the history of Turkey before 2001, when the dialogic process that constitutes the real object of this dissertation starts. The two chapters in the second part deal directly with the major questions of this dissertation.

I start by inquiring as to the nature of the regime that the JDP faced and pledged to transform. The most important task is to illuminate the army's role in the regime before its struggle with the JDP. Turkey had considerable experience in alteration in power through elections. The rights and liberties associated with democracy were also in place in a significant degree. What made Turkey's democracy a "diminished" form of democracy was its *praetorian* character. Even when it was not involved directly in the political administration, the army had been a veto player within the system since 1960 The most important aspect of this, in reference to this dissertation, is that the role of the army was seen as positive by the West within the context of the Cold War. There was a dialogical process between the West and the army that legitimized its actions. The army deployed a narrative centering on stability and progress and, unlike in the post-Cold War period, the West approved and even encouraged the army's interventions when the stability of the country was at stake, as evidenced by the army's

statements that targeted an international audience when it directly interfered with politics and the West's positive reception of its message.

The second chapter discusses the shorter history of the Islamist movement in Turkey and, in particular, the National Outlook movement, in which the JDP is rooted. It is important to look at this in order to be able to understand the tensions that led to the emergence of pre-democracy Islamist elite in the late 1990s. There was an Islamic reaction to the introduction of secularism by the Kemalists, centering on Sufi-Mystical movements. However, a form of political Islam which could truly vie for power only emerged in the 1990s, when Necmettin Erbakan established the National Outlook movement. The relationship between the National Outlook and democracy was uneasy, though, as the Islamic circles it relied on for support viewed democracy as a Western, and thus alien concept; it also, violated the supremacy of God's word by introducing the notion of popular sovereignty. The National Outlook movement, having accepted the democratic game, was ambivalent about democracy. Indeed, its major ideological attraction was to posit itself as an anti-system movement, defining the establishment it was against as a Western, Christian, fundamentally alien system. The most central point of the National Outlook's identity, which distinguished it from other major political parties, was its categorically anti-Western narrative. The key point is that when the Islamists managed to form a government in 1996, their key weakness that allowed the army to subtly overthrow them by forming a large coalition was this ambivalence. Despite the fact that the army failed to secure international legitimacy it had gained when overthrowing much more pro-West governments, the National Outlook was vulnerable as it failed to present itself as a genuinely democratic force.

As analyzed at the end of this chapter, it was the collision of the army (the product of the Kemalist Modernization project), the Cold War (as analyzed in the first chapter), and the National Outlook (the product of the adoption of Islamic communities to democratic politics, as analyzed in the second chapter), that led to the emergence of the JDP. In the following two chapters, I analyze the JDP's trajectory, until the Gezi events of 2013, when its democratic credentials collapsed in the Western narrative. I divide this period in two, a period between 2001 and 2008 (to be specific, between 14 August 2001, when the JDP was established, and 30 July 2008, when the closure case against the JDP was refused by the Constitutional Court.) and from 2008 to June 2013. This periodization requires an explanation. The starting date is self-explanatory, but why 2008 and 2013? The year 2008 is a milestone because it marks the time when the JDP moves from a defensive to an offensive stance against the army and its allies. Between 2001 and 2008, the JDP's leadership which remembers Erbakan's fate in 1997 only too well, was timid in imposing its vision of society. After 2008, when it became clear that the army was unable to form a coalition as large as in 2008 and intervene directly, the JDP became bolder. The narratives and tactics were not different, but the JDP moved to consolidate its power only after 2008. This change has caused some confusion over the JDP's identity and altered Western perceptions. The interaction between the Western and the JDP's narratives became more ambivalent after 2008. My goal in these two chapters is to emphasize continuities as well as differences. I will argue that though the perception of the JDP's identity gradually transformed after 2008, it was the extent of its intervention and its adversaries rather than its tactics and narrative about democracy that changed.

June 2013 marks an even more drastic break. From the JDP's perspective, it was a life-or-death struggle as, for the first time, the global narratives were aligning with its opponents. This was the first but not the last time; in all of its following struggles, the JDP has been classified as the authoritarian force and its opponents the democrats. As far as the JDP's trajectory is concerned, the developments after 2013 are also important. However, for theoretical purposes, 2013 is a valid endpoint. The dialogical process in which the JDP's identity was formed ended then, and the vocabulary of democracy stopped being a signal of a shared identity between the JDP and the West. This relationship has continued to worsen since 2013, but the Gezi events were the turning point.

In the third chapter, which addresses the 2001-2008 period, I analyze how the JDP strived to distinguish itself from its parent movement, the National Outlook, by emphasizing its democratic character. The ideological transformation was not a construct of the analysts after the fact, but a central part of the JDP's narrative about its identity. Erdogan and his lieutenants did not deny their ideological background, but insisted that the new political party represented a radical break from the past, and that they had transitioned from Islamists to conservative Democrats. In this period, the JDP worked to build a reputation as a pro-West, pro-democracy force, most importantly committing itself to Turkey's accession to the European Union.

There are two important key arguments that serve to show the value of a dialogic theory of regime change. First, it was this identity that saved the JDP from the fate of its predecessor. In 2007 and 2008, the army and its allies within the judiciary tried to mobilize a coalition similar to the one that overthrew Erbakan in 1998They failed as the JDP, empowered by the

legitimacy it held in the international arena, managed to stand its ground. The army's threats proved to be hollow as it did not dare to use coercive methods, particularly since it no longer enjoyed equivocal support in the international arena. The government's international reputation was a key factor in the 2008 Constitutional Court decision that declined to close the party on the grounds of being anti-secular. On a theoretical level, this conclusion supports the dialogical theory of democratization; the JDP's attempt to democratize the regime by robbing the army of its *de facto* power succeeded thanks to connections it made on the international level using its reformed identity.

Second, the differences between the JDP's and Western narratives were already clear in this period and caused frictions even though questions were not raised over the JDP's identity after 2008. The JDP had, from the very start, emphasized the idea of the National Will over controls on the government's power, seeing the first one as the core of democracy while the other as an auxiliary principle. Already, this difference manifested itself in a number of "boundary skirmishes" when the JDP attempted to enlarge the government's authority at the expense of individual freedoms. In those instances, the players deployed different narratives of democracy and negotiated the appropriate boundary between the myth of representation and the myth of fundamentals. This shows that the dynamics which would cast a shadow on the JDP's democratic identity later were already at work. From a theoretical point of view, it shows that the dynamics of contestation are embedded in the antinomies of the democratic mythology which opened the space for the JDP's triumph over the army.

In the final chapter, I discuss the developments between 2008 and 2013. In this period, the JDP had fought its boundary skirmishes from a position of strength and was no longer

anxious about a possible military intervention. In this period, the dialogic process's dual character became more pronounced. On the one hand, there were dynamics of concurrence as the JDP's actions were still empowered by the West's agreement, especially its actions that had weakened the army and its allies within the High Courts. On the other hand, there were dynamics of contestation at play; when the JDP attempted to consolidate its power vis-à-vis the media and enlarge its authority over individual freedoms, the Western response had been increasingly negative and the democratic identity of the JDP put into question. Finally, when the discontent against the government's growing authority at the expense of individual freedoms erupted in a major wave of protest which created the perception that the government's power hanged in balance, the narratives produced in the West strongly aligned themselves with the protestors. The JDP's usual narrative of protecting the majority's rights against the privileged few backfired. From that moment on, the JDP's opponents were seen as democrats while the JDP, and Erdogan in particular, has been seen as an authoritarian force. The disagreements over the boundaries between the myth of representation and the myth of fundamentals, which hitherto amounted to minor frictions, evolved to a complete reversal of the relationship of the players' identities. From a theoretical standpoint, this shows that the dynamics leading to the JDP's repressive policies were not the result of a clash between two antagonistic forces, but rather the ambivalences of the democratic mythology itself.

As the conclusion to the dissertation elaborates more fully, the contribution of this account of Turkish politics is to explain the unusual trajectory of the JDP using a novel conceptual strategy. How did Islamists become the darlings of democratization, only to soon be recast as proponents of authoritarianism? I argue that this process will stay enigmatic as

long as we rely on an essentialist definition of democracy, and that a relational concept-building strategy is necessary. The move from an essentialist to a relational strategy lets us to grasp the significance of the language about democracy. It also allows us to understand how the global hegemony of a certain narrative of democracy shapes the identities of local actors as well as their own narratives and empowers certain actors while reducing the number of available options to others.

In Turkey's case, the global narrative empowered the JDP while limiting the Army's options. However, the JDP was not simply a vessel of the global narrative. Instead, it actively reinterpreted it in ways which were not always compatible with it; these incompatibilities led to frictions, which eventually transformed how the players perceived each other's identity: The West started to see an authoritarian actor in the JDP, while the JDP mostly abandoned its pro-West narrative. Regarding the functioning of the regime, it resulted in a regime where free and mostly fair elections are still at the heart, but civil rights, liberties, and the rule of law are increasingly under pressure.

Given the fact that the realm of "hybrid regimes", that is, the regimes that combine features associated with both democracy and authoritarianism in the Western narrative, is expanding, I suspect that similar dynamics are playing a role in shaping places such as Thailand, Venezuela, Russia, and even Hungary and Poland. This can only be shown, however, by a detailed dialogical analysis done by scholars who speak the languages of these countries. This dissertation is also a methodological challenge to political science. I argue that, the essentialist concept-building strategy leaves some important dynamics invisible, and alternative strategies are needed to understand the dynamics of regime change.

CHAPTER II

THE MAKING AND PERSEVERANCE OF THE TUTELARY REGIME, 1914-1994

1. Introduction

One of the most important texts of political mythology on the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, which is memorized by elementary school students, is Mustafa Kemal's "10th Anniversary Speech", a speech made on 29 October 1933. In this short speech, Mustafa Kemal summarized the ambitions of the new republic. After praising its accomplishments, he said: "We will elevate our country to the level of the most prosperous and civilized countries. We will provide our nation with the largest amount of prosperity, tools and resources. We will carry our national culture to a level above the contemporary level of Civilization". One of the interesting aspects of this speech is the absence of any reference to a distinct Islamic civilization, a common concept among the Turkish elite in the early 20th century. Contemporary Civilization (with capital C) is unique, and it is the civilization of the wealthiest and most powerful countries.[68] Turkey is not quite there yet, but it will be. However, "being there" is not solely a material issue; it also requires recognition: "I tell you in full faith and certainty that the civilized world will shortly recognize again the greatness of Turkish nation which walks toward those ideals in full unity". Therefore, the ideals of the Turkish nation are not just to own the material resources equivalent to that of the West, but also to be recognized as a civilized country by the civilized world, i.e., the West.

[68] Levent Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi* (Istanbul: İletişim, 1990), 231–32.

On the 87th Anniversary of the Republic, 77 years to the day after that speech, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan still craves to reach the status of a civilized nation and being recognized as such, but with two important differences. First, he summarizes his critical view of Kemalism: "One cannot be a republican against the public, against the thoughts and emotions of the public. One cannot be a populist [*halkçı*] despite the people." The goal here is still the same, described using the same term, "the contemporary level of Civilization". He says, "You can only love and protect the republic by uplifting it, by realizing the policies that will elevate it above the contemporary level of Civilization." Thus, Erdogan shares the same goal with Mustafa Kemal, while differing in method. The second difference comes in the next sentence; Turkey is not seeking to accomplish this goal as it is already there. "The Republic of Turkey today is developed in a way that is not comparable to its past." Kemal Ataturk's prophecy has been fulfilled: "In the whole world, it became an appreciated, praised, exemplary country and most important, it achieved a respected and reputable status."[69] It is important to remember that this speech was given in 2012, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. Erdogan was referring to the idea that the "Turkish Model" could be used by emerging Arab regimes as an example, which was fashionable at the time.[70] The theme of recognition as a civilized nation links the two speeches. The domestic accomplishments of the country are measured by its reputation abroad.

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[69] All quotations are from Erdogan's speech on 28 October 2012, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp.

[70] For the roots of the "Turkish Model" debates, see Sinan Ulgen, "From Inspiration to Aspiration Turkey in the New Middle East" (Washington D. C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011), 3, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

This resemblance is not a coincidence; it indicates a dynamic relationship that shaped the political regime in the Turkish polity at least since the 19th century. The Turkish state has tried to cast itself as a civilized and Western force in the international arena and adopted a variety of Western institutions for this purpose. In this chapter, I will offer a short history of Turkey's regime, putting emphasis on its relationship with international society and, in particular, its relationship with the West. The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. On the one hand, it is a background chapter seeking to familiarize the reader with past events that shaped the Justice and Development Party's trajectory between 2001 and 2013. On the other hand, it will seek to show that the dialogical process, or the interaction between the view of democracy in the West and the actions of political players in Turkey, which made this trajectory possible has been an important factor throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. Thus, the Western discourse on democracy was not only influential in the 2000s, but it also made possible the "tutelary democracy",[71] that is, the democratic regime in which the army played the anomalous role of a veto-player, between 1960 and 2007. During this chapter, I will argue that its weight within the regime was made possible by the West's view of the army's legitimizing narrative during the Cold War. In later chapters, I will show that the shift in Western discourse weakened the army's position and empowered the JDP, which sought to challenge it.

[71] We owe the term to Edward Shils, "Political Development in the New States" 2, no. 3 (1960): 265–92. It was widely used to describe the single-party regime. Juan Linz, *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Reider Publicationa, 2000), 172; Ergun Özbudun, "The Nature of Kemalist Political Regime," in *Atatürk, Founder of a Modern State*, ed. Ergun Özbudun and Ali Kazancıgil (Connecticut: Archon Books, 1981); Walter F. Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973), 3; Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Siyasal Kurumlar ve Anayasa Hukuku* (İstanbul: IUHF, 1980), 314., but many authors also use the term for democracy under the Army. Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation under JDP's Rule"; Heper Metın, "The State, Political Party and Society in post-1983 Turkey," *Government and Opposition* 25, no. 3 (1990): 321–33. More Importantly, Erdogan himself has been using the term since at least 2004 (see Erdogan's speech on 2 November 2004, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp) to criticize the army, and it is now part of the daily lexicon.

To decipher these dialogical processes, I will first analyze the construction of Kemalist ideology and the single-party regime and then argue that the Kemalist radical modernization project was shaped by the West's conception of modernity. However, Western political ideals had an erratic effect on the building of the Kemalist regime, as the West was undergoing an ideological crisis at the time when Kemalism was taking shape. Then, in the second section, I will argue that the first transition to democracy between 1946 and 1950 was the product of both the international situation and the West's perception of the link between the political regime and international alliances. In the third section, I will argue that in the context of the Cold War, the army managed to build its identity as the key ally of the West, while assuming an active role within the regime that was not compatible with democratic ideals and practices.

The objective of this chapter is not to give a full account of regime changes in Turkey since World War II. Instead, I want to show that the regime that preceded the JDP was, just like the one built by the JDP, shaped by its international context through dialogical processes. It does not mean that the behavior of the domestic actors was entirely determined by the international context. It also does not mean that popular conspiracy theories that insist each major political event of the last 70 years has been designed and masterminded in Washington, D.C. are correct. However, it is clear that actors in Turkey have built their identities through speech acts and actions that would allow themselves to ally with Western players. We cannot understand these identities without understanding how they posit themselves vis-à-vis the West. For this reason, I am not trying to challenge existing accounts of those events fully, my aim is to emphasize the importance of international influence in shaping, not determining, the trajectory of Turkish institutions that distribute the public authority, i.e., the political regime.

2. Kemalist Origins of the Tutelary Regime

The history of Ottoman/Turkish Westernization has been written many times over, and a reiteration of that history might seem redundant. However, a reinterpretation of the dynamics of this history can build the case for a new interpretation of the Turkish regime today by emphasizing the importance of the recognition. Although the starting impetus of Westernization reforms on political institutions was a practical concern over the survival of the state, since the late 18th century, Turkish elites had sought recognition from the hegemonic West. They had adopted its values and institutions in order to ease building alliances with the West, which were often vital, especially when Ottoman and then Republican elites sought protection from Moscow. It was never simply cynical window-dressing, however; the internalization of such values and its use to forge alliances went hand-in-hand. The history of Turkish political institutions cannot be written without paying attention to this dual mechanism of survival and recognition. Ottoman and Republican Elites were indeed concerned about the survival of the polity. Many reforms, such as the modernization of military forces and the taxation system along Western lines were the result of concerns about survival. Recognition, on the other hand, is a more complex, dialogical, dynamic process. Both the West's opinion on what the Turkish regime should look like and the Turkish elites' own views interacted in an ever-changing global context.

The Ottoman imperial elite had been unwilling to adopt Western institutions for centuries because not only did they believe such institutions were inferior, but the Ottoman identity had been built around a narrative of "holy war". The *raison d'être* of the Ottoman

Empire was to fight against infidels, i.e., its Christian neighbors.[72] When the Ottoman war machine started to lose its supremacy, the first reaction of the elite was to look back at the golden age of Suleiman the Magnificent and study the decline of their institutions rather than to study the reasons for the West's progress.[73] Only when the supremacy of Western armies proved undeniable in the late 18th century did a comprehensive Westernizing reformation become a real option.

From that point on, Turkish politics were marked by an urge for reform; far-reaching Westernizing reforms had been widely understood as essential for the survival of the state by the elites who ruled the empire. At the beginning, importation of efficient bureaucratic, educational, and military institutions took precedence, but there was also interest in political notions such as the rule of law, constitutionalism, and parliamentary rule, as the Edict of Gülhane in 1839 attests.[74] Still, references to democracy were rather scarce; liberalism, not democracy, was the leading ideological framework of the time. The *Tanzimat* (Re-ordering) era (1839-1876) was marked by attempts to establish the rule of law and grant religious freedoms. These reforms had multiple motivations; the most important was to save the empire from its imminent demise by appeasing restless Christian minorities. During this time, two other dynamics became increasingly important: being recognized as a civilized state by

[72] Hakan Karatepe, "Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis," in *Legitimizing the Order* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 42–46; Sureiyya Faroqhi, *The Ottoman Empire and the World around It* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004), 8.

[73] Douglas A. Howard, "Ottoman Historiography and the Literature of 'Decline' of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries," *Journal of Asian History* 22, no. 1 (1988): 52–77.

[74] Erik J. Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (London: Tauris, 1994), 51.

European powers and obtaining their goodwill on the one hand, and the internalization of the values of the French Revolution by the educated elite on the other.[75] Indeed, the status of "civilized state" had an almost formal status in the 19th century, meaning a state that was entitled to be the subject of international law as a peer to other states that were part of the concert of Europe. The Ottoman Empire was the first state outside of Christendom to be recognized as a part of "International Society" in 1856.[76] It is also important to note that Young Ottomans, a movement that targeted the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, went to great lengths in order to invent an Islamic origin for democracy in the practices of the first generation of Muslims [*sahabe*].[77] That set of dynamics led to the First and Second Constitutional Eras, in which the institutional architecture of a constitutional monarchy was adopted.[78] The First Constitutional Period (1876-78), which was the result of a *coup d'état* organized by a few intellectuals and high-ranking bureaucrats, was short-lived. Abdülhamid II dissolved the parliament a year after its election. The Second Constitutional Era, which was adopted 30 years later, was the product of genuine revolutionary mobilization and had a much larger societal base: low and mid-level civilians and military state officers were involved, as well as the non-Muslim bourgeoisie.[79] Leading reformists imagined themselves as the

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 106–19.

[77] Serif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1962).

[78] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966); Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*; Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*; İlhan Tekeli, "Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşüncenin Gelişimi Konusunda Bir Üst Anlatı," in *Turkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce: Batılıaşma*, vol. 3 (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 19–42.

[79] Aykut Kansu, *1908 Devrimi* (İletişim, n.d.).

champions of freedom, the representatives of modernity, and the saviors of both Islam and the state. Caught in the storm of unstoppable secessionist nationalism and the First World War, the dream of constitutional monarchy was again short-lived. Still, it culminated in the radical modernization project of Kemalism.

The Kemalist regime was constructed in a radically different environment. The differences between the Ottoman Empire in 1908 and Turkey just before the proclamation of the republic in 1923 cannot be overstated. In 1908, the empire still commanded vast territories in the Balkans and the Middle East. The heartland of the empire, Anatolia and the Balkans, was a religious and ethnic patchwork. Non-Muslims played a crucial role; they formed the bulk of mercantile classes, owned most of the capital, and held important bureaucratic and political posts. In 1923, not only had the borders significantly contracted, but waves of ethnic cleansing that had accompanied the 10 years of war between 1912 and 1922 also left Anatolia with a decidedly Turkish-speaking majority and an almost completely Muslim population. The capital and capitalistic know-how had left the country with the Greeks and the Armenians.[80]

Politically, this meant that the liberal project of 1908 had lost its relevance, even before the First World War. First of all, the project of a liberal constitution which would hold multiple nations together had collapsed, and there was no need to appease the non-Muslim bourgeoisie.[81] Therefore, one important motivation to build a liberal regime, to include non-Muslims with money and intellectual links to Europe within the society as equals, had vanished. The second motivation came from the international environment. For the entire 19th

[80] Çağlar Keyder, *State and Capital in Turkey* (London: Verso, 1987).

[81] Ibid., chaps. 2–3.

century, the existential threat for the Ottoman elite was Russia, whose ambitions to annex the empire's heartland were no secret. Ottoman diplomacy and many top-down liberal reforms were aimed at allying with Great Britain and France against the Russian threat. As Great Britain and France moved to ally with Russia in order to contain the rise of the German *Reich*, the Young Turks chose to ally with Germany in 1914. After the First World War, the new regime in the USSR saw a potential ally in Turkey, while Great Britain and France emerged as imperialist threats.[82] Hence, the desire to gain the goodwill of Great Britain and France had diminished.

Moreover, Mustafa Kemal Pasha enjoyed a charismatic authority that his Young Turk predecessors could only dream of. The political coalition which won the Greco-Turkish War of 1919-22 and expelled the occupying forces of the Entente was not homogenous. It was certainly not republican, and the goals of the coalition were widely conceived as saving the Caliph from the Christian yoke. In its legitimizing narrative, however, it was based solidly on the principle of representation. Mustafa Kemal's biggest political accomplishment was to link local "Defense of the Rights" congresses mushrooming in various parts of Anatolia, giving them a centralized governance structure in the Turkish Grand National Assembly. This was then able to claim to represent the population and, thus, garner the necessary military and financial resources to win the war. As a result, the assembly was able to persuade the European powers that a military adventure in Anatolia would be too costly. He emerged from the war as a war hero and with a power base consisting of local notables in Anatolia (i.e., landowners and

[82] William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*, 3rd ed. (London: Routledge, 2013), 14–15.

merchants who made their fortunes during the war by acquiring Armenian and Greek properties and government contracts)[83] and a completely loyal army. At this juncture, he was strong enough to abolish the Sultanate (1923) and the Caliphate (1924), all the while easily repressing opposition from all directions.

The military and diplomatic accomplishments of the Ankara government under Mustafa Kemal were accompanied with the parliamentary politics of the "heterogeneous and unruly"[84] Turkish Grand National Assembly. As the Greek armies were expelled, the dictatorial tendencies of Mustafa Kemal alarmed his opponents, especially his unexpected move to abolish the sultanate.[85] As they started to organize, he moved to consolidate his rule. One of his moves was to establish a formal political party named the People's Party in 1923 (which would later, in 1924, become the Republican People's Party, the RPP). The opposition, united under the banner of former army generals, established another in 1924, the Progressive Republican Party. Its leaders claimed that the real divide was not between monarchism and republicanism, but between democracy and despotism, and adopted a more socially conservative and economically liberal posture.[86] Despite this, the multi-party democracy never saw an election. Mustafa Kemal felt that the Progressive Republican Party was a real obstacle to his radical-modernist agenda, and the Kurdish-Islamist insurrection started by Sheikh Said in the Kurdish areas gave him a good excuse for disbanding it.[87] By 1925, he no longer needed

[83] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 148.

[84] Ibid., 166.

[85] Ibid., 166–67.

[86] Ibid., 176.

[87] Ibid., 169.

the support of his old brothers-in-arms as he was in complete control of the state and army. Afterwards, Mustafa Kemal and his close allies moved to build a single-party regime.

It is important to remember when considering this repressive movement that it was not odd for a modernizing force to claim to be emancipatory and based on popular sovereignty at the time. By 1925, the multi-party democracy started to seem like an old-fashioned version of modernity. The USSR, an ally of the young republic at the time, had already built a single-party regime that claimed to best represent the interests of the people. In 1925, Mussolini left all pretensions of democracy and reorganized the Italian regime as a single-party state. In the following decade, Mussolini's Italia, and not the democracies of the Northern Atlantic (or Stalin's Russia) were to be emulated.[88]

If not its political ideals, what were Kemalists importing from the West? The Kemalist Westernization program is famous for adopting superficial elements. Kemalists switched from the traditional calendar to the Gregorian calendar, from traditional systems of measurements to the metric system, and, most controversially and in a somewhat bloody manner, the fez was replaced by the Western hat. There was indeed this so-called superficial element in Kemalist modernism, a sense that transforming the visual perception of the country and its people was a crucial part of the modernization project. This opened the door to accusations of meaningless modernization which imitates Western mannerisms, but misses its soul, i.e., political ideals. However, these ideals themselves were undergoing a profound crisis during the interwar period with the challenge of Fascism and Communism. Indeed, even though Kemalists exported key institutions from the West, they did not distinguish between those competing alternatives; they

[88] Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (London: Abacus, n.d.), 111–13.

took the Administrative Law from France and Civil Law from Switzerland, but they also exported the Criminal Law of Mussolini's Italy and the idea of five year economic plans from Stalin's Russia.

Kemalists, in the context of the 1920s and 1930s, did not conceive democracy as the soul of the West, the source of progress and supremacy. Instead, they were adopting two other key values that they understand to be crucial for progress and the true soul of the West: the nation-state and secularism. Both of these ideas have democratic undertones in the Ottoman context even though they may be articulated in openly dictatorial political institutions. On the one hand, the idea of secularism invalidates the main competitor of the idea of popular will without which any form of democracy cannot exist, that is, the divine right of the sultans. The idea of the nation-state implies the idea of representative government and the rulers' need to reflect the population's desires, values, and interests. Therefore, Kemalism opened the discussion of democratic values while suppressing all opposition, including those who demanded a more democratic regime.

Indeed, the first task of Kemalism was to replace the religious and dynastic symbols with national ones. The official name of the state was changed to "the Republic of Turkey" from "The Sublime State of Ottomans", the capital was moved from imperial Istanbul to Ankara in the heart of Anatolia, and the use of dynastic titles was forbidden. This was at least a partial step toward democratization; the narrative of a dynasty ruling through divine right was dethroned by the idea of a sovereign nation. Also, from the perspective of the Kemalist elite, who regarded the reactions of religious elites to various modernization attempts as the key reason for the empire's decline, it was a decisive step toward progress. Both nation-

building and secularization of the state necessitated more substantial institutional reforms, however. Kemalists built a centralized edifice of education that would propagate its nationalistic and secular ideals while disbanding religious alternatives. Another project was to secularize and westernize the law: new civil, criminal, administrative, and commercial codes were taken directly from Western countries. The soul of the West for Kemalists was secular laws, nationalism, and an effective state apparatus that would implement these, not democracy. The West itself, at this point of history, was unsure about how to define itself politically, and the future of democracy in Europe was uncertain.

In other words, the Kemalist lack of enthusiasm for democracy can be explained by the lack of a coherent set of hegemonic political ideals in the interwar period. Liberal hegemony was dead; the fusion of social democracy and liberal democracy was in its infancy and weak in the face of the rising tides of Communism and Fascism. Otherwise, the need for recognition from the West was still deeply felt. Kemalists were desperately seeking to be recognized as a modern, civilized state on equal footing in the international arena. Mustafa Kemal himself indeed sought to achieve this goal by establishing a Western-style representative body in Ankara and derive the legitimacy of the government from this representative quality. Ultimately, recognition as an equal partner was won by the force of the cavalry chasing the Greek armies toward Izmir, not by the speeches of diplomats and politicians. Kemalists were well aware that the country was in a sorry state in 1923, and it was impossible for the young republic to be recognized as a civilized and modern country. Its victorious armies would not stand a chance if Great Britain were willing to intervene militarily using its full force. (The idea was entertained by British politicians, but set aside when the members of Commonwealth

and the Entente, with the exception of New Zealand, did not respond to the Crown's call for support).[89] Kemalists wanted to achieve this status through an ambitious modernization program in which several institutions from the West would be emulated.

The West was mostly receptive. The Nazis had a high regard of the Kemalists as fellow nationalists that did not recognize the treaties which ended World War I; they also idealized some aspects of the Kemalist regime.[90] Soviets, at least until 1936 when Soviet-Turkish relations began to deteriorate, saw in the Kemalists a progressive, anti-imperialist force.[91] Most important, the democratic countries themselves saw in Mustafa Kemal an enlightened despot, a responsible dictatorship as opposed to the warlike dictatorships in Italy and Germany. For example, in 1936, *The Economist* referred to Turkey as a "good citizen of International Society" as opposed to Germany and Italy.[92] Its dictatorship is different from others, because:

> […] the Turkish system is a dictatorship with a difference – the difference being that the nation is fully informed as to the ultimate goals its rulers are working. The Ghazi moves sure of his aims. He had defined them, and his people shared them. Without a trace of fear, (so discernible in the majority of dictatorships) that he should gamble too high while pursuing some foreign adventure or personal whim.[93]

Similarly, when Ataturk died, *The New York Times* lavished him with praise and underlined the legitimacy of his single-party regime by stating that "His death comes as a blow to a nation of 14.000.000 people, although he reformed their social customs, their religion and

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[89] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 163.

[90] Stephan Ihrig, *Ataturk in the Nazi Imagination* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2014).

[91] Samuel J. Hirst, "Anti-Westernism on the European Periphery: The Meaning of Soviet-Turkish Convergence in the 1930s," *Slavic Review* 72, no. 1 (2013): 32–53.

[92] The Economist, "Turkey Asks for Revision," *The Economist*, April 18, 1936, 122.

[93] The Economist, "Obituary," *The Economist*, November 15, 1938, 362.

their economics with dictatorial zeal and speed".[94] The next day, when the parliament elected İnönü as Atatürk's successor, *The New York Times* stated that "Throughout the country, the election of General İnönü was received with general satisfaction".[95] Both articles praised Turkey's neutral foreign policy and its differences from European fascism. Turkish zeal for Westernization had indeed reached its objective of being recognized as a benign political project despite its dictatorial form.

Of course, the absence of democracy cannot be explained solely by external factors. The Kemalist project of transforming social values and undermining the influence of religion and the religious elite on social life was a deeply elitist one, which was unlikely to win free and fair elections. Moreover, if it is accepted that the majority of the population was holding views which were antithetical with the progress that the elites desired, as Kemalists did, the relationship between democracy and progress became problematic.

The Kemalist view of democracy was ambivalent at best. At times, it was simply thought of as a past form of modernity, not worthy of emulation; at others, as a future prospect reserved for a time when Turkey became a modern and prosperous country as a result of top-down reforms.[96] The Free Republic Party experiment of 1930 was the product of the latter view; some more liberally-minded members of the RPP were given the task of organizing an opposition party by Mustafa Kemal himself. However, it shortly became obvious that the Free

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[94] The New York Times, "Ataturk, a Military Hero, Formed Surged Nation," *The New York Times*, November 11, 1938.

[95] The New York Times, "İnönü Is Elected Turkey's President," *The New York Times*, November 12, 1938.

[96] Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*.

Republican Party was developing into an effective organizing force for the conservative opposition, even though it was managed by close friends of Mustafa Kemal. Therefore, the experiment was cut short.[97] And as the Nazis' star rose and its supporters in Turkey garnered support, the former view became more dominant. The onset of World War II, however, would change everything.

3. The First Transition to Democracy

In 1946, the single-party regime decided to allow multi-party competition. The decision seems to have been rather brusque. The regime was not facing a legitimacy crisis that could amount to a revolutionary mobilization, though it did survive several insurgencies throughout the 1920s and 1930s by using coercive measures without hesitation. However, at the time, there was no sign of such insurrections. There were some cracks within the RPP, but such were the rule rather than the exception. Having stayed out of the conflict during World War II until the defeat of Germany was evident, it did not experience the destabilizing effect of invasion and war. Its army was intact and completely loyal to the regime. Since there were no obvious motives, why did the regime willingly go through such a profound transformation between 1946 and 1950?

At first glance, it is easy to mistake the regime change as the triumph of enlightened despotism, the product of a benign modernist elite who finally decided that the country was ready for democracy.[98] There are speeches by Mustafa Kemal and his successor İsmet Pasha

[97] Weiker, *Political Tutelage and Democracy in Turkey*.

[98] Two famous American observers of Turkish Politics, Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Towards A Dynamic Model," *Comparative Politics* 2, no. 3 (1970): 337–63.) and Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969).), tend to see Kemalism in this light.

which imply that a functioning democracy was the end goal of their radical modernist agenda,[99] and what actually happened seems to confirm confirms this view of the intelligent despot who carefully designed his own demise. In 1946, the single-party regime decided to allow multi-party competition, gradually removed barriers to free elections, and, ultimately, in 1950, left its position as a ruling party peacefully. Such a view does not hold to closer scrutiny, however. In fact, earlier discourse of Kemalism on democracy was erratic.[100] In the main policy statements of the RPP and its party program, there is nothing that implies that democracy was the ultimate goal of the party. There was a strong hardliner wing of the party which opposed the transition, and İnönü appointed one of their leaders, Recep Peker, as the prime minister in 1946, though he later refused to back him up in 1948 when Peker had to resign. Until 1950, the hardliners used every opportunity to undermine the new multi-party regime.

Domestic difficulties experienced by the regime undoubtedly played a significant role. The economic troubles that had accompanied the war when a substantial portion of the population was under arms had led to considerable discontent among the population.[101] The RPP itself was divided internally in several policy areas, and the government had issues passing legislation in the parliament.[102] There was increasing pressure from businessmen who had made fortunes during the war for liberalization. In fact, the discontent of the bourgeoisie led to

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[99] Sarp Balcı, "Demokratik Geçiş Süreçlerinin İlkinde (1944-1950) Taraflar ve Müzakere," in *Ömur Sezgin'e Armağan* (Ankara: Mülkiyeliler Birliği Yayınları, 2013), 375.

[100] Köker, *Modernleşme, Kemalizm ve Demokrasi*.

[101] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 206–8.

[102] Balcı, "Demokratik Geçiş Süreçlerinin İlkinde (1944-1950) Taraflar ve Müzakere."

the break-up of the RPP. Four key members of the party who were close to the business community and vehemently opposed a land-reform law which would undermine the capitalistic sector of agriculture[103] were ousted from the party. They formed a new political party, the Democrat Party (DP), under the new rules. It quickly became the party for the discontented and gathered support from a variety of actors. Socialist intellectuals as well as religious leaders viewed it as an emancipatory force. Finally, in 1950, the new party managed to win a resounding electoral victory against the better organized incumbent.

It is hard to argue, though, that the discontent of the populace and internal divides forced the RPP's leadership to adopt multi-party elections. Since its conception, the party had never been popular. It had been subject to several rifts, also, especially over economic lines, and there was tension between the members who favored a statist economic model and more liberally-minded members. Until 1946, such divisions had been resolved by the party's leadership through a large repertoire of repression and co-optation tactics inherited from the Ottomans (in typical Ottoman fashion, many political figures who opposed policies were relocated to backwater diplomatic missions with generous salaries). Alternatively, a new party would be permitted to form, only to be abolished quickly. The party had the means to overcome discontent through coercion and co-optation. The bourgeoisie was still meager and a bourgeois revolution was not in sight.[104]

If the regime shift is difficult to trace directly to internal challenges, though, its relationship to changes within the international environment is far more obvious. In 1945, the single-party

[103] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 210–12.

[104] Hakan Yılmaz, "Democratization from Above in Response to the International Context: Turkey, 1945-1950," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, no. 17 (1997): 2.

government faced a radically different international environment. First of all, its relationship with the USSR had changed drastically. The USSR refused to renew the friendship agreement in 1938, though at the time this was not conceived as direct threat. In the aftermath of the war, the USSR sought to transform its vicinity much more actively. In 1945, the USSR unilaterally withdrew from the 1925 no-aggression pact with Turkey. Molotov expressed interest in revisiting the 1936 Montreux Convention that gave Turkey control over the Straits as well as Turkey's borders with the USSR. The Turkish government began to take the threat seriously, and assessed that it would not be able to resist the might of the Red Army without international support. Necmeddin Sadak, İnönü's foreign minister published an article in *Foreign Affairs* telling to the American audience that the Soviets would not stop before establishing a communist government in Ankara if they see a weakness.[105] The traditional policy of neutrality was no longer sustainable.

Meanwhile, the identity of the West was going through a profound change. As the fascist powers were defeated and new geo-political dynamics moved toward a bipolar world divided between the communist East and capitalist West, liberal democracy asserted itself as a core component of the Western identity. By signing the United Nations Charter in June 1945, Turkey had already committed to democratic ideals. It also strived to join NATO to secure its position as a member of the Western Alliance. Besides those geopolitical security concerns, there were no more competing models of political regime in the West. Even though right-wing single-party regimes survived in the Iberian Peninsula, the hegemonic ideals were the ones of liberal democracy, challenged only by Communism which was, unlike the 1920s and 1930s,

[105] Necmettin Sadak, "Turkey Faces the Soviets," *Foreign Affairs* 27, no. 3 (1949): 460.

now perceived as a direct threat to Turkey's territorial integrity.[106] The single-party regime of Turkey seemed far more difficult to justify given the new position of democracy.

Before the war, the press in democratic countries would compare Turkey favorably to Germany and Italy. In the aftermath of the war, this was obviously no longer the case. New regimes were mushrooming all around Turkey. The choices were either liberal, multi-party democracies, or communist single-party regimes, and the choice would affect directly the country's place in the global chessboard. Whereas Balkan countries other than Greece were falling into the USSR's sphere of influence, Turkey's other neighbors were moving toward multi-party democracy. Iran, under Anglo-Russian occupation, was becoming more liberal and held competitive elections in 1944. In Greece, a bloody civil war developed, but the victorious right-wing established an electoral democracy which excluded the communist Left. The constitutional monarchy in Iraq was holding multi-party elections even though the elections were manipulated. In 1944, Syria declared its independence and elected a government, and the multi-party democracy would remain in place until the 1949 *coup d'état*, which would start a string of coups. Looking at this period, all of Turkey's neighbors were either becoming communist or were experimenting with some form of multi-party democracy.

External pressures pushing Turkish regime toward a multi-party democracy were more tangible than the domestic discontent. Those pressures had both ideational and material dimensions. Ideologically, the Kemalist narrative to reach the contemporary level of civilization was becoming clearly anachronistic as the entire non-communist Europe, with the

[106] Eren Tellal, "SSCB'yle İlişkiler (1945-60)," in *Türk Dış Politikası*, ed. Baskin Oran, vol. 1 (Istanbul: İletişim, 1991), 499–521.

exception of the dictatorships of the Iberian Peninsula moved toward multi-party regimes, as well as its neighbors in the Middle-East. Materially, Turkey needed to forge closer relations with the Western Alliance as the USSR emerged as a credible security threat, making Iberian-style indifference more difficult to hold.

It is important to emphasize that unlike the European Union candidacy process half a century later, the Western institutions did not put direct pressure for democratization. Membership to NATO and other Cold War institutions cannot be seen as direct causal factors in this transition project. The Cold War began in 1947, and its institutional structure, including NATO, began to take shape in the subsequent years whereas Turkey's regime change was already under way. The Marshall Plan was a major issue for Turkey's foreign policy, but İnönü was well aware that "America's principal concern was with regional stability and not with democracy or multi-party politics […] they were even anxious lest party politics weaken Turkey."[107] Although the West did not offer direct rewards for regime change, it was clear that a democratic Turkey would seem closer to the West.[108]

On the ideational plane, the Kemalist narrative of a regime based on popular sovereignty, but without actually consulting the people through free elections, became vulnerable.[109] Not only was "the civilized world" moving away from such concepts, except in communist form, but also countries that were comparable to Turkey. As the Kemalists were hostile to Communism, their narrative of walking toward "the most advanced form of

[107] Feroz Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Turkey 1950-75* (Boulder. CO: Westview Press, 1977), 25.

[108] Yılmaz, "Democratization from Above in Response to the International Context: Turkey, 1945-1950," 7–8.

[109] Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics; the Transition to a Multi-Party System.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959).

civilization" seemed hollow without adopting a form of multi-party democracy. Indeed, this is the time Kemalists started to refer to democracy consistently as a desirable goal. İnönü had instructed Turkey's representative at the San Francisco Conference (which established the United Nations) to assure the allies that he would transition to democracy as soon as the war is over.[110] İnönü himself had said that the principles of democracy would gradually become more important in political and cultural life in Turkey.[111] Moreover, the opposition within the RPP used the same argument to pressure İnönü. Menderes, the future leader of the opposition and prime minister, was a member of the RPP at the time, and he argued that Turkey should remove barriers on political and individual rights in order to comply with the United Nations Constitution, saying that the reasons justifying limits on those rights no longer existed.[112]

Eventually, Turkey succeeded in finding a place within the Western Alliance. Both Greece and Turkey became NATO members in 1952. Also, from 1948, Turkey was the beneficiary of a huge American aid program. Retrospectively, the effect of Turkey's regime change in those favorable outcomes is questionable; as the Cold War took off, the U.S. and its allies stopped to pay close attention to the regimes of their allies. Similarly, the rise of democracy proved to be a short-term prospect. Again, if we only look at Turkey's neighbors, Syria abandoned the multi-party regime in 1949, and Iraq did so in 1958. The U.S. and the UK actively participated in overthrowing the elected prime minister of Iran and in the construction of a far more repressive regime in 1953. Eventually, Turkey would have its own military

[110] Mustafa Albayrak, *Turk Siyasi Tarihinde Demokrat Parti (1946-60)* (Ankara: Phoenix, 2004), 30.

[111] Karpat, *Turkey's Politics; the Transition to a Multi-Party System.*

[112] Ibid.

regime in 1960-61 and Greece in 1967-74. In 1946, however, the relationship between regime-type and international alliance seemed potentially important and the future of democracy seemed bright, and Kemalists, whose legitimizing narrative was based on keeping up with the "contemporary level of civilization" and who felt the pressure of being a neighbor of an emerging super-power, were particularly sensitive to this juncture.

To summarize, the transition to democracy in 1946 and 1950 cannot be explained by any Modernization Theory aspired, society-centered theory. Thus, the perfect example is Rustow, who wanted to emphasize the role of concrete historical processes leading to democratization against slow moving forces of societal modernization.[113] What Rustow largely overlooked, however, was that the shift was heavily influenced by the change in the international context. This alteration had two dimensions. The first, which would be long-term, was the geopolitical formation of the bi-polar world and Turkey's new strategic position in it as a key Western ally. The second was the rise of democracy as a core-value of Western civilization and as an indicator of international loyalties. This second change would be a short-term one, yet Turkey, being particularly sensitive to both changes because of its vulnerable position on the map of the Cold War and its commitment to Westernization, would forever be reshaped by this conjuncture.

4. The Army and Democracy during the Cold War

In this section, I will argue that the "tutelary regime" in which the army played a significant role and effectively limited the government from 1960 to roughly 2007 was made possible by the discursive context of the Cold War. During the Cold War, democracy was

[113] Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy: Towards A Dynamic Model."

determined to be a desirable goal by liberal intellectuals and politicians, but it was conceived as a regime which did not necessarily support economic development and stability, and one which creates fertile ground for communist movements. The distinction made between authoritarian and totalitarian regimes –even though it is not entirely hollow from an analytical point of view- was used to underline this normative hierarchy: a right-wing dictatorship was below liberal democracy, yet preferable to a totalitarian one, as well as to "anarchy", that is, a situation in which a government cannot impose an effective monopoly on violence. For example, two political scientists that played an important role on the development of the Cold War stances, Brzezinski and Friedrich, argue that "the Autocratic Regimes of the past were not nearly thorough as the totalitarian dictatorship of today. They did not seek to get hold of the entire man, the human being in its totality, but were satisfied with excluding him from certain spheres of and exploiting him more or less mercilessly in others."[114] For them, less repressive military dictatorships established to ward off the threat of totalitarianism should not be confused with totalitarian regimes.[115] This discourse on the normative hierarchy of regimes opened a space for armies, which were relatively autonomous institutions even in the model democratic countries and enjoyed unsurpassable coercive capacities, to develop narratives that justified interventions and meddling with democratic politics on a daily basis. Obviously, each country had a distinctive trajectory, and the Turkish army proved to be more sensitive to the pressures for democratization than most. Unlike other meddlesome armies of the Third World which ruled directly for long periods, it usually preferred to exercise its powers behind the

[114] Zbigniew Brzezinski and Carl Friedrich, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publications, 1965), 1–2.

[115] Ibid., 8.

curtain and intervene for short periods. After the Cold War, it became even more cautious and indirect in exercising its power. Starting with the 1990s, the discourse on democracy changed drastically in the West. Now, democracy was conceived as an effective way to provide economic development and stability, and narratives that were credible before the end of the Cold War started to seem anachronistic. The Turkish army, discovered that its usual narrative no longer worked in the way that it had in the 1990s. It eventually lost power in the 2000s in a series of political skirmishes. I will look at the post-Cold War dynamics in detail in later chapters.

Between 1960 and 2002, the Turkish army intervened in political life more or less directly four times: in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. Each time, the tools and narratives used by the army were different. In 1960, unlike its successors, it was a "junior officer's coup", and was not the product of the army's formal hierarchy. The interventions in 1960 and 1982 established temporary military regimes whereas 1971 and 1997 just ousted the current government and forced the parliament to produce a government with whom the army was willing to cooperate. The 1960 coup produced a more liberal constitution than the existing one whereas in 1971 and 1982, generals insisted that the constitution was too liberal. In the narratives, in 1960 and 1997, the army overtly targeted the incumbent government, while in 1971 and 1982, it only targeted its inability to rule. There are three similarities worth noting, however. First, all four were based on a narrative that they were the last resort as the country was on a path that would lead to destructive instability. Second, none of them were simple, unilateral decisions. In each case, the army had to cooperate with a plethora of social and political actors. In other words, it did not act without forging alliances. Third, it was always

careful in preserving Turkey's diplomatic relations and its reputation. Shortly after 1946, it became clear that there was no link between a country's place in the alliance system and its regime, and the only rule was that a communist country could not be a Western ally, and even that rule had the partial exception of Yugoslavia. To construct alliances which would sustain the legitimacy of military interventions was still a delicate task, and the Turkish military either made limited interventions or promised to abandon power as soon as possible, and did so.

In this section, I will analyze and compare the first three of these four military interventions and their legitimizing narratives, as well as how they were perceived by the Western media. I leave the peculiar dynamics of the fourth to the next chapter. I will argue that each intervention was different as they were reactions to very different political pressures, yet they were all cautious in staying within the legitimate space drawn by the international discourse.

Even though I do not offer here a comprehensive alternative to widely held explanations of civil-military relations and coups in Turkey and, instead, just attempt to make the case that international discourse is an important and influential aspect of the story, it is still worth noting that existing explanations do not elucidate as much as they pretend. To address this problem, I shall discuss two popular explanations: Savran's Marxist explanations and Heper's "Strong State Tradition Thesis".

From a Marxist perspective, the trajectory of Turkey's democracy is best explained by the bourgeoisie's needs. For example, Savran rightly draws our attention to the fact that two most direct interventions, the ones in 1960 and in 1980, coincide with major economic policy shifts. According to Savran, the governments after the 1960 coup transitioned from a

development perspective centered on agricultural capitalism to import-subsidized industrialization.[116] The 1980 coup, in its turn, greatly facilitated the transition from import-substitution to an export-led growth model by eliminating the force of organized labor temporarily. Savran assumes that such economic imperatives are behind those coups. Even though it is clear that political events and economic policies interacted, and there is ample evidence showing that there were businessmen who encouraged generals to intervene in more than one instance, it is difficult to argue that this relationship was as unidimensional as Savran argues. The conspirators of 1960 were not in contact with the business world and, in 1970, the army did not support pro-business political parties consistently. Even in 1980, the army did not unambiguously throw its weight under the neo-liberal program; rather, it went with it.[117] Therefore, it is difficult to argue that the needs of the bourgeoisie directly motivated the military coups. In other words, the correlation between the big shifts in economic policy and coups do not automatically show that the needs of capitalism were the main driver of the army's actions. It seems more accurate to conclude that the economic and political crises fed each other, and the military interventions which attempted to solve political crises through coercion created environments in which large economic policy shifts can happen.

Liberals, on the other hand, blame the weakness of civil society vis-à-vis the state and the army in particular. For example, Heper argues that Turkey inherited a strong state tradition from the Ottoman Empire and, as a result, the state and especially the army were the strongest

[116] Sungur Savran, *Türkiye'de Sınıf Mücadeleleri*, vol. 1 (İstanbul: Yordam, 2010).

[117] Tanel Demirel, "12 Eylül'e Doğru Ordu ve Demokrasi," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* 56, no. 4 (2001): 43–75.

and most modernized actors in Turkish society. It is this unbalanced relationship which enabled the privileged role that the army plays in Turkish politics.[118] It is certainly true that a statist ideological tradition is strong in Turkey, and the army uses arguments from that ideological stance quite often. However, this argument is weak from a comparative perspective; many third world countries experienced military regimes, and not all of them had the tradition of a militaristic state and/or a reformist army. Moreover, the antagonistic relationship between the state and civil society that Heper draws is not realistic. In all coups, the army had to rely on sympathetic civil society actors in order to legitimize its rule. The junta of 1960 relied on the support of the educated middle-class, and the junta of 1980 relied on the support of big business. Therefore, it is more correct to look at ideological ties that enable the military and civil society actors, including big business, to form alliances that can use excessive violence. In the following sections, I will show that such an ideological link existed in their dialogue with the West.

a) May 27, 1960: The Junior Officer's Revolution

If one skims the debates among pundits about Turkey's modern history, it can be seen that only the 1960 coup is controversial while the later three are either loathed or, at best, seen as necessary evils. The views on the 1960 coup are, on the other hand, vary greatly. Its advocates would remind us of the repressive measures of the Democratic Party just before the coup, such as the infamous "Assembly Committee of Investigation," which was made of Democrat members of the parliament and had the jurisdiction to shut down the main opposition party and the DP's censorship policies crippled the press and the 1961 constitution which

[118] Heper Metin, *The State Tradition in Turkey* (Eothen Press, 1985).

greatly extended rights and liberties. Its critics remind us of the hanging of former Prime Minister Menderes and two of his ministers by a court whose impartiality was severely undermined by the army, and the fact that the 1961 Constitution carved an autonomous space for the army, thus paving the road for following military interventions. They would also defend the Democratic Party's repressive actions as a result of the RPP's aggressive and hostile attitude. This blame game is the result of the 1960 coup's distinctive nature. It is the only successful one which had been planned outside of official army channels, and it was the only one which claimed to provide more democracy rather than trimming the excesses of it.

This claim was made, however, after the fact, and the initial project of the junta was unclear, not least because it was composed of men of very different ideological backgrounds.[119] To understand the complex political struggles within the Junta, we should briefly look at the army's role before 1960.

The elites who established the republic largely came from military careers, but the new republic excluded the army from civilian politics, beginning in 1924. Mustafa Kemal himself left his post in the army and forced his opponents to do the same. Even though the supremacy of civilian administration was emphasized, the institutional structure of the republic gave the army a large autonomy, and it had the ability to exercise some influence over the civilian politicians.[120] Civilian politics were largely kept separate from the military, and the army, which was loyal to the regime, never questioned the main policies that were to be made by

[119] For a very detailed history of the multiple juntas and their interactions and motivations, see Ümit Özdağ, *Menderes Döneminde Ordu-Siyaset İlişkileri ve 27 Mayıs İhitilali* (İstanbul: Boyut Kitapları, 1997). .

[120] Ali Bayramoğlu, "Asker ve Siyaset," in *Türkiye'de Ordu*, ed. Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu (Istanbul: Iletisim, 20004), 65–79.

civilian politicians.[121] It was the party, not the military, which decided the main policies. However, in a single-party regime, the army was conceived as a part of the governing party. This situation complicated the passage to the multi-party regime. The Democratic Party suspected that the loyalty of the army was to the RPP and that it could intervene at any time. Indeed, one of the primary acts of the first DP government was to "purge the high command of Turkish armed forces, replacing the Chief of the General Staff and other senior officers with men not associated with the RPP and therefore politically more reliable".[122] During the 1950s, the Army did not play the role it played after 1960 and even though it was exceptionally autonomous regarding its duties, it did not seek to influence the DP's policies. In fact, the DP, ever suspicious of a coup, had successfully brought the high command under its control. However, the middle officers were not happy with the DP government. They relate more easily with the RPP's more elitist and statist tones, but they were against the economic policies of the DP, also. These greatly favored landowners and market-oriented small agricultural producers, but were detrimental to salaried public officers and the officers' economic situation had deteriorated significantly in the 1950s, especially in the second half of decade as inflation began to rise.[123]

Some middle-rank officers began to conspire to organize a coup as early as 1955. They shared little other than their economic woes and desire to remove the DP from power,

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[121] Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Turkey 1950-75*, 7.

[122] Ibid., 36.

[123] Keyder, *State and Capital in Turkey*.

however.[124] Some of them wanted to return to normal democratic politics once the DP was removed from power, some wanted to hand the government to the RPP, and others wanted a full-scale military dictatorship that would reform the country, even though the exact nature of these reforms remains unclear.[125]

Meanwhile, the political situation in the country was tense. Menderes governments had alienated the intelligentsia and especially the universities. The RPP's criticisms were getting harsher and harsher. The main tension was not about tangible foreign, social, and economic policies, though business favored more pro-industry economic policies as opposed to the ones that prioritizes agricultural capitalism. The primary cause was the handling of the opposition by Menderes. By 1960, the press was crippled by censorship; universities were feeling the heavy hand of the government if they dared to criticize Menderes. The DP, who already had confiscated a good portion of the RPP's properties in 1952, established a parliamentary commission among the DP's own ranks. The aim appeared to be the dismantling of the main opposition party. Even the DP parliamentary group felt uncomfortable with Menderes' tactics.

On May 27, the junior officers finally acted, believing that their conspiratorial activities were about to be discovered by the government, and they quickly seized power. The coup was planned in a hurry and did not have a concrete political program. But once set on the motion, it had to announce its intentions. In a declaration written hours before the coup, the conspirators told the world that their intentions to interfere with the existing regime were minimal. The

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[124] Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Turkey 1950-75*.

[125] Mehmet Ali Birand, Can Dündar, and Bülent Çaplı, *Demirkırat* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, n/d), 85; Cihat Göktepe, "Türkiye'de İç ve Diş Siyasi Gelişmeler: 1950-1965," in *Türkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi 1946-2012* (İstanbul: Ufuk Yayınları, 2014), 87.

declaration had two addressees: “our citizens” and “our allies, neighbors and the World”. Citizens were assured that the army was not targeting a particular group and was only intervening “to hinder fighting among brothers”, and that free and fair elections will be held as soon as possible. They also assured that all citizens would be treated “in accordance to laws and legal principles”. The “World”, on the other hand, was assured that the Charter of United Nations and Human Rights would be respected, and that Turkey would stay true to its alliances and international commitments. In other words, the coup represented itself as a minor adjustment which did not seek to alter Turkey’s identity. Its regime would remain the same, and its laws would still be valid. In a covert reference to the 1958 coup in Iraq, which eventually led the country to switch sides during the Cold War, the declaration also proclaimed its loyalty to the NATO and the CENTO (the successor of the Baghdad Pact that Iraq left after its 1958 coup).

Regardless of these assurances, the conspirators did not have a concrete, unanimous plan. Although they immediately declared that they had no intention to prosecute the members of the DP and that new elections would be held within three months, the emerging balance of power did not allow those promises to be realized. The junta asked the universities, which had been antagonized by the DP to write a new constitution. Professors, while preparing a document which greatly expanded civil rights, insisted that the *Ancien Regime* should be tried and condemned so as to secure the legality of the coup. Meanwhile, the army fell into disarray. Even after the purge of pro-DP generals, the upper echelons of the military found it hard to swallow the fact that they were subjugated to junior officers, and they organized in order to secure the army’s internal coherence. The conspirators themselves were divided between

hardliners who wanted to cling to power as long as possible and soft-liners who wanted to leave the government to civilian politicians as soon as possible. The main opposition, the RPP, emerged as the main civilian support of the junta while pushing for a return to democracy.

After several purges, many abortive coup plans, two failed coups, and the execution of Prime Minister Menderes and two of his ministers after a controversial trial, the new regime took shape. Even though it was based on a liberal and social-democratic constitution, one which was more in line with Western democratic practices than the previous one, the more lasting result of the coup was the emergence of the army as a meddlesome political force. The soft-liners in the junta, the universities, and the RPP managed to secure a return to democratic politics in 18 months, but it could only be done by allowing the military to institutionalize its political influence.

Western governments were mostly sympathetic to the coup, which was referred to as a "revolution" (using the same language as the junta). The declared aim, protecting democracy, was recognized. The most controversial act of the coup was to execute the former prime minister and two of his ministers. President Kennedy, President De Gaulle, and Queen Elizabeth wrote letters to the junta asking that they should not be executed, and Kennedy said that the executions would not do any good for the future of the democratic regime,[126] but the junta, feeling that a new coup within the army was brewing, did not listen.

[126] Birand, Dündar, and Çaplı, *Demirkırat*, 88.

On the whole, the new regime was seen positively by the Western media,[127] who perceived it as a move to save democracy from an increasingly repressive government. For example, *The Economist* said that the revolution made the West uncomfortable and that it was a retrograde step, but it also said that Menderes "had been heading for trouble for some time", that the army was ready to ally with progressive forces, and it was a fresh start for Turkey.[128] Similarly, *The New York Times* stated that "Premier Menderes brought about his own downfall by not comprehending the extent to which traditional political attitudes and habits had changed".[129] *Le Monde*, even when the names of members of the junta were still unknown, characterized Menderes's regime as a disintegrating one comparable to the last days of the Fourth French Republic and lavished the army with praise.[130] Tellingly, all media emphasized that Turkey was not likely to switch sides in the Cold War and that the Turkish army would allow free elections as soon as possible, which were both of the points underlined in the junta's statement.

Overall, the new regime was shaped by two antagonistic forces. On the one hand, there was an urge to keep developments within the rules of democracy and legality. Even though a pro-DP civil resistance movement was nowhere in sight, democracy functioned as the ultimate *ethos* of the elites, at least those in the winning coalition of soft-liners within the junta, RPP,

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[127] Peggy Bieber-Roberts, "America Looks at the Turks: Analysis of Major US Newsmagazines Coverage," in *The U.S. Media and the Middle East: Image and Perception*, ed. Yahya R. Kamalibur (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1995), 167.

[128] The Economist, "A Fresh Start," *The Economist*, June 4, 1960.

[129] The New York Times, "Turkısh Coup Surprises U.S. ; Few Thought Army Would Rıse," *The New York Times*, May 27, 1960.

[130] Eduard Sablier, "L'armée Prend Le Pouvoir En Turquie," *Le Monde*, May 27, 1960.

and universities. They were motivated by securing the reputation of Turkey in the West as well as not overstepping the moral boundaries. The top generals, however, saw in the authority of the junta and in the failed coup attempts organized by one of the leaders of the hardliners, Colonel Talat Aydemir, a direct threat to its institutional coherence and reacted by institutionalizing their role within the regime as the only way to provide stability and hinder new coups originating from the middle ranks of the Army. The institutional architecture of the new regime allowed the realization of both goals.

b) March 12. 1971: Generals "Balancing" the Pace of Economic and Social Development

Even though the 1960s were characterized by its constant meddling with civilian politics, the army did not intervene directly until 1971. After 1965, the Justice Party, which was the direct continuation of the Democratic Party, won the elections. The army leadership preferred to limit the JP's power by issuing occasional warnings rather than ousting it or attempting to control it entirely. On 12 March 1971, however, the coup by memorandum disrupted this equilibrium. The top generals issued a memorandum to the parliament and declared that the army would intervene if the current government would not abdicate and be replaced by a multi-party government. The memorandum argued that the government was unable to cope with the anarchy, i.e., the rising left-wing radicalism, and had lost "the hope of reaching the level of contemporary civilization". Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel obliged immediately; the opposition leader, İnönü first opposed the memorandum, but later changed his position and supported it. Though the army did not assume power, through *états de siège* declared in major cities, it had the opportunity to deal with the rising radical Left movements directly through repressive measures.

Yet the anarchy that the army had been referring to was not immediately visible. The 1960s witnessed three separate developments that favored the rise of the radical Left, which previously had been mostly confined to an illegal, small, and secretive pro-Soviet Communist Party. These developments included the expansion of political rights in 1961, the development of the industrial proletariat, and the influence of the 1968 student protests. Several university students, inspired by Latin American guerilla movements and the 1968 protests, had joined illegal revolutionary organizations. The reach of those organizations was very limited, and they were unlikely to accomplish anything other than shaming the government by kidnapping foreign diplomats. The real threat that provoked the army's reaction was the popularity of radical Left ideas within its own ranks. Quasi-Marxist doctrines spread by the journals *Yon* and *Devrim* were gaining popularity among military officers. According to these doctrines, Turkey was unable to develop economically because of its dependency on metropolitan capitalism and surviving feudal elements in its social fabric; a revolution spearheaded by "Dynamic Forces" was needed to realize true independence and democracy. "Dynamic Forces" were the army and university students.[131] It was the influence of this doctrine among the officers that triggered the March 12 coup. The specifics are still obscure, but it is certain that the army's perception of the political landscape was influenced by fear of a radical coup attempt, which could incite a civil war or alter Turkey's social structure and foreign alliances drastically. The top generals were convinced that removing the Justice Party from the government would appease the radicals within its own ranks.

[131] Gökhan Atılgan, "Yön-Devrim Hareketi," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce v8 Sol* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2007), 597–645.

The army, which was unwilling to expose the division within its ranks to the public, did not mention this threat in the memorandum, nor was it widely known by the public in the West. It only mentioned the instability and its willingness to keep the elected parliament open as long as the assembly did not overstep the boundaries drawn by the Army. However, the existence of a left-wing conspiracy and the fact that 12 March was a reaction to it is a well-established fact today.[132]

The West saw these developments through a new perspective, one in which internal democracy was expandable.[133] The West saw them through the dichotomy of stability and democracy. For example, *The Economist* congratulated the generals for not intervening directly and using the ultimatum as a natural result of the political violence.[134] All outlets represented the generals as reluctant interveners.[135] The most interesting analysis comes from *Le Monde* just one day after the memorandum. Written by a Turkish political scientist, Ali Kazancıgil, the news report on the front page claimed that "The Turkish Society is profoundly marked by the lateness of economic development compared to social and political development."[136] This view, of course, was rooted in Huntington's famous analysis offered in his book, *Political*

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[132] Mehmet Ali Birand, Can Dündar, and Bülent Çaplı, *12 Mart / Ihtilalin Pençesinde Demokrasi* (Ankara: İmge, 1994); Ümit Cizre, *AP-Ordu Iliskileri* (Istanbul: Iletisim, 2002), 71; Tanel Demirel, *Adalet Partisi: İdeoloji ve Politika* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2004), 63–64; Bestami S. Bilgiç, "Türkiye'de İç ve Dış Politika 1971-1983," in *Turkiye'nin Demokrasi Tarihi 1946-2012* (İstanbul: Ufuk yayinlari, 2014), 223; Doğan Akyaz, *Askeri Mudahellerin Ordu"ya Etkisi* (Istanbul: Iletisim, 2002), 312.

[133] Bieber-Roberts, "America Looks at the Turks: Analysis of Major US Newsmagazines Coverage," 170.

[134] The Economist, "Backseat Drivers Move Forward," *The Economist*, March 27, 1971.

[135] Bieber-Roberts, "America Looks at the Turks: Analysis of Major US Newsmagazines Coverage."

[136] Ali Kazancıgil, "L'Armée Turc Menace de S'emparer Du Pouvoir," *Le Monde*, March 12, 1971.

Order in Changing Societies, in which he argued that a high rate of social development relative to economic development creates problems of political stability. In other words, if the economy is not equipped to meet the demands of the population, the result is chaos. Huntington calls such societies "Praetorian Societies" and argues that military interventions are desirable in such circumstances for the benefit of political order: "Unlike student intervention, military intervention, which many people consider to be the source of evil in a praetorian society, may also be the source of the cure."[137] Starting from 1970, Memduh Tağmaç, the Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces started to analyze the Turkish political landscape using the exact same terms. In 1970, during a National Security Council meeting, he advised the government to amend the constitution in such a way that it would decrease the scope of political rights "to ensure that the pace of social development be in harmony with the pace of economic development."[138] The Western media, the army, and the no-Marxist segments of the Turkish Intelligentsia shared the language of Huntington and viewed Turkey through this lens. Huntington's analysis had provided the Army with a justification for the coup and it partially functioned as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The political projects and legitimizing narratives of the 1960 and 1971 coups were very different; the 1960 coup promised to expand freedoms whereas the coup in 1971 promised to trim them for the sake of stability. However, both were positively received by the Western media. In both cases, the army was represented as a benign actor that had runout of options.

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[137] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*, 240.

[138] Yankı Magazine, no: 113 quoted by Halit Çelenk, "12 Mart Hukuku," *Yeni Ülke Dergisi*, no. 3 (1978): 60.

The culpability lay with the repressive measures of Menderes in 1960 and the inability of the government to curb the rise of the radical Left in the second. Overall, the army was thought of as a legitimate actor within the Turkish regime, ready to correct the excesses of the democratic regime. The army itself willingly stepped into that role in 1960-61 as a progressive force as well as the guarantor of stability. Starting from 1971, in tandem with discourse in the West, the army dropped the progressive part from its discourse. Both 1960 and 1971 were, of course, reactions to complex political and social problems, but each was made possible by the perceived position of the West, and both formulated its narrative and actions by taking account of the ideological landscape in the West. Both, indeed, were sure that the coups will reinforce, and not hamper Turkey's identity and position as a Western ally, and yet the bloodiest chapter of the story was yet to come.

c) September 12, 1980: The Army Steps In

The March 12 coup failed to accomplish its goals other than curbing the left-wing agitation within the Army. As of 1974, the top generals were no longer able to act together as personal enmities and political disagreements surfaced. Civilian politicians were also no longer afraid of a military intervention, a fact that is demonstrated by their refusal to elect the Chief of Staff General Faruk Gürler as president despite overt threats from the army. The radical Left's influence and activism kept rising, and it started to struggle with ultra-nationalist para-military forces for domination of the streets. Meanwhile, together with global trends, the economic outlook worsened significantly. At a crossroads of severe political and economic crisis, on 12 September 1980, the Turkish army intervened once more under Chief of Staff General Kenan Evren, stating that the state had become dysfunctional because of the paralysis

of civilian politicians.[139] This time, the army established a military regime that would rule the country for three years, until 1983, using repression and torture as everyday tools.

The 12 September Coup was different from the preceding coups. First, the lack of state authority it referred to was very noticeable. The political violence that was waged between the Left and the Right had escalated to extreme levels and merged with ethnic and religious tensions. *The New York Times* summarized the situation quite well for its readers: "Over the summer [of 1980] a legislator, a former prime minister and a union leader were killed in the violence, which has taken more than 2000 lives in Turkey this year alone." [140] Second, unlike its predecessors, it was carefully planned by the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces. Its political aim, to crush the civilian political class and redesign it under the control of the army, was clear from the start, as was its will to return to democratic politics once it accomplishes its goals.[141] Also, unlike its predecessors, the top generals decided that, this time, half-measures would not do. A full-scale military regime that sought to redesign the country as a whole was built, and the it did not hesitate to dismantle the entire institutional framework of Turkish democracy.

In justifying the coup, the junta used a familiar language. It stated that it was intervening to prevent fratricide and civil war, out of necessity and patriotism. The democracy, in this language, was broken and would lead to a civil war. A military regime was better

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[139] See http://blog.milliyet.com.tr/12-eylul-1980---darbe-gunu-ve-mgk-bildirileri/Blog/?BlogNo=201315 for the full text of the army's statement.

[140] Barbara Basler, "Unrelenting Terrorism Set the Stage for the Turkish Coup," *The New York Times*, September 12, 1980.

[141] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 292.

equipped than democracy to counter this threat. That is, the status of liberal democracy as the ideal regime was kept in place, and its future was assured. The civilian politicians, however, had failed to provide stability and security for the country, which made the military regime necessary. Of course, this meant that democracy is not the ideal regime at all. Under certain circumstances, democratic institutions fail and degenerate into "anarchy". For this reason, the army argued, democracy should be redesigned under its auspices. The 1982 Constitution, drafted by the army, was the result of such a view. Along with consolidating the army's autonomy and its status as the guarantor of the regime, the new constitution restricted the use of political rights severely and clearly attempted to keep undesirable political ideologies such as socialism, Kurdish nationalism, and Islamism out of the political and social spheres.

How did this narrative resonate in the West? A common view is that the September 12 coup was directly masterminded by the American government, which was wary of the rise of the Left as well as concerned about the Islamic Revolution in Iran. However, there is no proof of direct American involvement, though there is evidence that the Carter administration was expecting the coup.[142] It is also important to remember that the coup coincided with the re-escalation of tensions between the U.S. and the USSR after the invasion of Afghanistan. Western Allies were, thus, particularly anxious about leftist activism.

However, the discourse of stability over democracy was already in place, which allowed the army and the American administration to behave in the manner that they did. Turkey was conceived by the media of the mercy in terrorism and irresponsible politicians. The Western media, while reporting the coup, emphasized that it was terrorists and politicians

[142] Demirel, "12 Eylül'e Doğru Ordu ve Demokrasi."

which had provoked the coup, and that the army had intervened reluctantly. For example, *The New York Times's* headline read, "Unrelenting Terrorism set the Stage for the Turkish Coup".[143] In the same article, the toppled government was criticized heavily: "With the Government barely limping along, terrorist activities in the country have continued almost unabated and virtually unchecked."[144] The army, on the other hand was concerned about the political violence and had, in the paper's view, intervened with reluctance. In a separate article published on the same page, the reader was reminded of the army's warning written nine months prior, inviting major political leaders to cooperate to deal with Turkey's security problems.[145] *The Economist* used similar language and went a step further, saying that the generals should have intervened earlier.[146] Overall, everyone seemed to agree with the anonymous U.S. State Department official who said that the generals had intervened to save democracy.[147]

To summarize, the West and the army shared the same discourse about democracy; although a military regime was undesirable, if civilian politicians were unable to provide stability, a military interregnum was necessary. In this view, democracy tends to promote instability, while a military regime led by responsible, patriotic generals is the cure for such instability, at least in the short-run.

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[143] Basler, "Unrelenting Terrorism Set the Stage for the Turkish Coup," a13.

[144] Ibid., A13.

[145] Bernard Gwertzman, "Coup Reportedly Bloodless," *The New York Times*, September 12, 1980.

[146] The Economist, "Third Time Lucky," September 20, 1980, 15.

[147] Gwertzman, "Coup Reportedly Bloodless," A13.

The positive outlook of the military regime was short-lived as the army kept postponing the transition to democracy and gross abuses of human rights became explicit.[148] The West quickly changed its tone, and the military eventually handed over the leadership to a civilian government in 1983. Even though the 1983 elections could not be considered a free election as the junta had the authority to veto all candidates and used this authority copiously, the army's ambition to redesign the party system failed. In 1983, it allowed three parties to compete: the National Democratic Party, the Populist Party, and the Motherland Party. The first two were directly organized by the army and were headed by former generals. The National Democratic Party was supposed to attract the right-wing voters while the second was supposed to attract left-wing voters. The Motherland Party, which was led by Turgut Özal, an economic bureaucrat who served under both the Demirel government and the junta, was allowed to organize a third party only reluctantly. The junta strongly supported the National Democracy Party, but the Motherland Party won the election by a wide margin, receiving 45.1 percent of votes. Within a few years, old political ideologies and leaders had crowded the political scene again, with the exception of the radical Left, which had been crushed utterly by the army and then undergone an ideological crisis as the USSR started to crumble.

The military had failed to redesign political life as a whole, but the legal architecture it established consolidated its role within the regime even further. In the years following the civilianization of the regime, the top generals were able to influence politics via a number of constitutional institutions, the National Security Council chief among them. In several issues

[148] Meryem Müftüler-Baç, *Turkey's Relations with a Changing Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

ranging from Cyprus to the Kurdish problem, the boundaries of political debate were effectively drawn by the army. Yet it faced two new challenges with the rise of the Islamist movement in 1994: the new, confident domestic organization and a drastically changed international environment.

5. Conclusion

When we examine how the three military interventions between 1960 and 1980 were represented in Western mainstream media, we see a common narrative. They analyzed the process that leads to the military intervention and, in all three cases, they came to the conclusion that the intervention was justified. In each instance, the leaders of the coup were thought of as reluctant actors who intervened as a last resort. Rather than being portrayed as power grabbers acting outside of their legal jurisdiction, they were shown as patriots who acted out of a desire to protect democracy. In each case, the status of Turkey as a key ally of the West against Moscow was highlighted, and the fact that the coup was not likely to change its allegiances was underlined. In each case, the incompetence of the elected government was explained to the reader. In the last two, it is also implied that the military would succeed where the civilian governments had failed: it will ensure the security of its citizens and end political violence. This is in spite of the fact that, in all three coups, in the medium-term, the army's intervention fueled more political violence, not less[149]. To summarize, the military was seen as a legitimate last resort solution when democratic institutions faced either a majoritarian government eroding democratic institutions or rising political violence.

This is not to say that it was the West, or the United States in particular, "caused" or "designed" the coups. Rather, we see a discourse that developed within a particular dialogue. In all of the interventions, one of the junta's first acts was to provide an analysis of the current political situation that justified the intervention and declared its goals. In all cases, the democratic regime was represented as an ideal that would be restored as soon as possible, but which had been unable to cope with the current situation because of the failure of civilian politicians. This narrative did not speak only to domestic actors, but also to international players, as evidenced by the reaction of Western mainstream media. However, this is not to say that the military is the producer of the message and the West is the consumer. The army's narratives are crafted in a way that would be acceptable to Western views. Not only did the statements emphasize the army's commitment to the *status quo* of the alliance system in the Cold War, but they also did not challenge the West's normative order. Moreover, the West was eager to see a patriotic force that could keep the power-grabbing, ineffective, and potentially corrupt politicians in check, while solving the problems that the civilian government could not. Huntington gave this narrative theoretical substance and, at the same time, provided vocabulary that the generals can use. In other words, this discourse was formed through a dialogical process that both domestic actors, such as the army, and international players, such as Western mainstream media, take part. Even though this narrative crystallized during the periods of direct political involvement, it also sheds light on the broader influence that it had been able to exercise during normal times.

Compare this, for example, with one of the most important coups of the post-Cold War era, the ousting of President Mohamed Morsi by General Sisi in Egypt on July 3, 2013. General

Sisi's narrative was very similar to that of the coups examined here; to protect the democratic achievements of the Egyptian Revolution, encouraged by millions protesting the civilian government, the army intervened and put an end to the power grab that Morsi was executing. The crisis was created by the civilian government, which had undermined democracy, and so the patriotic army intervened to provide stability and save democracy from the tyranny.[150] However, the reaction of the Western media was not fully supportive; although Morsi's actions were criticized, the army's narrative was met by skepticism. *The Economist*, for example, harshly criticized Morsi's attempts to consolidate its power, but was not enthusiastic about the prospect of a military regime. First of all, it believed that it would put the "country in a dangerous state of flux, and it will have sweeping implications for politics across the Muslim world"[151] Moreover, the Egyptian Army's more cynical reasons to intervene were stated: "It is not easy to see the 450,000 man force, long used to near-absolute autonomy, as an impartial arbiter of the popular will; it had its own reasons for wanting the Brothers out. Tens of thousands of retired officers form a thick and privileged web of interest, both in private business and state run firms, including those that run the oil business and the Suez Canal".[152] Therefore, even though the army is given the benefit of the doubt, the risk that they may grab power for their own purposes is made clear from the start. The narrative that *The New York*

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[150] For the translation of the full text of the army's statement, see http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2013/07/201373203740167797.html

[151] The Economist, "The Second Time Around," *The Economist*, July 6, 2013, http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21580533-egyptian-army-widespread-popular-support-has-ended-presidency-muhammad-morsi.

[152] Ibid.

Times is offering is exactly the same in its main themes; Morsi is criticized, but "[The army's] return threatened to cast a long shadow over future efforts to fulfill that revolution's promise of a credible, civilian democracy".[153] and use a concerned tone about the future of Egypt. Overall, the coup is seen as a threat to stability and democracy rather than a savior.

Of course, the contexts of those interventions are very different—which is the point of the next chapter. There, I will argue, using the Turkish Army's intervention in 1997 as a key focus, that the most important difference in context is the changing attitudes of the West rather than differences between the countries.

[153] David D. Kirkpatrick, "Army Ousts Egypt's President; Morsi Is Taken Into Military Custody," *The New York Times,* July 3, 2013.

CHAPTER III

THE RISE AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE NATIONAL OUTLOOK MOVEMENT, 1970-2002

1. Introduction

Islamists in Turkey established their first significant political party, the National Order Party (NOP), in 1970. This was a relatively late entry: socialists had been represented in the parliament since 1965 under the banner of the Turkish Workers Party, and the extreme Right had been represented since 1969 by the Nationalist Action Party. Both movements had more difficulties in finding supporters. Various Islamic political movements had existed before, but they had not established a party since the formation of the republic. One of the reasons for this delay was that an Islamist political party seems to be an oxymoron to Islamists as elections implied that the people shared God's sovereignty.[154] Indeed, the program of the NOP attempted to address this problem immediately after its introduction under the title "Our Understanding of Democracy". The program solved the dilemma in three strokes. First, it said, democracy is simply a regime that tends to favor the most deserving and the people who are the most eager to serve God. Second, democracy's foundation should not be "unfettered liberty", but "virtue". Third, democracy without virtue is certain to degenerate into anarchy, so it would be worthless.[155] Therefore, they argued, the democracy that Islamists are defending is different from the liberal democracy as it is based on Islamic virtues rather than individual liberties.

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[154] Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 46.

[155] National Order Party, *Program* (Ankara: As Matbaası, 1970), 5–6.

In 2001, the JDP, a party established by the "moderate" wing of the same Islamist movement, approached the issue in a very different manner. Like the NOP, its first order of business was to define democracy. The first program of the party was tellingly entitled "Program for Democratization and Development". It began its chapter on political goals with an uncompromising commitment to the Western ideal of democracy:

> Basic human rights and freedoms are an accomplishment of Humanity resulting from struggles that lasted centuries. The level of those freedoms is an indicator of the level of civilization in a society. The society expects that Turkey, which is a part of the civilized world, will rise to its rightful place regarding basic rights and liberties. Therefore, steps towards this direction should not be made because international institutions want them but because our people deserve them.[156]

As this quotation makes it clear, the JDP was putting an emphasis on its commitment to democratic ideals fully and without strings attached. Individual liberties were an essential part of that ideal, and the universal understanding. This is not to say that Islamic virtues were left out of the program. However, the tension between liberal democracy and virtue had disappeared as a problem; it was assumed that they were just two different agenda items, complementing each other. JDP emphasized that its understanding of democracy was compatible, if not identical with the

The differences between these two statements, both trying to introduce a new force in the field of party politics, illustrate that the vocabulary of the Islamic movement changed profoundly in the 1990s. This chapter examines the dynamics of this transformation before the establishment of the JDP, which claimed to have abandoned the ideology of previous Islamic movements. Before the establishment of the JDP, the most influential representative of

[156] JDP, *AK Parti Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı* (Ankara: AKP, 2001), 13. .

Islamism in Turkey was the National Outlook movement. The National Outlook movement is the name given to the Islamist groups that engaged in parliamentary politics under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan. The term is particularly useful as it makes it possible to identify a string of political parties, each shut down and succeeded by a new one, all led by Erbakan. They included the National Order Party (NOP, 1970-71), the National Salvation Party (NSP, 1972-1981), the Welfare Party (WP. 1983-98), the Virtue Party (1998-2001), and the Felicity Party (FP, 2001–present day). The JDP, founded in 2001, was a splinter movement which expressly rejected the epithet "National Outlook". After the establishment of the JDP, the National Outlook became a minor political power while the JDP shaped the course of Turkish history.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the transformation of the National Outlook movement in the late 1990s. To achieve this goal, two tasks should be achieved. First, the trajectory of the National Outlook movement up to the 1990s should be tracked, and the principal tenets of its identity that set it aside from other conservative political forces should be underlined. In other words, we need to understand its properties before its transformation. This can be done through tracing the movement's ideology in an isolated manner; this will be possible because part of the way it defined itself was as an anti-system force, actively refusing to come into contact with the West and Westernized actors. I will focus on this task in the first half of the chapter. Second, we need to evaluate the forces that incentivized the change in the late 1990s. The first can be done through a tracing the National Outlook's ideology in an isolated manner as, it defines itself by actively refusing to come into contact with the West and Westernized actors, hereby clearly positing itself as an anti-system force. I will engage this

task in the first half. Thus, in the second half, I will use a dialogic method to trace how the interactions between the West and the Islamists incentivized the reformulation of the Islamist identity.

I will argue that the National Outlook's defining feature was its relationship with the West and that what enabled its transformation in the late 1990s was changing international attitudes. The National Outlook differentiated itself from other conservative political parties by its vehemently anti-Western position. For this reason, its relationship with democratic institutions, which were of course exported from the West, was precarious. When the social and political developments of the early 1990s catapulted the National Outlook from the peripheries to the center of the political arena, it found itself vulnerable against the army. The National Outlook's interactions with the Army has also made clear that the Army's position was also precarious because of the evolution of the West's understanding of democracy. The army's narrative of saving democracy from itself no longer resonated with the Global Culture. The unexpected reaction of the West to the ousting of Erbakan from government in 1997 encouraged the Islamists to revisit their relationship with the West and to reinvent themselves as democrats.

I will explore this transformation in five sections. In the first section, I will address the terminological problem of Islamism in order to avoid the unproductive debate on which political parties should be considered Islamist. In the second section, I will sketch the early history of the Islamists who later gave rise to the National Outlook. In the third section, I will examine the political and ideological trajectory of the National Outlook until 1990, when it started to move from the peripheries to the center of political arena. In the fourth section, I will

give an analysis of the ousting of the Erbakan government, which occurred through a series of political maneuvers orchestrated by the Army dubbed the 28 February intervention. I will then argue that it was the success and challenges of this process that shaped the JDP's identity. In the fifth and final section, I will analyze how the influence of the West led to the transformation of the movement's identity, eventually causing its division.

2. A Terminological Note: "Islamism"

Analysts working on the conceptual issues around the relationship between Islam and politics are careful in distinguishing between the adjectives "Muslim" and "Islamist". The distinction is important for both political and analytical reasons. Politically, analysts avoid offending all adherents of a religion while criticizing particular political movements. This distinction is also analytically important: not all Muslims support political actors that seek to widen the role of Islam in political affairs, and many of them support separation between religion and the state and do not think that Islamic theology is inherently anti-secular.[157] The adjective "Islamist" is reserved for the individuals who do believe that Islam should play a larger role in public affairs.[158] However, the term has two problems. First, Islamism is almost always an exonym.[159] Even though there are a few intellectuals who embrace the term, most

[157] Such a view does not only disagree with Islamists, but also some Western intellectuals. See, for example, Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Policy* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22–49; Ernest Gellner, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Bernard Lewis, "Islam and Liberal Democracy: A Historical Overview," *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 2 (1996): 52–63.

[158] Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*; Martin Kramer, "Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?," *Middle East Quarterly*, March 1, 2003, http://www.meforum.org/541/coming-to-terms-fundamentalists-or-islamists.

[159] For an excellent study of the history of the term and the Islamist rejection, see Kramer, "Coming to Terms."

political movements and individuals reject it as a way of defining their identity.[160] This problem is exacerbated in Turkey by the legal restrictions over establishing parties and associations that seek to abolish secularism.[161] A second problem is that the definition given above has porous boundaries and Islamism, much like democracy, can be conceived of in degrees, rather than as an absolute. While some political movements which are labeled as Islamist demand nothing short of the re-establishment of a supra-national Caliphate, ruling according to a strict interpretation of Qur'anic law, others simply want the state to actively promote an Islamic way of life. These two problems make it difficult to conceptualize the National Outlook's ideology and, consequently, its transformation.

The first problem makes self-identifications unreliable. Many observers agree that earlier parties of the National Outlook were Islamist whereas the JDP is not,[162] and the spokespersons of the JDP insist that they are conservatives as opposed to Islamists.[163] The problem is that none of its precursors have ever claimed to be Islamist. This is for two reasons. First of all, legally, establishing an Islamist party was (and still is) forbidden in Turkey. Second, as I mentioned above, there are very few individuals who claim to be Islamists. Those who are

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[160] Yasin Aktay, "Sunuş," in *Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce v6 İslamcılık*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005), 16.

[161] Ibid., 15.

[162] Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*; Ergun Özbudun, "From Political Islam to Conservative Democracy: The Case of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey," *Southern European Society and Politics* 11, no. 3–4 (2006); Gamze Çavdar, "Islamist 'New Thinking' in Turkey: A Model for Political Learning?," *Political Science Quarterly* 121, no. 3 (2006); Çınar, "Turkey's Transformation under JDP's Rule."

[163] For a detailed analysis of how the word is used by the JDP representatives, see Ulku Doganay, "AKP'nin Demokrasi Söylemi ve Muhafazakarlık: Muhafazakar Demokrasiye Eleştirel Bir Bakış'," *Ankara Universitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakultesi Dergisi* 62, no. 2 (2007): 65–88; and for the most complete articulation of the concept by a JDP representative, see Akdogan's book. Akdogan is a longtime advisor to Erdogan and was later a member of the parliament for the JDP: (Yalcın Akdogan, *AK Partı ve Muhafazakar Demokrasi* (İstanbul: Alfa Basım Yaım, 2007).

called Islamists prefer to simply call themselves Muslims, implying that they are simply advocating for the correct and full interpretation of the "one true religion". Instead, they prefer the term "Islamic Movement" to differentiate themselves from apolitical forms of Islam.

This problem cannot be solved by applying the term "Islamist" to the movements that advocate the complete abandonment of secularism because of the second problem, i.e., the question of "how much". Not only are the stances against secularism variegated within the Islamic movement, but also, the word does not capture the distinction between moderate and radical Islamism, terms popular in the West.[164] Even though what is meant by "moderate" Islam is not always clear, it widely refers to the movements that seek to reconcile Western principles, such as democracy and human rights, with Islam while still seeking to Islamize the state to an extent. In other words, moderates are the ones who seek to find common ground between Islamic and Western political principles without reducing Islam to a private affair. Therefore, Islamists that are critical of secularism yet try to develop a dialogue with the West are called moderates, though the epithets "moderate Islamist" and "moderate Muslim" are even less popular than "Islamist". This is especially true in Turkey where "moderates" prefer to call themselves "conservatives". Still, the distinction captures the difference between the National Outlook and the JDP. Whereas the National Outlook refused to develop a dialogue with the values it labeled as Western, the JDP did so eagerly.

To summarize, while using Islamism as an analytical concept, we encounter problems similar to the ones we see in democracy. On the one hand, the problem is the symmetrical opposite. Everyone wants to be considered a democrat, so we need to distinguish between

[164] Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam*, 41–42.

democrats and pseudo- or semi-democrats. Conversely, no one considers himself an Islamist, so we need to distinguish Muslims who believe that religion is a private matter as opposed to a political project without the guidance of self-identifications. On the other hand, again much like democracy, political projects centered on Islamic identity have differing interpretations of the political ideals of Islam, and these are widely conceived as a matter of degree. To understand the transformation from the National Outlook to the JDP, such types of self-identification limited leverage. More important is the fact that while the National Outlook emphasized its anti-system, anti-Western character, the JDP presents itself as a mainstream force ready to engage with Western political values. In the following section, I will emphasize the National Outlook's defining characteristic, its identity as an anti-Western political movement.

3. The Roots of the National Outlook Movement

The term Islamism [*İslamcilik*] gained currency in the Ottoman Empire in the first decade of the 20th century to refer to intellectuals who believe that the weakened empire could be saved by a return to Islamic values, ending efforts to imitate the West (i.e., exporting institutions from the West), and being vigilant against Western influence over social customs.[165] In the succeeding two decades, however, the elite who adopted the exact opposite political program triumphed. The Kemalists established a secular state, adopted many Western institutions and laws to the letter, and overtly promoted some Western customs, most notably regarding women's role in society.

[165] Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı* (Istanbul: Simavi Yayinlari, 1991); Ali Bulaç, "İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı Veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli," in *Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce v6 İslamcılık*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005).

Even at this early stage, the relationship between the West and Islamism was more complex that it is assumed, and most of those intellectuals who had been labeled Islamists were not simply reactionaries holding to traditions against Western influence or progress in any shape and form. According to Ali Bulac, members of the clerical classes [*ulema*] at large were closer to this reactionary stance. From their point of view, any kind of reform which would diminish the authority of the sultan and the clerical class would only lead to an atheistic regime and moral collapse.[166] Other Islamist intellectuals, separate from the clerical class, were preoccupied with the causes of Ottoman decline and Western supremacy as much as the advocates of Western reforms. Intellectuals such as M. Semsettin (Günaltay), Namık Kemal, Muhsin-i Fani, and Ahmed Hilmi argued that the reasons for Western supremacy were not inherent in Islamic theology. Islam had a rationalistic, progressive core, but Muslims had lost it. The way to revitalize the Ottoman Empire was to revitalize this core in order to surpass the West in natural sciences and technology while preserving Islam's moral authority.[167] Therefore, the West could be imitated in the material realm as this would simply be a return to Islam's roots; but its philosophical views and moral customs should be combatted so as to preserve Islam's intrinsic superiority.[168] In some cases, this rediscovery of "seemingly Western, but Islamic in reality" values extended to political ideals. The liberal ideals of constitutionalism, which limits the monarch's authority as well as the French Revolution's

[166] Bulaç, "İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı Veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli," 59.

[167] Tunaya, *İslamcılık Akımı*, 19–21; Bulaç, "İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı Veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli," 60; Ismail Kara, "Hem Batılılaşalım Hem Müslüman Kalalım," in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce v1 Tanzimat ve Meşrutiyet'in Birikimi*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (İstanbul: İletişim, 2001), 243–51.

[168] Bulaç, "İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı Veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli," 60–62.

motto, “Liberty, Equality Fraternity”, were cast as essentially Islamic ideals found in the Qur’an by intellectuals such as Reşid Rıza, Ali Abdurrazik, and Seyyid Bey.[169] Therefore, a non-secular democracy was not possible in the West as Christianity did not have the liberal ideals that Islam have, but it was a must for the Islamic societies. These intellectuals lost their influence on political development, if indeed they ever had, and when the Kemalists gained power, other forces raised the flag of opposition in the name of Islam.

The Kemalists embarked on the ambitious project of building the state on a secular foundation, but the project did not only entail separating the religious establishment and the state, but also control of the religious institutions by the state.[170] In structuring this, there were two kinds of religious groups that could present a problem for Kemalist ambitions.

The first was the state-organized *ulema*, the clerical class educated in Islamic Sciences in higher education institutions called *medrese*s, whose graduates were hoping to find jobs as judges or scholars, but could also work as mosque *imams.*[171]. The value of this kind of cultural capital depended entirely on the state, and the education itself was largely, though not exclusively, organized by the government, though the *ulema* and *medrese*s had a significant amount of autonomy.[172] For this reason, when Kemalists abolished the *medreses* and

[169] Ibid., 64;Tunaya, *Islamcilik Akimi*, 48–53.

[170] For a detailed study of the complex relationship between control and separation dimensions of Turkish secularism, see Andrew Davison, *Secularism and Revivalism in Turkey* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), chap. 4.

[171] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 12–13.

[172] Ibid., 12.

completely secularized the judicial and educational systems, the *ulema* simply ceased to exist. *Medrese*s were replaced by new state organizations without a modicum of autonomy.[173]

The second was not a class defined and employed by the state, but instead an amorphous network, the Sufi orders [*tarikatlar*]. Sufism's reach was not as large as the *ulema* because, by definition, Sufism only addressed the best among Muslims. Each and every Muslim needed to pray in mosques and accept the judicial authority of the *ulema*, but Sufi lodges were, at least in theory, for the souls who sought to elevate themselves through the love of God. In the late Ottoman period several orders had networks of lodges of various sizes and influence. Some of the orders were (and still are) very localized, active in a single neighborhood or a rural area, whereas others had (and still have) a wide geographic scope. Some focused exclusively on the elites, while others attracted the uneducated poor, and larger ones served all social classes. Overall, every lodge had a different social basis, but as a network, Sufism cut across all regional, social, and economic lines. Each lodge was led by a sheik, who was acknowledged as a spiritual leader by its members, though the sheiks themselves are not part of an institutionalized hierarchy. Each lodge, therefore, was a hierarchical institution with the sheik at the top, but the sects themselves were mostly a loose network. Some of these lodges played important roles in social and political life as club-like organizations.[174]

Therefore, one of the Kemalists' crucial steps toward consolidating their control was the dismantling of the Sufi orders. However, the centuries-old institutions did not simply

[173] Ibid., 187.

[174] Ibid., 12.

disappear when sanctioned by the state; instead, they retreated underground.[175] Many of them simply stayed away from political life, focusing on their spiritual mission. The elitist Mevlevis kept their privileged position and gradually transformed into a tourist attraction using the visual charm of their "whirling dervishes". The Bektaşis, having close links to the heterodox Alevi minority, supported the principle of secularism and various leftist movements have occasionally found partners among them.

Islamist politics have been shaped by one of these orders, the Nakşibendis, and a new religious movement established by Said-i Nursi, a charismatic Islamic scholar influenced by the Nakşibendis.[176]. Nursi himself did not openly challenge the secular republic, instead he advised his followers to focus on understanding and disseminating the message of Islam. The Nakşibendis, on the other hand, occasionally organized open rebellions, most notably in 1925 in Kurdish areas under the leadership of Sheik Said.[177] It is important to note that each Nakşibendi sheik is entirely autonomous so one cannot speak of a Nakşibendi political structure or political thought, and the scope of the influence of sheiks has varied (and still varies) greatly. Similarly, the Nurcu movement (the followers of Nursi) fragmented after Nursi's death in 1960.[178]

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[175] Ibid., 204.

[176] Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 152.

[177] Ibid., 139–40.

[178] Elisabeth Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," in *Political Leaders and Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayarı (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2002), 129.

When Turkey transitioned to a multiple-party regime in 1946, the pressure on those networks diminished significantly. Islamist periodicals flourished,[179] and these networks partnered with center-right parties instead of supporting small, non-consequential political parties with anti-secular agendas.[180] Despite the DP and its successors welcoming the electoral support of Islamic networks, its leaders never actually challenged secular principles.[181] For example, when its triumph in 1950 triggered a wave of vandalism by the Ticani order, who targeted the omnipresent Ataturk statues, the government's response was swift and heavy-handed.[182] The relationship between Islamic groups and the center-right can be characterized as a distrustful partnership. The center-right saw Islamist circles as unreliable extremists and Islamists saw the center-right as the lesser of two evils. In these terms, the Nakşibendis and Nurcus had different perspectives. While most Nurcus thought that Islam should be kept above day-to-day politics,[183] Nakşibendi projects were more ambitious. In the 1960s, the leader of the influential İskenderpaşa Nakşibendi Lodge, Mehmed Zahid Kotku, sought to establish a political party which would directly pursue the cause of Islam instead of trying to rely on

[179] Bulaç, "İslam'ın Üç Siyaset Tarzı Veya İslamcıların Üç Nesli."

[180] Kemal H. Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: the Transition to a Multi-Party System.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 283.

[181] Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Turkey 1950-75*, 13.

[182] Karpat, *Turkey's Politics; the Transition to a Multi-Party System.*, 285; Ahmad, *The Turkish Experiment in Turkey 1950-75*, 42.

[183] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 156.

alliances with the center-right.[184] A Nakşibendi disciple, Necmettin Erbakan, rose as the potential leader of that party.

Erbakan was a successful, German-educated academic, who had studied Mechanical Engineering. He had close links with the business world,[185] the conservative wing of the center-right Justice Party, and Nakşibendi circles. He started showing interest in politics in 1969. In consultation with his sheik and his contacts within the Justice Party, he was first elected as the president of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges, capitalizing on the disgruntlement of pious small and mid-level entrepreneurs who had been harmed by the Justice Party's pro-big business policies. However, Süleyman Demirel, the center-right prime minister (and a classmate from his undergraduate years), forced him out of office. Then, he tried to be a candidate in parliamentary elections for Demirel's Justice Party, a venture Demirel managed to block.[186] At this juncture, Mehmed Zahit Kotku encouraged him to establish a new political party. He contacted dissatisfied members of the Justice Party who belonged to Nakşibendi and Nurcu networks and who had been kept out of Demirel's inner circle. The new party could not be formed before the parliamentary elections, however. Several Islamists ran in the elections as independents,[187] but only Erbakan won.[188] In 1970, with the blessings of Mehmed Zahid Kotku and the support of other Nakşibendi and Nurcu politicians, he established his first

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[184] Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," 128.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid., 130.

[187] Ruşen Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan* (Istanbul: Metis, 1990), 214.

[188] Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," 128–29.

political party, the National Order Party, which would later be known as the first of National Outlook Movement's political parties led by Erbakan.[189]

Before examining the ventures of the National Outlook, I want to emphasize three important characteristics already present in the party's establishment. First, pre-existing religious networks, mostly Nakşibendi, but also Nurcu, played an important role. Second, the socio-economic class which the National Outlook most easily resonated with was the small businessmen of the Anatolian countryside. Third, the boundary between the conservative wing of the center-right and the National Outlook has always been porous. Those factors shaped the National Outlook's trajectory before 1980. Erbakan found himself in constant need of forming alliances with various traditional religious circles that competed with each other. He tried to address the problems of small businesses while trying to increase the allure of his party among other classes. Last but not least, he was constantly in need of differentiating himself from the center-right while respecting the limits that were set by the constitution. All three problems made political maneuvering difficult for Erbakan.

4. The National Outlook Until 1990: On the Fringes of Electoral Politics

The best source that documents the NOP's identity is its *Establishment Declaration* from 1971. In this short text, the founders of the party addressed the nation as a whole, offering a brief analysis of the current international and domestic political situation and declaring their goals. The first discursive operation was to construct the addressee. It began by characterizing

[189] Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 217.

the Turkish nation as God's chosen people.[190] To them, the Ottoman Empire was a force that represented Islam against the West, and the modern Turkish nation's essence, the very center of its self-identity, was Islamic.[191] The poverty and powerlessness that Turkey struggled with was the result of Western influence, which also had led to the loss of Turkey's authentic identity.[192] The result was a materially and spiritually destitute Turkey: "an undefended spiritual realm that is open to the dual spiritual invasion of cosmopolitanism and communism originating from alien cultures."[193] The NOP's solution was to re-build Islamic civilization as a new society, distinct and opposed to both communist and capitalist varieties of Western civilization, surpassing it in both material and spiritual realms. Therefore, the NOP's mission was to recover the lost, true identity of the nation, and this identity was defined as a new civilization different from the Western Civilization. The declaration constructs both the party and its addressee, the Turkish nation, on a fundamentally anti-Western basis.

The second discursive operation was to distinguish itself from the center-right. Indeed, the declaration does not deal with the issue of how the party was different from the Left and ultra-nationalist Right. In contrast, the NOP carefully reconstructed its relationship with the center-right. It characterized the Democrat Party of the 1950s as a partial attempt at revitalization.[194] Its successor and the NOP's direct rival, the Justice Party, had lost its vitality

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[190] Founders of National Order Party, "Milli Nizam Partisi Kurulus Beyannamesi," 1970, 1.

[191] Ibid., 3.

[192] Ibid., 4.

[193] Ibid., 6.

[194] Ibid., 5.

and did nothing to recover the lost, anti-Western identity.[195] Both parties failed to see the spiritual aspect of the conflict, though they managed to provide some material gains. Therefore, what separated the NOP from the center-right was its identity as an anti-Western civilizational force.

It is worth mentioning that the emphasis on "our own civilization" is shared by later Islamic movements, and the antagonistic conceptualization of Western and Islamic civilizations is exactly what other rightist parties, including the JDP, tried to avoid. The first sentence of the Justice Party's (the NOP's main adversary at the time) program, for example, began with a promise to fulfill its commitment to the "Law of Contemporary Western Civilization" and "Universal Human Rights".[196] The program referred to contemporary and Western civilization several times, but an Islamic civilization was never mentioned. While other rightist parties tried to connect to the West, the NOP carefully dissociated itself from it.

Concrete policies were not present in the declaration yet, other than vague references to a third way economic development program approach between capitalism and communism, which was based on Islam, and to an Islamic reform of educational policies. Its position vis-à-vis democracy went unmentioned. As I stated in the introduction of this chapter, democratic elections and political parties, both Western institutions that fall into the category of spiritual rather than material, create a problem for the NOP. Ironically, the party chose to adopt openly Western organizational structures and rules in its civilizational mission. This tension was

[195] Ibid.

[196] Justice Party, "Adalet Partisi Tüzük ve Program," 1964, 43.

overcome by using democracy as a mere tool to be used in the service of virtue rather than as a value in itself. Similarly, rights and freedoms were mentioned as values that are truly Islamic and not Western.[197] Regarding liberties, only the religious are discussed, with the Ottoman Empire as the perfect model for the implementation of religious freedom. Human rights were also cast as disguised Islamic values. The perfect application of these values could be realized by referring to national consciousness, which already encompassed them.[198]

The tone of the text is apologetic. Unlike its rival Justice Party, the NOP had a hard time committing to the freedoms and rights written in the constitution to which it was legally bound, and they found it necessary to explain why it accepted those Western values. This apologetic tone is nowhere to be found in the JP's program, however, because the JP's interest in connecting with Islamic networks was limited while the NOP's very identity was shaped by them. In other words, the JP's identity was shaped by a dialogue with Western and Westernized actors, but the NOP's identity was shaped in dialogue with Islamic networks.

Despite its efforts to avoid legal pitfalls, the National Order Party's life was short-lived. It was established in January 1970 and was disbanded by the Constitutional Court a year later on the grounds that the NOP wanted to dismantle the principles of secularism and Ataturk's revolutions.[199] Erbakan fled to Switzerland to avoid persecution. Even though the Constitutional Court's decision was made just two months after the 12 March 1971 coup, it is hard to argue that it was a result of the coup. Not only was the case opened a week before the

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[197] National Salvation Party, "Milli Selamet Partisi - Program ve Tüzük" (TBMM, 1972), 5.

[198] National Order Party, *Program*, 7.

[199] AYM E.S.: 1971/1, K.S.: 1971/1, K.G.: 20/5/1971Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 209.

coup, but some members of the right-wing group in the army that had carried out the coup thought that the decision was a bad move. In their view, the NOP could be used against the rising influence of the socialist Left, and they encouraged the leadership of the NOP to re-open the party under a new name.[200]

A "replacement party" was quickly organized, the National Salvation Party (NSP). This time, the National Outlook was more careful, and the party program written in 1972 carefully avoided all conflictual issues.[201] As the 1973 elections approached, however, the party got bolder. The introduction chapter of its platform, written a year later, was entirely identical with the NOP's *Establishment Declaration*[202]. Despite its real leader's absence (Erbakan was still in Switzerland) the party had a strong showing in the 1973 elections, at the expense of the JP whose share of votes decreased to 29.3 percent from 46.5 in 1969. With 11.8 percent of votes, the NSP won 48 seats in the parliament (out of 450). Its support was strongest in Kurdish majority areas and provinces in which sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Alevis were rising.[203] Erbakan returned immediately after the election and took the helm of the party.

Overall, the NSP's message accomplished its goals. It managed to recruit politicians who hitherto had operated within the JP and mobilized Nakşibendi and Nurcu networks to garner votes. It managed to persuade Islamic networks and politicians that the JP's stance was not radical enough and that the revitalization of the Islamic roots of society could be achieved

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[200] Ibid.

[201] National Salvation Party, "Milli Selamet Partisi - Program ve Tüzük."

[202] National Salvatıon Party, *Seçim Beyannamesi*, 1973.

[203] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 210; Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 217.

through electoral politics. From an economic perspective, the National Outlook represented provincial interests, those of small-town businessmen in particular, who thought that the center-right supported a pro-big business agenda at their expense.[204] Many of NOP's founders were small businessmen and lawyers from small towns.[205] The mobilization that those individuals had was not enough to replace the JP as the leading force of the Turkish Right, but it made the NSP a significant force.

Though the NSP had performed well for a newcomer, the real winner of the 1973 election was the Kemalist RPP, which came first at the ballot box, though it was unable to form a single-party government. The leader of the RPP, Ecevit, had the task of forming a government and when Demirel declined to be his coalition partner, the only viable option for him was the NSP. These parties had diametrically opposed views on social and cultural issues, although they both emphasized issues of social justice during their campaign using different vocabularies. When Ecevit approached the NSP, Erbakan found himself in a difficult position. On the one hand, being a key part of the coalition government would increase the legitimacy of the party and protect it from sharing the fate of the NOP; on the other hand, there was strong opposition within the party against the move, particularly from its Nurcu wing.[206] Erbakan ignored the opposition and agreed to partner with Ecevit, gaining control of six ministries including crucial ministries such as ministries of Interior and Justice.

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[204] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 209.

[205] Ibid.

[206] Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," 121; Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 218.

As expected, the government was marked by tensions. The coalition partners disagreed on almost every issue. In particular, there was a dispute regarding the general amnesty that released political prisoners who had been sentenced after the 1971 coup, as the NSP was opposed to the release of left-wing activists. When Turkey invaded Cyprus in 1974, another quarrel emerged. Erbakan and Ecevit both tried to capitalize on the nationalistic fervor by discrediting the other. In 1975, Ecevit ended the government, hoping to force an early election and reap the domestic rewards of the Cyprus intervention. He was disappointed, however, when Demirel stepped in and forged the "National Front" between all right-wing parties, including the NSP, which used governmental resources as much as possible and worked to convince the nationalist electorate that Erbakan was the real force behind the invasion of Cyprus.[207] By 1977, the party had been deserted by its *Nurcu* wing as a delayed result of Erbakan's cooperation with Ecevit in 1972.[208] The ultra-nationalist and conservative Nationalist Action Party, with its para-military forces, also managed to capture NSP votes in central Anatolian provinces, where sectarian tensions between Sunnis and Alevis had peaked.[209] In the chaotic years characterized by growing violence and successive political and economic crises, the NSP tried to weather the times without resorting to violence, while expanding the party's influence as much as possible. But after the 1980 coup, all political parties were disbanded, including the NSP, and their leaders were banned from political activity.

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[207] Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 219.

[208] Ibid., 53.

[209] Ibid., 54.

Overall, even though the NSP managed to carve a respectable place for itself in the political arena and became an influential actor, it fell far short of realizing its goal to resuscitate Islamic civilization against the West. It failed to radically alter the Turkish party system consisting of two major political parties, one center-of-left and one center-right, and several small parties. But it did manage to become the largest and most significant of the small parties. Given the fragmentation within the party system, this position gave Erbakan significant leeway to influence policies. For this reason, the West had to pay a certain amount of attention to its would-be nemesis, though it was nowhere near the attention paid to the main two actors. The disdain was reciprocal. When the NSP performed surprisingly well in the 1973 elections, Western media outlets moved to introduce this new actor to their readership with epithets such as "theocratic obscurantists",[210] "religious puritans",[211] and "Islamic socialists"[212]. The NSP's image would get worse after the invasion of Cyprus, as it was largely assumed that its influence would keep more centrist figures from giving concessions in the negotiations with Greece and Cyprus, and compromised NATO's cohesiveness throughout the 1970s.[213] Erbakan and the NSP were seen as noteworthy, but without the tools to realize its maximalist, radical claims.

The coup of 1980 altered the political landscape entirely, but the junta's ambition to engineer it without the interference of established forces was short-lived. The Socialist Left,

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[210] The Economist, "Wanted-an Ally," *The Economist*, October 20, 1973, 43.

[211] Le Monde, "Selon Les Premiers Résultats Des Elections: Le Parti Républicain Populaire Semble Prendre L'avantage Sur Le Parti de La Justice," *Le Monde*, October 16, 1973.

[212] Mehmet Ali Kışlalı, "New Look But and Old Problem," *New York Times*, October 21, 1973; Le Monde, "Selon Les Premiers Résultats Des Elections: Le Parti Républicain Populaire Semble Prendre L'avantage Sur Le Parti de La Justice."

[213] For example, see The Economist, "The Rise and Swift Fall of Bulent Ecevit," *The Economist*, June 9, 1977, 43.

which was the coup's main target, never recovered from the joint impact of the coup and the fall of Communism in Turkish majority areas of the country. However, all of the other forces targeted and loathed by the generals proved resilient, including the Kurdish Marxist separatists. The supporters of Erbakan established a new party in 1983, the Welfare Party. The 1980s offered many short-term challenges that would leave the WP struggling, but also brought several opportunities that would benefit it in the long-term.

The first challenge was, unsurprisingly, the junta's attempt to re-order and control the political sphere in its entirety. Many high-level cadres of the NSP were either imprisoned or banned from political involvement. The fear of retribution from the army made propaganda very difficult. For example, the party's election platform in 1986 was simply a dry reiteration of the constitution drafted by the junta.

Equally important, the National Outlook had lost the support of some Islamic networks. The Nurcus had left the movement before 1977 and reestablished relations with the center-right the Motherland Party and, later, the True Path.[214] The support of the Nakşibendis had also dwindled, partly because of Erbakan's evolving leadership style. As Özdalga puts it, in the 1970s, he led the party as a *primus inter pares*; but in the 1980s, his leadership became undisputed and strict.[215] When his sheik, Mehmed Zahid Kotku died, he did not accept the leadership of the new, younger sheik of İskenderpasa Lodge, Esat Coşan. During the 1980s, the relationship between the WP and the Nakşibendis became increasingly tense. Finally, in

[214] Ruşen Çakır, *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi* (İstanbul: Metis, 1994), 114–15.

[215] Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," 137.

1990, Coşan accused Erbakan of putting political goals above spiritual ones and deserted the WP.[216]

Another important factor was the rise of Turgut Özal and his Motherland Party. Originally, the junta wanted to restructure the political arena on a two-party basis, a right-wing and left-wing party each led by former generals. They decided to allow a third party as well, headed by Turgut Özal, a bureaucrat who had been in charge of economic policies since 1979. Özal was, first and foremost, a champion of neo-liberalism, but he was also a Nakşibendi, though not nearly as pious as the leaders of the National Outlook. As Jenkins puts it, "Some aspects of Özal's lifestyle flouted conservative convention, including his appearances on television holding hands with his bareheaded wife Semra (born 1934) and her own equally public penchant for whisky and cigars".[217] Regardless, he became the champion of religious freedoms, and obtained support from many Islamic networks. The Motherland competition reduced the scope of the National Outlook's electorate. In the local elections of 1984, the WP obtained just 4.44 percent of votes as opposed to 41 percent for Motherland; even in 1987, when the Motherland Party started to weaken, falling to 36 percent, it got just 7.16 percent. The coverage it received in the Western media was limited to a few passing remarks on Erbakan's problems with the generals and its meager electoral performance.

For all of the difficulties, there were great opportunities as well. First, the 1980s marked the rise of Islamism on the international level. The 1979 Iranian Revolution, Pakistan's

[216] For the full text of Coşan's letter, see Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 48–54.

[217] Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008), 149.

transformation to an Islamic State after the coup of 1977, and American support for the Afghan Mujahedeen in their struggle against the Soviet Union signaled that Islamism was on the rise.[218] The National Outlook, hitherto operating exclusively on the domestic level, was now able to find allies beyond Turkey's borders. Second, the junta, much like the generals who encouraged Islamists to open the NSP in 1971, was of the opinion that Islam, under strict control of the state, would be the antidote against the rise of the Left.[219] Therefore, the 1980s witnessed a rise in Islamic education, and Turkey became a fertile environment for Islamist intellectuals. Lastly, the economic boom of 1983-7 had strengthened the pious entrepreneurs in the Anatolian small cities, providing the WP with a prosperous and influential new power base.[220] Finally, in 1990, these pious industrialists and businessmen established MUSIAD, an alternative business association to TUSIAD, which supported the interests of the secular Istanbul bourgeoisie.[221] Even though MUSIAD was and still is dwarfed by TUSIAD in every measure,[222] its support would prove very important in the coming decades.

To summarize, in the 1980s, the National Outlook was struggling. Its project to rebuild the true self of the Turkish nation as the center of Islamic civilization, which would be the nemesis of the West had not resonated with the population as much as Erbakan hoped. Also,

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[218] Bokhari and Senzai, *Political Islan in the Age of Democratization*, 15–16.

[219] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 284; Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, 142.

[220] Özgür Öztürk, "The Islamist Big Bourgeoise in Turkey," in *The Neoliberal Landscape and the Rise of Islamist Capital in Turkey*, ed. Neşecan Balkan, Erol Balkan, and Ahmet Öncü (New York: Bergharn, 2015), 128–29.

[221] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 93; Ayşe Buğra, "Class, Culture and the State: An Analysis of Interest Representation by the Two Turkish Business Associations," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no. 4 (1998): 523; Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, 154.

[222] TUSIAD members generate 80 percent of the total exports and employ 50 percent of the total labor force. See http://www.tusiad.org.tr/tusiad/verilerle-tusiad/)

its room for maneuver had been diminished by the repressive post-coup environment and the restrictions on rights and liberties, including the new constitution's 10 percent electoral threshold. Moreover, it found itself isolated as it alienated some of the Islamic networks that were unwilling to cooperate with Erbakan, whom they find power-hungry. Nonetheless, the National Outlook used this time to rebuild itself organizationally, a move which would help it exploit more favorable conditions in the 1990s.

5. 1990-98: The Rise and Fall of the National Outlook

As soon as the army allowed a transition to an electoral regime, timid liberalizing reforms started and, piece by piece, the controlled and restrictive political environment that the army had hoped would sustain itself gradually fell apart. By 1987, political parties other than Özal's Motherland Party began to campaign for the end of political prohibitions that the junta had imposed on prominent politicians in the 1970s.[223] The Motherland Party called for a referendum on reinstating the political rights of pre-1980 political leaders instead of restoring the political rights of its prospective adversaries, but they lost the gamble by a razor thin margin. As a result, politicians banned by the army, including Erbakan, returned to the political arena. By 1991, the Welfare Party felt safe enough to mount its offensive, its party platform being as aggressive as ever, if not more.

The party's situation had changed in three aspects during the 1980s: international relations, the organizational structure, and its economic basis. All these three changes prepared the party to use the opportunity it would find in the 1990s. Before examining the ideological shift, those changes should be briefly examined.

[223] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 280.

The first dynamic was external. The Iranian Revolution and the rise of Islamic movements in the Middle East had given stimulus and confidence to Islamic intellectuals. Erbakan started to emphasize more of his foreign policies, which aimed to build closer bonds with Islamic countries. Most importantly, he forged alliances in the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, which would help with the WP's finances.[224]

Second, the organizational structure of the National Outlook had changed. Not only had Erbakan started to control the party more strongly, instead of acting as an intermediary between representatives of various groups;[225] the party also developed an effective propaganda machine composed of dedicated individuals that prioritized face-to-face relations.[226] Building on this, the National Outlook adopted modern propaganda techniques instead of relying solely on traditional religious networks. By 1994, its organizational structure was widely perceived as the most effective in Turkey.[227]

Third, the rapid but unequal economic development of the 1980s prepared the ground for a cross-class alliance centering on Islamic identity. The neo-liberal policies of the Özal governments, coupled with rapid urbanization, had expanded two socio-economic groups.[228]

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[224] Çakır, *Ne Şeriat Ne Demokrasi*, 178–79.

[225] Özdalga, "Necmettin Erbakan: Democracy for the Sake of Power," 137.

[226] Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 224.

[227] Ziya Öniş, "The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective," *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1997): 761; Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 295; Çakır, *Ayet ve Slogan*, 225; Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey*, 156–57; Metin Heper and Aylin Guney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience," *Armed Forces & Society* 26, no. 35 (2000): 638; Sencer Ayata, "Patronage, Part and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 52.

[228] Öniş, "The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective"; Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 90–91.

One was the urban poor, who had been completely excluded from the fruits of the economic boom. The second was an "Anatolian Bourgeoisie", new businessmen and industrialists who were largely located in medium-sized towns and who owed their success in part to the connections they made via Islamic networks.[229] As the Social Democrats failed to garner support from the urban poor after their partial success in the 1989 local elections, and the MUSIAD has been established in 1990, the WP had both the funds and the opportunity to exploit these socio-economic dynamics.

In this context, the WP started to construct a new discourse, though it was not radically different from the previous one, but placed more emphasis on the party's anti-system aspect. The 1991 party platform, which bore the marks of Erbakan's personal style, marked the beginning of the WP's new offensive. The program was very unusual; it did not only abandon the hollow language of the previous party platform, but also used a poetic language instead of the legalistic and policy-centered language that usually characterizes such documents. It started with a very unusual "philosophy of history" chapter, arguing that the entire history of men has been characterized by the conflict of two civilizations since 2000 BC, one representing the righteous [*hak*] and the other fallacious [*batıl*]. In an eternal cycle, when one righteous civilization rises, it inevitably falls to be replaced by a rising "fallacious" civilization, which would later be replaced by the righteous. According to this Khaldunian view, in the last couple of centuries, the fallacious West had replaced Islam, but it was failing, and the time for the rise

[229] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 91; Evren Hoşgör, "Islamic Capital," in *Neoliberal Landscape and The Rise of Islamist Capital* (Oxford: Bergharn, 2015), 147–49; Öniş, "The Political Economy of Islamic Resurgence in Turkey: The Rise of the Welfare Party in Perspective."

of the righteous had come. The 1991 elections would mark the beginning of a new era and the rebirth of the righteous.[230] Therefore, the election of 1991 was nothing less than an epic battle between good and evil, the former embodied in the WP and the latter embodied in all other parties, which were the West's puppets. Indeed, the platform insisted that the real adversary of the WP in the 1991 election was the West and Zionism, which were one and same.[231] The WP went further than its predecessors in condemning the West and emphasized that all other parties were the West's pawns.

Tellingly, this uncharacteristically aggressive language did not lead to the renunciation of "human rights" and democracy. Unlike its platforms in the 1970s, the National Outlook did not try to handle the issue of democracy's Western roots, and entirely omitted the question of how it understood democracy. Instead, it used the adjective "democratic" to signal the policies it would implement and "anti-democratic" to signal the policies it did not approve. Moreover, it used the term "guided democracy" to describe Turkish democracy, but not in the usual sense of "guided by the army" but instead, "guided by the West and Jews".[232] Conversely, it tackled the issue of human rights directly, by providing a brief list of God-given rights that more-or-less aligned with the Universal Declaration, but which was far shorter and put emphasis on one's freedom to practice his religion.[233] The program did not mention the Universal Declaration, and implied that the WP's understanding of human rights is Islamic in origin.[234]

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[230] Welfare Party, "Refah Partisi Programi," 1991, 1–5.

[231] Ibid., 8.

[232] Ibid., 15.

[233] Ibid., 6.

[234] Ibid.

Despite the radicalizing rhetoric, these two concepts, which were questioned by most radical Islamists, were not challenged.

Even though the aggressiveness of the language and the conspiratorial thinking were novel, all of these themes had been used by the National Outlook previously. The real change was the insertion of a new term as a central tenet: the Just Order [*Adil Duzen*]. This term, albeit vague, was the National Outlook's attempt to develop a new program to answer the problems created by new socio-economic dynamics. Although the details of the *Just Order* were not fully explored in the 1991 platform, Erbakan gave details about it in a book he published the same year, *The Just Economic Order*. Indeed, some parts of the book and platform are identical. The *Just Economic Order* was Erbakan's answer to Özal's neo-liberalism. Even though economic development was still portrayed in conjunction with spiritual development, this time it went beyond that, and fleshed out how an economic order based on Islamic principles would realize both economic development and income equality. Neo-liberal language was used in parts of the program, which promised to diminish the state's role in the economy and support entrepreneurs. It also promised social justice through the implementation of Islamic principles. At the heart of the program was the idea of the abolition of usury, which were forbidden in Islam. The move to an interest-free system would accomplish three tasks. First, it would end dependence on the West by dismantling financial mechanisms that funneled domestic assets to it. Second, by providing small and medium entrepreneurs interest-free credit, it would generate investment and hence, economic development. Third, by eliminating inflation and stopping exploitation by the West and big business through financial mechanisms,

the pressure on low-income households would be lifted.[235] The economic program was clearly an articulation of the WP's anti-West, Islamic identity with a new cross-class alliance. The WP promised to solve the problems brought by Özal's neo-liberal, export-oriented policies in a way that would benefit the urban poor and small businessmen

This discursive strategy indeed gave the intended result in the 1994 local elections. The WP sent shockwaves to the heart of the established party system by winning 19.13 percent of votes, close to both center right-parties (the TPP won 21.40, MP 21.08) and well ahead of the leading center-left party, the SPP, which got 13.52 percent of votes. More important, it won in the two largest metropolises, Istanbul and Ankara, where it traditionally performed below its country average. This not only proved that the WP was no longer a perennial, mostly rural force, it also gave the WP control of a huge political machine. It is also worth noting that this was the first victory of Tayyip Erdogan, hitherto unknown to public, who became the mayor of Istanbul.

The platform that brought the successes of 1994 and 1995 was mostly similar to that of 1991, but it was different in one important aspect: it had toned down the rhetoric in order to appeal to a wider audience. The anti-Semitic vocabulary, the Islamic economic program, and the emphasis on building a new, righteous civilization against the West were still there. The millenarian language of the 1991 platform was kept out of the primary documents in 1994 and was replaced by the usual, unexciting language of lawyers and economists. This shows that, already in 1994, the WP was trying to moderate its discourse, while still maintaining its radical identity.

[235] Necmettin Erbakan, *Adil Ekonomik Duzen* (Ankara, 1991).

In terms of relating to human rights and democracy, there were two crucial differences. As in the previous program, there was a shorter, but similar list of human rights, which continued to be presented as an Islamic principle without reference to the Universal Declaration. The content of the list had been altered in a way to focus more on religious freedoms. In 1991, "religious freedoms" were one of the subtitles under the freedom of expression.[236] In 1995, freedom to believe held a title of its own, second only to the right to live, and was the only one discussed and explained in a detailed way.[237] The National Outlook was always critical of Turkey's secularism, but had not been vocal about it. In the mid-1990s, as the ghosts of the 1980 coup became less threatening and democratization began to dominate the political agenda, that started to change, basing its criticism of secularism on democratic ideals. It started to argue that the way secularism had been implemented in Turkey was fundamentally anti-democratic. In 1994, the WP suggested that the principle of secularism should be removed from the constitution, under the pretext that "democracy" was already implied in it. The suggestion has a long appendix listing other countries around the world, including the U.S., Canada and Western European countries, which mention god and state religion in their constitutions. In short, as the conversation on the liberalization of the regime expanded, the WP sought to contribute to the conversation, but with a single-minded emphasis on "freedom to believe".[238]

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[236] Welfare Party, "Refah Partisi Programi," 6.

[237] Ibid., 20.

[238] Welfare Party, *Refah Partisinin Anayasa Değişikliği Uzlaşma Teklifi*, 1994.

A second change regarding democratic ideals was the introduction of the concept "pluralist democracy". The WP argued that it advocated "pluralist democracy" while other political parties promoted "guided democracy".[239] Those familiar terms sound like a liberal critique of the regime, but the terms were not understood through their academic definitions. The adjective "guided" referred more to the West rather than to the army *per se*. More important, pluralism was not conceived as an anti-majoritarian term. Quite the contrary, the emphasis was on minorities (i.e., the secular establishment) dominating the majority (i.e., Muslims), even though the WP was not even close to winning a majority in elections. The principle of pluralism was mentioned and elaborated on by Erbakan in the crucial 4th Congress of the Party.[240] The speech was prepared in part by the Islamist intellectual Ali Bulaç, who had a sophisticated theory of Islamic pluralism. For him, the term referred to legal pluralism. It took inspiration from the *Medina Constitution,* a charter drafted by Muhammed when he first migrated to Medina and sought to rule the religiously heterogeneous polity. It recognized the supremacy of the Muslim majority, but also gave religious freedoms to non-Muslims; it created a pluralistic legal system in which every individual was primarily defined by his freely chosen religion. For Bulaç, this would be a genuine attempt to modernize and democratize Islam instead of mimicking the West.[241] Even though his theories have never become part of a concrete political program, they have been influential in WP circles.[242]

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[239] Ibid., 23.

[240] Necmettin Erbakan, "Refah Partisi 4. Büyük Kongre Genel Başkan Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan'ın Açış Konuşması," 1994.

[241] Ali Bulaç, *İslam ve Demokrasi* (İstanbul: İz, 1995); Ali Bulaç, "Medine Vesikası ve Yeni Bir Toplum Projesi," in *Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce v6 İslamcılık*, 2nd ed. (İstanbul: İletişim, 2005).

[242] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 119.

To summarize, by 1995, the WP's discourse was significantly different from what it had been in the 1970s. Economically, its vague advocacy of a developmental state was replaced by a hybrid, more detailed program that brought together neo-liberal terms, an emphasis on social justice, and Islamic principles. Moreover, its discourse was no longer marked by the need for an alliance of Islamic networks. In terms of this dissertation, the most significant aspect was that the way it treated Western concepts pertaining to the political regime had altered. It was still defined by its anti-Western zeal, but the narrative on democracy was no longer apologetic. Instead, these terms were radically redefined in an anti-Western way. Human rights were expressed through a focus on the "right to believe", democracy was redefined as a regime that protects the freedom to believe, and the WP experimented with the notion of "legal pluralism". Also worth noting is that the rights of the majority over those of minorities were already emphasized, even though the WP was still a minor party. This strategy would be successful in 1995 election, but it also would lead the WP toward the 28 February disaster in 1997.

The 1995 election happened amid the after-effects of the 1994 economic crisis, and Erbakan's party emerged as the winner. In spite of this, the parliament was bitterly fragmented (The WP had 158 deputies, the center-right Motherland Party and the True Path Party had 132 and 135 respectively, and the center-left parties Democratic Left Party and the RPP had 76 and 49 respectively.). The President gave the duty of forming a new coalition government to Erbakan, whose reputation as a dangerous extremist led to his eventual failure. After the other four parties failed to suggest a workable solution, he lowered his tone in order to find a suitable

coalition partner. Finally, six months after the election, Erbakan forged a new government with the center-right TPP.

Nevertheless, Erbakan found himself in a tough position. First of all, he had to give much more authority to his minor partner than usual. More important, he immediately attracted the army's open hostility - Unlike the similar case of Algeria, they adopted a wait-and-see strategy rather than intervening immediately.[243] His repeated attempts to ensure the army that he had no intention to dismantle secularism and democracy were undermined by his gaffes and statements from the middle cadres of his party.[244]

Despite the fact he had become much less vocal on his most controversial policy suggestions, including leaving NATO and the customs union with the EU, Erbakan's ambivalence toward democracy and secularism, as well as his foreign policy, which prioritized relations with the Islamic world made the Welfare Party unpopular with several actors, the army chief among them. Rather than intervening directly, the army, however, preferred to forge an alliance with other social actors and bureaucratic institutions.[245] The government led by Erbakan faced fierce opposition on all fronts. Big business and the biggest trade union confederations formed an alliance against the government, refusing to cooperate, and the mainstream media fueled secularist fears of a move toward an Islamic state.[246] However, the

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[243] Heper and Guney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience," 639–40.

[244] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 301.

[245] Heper and Guney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience," 647.

[246] Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey"; Gareth Jenkins, "Continuity and Change: Prospects for Civil-Military Relations in Turkey," *International Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2007): 339–55.

main actor that ousted the Erbakan government was still the army. On 28 February 1997, during the regular meeting of the National Security Council, an advisory body consisting of top generals, the President of the Republic, and the Prime Minister, and ministers with security-related portfolios, the army forced Erbakan to recognize political Islam as the biggest threat against the Turkish Republic and implied that a coup was imminent if he failed to agree with this.[247] Erbakan tried to preserve control through a rotation in power, leaving the post of prime minister to his partner in the coalition, Tansu Ciller, an unpopular yet more centrist figure (also, the first and only female prime minister in the history of Turkey) between 1993 and 1996. In response, in an unconventional move, President Demirel gave the task of forming the government to the leader of the third-largest party, Mesut Yilmaz of the Motherland Party. Yilmaz would have been unable to form a government if both the Welfare Party and the True Path Party had stood firm, but the secularist coalition managed to divide the latter by lobbying some of its members. With the support of these members of parliament, Yilmaz managed to form a new government.[248]

28 February came to be known as "the post-modern" coup because of the Army's indirect, somewhat timid approach. Indeed, there was nothing in the series of events that led to Erbakan's ousting that would have grabbed the attention of foreign audiences. There were no public ultimatums from the generals, no mass incarcerations, no violent incidents, and no military seizures of public institutions and radios. Every act that marked a cornerstone of the process was legal, though some decisions were based on shaky interpretations of the law, and

[247] The full text of the famous National Security Council Decision no:406 can be found at https://t24.com.tr/media/editorials/files/406.pdf

[248] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 301.

it owed its success, at least in part, to the ghost of a full-fledged coup. In sum, there was nothing headlines-worthy for the foreign media. This takeover is notably different from the coups discussed in the previous chapter and yet, unlike in those events, the army struggled to justify its acts in 1997.

Indeed, though the process hardly made headlines in the Western media, the reaction to and analyses of it came slowly, and they were overwhelmingly negative. This is surprising when this is compared to the responses to the three previous coups, which had been overwhelmingly positive. In the first three coups, the governments which had been deposed were pro-West governments while Erbakan was clearly experimenting with alternatives to Turkey's Western alignment. The absence of violence can be offered as the cause of the West's reaction. Indeed, the 12 September coup was realized in the context of extreme violence, but the same can hardly be said about the 12 March upheaval and not at all for the 27 May coup.

To understand this paradoxical situation, we first need to explore how the political situation in the mid-1990s was conceived by the West. Most articles featuring Turkey were connected to its aspirations of becoming an EU member as expansion dominated the European agenda. Other issues discussed were the human rights tragedy that accompanied Turkey's struggle with the PKK in Kurdish majority areas and the corruption of the political class. The rise of Islamism, starting from 1994, added another Turkey-related topic, but the West did not share the trepidation of the Turkish secularists. For example, the first reactions to Erbakan's premiership were cautious, but far from alarmed. For example, *The New York Times* said, "Mr. Erbakan's views have moderated over the years. He now pledges to maintain Turkey's secular

character and to play by the democratic rules that brought him to power."[249] It also maintained that "America would serve its own best interests and its democratic principles by extending the hand of friendship" to the Islamist government.[250] Still, there were questions; another news article conjectured: "Today, many were wondering which Necmettin Erbakan is their new Prime Minister: the pragmatic reformer or the militant fundamentalist."[251] *The Economist*, similarly, announced that "The Islamist-led government of Necmettin Erbakan offers no reason for alarm – so far."[252] In general, a popularly-elected Islamist government was seen as unobjectionable and even desirable, and Erbakan's anti-West promises were considered unrealistic, though it invited a watchful eye from the West.

When the military ousted Erbakan, albeit subtly, the reaction from the West was not strong as only close observers could see the importance of political maneuvers, but it was still negative. Two days before the 28 February, *The New York Times*, fearing a full-fledged coup, assessed America's options and encouraged the government to distance itself from "meddlesome generals" and stand with democratic institutions:

> While the generals' defense of secularism appeals to many Americans, the United States should recognize that another period of military rule in Turkey would do more harm than good. Washington needs to make clear that it favors civilian governance and would be obliged to distance itself from any military-dominated regime. […] Washington would understandably prefer a solidly secularist government. But for

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[249] The New York Times, "Turkey's Islamic Government," July 8, 1996, http://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/08/opinion/turkey-s-islamic-government.html.

[250] Ibid.

[251] Stephen Kinzer, "Man in the News: Necmettin Erbakan;In Turkey, a Zealous Pragmatist," *The New York Times*, June 30, 1996.

[252] The Economist, "Turkey Tilts Eastward," *The Economist*, August 17, 1996, 15.

> practical as well as principled reasons the United States should support democratic solutions to Turkey's problems rather than those imposed by force.[253]

Indeed, the American government acted along similar lines, as the *Wall Street Journal* article attested: "U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned the Turkish armed forces against "extra-constitutional" attempts to combat growing Islamic influence in Turkey."[254] Just after the 28 February National Security Council meeting, when it became increasingly clear that the crisis would be handled without an actual coup, *The Economist* repeated the tone of *The New York Times*. Though some of Erbakan's acts had been provocative, "nothing Mr. Erbakan has done, however, has directly undermined Turkey's claim to be a democracy."[255] They continued by saying that, by involving themselves in politics, the "generals have made fools of themselves."[256]

It might seem that this is an Anglo-Saxon perspective; both publications refer to Turkey's laicism as rigid and find the ban on headscarves counter-intuitive. France also featured a relatively strict secularism, which was the direct inspiration for the Turkish version, *laiklik*. With its own issues of rigid *laïcité*, was France's perspective different? An analysis of *Le Monde* suggests otherwise. *Le Monde*, in tandem with its Anglo-Saxon counterparts, insisted that Erbakan was a pragmatist and a moderate and emphasized that the radical projects

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[253] The New York Times, "Turkey's Meddlesome Generals," *The New York Times*, March 28, 1997.

[254] James M. Dorsey, "Turkish Prime Minister Resigns As Military Pressure Increases," *The Wall Street Journal*, n.d.

[255] The Economist, "Turkey's Troubles," *The Economist*, March 8, 1998, 18.

[256] Ibid., 8.

from his electoral campaign were absent from the government's program.[257] Regarding the events that lead to the Erbakan's ousting, *Le Monde* warned that "to eject the Islamist Party in power, risks radicalizing a movement, which has, for the time being. chose to act within the system".[258] Therefore, *Le Monde* was not different from its Anglo-Saxon peers in condemning the "post-modern" coup.

How can we explain the difference between the reception of the 28 February and the preceding three coups in the West? One obvious argument is that the West did not agree with the justificatory narrative of the army, which argued that fundamentalism, in the form of the Welfare Party, was a mortal threat to democracy and stability in Turkey.[259] 28 February was different from the interventions in 1972 and 1980, also, because it did not mention the government's inability to deal with violence as a justification. Instead, the elected government itself was cast as a security threat. Such narratives had been effective during the Cold War, both in Turkey in 1960 and in Latin America.

The crucial clue in the West's discourse was its dual character. As in the quote from *The New York Times* above, its distaste of the army's actions was based both on principle and on practice. Previously, the West claimed that democracy was the best solution in principle but that more coercive tools were necessary in some circumstances for the sake of the stability. In 1998, the West saw the army's actions as a destabilizing, rather than a stabilizing force. Democracy was conceived of as an effective means to provide legitimacy, whereas a military

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[257] Nicole Pope, "Les Islamistes Turcs Présentent Un Programme Modéré de Gouvernement," *Le Monde*, July 2, 1996.

[258] Nicole Pope, "La Guerre D'usure Se Poursuit Contre Le Parti Islamiste Turc," *Le Monde*, May 23, 1997.

[259] See the full text of the 28 February decisions in https://t24.com.tr/media/editorials/files/406.pdf

intervention was an antiquated tool that was likely to destabilize the situation further by radicalizing the anti-systemic opposition. The West was not convinced that anti-Western forces should be left out of the democratic system this time. Also, it emphasized that "the times have changed", and the institutions that gave the army its power had no counterpart in NATO, and it was time for Turkey, a candidate for the EU, to mature.

The times had, indeed, changed. This is not to say that violence as a tool for social control had become less effective at some point between 1980 and 1997.However, the self-conception and identity of the West and its relationship to the concept of democracy had fundamentally changed after the Cold War; in this sense, the times had changed.

During the Cold War, the West was convinced that liberal democracy was the morally and technically superior form of government, but that claim was hotly debated by the second super power as well as by communist political movements all around the world, including some of the most prosperous western European democracies. Yet, democracy was also conceived in the context of modernization theory: it could only thrive in the presence of a modern, industrialized economy. In less affluent societies, democracy would be fragile, and could lead to a social unrest that would end in a communist regime, an argument which was best articulated by Huntington.[260] Stability and democracy were antithetical. Therefore, the way Western countries distinguished between friends and foes had little to do with democracy as a regime or a narrative; instead, the deciding factor was the position taken in the struggle between capitalism and communism.

[260] Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies*.

Even in the 1980s, this discourse had started to evolve. Reagan himself started to see the dissemination of democracy as an effective tool in his struggle against the "Evil Empire".[261] He established the National Endowment for Democracy, though he did not hesitate to employ coercive methods, most notably in Nicaragua and Grenada. By the end of the Cold War, however, the willingness of Western elites to support anti-democratic regimes diminished. The developments in the world of political science and the rise of process-oriented transitology at the expense of modernization theory mirror this discursive change, as do the practices of several non-governmental and quasi non-governmental organization that sought to disseminate democratization. In the diplomatic world, the relationship was less direct: Western countries kept good relations with their key allies while condemning them as authoritarian regimes, especially in the Middle East. In spited of this, openly supporting military coups against democratically-elected governments became more difficult and less desirable. The would-be military and oligarchic dictators could no longer rely on Western support only by siding with it in the Cold War.

Turkey is an example of this trend and a particularly striking one. Turkey was a member of NATO and, in terms of the size of its military, it was second only to the United States. Therefore, its importance for the West as well as its organizational links was probably of a greater magnitude than any other third-world country army. Its enemies, the Islamists and the Marxist PKK, could easily be categorized as enemies by the West. The first one openly used Anti-Western rhetoric, and the PKK still used a Marxist vocabulary, although the Marxism of

[261] William I. Robinson, "Globalization, the World System, and 'Democracy Promotion' in U. S. Foreign Policy," *Theory and Society* 25, no. 5 (1996).

the party was a watered down version. Despite these reasons, the West was unwilling to support the Army in either of these struggles and constantly criticized human rights infringements and the extra-democratic means that were employed.

In other words, the differing coverage of the 28 February process by Western media was the product of a discursive shift. Not only did democratic credentials seem more important, but also, democracy was conceptualized as a tool to increase stability and not a luxury that could hamper it. Moreover, the army's claim that it was acting to "safeguard democracy and improve Turkey's image abroad" was not found to be persuasive.[262] If anything, its role was seen as an anachronism, an indication of backwardness. The army had indeed failed to accomplish one of its goals, proving that Turkey was a Westernized, civilized country, as any political act to prove this would, at this point, could accomplish anything but its opposite as a politically passive army was perceived as a crucial indicator of civilization in the West.

Indeed, the army did its best to oust Erbakan from government without a coup or even an official memorandum, and eventually succeeded. The question, at this point, is: how could the 28 February 1997 have been successful without relying on the good will of the West, as the others coups did? Erbakan's reputation as an extremist explains this success. Even though the West found the army's intervention distasteful, it was also worried about Erbakan's long-term goals, as evidenced by the media's coverage, and a more active sanction for Turkey was clearly out of question. More important, Erbakan found himself isolated in domestic politics. Many high-profile politicians in Ciller's TPP felt that aligning with an extremist was damaging for their political careers and left the government. (Ciller herself was unable to do so because

[262] See, for example, The Economist, "Turkey's Troubles," 18.

Erbakan had the power to pursue corruption claims against her). A protest wave that mobilized several NGOs and trade unions was already in place. Big business was less vocal, but generally saw Erbakan as a dangerous man.[263] Finally, the High Courts were strongly against him, and the Constitutional Court was the actor which finished the WP by dismantling it and banishing Erbakan from politics.

On a superficial level, the closing of the WP had nothing to do with the army and was an act of the independent judiciary. From the Western point of view, however, the court's act was the most outrageous. For example, John Shattuck, the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights for the United States, said that "Americans, as a democracy, will have difficulty understanding and reconciling this action with our concept of democracy."[264] Similarly, the British Embassy said in a statement, "We are concerned with the implications for democratic pluralism and freedom of expression, and will be discussing the closure of Welfare urgently with our E.U. partners."[265] The army's attempt to camouflage its offensive against the WP as a legal procedure did not stick and further increased the fears of Islamist radicalization in the West. It did mark, however, the beginning of the real transformation of Islamism, as Islamists saw that they needed to seek allies. The West was a potential ally in this process, and starting a dialogue was crucial. The dialogic process that would create the JDP started to gather steam at this point.

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[263] Patton, "AKP Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the EU Process?," 342.

[264] Stephen Kinzer, "Turks' High Court Orders Disbanding of Islamic Party," *New York Times*, January 17, 1998.

[265] Ibid.

To summarize, the new international discourse on democracy shaped the actions of the players. During the 28 February process, both of the major actors, that is, the WP and the army, experienced legitimacy problems because their connection to the discourse of democracy, or the "Global Culture" on political institutions in Meyer's terms,[266] was precarious. The army found that both its legitimacy as a political actor and its credibility as a stabilizing force were being questioned in the West and that it was unlikely to get the Western support it had been able to count on during the Cold War. The WP, on the other hand, was unable to capitalize on Western skepticism as it had built its entire identity on its antagonism to the West, and had also found itself isolated domestically. Even though the army was unable to play the role of savior that it had played before, by playing its cards carefully, it was able to oust Erbakan's government. The way both actors built their identity through speech acts and actions was at odds with this "Global Culture," even though they both, unsuccessfully, tried to connect their narratives to this Global discourse. The WP's use of the term "democracy" seemed inconsistent and unenthusiastic; the army's call for the defense of democracy and secularism appeared unjustified and anachronistic. The Army made major efforts to keep its action within constitutional limits to avoid a direct confrontation with the West, and managed to succeed. The post-Cold War discourse on democracy limited the army's room for maneuver, but the WP's distance to this discourse allowed it to accomplish its limited goals. It was this "Global Culture" that shaped the narratives and tools used in the conflict and the limited nature of its outcome.

[266] Meyer et al., "World Society and the Nation-State."

6. National Outlook in Dialogue with the West

Just after the generals managed to oust Erbakan, *The Economist* published a lengthy analysis of Turkish politics entitled "The Increasing Loneliness of Being Turkey",[267] assessing Turkish democracy and its relationship to the West in the context of Turkey's potential membership to the EU. In this piece, after emphasizing that Erbakan had already moderated his tone, the author imagined a dialogue between Erbakan and the army. He began by emphasizing that what Erbakan has already done was good, but not enough. He needed to start to a conversation with the army. *The Economist* suggested these cues:

> But Mr. Erbakan could go further. He could formally commit himself to the democratic credo already voiced by open-minded Islamists in other countries. What people believe or do not believe, says this credo, is their own private business; the state should keep its nose out. But both believers and non-believers should be free to put their ideas about the government of the country, wherever in heaven or earth those ideas are said to come from, to the country's voters. If they and their allies get the support of a majority of the voters, they can put their proposals into law, provided these laws do not clash with the country's constitution (which must itself have the voters' approval). If at the next election a different lot of people with different ideas win a majority of the votes, the first lot will stand down and accept the changes the second lot make, subject to the same proviso. Full stop. That is democracy.[268]
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Therefore, there were still doubts on whether Erbakan accepted the rules of the democratic game. The suggestion was that Erbakan should clear the air, so to speak, and formally commit to democracy. Only then, would the army play its role.

> In reply, the generals could say that their only concern is to preserve the rules of democracy. They do not support or oppose any particular body of ideas; they merely want to make sure that the voters can make the choice, and change their choice next time if they wish. Given Mr. Erbakan's commitment to the same principle, the generals will go back to their military business and watch the next election with impartial

[267] The Economist, "The Increasing Loneliness of Being Turkey," *The Economist*, May 19, 1997.

[268] Ibid., 23.

> interest. They might add, *sotto voce*, that if anybody really does break the rules they will know what to do about it.[269]

There was a role for the army to play; it could be the guarantor of democracy, *sotto voce*. What would happen, though, if this optimum scenario did not play out?

> If something like this happens, the Turks can resume normal politics. If it does not, they face an increasingly isolated future. A continuation of the army's campaign against the Welfare Party—maybe even a court order disbanding the party—will give new ammunition to the people in the European Union who say that Turkey will never be democratic enough to be a full member of the EU (even though its economic qualifications for membership are in some ways better than those of most of the EU's other current applicants). It would also make it harder for the United States to insist on Turkey's military importance to the NATO alliance, since the countries now seeking to join NATO are being told that they first have to prove they are good democrats. And Iran's mullahs will be even more anti-Turkey than they are now. [270]

Thus, given the lack of formal commitment on Erbakan's part, if the army had preserved the *status quo*, Turkey would find itself isolated, without a role to play on the world stage. These were the options that Turkey faced: democratize or become a country without allies and significance.

Of course, this script never played out. For one, Erbakan was not fit to play this role; he was fond of his position as a radical and unwilling to reinvent a new political persona at the age of 71. The army also was not eager to play this role either, given its success. Moreover, in the short-run, the backlash from the West did not come. Two years later, despite the fact that the army was still meddlesome, the EU gave the status of candidate country to Turkey, and the United States did not take any drastic action. By 1999, Turkey's future on the international stage seemed promising.

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[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid.

At the end, a similar script did play out as other actors emerged and who realized that allying with the West was an effective tool to break the secularist coalition. The actor who saw the need for transformation was not Erbakan, who tightly controlled the National Outlook, but younger politicians within the movement who would be known as the "reformists"; ultimately, they would break away from Erbakan and establish the JDP under the leadership of Tayyip Erdogan.

The existence of two wings within the National Outlook movement, one reformist and the other traditionalist, was first mentioned in the media in 1994.[271] At the time, younger politicians hastily rejected such labels, and the potential leader of the younger generation, Erdogan, emphasized that he was just an apprentice to his master, Erbakan.[272] There were no visible cracks within the WP, and Erbakan's authority seemed to be unchallenged. However, his increasingly authoritarian leadership, which had alienated some Islamic communities before, started to bother younger politicians, but no major politician within the WP attempted to capitalize on those feelings during the troubles of the 28 February process.[273]

In fact, the National Outlook was already changing its discourse on democracy as the 28 February process unfolded. Erbakan had already toned down the party's rhetoric before being ousted from government. After the collapse of the WP-TPP government, the WP started to draw attention to how the army's interference was not in line with the standards of the

[271] Ruşen Çakır and Fehmi Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan* (İstanbul: Metis, 2001), 157.

[272] Ibid., 7.

[273] Ibid., 159–60.

Western democracy.[274] The reactions from the West to the party's closure in January 1998 were encouraging. The U.S., the EU, and several individual European countries expressed concern, warning Turkey that dismantling the Welfare Party could be detrimental to democracy.[275] A *New York Times* editorial stated that "Turkey is wounding its democracy in a careless effort to preserve it".[276] *Le Monde* warned that this move would lead to radicalization of the Islamic movement.[277]

At this point, a dialogue between the West and the National Outlook started to emerge. Islamist politicians, who were hitherto unwilling to be seen with Christian Westerners, started to share their comments with the Western media, emphasizing the undemocratic way they had been treated by the system. They found receptive ears. Democratization, human rights and, as Erdogan was sent to prison for a speech he made in 1997, freedom of expression became terms more widely-used in their vocabulary. The program of the Virtue Party (VP), which had been established quickly by the cadres of the National Outlook as a replacement for the WP, had the subtitle "The Development Program for Democracy, Human Rights and Liberties, Peace, Justice and a Pioneering Turkey". In the program, democratization and commitment to human rights as they are expressed in international agreements are cast as the paramount objectives of the new party.[278] However, it was different greatly from the WP's 1987 program, which clearly

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[274] See, for example, Abdullah Gül's reactions in Stephen Kinzer, "Turks' High Court Orders the Disbanding of Islamic Party," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1998.

[275] Ibid.

[276] The New York Times, "Turkey's Politics of Exclusion," *The New York Times*, January 17, 1998.

[277] Nicole Pope, "Le Parti Islamiste Turc Du Refah Est Menacé de Dissolution," *Le Monde*, November 15, 1997.

[278] Virtue Party, *Fazilet Partisi Programı: Öncü Türkiye Için Elele* (Ankara, 1999).

avoided saying anything that could provoke the army. It actually openly targeted the army, stating that the current regime was a deeply flawed democracy and that the new party's primary objective was to transform it into a true democracy. It said, for example, that the National Security Council should be kept out of domestic politics.[279] The references to Islamic civilization and economic institutions based on Islamic values disappeared. The Virtue Party still used the language of the National Outlook and was led by the same cadres, but it was already emphasizing its commitment to democracy.

It actually seemed that Erbakan, who had been banished from political activity by the Constitutional Court, but who maintained control of the party, actually decided to play the role that *The Economist* had suggested. At the same time, the struggle between the reformist and traditionalist wings of the party surfaced and intensified. Erbakan was unwilling to go as far as the reformist wing wanted in moderating the Islamic discourse. He was determined to preserve the anti-system discourse of the party and, most importantly, he was doing everything in his power to obstruct the flourishing of intra-party democracy.[280] While Erbakan had agreed to adopt a new vocabulary, he tried to keep the reformist wing out of the management structure, bringing loyalists into important positions. One of those he tried to keep out was Erdogan, whose popularity almost rivalled his own and who was considered his heir by both the Turkish and Western media.[281] Meanwhile, Erdogan and Gül, Erdogan's future second-in-command,

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[279] Ibid., 61.

[280] Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, 99.

[281] Ibid., 101; Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," 345.

campaigned for "grassroots democracy".[282] Despite Erbakan's best efforts, it was becoming increasingly difficult to control them as he had no formal position within the VP, and the reformist wing was becoming more organized. As the party was busy with internal struggles, its performance in elections disappointed its supporters. In the 1999 election, it gained just 15 percent of votes, losing ground to the ultra-nationalist NAP. Afterwards, the competition between the two wings of the party became open. The reformists wanted a more decisive break with the radical past and a more democratic party structure, whereas Erbakan had interpreted the election results as the failure of opening strategy and tried to keep the party under his control.[283] From the perspective of the reformists, on the other hand, the reason for the failure was the fact that the opening did not go far enough.[284] In 1999 congress, the reformists openly challenged Recai Kutan, the Erbakan's favored candidate, but failed to overcome the power of his loyalists. Meanwhile, Erdogan was busy making new connections. He visited the United States numerous times, visiting NGOs and powerful lobbies.[285] He also connected with the big business in Turkey in a series of brunches,[286] and tried to convince them that he was fully committed to democracy and secularism. When criticized because of these meetings with

[282] Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, 100.

[283] Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," 348.

[284] Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, 104; Mecham, "From the Ashes of Virtue, a Promise of Light: The Transformation of Political Islam in Turkey," 349.

[285] Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*.

[286] Ibid., 176–79.

leading businessmen, he replied, "Don't ask me why I met with them, ask me what we've talked about. […] The World has changed."[287]

By 2001, the reformists were determined to go their own way. Expecting that the Constitutional Court would close the VP on the grounds of being the continuation of a banned political party, they organized a three-day meeting in May 2001, in which the participants laid out the principles for a new center-right party to be formed out of the reformist wing of the National Outlook. They were prepared to take steps that Erbakan would not: positing themselves a center-right party working within the system and developing connections with the West and the establishment. The closing of the VP by the Constitutional Court in June 2001 simplified the divorce between the two wings. The reformists, instead of joining the replacement party of the VP, the Felicity Party, established their own, the Justice and Development Party.

The JDP insisted that it represented a break with the past and the National Outlook Movement, rejecting the epithets associated with Islamism vigorously and adopting a pro-West, pro-EU posture. On the other hand, the Felicity Party, established by the core of National Outlook, reverted to old themes. In its platform for the 2002 election, even though the themes of democratization and human rights played a larger role, it was definitely closer to the WP's programs than the VP's. It again positioned the party as an anti-Western force, arguing that the roots of Turkey's problems lay in neo-imperialism and the Islamophobic attitudes that peaked after the 11 September attacks.[288] The economic problems were again addressed within an

[287] Ibid., 179.

[288] Felicity Party, *Saadet Partisi Seçim Beyannamesi* (Ankara, 2002), 7.

Islamic vocabulary. Democracy and human rights were mainly discussed in their relationship to religious freedoms. The party also emphasized its difference from the center-right, positing itself as an anti-establishment party. This back-to-the-roots approach was not going to pay off: the party would get 2.48 percent of the vote, and Erbakan and his loyalist would fall into political oblivion. The JDP, in contrast, received 34.28 percent, which put it in a position to shape the fate of the country, which I will discuss in detail in the next chapter.

7. Conclusion

I finished my chapter on the first three coups in Turkey with a comparison to the coup in Egypt in 2013: the Western attitude against the intervention of the Egyptian army against the Islamist government was very different from the reactions to the coups in Turkey. The army's narrative of stopping the power-grabbing and destabilizing acts of the Muslim Brotherhood was received with skepticism. This was in sharp contrast with the coups in Turkey I studied in that chapter. The Western reading of the 28 February events is actually very similar to what happened in Egypt. Unlike those events, however, the Turkish army intervened at a juncture when Erbakan had not make concrete moves toward monopolizing power; he did not have as much power, perhaps, but the incidents were viewed through a similar lens. According to the West, the army's reaction to the Islamist government was seen as an unwelcome event, unlikely to solve social problems and stabilize the situation, no matter what the faults of the civilian politicians were. The narrative of good guys in uniforms who had to act because of the excesses created by democratic politics was no longer working.

The empirical material here says little about the causes of this transition. It may be the end of the Cold War,[289] a consequence of globalization,[290] the result of intellectual maturation,[291] or even simply intellectual fashion. It might be a combination of these. Regardless, this change had real-life consequences. An actor which had been committed to the Westernization process, namely the army, saw that its narrative no longer resonated with the West. An Islamist political movement, which had grown out of traditional Islamic networks and built its distinctive identity on its uncompromising hostility to Western civilization, saw that dialogue with Western actors was possible. The 28 February process triggered a dialogic process which would alter the identity and future of the Islamic movement in Turkey and its fate. The army's room for maneuver and its ability to find supporters in the international arena had dwindled while Islamists found that building its own global connections was both possible and desirable. They needed to rethink the relationship with democracy and Islamic movement through a dialogue with the Western conception of democracy under the light of their experience of Army's intervention. Yet rethinking democracy in a dialogical manner involved the reinterpretation of the concept as much as adopting it. The tension between the processes of adoption and reinterpretation would become quickly apparent, as the next chapter will illustrate.

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[289] Michael McFaul, "The Missing Variable," in *Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Post-communist World*, ed. Velerie Bunce, Michael McFaul, and Kathryn Stoner-Weiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3–29.

[290] Robinson, "Globalization, the World System, and 'Democracy Promotion' in U. S. Foreign Policy."

[291] Amartya Sen, "Democracy as a Universal Value," *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 3 (1999): 3–17.

The story of the National Outlook reveals an important aspect of the dynamics of democratization in the post-Cold War-era. During that time, political actions that shaped the regime occurred in a framework that had been developed in dialogue with the West. However, in the 1980s, the Western discourse on democracy changed drastically; the army was no longer able to rely on the West's support by stating that its intervention was necessary to maintain stability and keep radical political movements at bay. This is why the army used indirect means in its struggle with the National Outlook. In spite of this as well as concerns over Erbakan's long-terms goals, the reaction from the West was unfavorable. This sparked a dialogue between the West and the National Outlook which eventually led to the split in the movement between the reformists and traditionalists. Both the army's timidity, relative to the Cold War era and its impact on the National Outlook movement show that the concept "democracy" played a different role in the post-Cold War era. The military's room for maneuver was limited as a response to the new discursive environment, while the majority of Islamists, who hitherto had defined themselves by their opposition to the West, were willing to start a dialogue which would transform their identity and affect their chances to shape the regime.

CHAPTER IV

THE JDP ON THE DEFENSIVE: CRAFTING A DEMOCRATIC IDENTITY OUT OF AN ISLAMIST IDENTITY, 2002-2008

1. Introduction

The JDP won the 2002 elections on its pro-West platform, carrying the label "conservative democrat" and engaging in an ambitious pro-EU reform project that sought to harmonize the Turkish legal system with the European *acquis communautaire*. In the aftermath, political scientists rushed to explain the phenomenon. It was interesting to academics for two reasons. First of all, it provided ammunition against Huntington's influential argument presented in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations*. Islam was compatible with democracy, civilizations could co-exist without bloodshed, and Turkey did not have to choose between Western and Islamic civilizations. Indeed, almost every article written about Turkey between 2002 and 2008 was an overt or covert polemic against Huntington. Second, the developments were conceived through the lens of democratization theory. Apart from the literature dealing with neo-liberal economic reforms, the majority of articles in that period conceived the recent developments as a case of democratization/consolidation, though it did not fit well into that formula as the regime had existed between democracy and authoritarianism since the 1950s. Regardless of this, the process of reform had been analyzed using the tools of democratization literature. As I discussed in detail in the literature review, there were three broad categories of explanation: structural-societal explanations that emphasized socio-economic transformations, institutionalist explanations that emphasized the institutional environment and democratic learning, and EU-centered explanations that focused

on the accession process and its effects on Turkey's domestic politics. All three approaches considered the policies of the JDP as a case of democratization and emphasized a different set of independent variables as leading to the JDP's rise. Societal approaches emphasized the growth of the civil society and economic development; institutionalist approaches emphasized the moderating effect of the institutional environment and the need to build large electoral coalitions to win elections. EU-centered arguments gave priority to Turkey's candidature to the EU. Ideological inconsistencies of the JDP were noted, but they were conceived as a residue of the past even though it was seen as a possible risk factor for the future of the democratization process. That residual factor would be summoned as a *deus ex machina* argument later to explain the failure of those theoretical constructs; this will be analyzed in the next chapter.

The literature's failure to take the ideational factors into account is inherent in the very nature of democratization literature and its concept-building strategy. When we use an alternative conceptual strategy and investigate what the actors meant by democracy empirically instead of defining it *a priori*, the trajectory of the JDP becomes intelligible without resorting to a mysterious evil demon which materialized to undo the work of structural and institutional variables. If instead, democracy is approached in a Wittgensteinian way so that we look at its uses in the real world, we will see that the democratization that the literature was speaking about was the result of a dialogical process in a global context where the JDP successfully asserted a new identity whereas its opponents could not transform their Cold War-era identities. But we will also see that the JDP's connection to Global Culture was not without problems, and the differing interpretations and uses of the democracy were already apparent. In other words, the JDP's initial years (from its establishment in 2001 to July 2008, when the

army's last attempt to threaten the JDP failed when the Constitutional Court declined to dismantle the party) were characterized by a double movement. The first movement was to distance itself from its radical Islamist past and connect to a global narrative. The second movement was a process of articulating a new understanding of democracy in its own vocabulary, a process of translation which involved contesting the global narrative. The connection movement, then, co-existed with the contestation movement.

The political science literature on Turkey documented both dynamics, but, as it was rooted in an essentialist conception of democracy, it was not perceived as two movements that would shape the new political architecture. Instead, it regarded the latter as a relic of the past which risked damaging the labors of the first; in other words, it was either one way or the other. The alignment was considered primarily the result of an institutional or structural change, while the Islamist-nationalist-majoritarian tendencies of the JDP were portrayed as an ideological residue of the past. Such inclinations only won a passing mention, however, usually in the conclusion of publications where future prospects are discussed. Later, when the discrepancy between these two movements became more pronounced, these ideological tendencies would take center stage as a *deus ex machina* solution to analytic problems in a way that is incompatible with the generalizations of democratization literature.

If there is indeed a double movement that explains both the JDP's democratic reforms and repressive tendencies, we should be able to identify and discuss two dialogic components. The first is the circumstance in which the JDP emphasized its identity as a democratic force and was recognized as such. Conversely, the army's narrative of defending secularism and saving democracy from itself was not found convincing. This dynamic is one I will address in

the following section. The second dialogic process is when the JDP re-interpreted democracy and cast its internationally-objectionable acts as democratic by referring to its own interpretation. I will discuss this in the second section.

2. The JDP Connects to the West

Throughout the period under scrutiny in this section, the JDP was not fully confident in its ability to rule. The ghosts of the "post-modern coup" of 1997 still lingered, and the JDP carefully avoided them in spite of the strong mandate it obtained from the 2002 election, when it won 363 of 550 seats in parliament. The first term of the JDP was characterized by economic recovery following the recession, the austerity program that led to the demise of established parties, and EU harmonization reforms., The EU candidacy process lost credibility in 2006, and when President Ahmet Necdet Sezer's term ended in 2007, the army mounted a new offensive against the JDP, using the same strategies it had used in 1997. This time, it failed; the JDP called a snap election, in which it won handsomely. And finally, in July 2008, the Constitutional Court refused to close down the party. After this, the JDP would start to act more boldly.

To summarize, the democratic reforms that characterized the period and the JDP's success in overcoming the military's hostility were the result of a dialogical process that led the party to transform its identity and prove the credibility of this transformation. In this section, I will show how this process worked in three sub-sections. In the first sub-section, I will discuss the uncertainties that characterized the first years of the JDP government and how the JDP's success and the recognition of its new identity were initially fragile. In the second sub-section, I will discuss how it transformed itself from an unknown quantity to the darling

of the international community. In the last sub-section, I will discuss how the crown jewel of the JDP's democratization attempts, its victory over the army's veto, was the result of its international recognition.

a) 2002 Elections: Uncertainty and Reactions

When the JDP split from the National Outlook movement in 2001, it did so with a pro-democracy platform. Erdogan and his allies promised a more democratic Turkey as well as more intra-party democracy. Observers had varying degrees of doubt about the credibility of this transformation, however. Both the Turkish and Western media often quoted Erdogan as saying, earlier in his career, that "Democracy is like a streetcar. You ride it until you arrive at your destination and then you step off." In response, they would ask: Had he really changed or was he using democratic rhetoric for cynical reasons, only to betray it later?[292] These suspicions of Erdogan's true motives were more pervasive domestically, and most Western actors were of the opinion that he deserved a chance to prove the genuineness of his new identity.

An important aspect of the 2002 election is the difficulty in explaining the JDP's success from a deterministic point of view. The party had won the election and acquired a vast majority in the parliament, but one must look at the chaotic nature of the 2002 election and its unusual results before attempting to understand the JDP phenomenon. The 2002 election was an unusual one, and several conjunctural factors shaped later developments. It was a snap

[292] The quote was so central to his public image that he had to address the problem directly in an interview, saying "the legitimacy of an instrument is as important as the legitimacy of your goals. If your tools are not as legitimate as your goals, you cannot produce real results." Interview in Zaman quoted in Çakır and Çalmuk, *Recep Tayyip Erdoğan*, 203.

election caused by the failing health of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit. As members of the parliament started to desert his Democratic Left Party, his ultra-right junior partner Nationalist Action Party, instead of seeking a workable solution, called for early elections. The timing for governing parties could not have been worse; the election happened in the midst of a painful austerity program following the 2001 economic crisis. Another unusual phenomenon that accompanied the 2002 election was the Young Party, which was established by businessman and media tycoon Cem Uzan. At the time, he was under fire because of serious misconduct allegations. Following the example of Berlusconi, he poured his fortune into the Young Party and decided to run on a text-book populist platform.[293] The snap elections caught him off-guard, and his party did not have time to fulfill all of the legal conditions before the elections. He managed to persuade the entire ruling body of a minor party to first merge with the Young Party, elect him as leader, and then change the party's name. This gamble would have profound effects on Turkey's political landscape.

When the JDP first acquired 34 percent of the vote, hardly anyone was surprised. The RPP's relative success, with 19 percent, was not unanticipated either; the RPP's reputation was untarnished by the devastating economic crises of 1999 and 2001, and it managed to attract the Finance Minister Kemal Dervis, a favorite of big business and the West, after the collapse of the Democratic Left Party. What was unusual was that the JDP got two-thirds of the parliamentary seats and the RPP got the rest; 47 percent of votes were not represented in the parliament. The Young Party's relative success, receiving 7.25 percent, kept two other parties

[293] Ali Çarkoğlu, "Turkey's November 2002 Elections: A New Beginning?," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 6, no. 4 (2002): 38–39.

under the 10 percent electoral threshold: the NAP (8.36 percent) and the TPP (9.54 percent). The single-party government would not have been possible if one of these parties had made it into the parliament. That outcome would have been possible if the governing parties had stalled the elections until there were signs of economic recovery or if the Youth Party had not participated. In that case, the army would have had more room for maneuver and the JDP less. The ascendance of the JDP was by no means unavoidable.

Another important observation to make is that, during the election, the JDP was by no means the West's favorite. At the time, the clear holder of that title was Kemal Derviş, a LSE and Princeton-educated economist, who had left his post as the Vice President for Poverty Reduction and Economic Management in the United Nation Development Program to design and oversee a recovery program for the Turkish government in 2001. He worked for the Ecevit government until July 2002 and then quit his job and joined the ranks of the RPP. An undamaged name and a favorite of business and big media, he managed to acquire a level of sympathy among voters. Western media, especially, showed him in a very favorable light. For example, *The Economist* published a profile of him, titled "Derviş: The Man Turks Trust".[294] The *BBC* published a portrait saying, "In the one hand there was a strong willingness to preserve the Turkish identity, on the other hand there was a strong desire to modernize and move westwards. Mr. Derviş might represent the best chance of combining those two desires".[295] *Le Monde* characterized him as a man who became politician reluctantly in order

[294] The Economist, "The Man Turks Trust: Kemal Dervis," *The Economist*, August 17, 2002, 45.

[295] BBC, "Profile: Kemal Dervis," *BBC News*, August 12, 2002.

to accomplish the task of unifying the Left and realize the reforms necessary in the path leading to the EU.[296] While Western media never failed to express concerns over Erdogan, support for Derviş was unequivocal. Derviş, in turn, would emphasize that the JDP was not as reliable as many thought. In an interview given to *Le Monde,* he said, "The head of this formation [the JDP] is certainly a moderate, but we don't know which direction will Recep Tayyip Erdogan's party, whose base is extremely conservative, will take. A minority within that party wants to change the constitutional secular basis of our system. This would be very dangerous."[297] There was also consensus about the fact that his outsider status was a hurdle as much as an advantage, as he lacked experience. Indeed, Derviş's adventure in the political arena would be a short one; he accepted the post of UNDP's chief in 2005 and left Turkish politics behind.

These two notes, the unpredictable nature of the 2002 election, and Derviş's status as the Western favorite are significant because they show the importance of looking at the political process in a non-deterministic way. First, the election that resulted in the JDP's rise as a power, which could persuade the West of its value and challenge the army, may have turned out very differently. Ecevit's health might not have deteriorated so quickly; the coalition partners might have managed to stall the elections a bit longer; Cem Uzan might not have abruptly decided to go into politics, or he might have failed to merge with an existing political party. The TPP, with the help of some random event or slightly better campaign tactics, might

[296] Le Monde, "Les Efforts D'unification Du Centre Gauche Sont Mis En Échec En Turquie," *Le Monde*, August 16, 2002, http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2002/08/16/les-efforts-d-unification-du-centre-gauche-sont-mis-en-echec-en-turquie_287476_1819218.html#2eUEC1KfzpePvXXt.99.

[297] Nicolas Bourcier, "Trois Question a... Kemal Dervis," *Le Monde.fr*, February 11, 2002, http://www.lemonde.fr/archives/article/2002/11/02/trois-questions-a-kemal-dervis_4247476_1819218.html.

have managed to acquire 150,000 more votes. Second, despite the best efforts of secular-minded conspiracy theorists in Turkey, it is impossible to say that any Western actor has effectively determined the course of Turkish history; Derviş, the most pro-West political figure in Turkey, with the most friends in Western capitals, managed to have an impact using those credentials, but he ultimately failed to change the country's course.

Once Erdogan's formidable election-winning machine, with the help of luck, had won the day, the JDP found itself in a favorable position. The economy, decimated in 2001, had nowhere to go but up. His neo-liberal economic program appealed to big business and the liberal media, which had opposed Erbakan fiercely in 1997. The army was unhappy, but could not move against the JDP because of the winds of optimism blowing around the JDP both in domestic and international levels. The international media signaled before the election that the JDP's victory was likely to be a positive outcome and, after the election, its reaction was unanimous, if cautious optimism. A brief look at how the Western media perceived the 2002 election demonstrates this.

For example, before the elections, *The New York Times* asserted that the JDP's moderation was a positive step, but, the *Times* made clear, if it was not genuine, the army could always step in.

> Throughout the campaign, Mr. Erdogan and other party leaders have projected a moderate, pro-Western, pro-European Union stance, even while promising observant Muslims greater freedom of expression, itself a contentious issue in Turkey. Yet they say their government would be defined not by religion but for being competent, honest and a beacon to democracy in other Muslim nations. […] The moderate oratory has helped tamp down some immediate concern about Mr. Erdogan and other party leaders, who trace their roots to the Welfare Party, the first pro-Islamist party to govern Turkey,

> which Turkey's army eased out of power in 1997 after only a year in office. Few doubt that the military would act as fail-safe again if, like the Welfare Party, Justice and Development became too Islamist.[298]

The Economist, which has long had the habit of openly supporting its favorite political parties in elections all over the world, following British tradition, actually refrained from endorsing anyone in this case. It emphasized, however, that the army's attempt to "pin the Islamist label to Mr. Erdogan […] did not stick", and that it favored a coalition between the JDP and the RPP, which would make "top business people and their Western friends happy".[299]

After the election, an editorial published in *The New York Times* reflected the general mood; it hailed Erdogan's victory as a good sign for democracy's progress in the Islamic world:

> Turkey's voters have thrown out a failed government and selected leaders who are in disfavor with the country's military and political establishment. This is the kind of opportunity people elsewhere in the Islamic world want and deserve. Turkey's election was noteworthy for passing power to the Justice and Development Party, which has been evolving from roots in Islamic sectarianism toward support for ties with Europe and the United States.[300]

Indeed, both articles I discussed here have another commonality: they both give advice to Turkish actors on what to do next. *The New York Times* suggested that "The next steps are crucial. Justice and Development must honor its pledges to protect the rights of the worldly as well as the devout".[301] Regarding the generals, the newspaper suggests that the U.S. should take action, saying that "Washington should use its influence with Turkey's generals to

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[298] Ian Fisher, "Party with Islamic Roots Likely to Win Turkish Vote," *The New York Times*, October 31, 2002.

[299] The Economist, "Throw the Rascals out," *The Economist*, November 2, 2002, 53.

[300] The New York Times, "Turkey Votes for Change," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2002.

[301] Ibid.

discourage them from meddling in democratic politics".[302] *The Economist,* on the other hand, gave advice only to secularists, who should let democratic politics takes its course. It also warned the EU that religion should not be a factor in the membership negotiations.[303] Similarly, *Le Monde,* in an editorial, emphasized that the JDP needed to prove the worth of its words with its actions.

> The JDP has the historical responsibility of showing the compatibility of Islam with democracy. It should prove that a "centrist Islamism" – to use the term of political scientist Olivier Roy - is conceivable, and it can integrate to a political game which is effectively close to Christian-Democracy. The odds are colossal for the Turkish military hierarchy which should let Mr. Erdogan govern and also for the JDP which is accountable for its promises. But the odds have implications outside of Turkey. If the JDP manages to reconcile Islam and modernity, the lesson would also be valid for the Arab world. The example of a party which synthesizes a cultural anchor in Islam and an indefectible attachment to democracy, human rights and especially women's rights can be decisive. That would be a game changer in the Middle East.[304]

As this quote demonstrates, the general mood of the West was anticipation: would the JDP deliver on its promises? This was a question that had to be addressed immediately.

Indeed, Erdogan's immediate reaction to his victory was cautious and in line with global expectations. He promised to not to meddle with secularism, not to create a tense situation that would provoke the army, and to focus on "the EU accession process, integration with the World

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[302] Ibid.

[303] The Economist, "After the Earthquake," *The Economist,* November 9, 2002, 13.

[304] Le Monde, "Notre Enjeu Turc," *Le Monde,* November 4, 2002, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/une-abonnes/article/2002/11/04/notre-enjeu-turc_296804_3207.html?xtmc=erdogan&xtcr=20.

and the implementation of the IMF program".[305] In a word, Erdogan took the stance that the Global Culture hoped him to take.

To summarize, the JDP's position in the aftermath of the 2002 election was both strong and weak. It was strong because it had acquired a majority in the parliament and both Global Culture and local elites were keen to give it a chance. It was weak, too, because its newfound identity was met with a level of skepticism and the army was clearly unhappy. In the following years, the JDP had to prove the authenticity of its democratic discourse to keep the army at bay.

b) The EU, Democracy, and Islam: The JDP Connects to Global Culture

The JDP's rule was characterized by neo-liberal economic policies and EU harmonization reforms in the ensuing four years, and signs of Islamicization were few and far between, which relieved the Western media. This provoked a flurry of analyses on two issues. The first was the compatibly of Islam with democracy, and the second was Turkey's candidature for EU membership.

The latter attracted much more attention because it coincided with multiple fault lines within the West. The United Kingdom and the United States were in favor of Turkey's membership, but the Continent was more skeptical. The Left was more open to the idea, while the more nationalistic, religious Right was against it. The cosmopolitan elite considered the pros and cons more carefully whereas the rightist populist organizations were fiercely against it. Those fault lines played a crucial part in the JDP's long-term trajectory as, ultimately, the

[305] Hürriyet, "6 Güvence," *Hürriyet*, November 4, 2002, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/index/ArsivNews.aspx?id=107551.

process all but halted in 2006. From a dialogical perspective, these fault lines matter little because the skeptics' position was not contingent upon the JDP's discourse or actions. The JDP has occasionally criticized that line of argument, but there were no actions that could have altered it. Therefore, arguments that were categorically against Turkey's inclusion in the EU did not shape the JDP's actions that sought to build its reputation as a democratic force in this period.

The perfect example would be the reaction to Turkey's EU candidacy from Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former President of France and, at the time, the head of the European Constitutional Convention. He gave an inflammatory speech shortly after the 2002 election that argued against Turkey's admission. He had three arguments, none of which were related to Turkey's democracy: that Turkey is geographically not in Europe, that Turkey would be unfairly powerful in European decision-making because of its population, and that the UK and the U.S. wanted Turkey in the EU because it would be their Trojan horse, which would stop the process of deepening.[306] Later, in a similar manner, French President Sarkozy focused on the geographical argument and stressed that the majority of the French were hostile to Turkey's membership, therefore suggesting that democracy required the end of membership negotiations. He said: "As you know, I have always opposed to Turkey's entry [to the EU] because of a simple reason: Turkey is not in Europe, it is in Asia"[307] Actors less concerned by political correctness such as extreme-Right political parties were boldly saying that Turkey

[306] Le Monde, "Pour Ou Contre L'adhésion de La Turquie À l'Union Européenne," *Le Monde*, November 8, 2002, http://www.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2002/11/08/pour-ou-contre-l-adhesion-de-la-turquie-a-l-union-europeenne_297386_3214.html.

[307] Le Monde, "L'essentiel de l'entretien du président," *Le Monde.fr*, April 25, 2008, http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2008/04/25/l-essentiel-de-l-entretien-du-president_1038543_3232.html.

should not be allowed in the EU because of religious reasons and a probable surge of immigration. It is entirely plausible to think that center-right leaders were motivated by the same reasons, though they refrained from saying so in public.

These arguments are of an essentialist nature; there are no actions that can be deployed against those arguments because they were against Turkey's adhesion in principle. At least on the basis of a possible EU membership, they cannot be a part of a dialogue. For this reason, in a specific, concrete issue like EU membership, the JDP did not seek to be received positively by everyone living in Western countries. Instead, it sought to craft alliances, convincing key actors with cosmopolitan point of views to support its ambitions, while ignoring those who were categorically opposed to Turkey's membership. In 2006, however, skeptics within the EU won the battle over Turkey's membership.

The former issue, Islam's compatibility with democracy, provided a more nuanced subject, a field in which the JDP could present itself as a legitimate partner, was considered in conjunction with Turkey's EU candidacy. In the framework of the September 11 attacks and the War on Terror, the relationship between democracy and the JDP was largely conceived as a security-related issue.[308] In Western thought, a functioning democracy governed by Islamists would be the best antidote against growing Islamic radicalism, which was at the top of the West's security concerns. Even before 11 September, in 1997, the Western media was concerned that the army's actions would push Turkish Islamists toward more violent, radical

[308] In this context, an interesting parallel to this study is the Copenhagen School's concept of securitization, which understands security as a discursive operation integrating a wide variety of political problems. See Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

options.[309] The JDP's performance in its first years further strengthened this view, and the proponents of Turkey's membership to the EU used this as their main argument. For example *The Economist,* at the end of a long leading article entitled "Turkey belongs to Europe" said, "Perhaps most important [as a reason for admitting Turkey into the EU], an EU open to Turkey should send a message to the troubled Muslim World of today: the West does not consider Islam and democracy incompatible as long as Islam doesn't".[310] *Le Monde,* similarly, perceived the JDP as a security asset in the aftermath of the al-Qaeda bombings in Istanbul in 2003 in an editorial:

> Turkey is not a random target. For radical Islamism, it is a triple, even quadruple, provocation. A Muslim but secular country, member of NATO, with strategic relations with Israel, EU candidate, ruled by an Islamic government determined to prove that Islam is compatible with the "absolute evil" which is the Western democracy… It is as if some Ben Laden sympathizers understood that democratization in Turkey would be a defeat for Radical Islamism bigger than the fall of Saddam Husain. For this reason, the experiment should go on.[311]

The New York Times, in the same vein, declared, again in an editorial:

> The reforms are intended to prove that Turkey is ready to begin negotiations on joining the E.U. The talks will start at the end of next year if Turkey makes the grade. Despite overwhelming public support for E.U. entry, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his party will still need courage to put the new measures into effect in the face of the entrenched interests of the military and other conservative forces in Turkish society. For taking such a bold step Mr. Erdogan deserves all the support he can get from Europe, which stands to benefit from the partnership of a truly democratic Turkey. The United States should put aside any lingering spite over Turkey's refusal to accept American forces during the Iraq war, and back Mr. Erdogan's efforts. Washington,

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[309] Pope, "Le Parti Islamiste Turc Du Refah Est Menacé de Dissolution"; The Economist, "The Increasing Loneliness of Being Turkey."

[310] The Economist, "Turkey Belongs to Europe," *The Economist,* December 7, 2002.

[311] Le Monde, "La cible turque," *Le Monde.fr,* November 21, 2003, http://www.lemonde.fr/une-abonnes/article/2003/11/21/la-cible-turque_342847_3207.html.

> facing an uphill struggle in Iraq, has much to gain from showing that it trusts moderate Islamists with the task of embracing democratic reforms.[312]

In short, at this time, the analysis that the JDP was the antidote of radical Islam was pervasive in the West. This assumption was an asset for the JDP as it strengthened its position both domestically and internationally.

The JDP's leadership sought to reinforce this idea. Erdogan said this plainly in a juncture EU-Turkey relations approached a crucial date:

> No one should assess that the EU is giving something to Turkey for free. Turkey has a lot to gain, but the EU is going to gain a lot by including Turkey. […] Turkey's adhesion will end the rumors and gossips that say that the EU is a side in the clash of civilizations, it is a Christian, geographic and economic union. It will prove that the EU is a political union; a union of values, it is a place where civilizations meet and reconcile.[313]

It is also important to emphasize that even though the compatibility debates were usually situated within the EU membership debates, as both politicians and journalists were inevitably drawn to the question "what is to be done?", it was also cast as a separate issue. Erdogan himself was very careful in distinguishing between the two. In his oft-quoted "Ankara Criteria" speech from 2004, when the relations between Turkey and the EU began to sour, Erdogan said that Turkey's democratization did not depend on EU membership: "Turkey will embrace the most advanced standards for its democratic regime, within or without the EU. I tell you, the Copenhagen criteria might or might not give the result that we expect on December

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[312] The New York Times, "A Changed Climate in Turkey - NYTimes.com," *The New York Times*, August 4, 2003, http://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/04/opinion/a-changed-climate-in-turkey.html.

[313] Erdogan's speech on 16 December 2003 available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp. .

2004. What happens if it does not? We call them the Ankara criteria and continue".[314] The JDP's narrative clearly marked democracy as a good in itself, rather than as a bargaining chip.

The Western media, too, saw it as a separate issue. The question that drew the Western media was: why were Turkey and few other countries, such as Indonesia, reconciling Islam and democracy, while the vast majority were not? The academic world aside, the analyses were usually a modernization-inspired argument of Turkish exceptionalism, which we may call "Cronus argument". Like Cronus, who was once the rightful king of Olympus, but who was destined to be overthrown by Zeus no matter what he did, Kemalism had created a country where moderate, pro-democratic Islamists could grow, but it was now an anachronistic force that was fighting the forces of democratization in vain. Other Muslim countries, however, did not have their own version of Kemalism, at least not as effective versions. Kemalism had helped Turkish society to mature, but now it was time to gracefully step down.

One example would be an analysis by *Le Monde*, published shortly after the 2002 election. The analysis started with a short appraisal of Kemalism, which ended badly:

> Enjoying a rare status in a region where democracy has difficulties, Turkey, has all of its superficial attributes: real alteration in power, a vivid civil society, a dynamic private sector. It was Mustafa Kemal, a young officer determined to build a West-inspired republic over the ashes of the Empire in 1923, who gave it its institutions. Since then, the Army never stopped to be the real power behind the curtains. In Turkey, it's the Army which decides grand orientations of the foreign policy and determines the rules of the political game. Three times, it intervened brutally in the name of "national security", in 1960.1971 and 1980.[315]

[314] Erdogan's speech on 4 May 2004, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp. .

[315] Marie Jego, "L'ombre Pesante de l'Armée," *Le Monde*, December 14, 2002.

The analysis, after summarizing the Army's perverse effect on Turkish politics and rise of a democratic Islamism, ended on a cautious note:

> Largely celebrated by actors including financial circles in search of stability, would the Islamist victory be enough to put Turkey on the path to change? The European contract that all countries accept supposes that generals will accept to reduce their grip over the political life. Are they ready?[316]

At the time, the JDP's time in power had been too short, so *Le Monde* finished its analysis with a question mark. In 2007, when the JDP won its first open battle against the army, the analysts felt more confident in the success of the Turkish Model. For example, *The Economist* discussed the viability of the Turkish Model for other Muslim countries and settled on a Turkish exceptionalism:

> Is there a lesson in Turkey for the future of democracy in the wider Muslim world? Yes, but approach with care. There are many paths to democracy, and the right choice varies from place to place. Turkey has an exceptional history. Simplifying mightily, its bumpy path to democratization goes roughly as follows: set up an empire; inherit a caliphate; fight on the losing side in a world war; in desperation dissolve the caliphate and submit to the autocratic rule of a moderniser who pushes Islam ruthlessly to the margins; then wait the better half of a century for the emergence of an Islamist party that looks mild and moderate enough to be trusted with the reins of government. In short, squeeze Islam out of political life for decades before gingerly allowing a tamed version back in. […] The trouble with this approach (apart from the long wait) is that things can go calamitously wrong both at the squeezing-out stage and at the letting-in stage.[317]

The author goes on to compare the failure of the imitators of Mustafa Kemal in Algeria and Iran. What made the difference in Turkey? The author thinks that it was the willingness of

[316] Ibid.

[317] The Economist, "The Lesson from Turkey," *The Economist*, July 28, 2007, 13.

the JDP to learn and adapt to the rules of the democratic game.[318] *The New York Times* echoes the same argument:

> […] the system Ataturk built settled deeply into Turkish society. It brought Turkey up to levels of economic and social development on par with Europe. The secular establishment produced wealthy families who established generously endowed private universities and museums. Turkey became largely literate and acquired a growing middle class. But politically it remained frozen in time. While Europe redefined its ideas of modernity in ways that emphasized democracy, tolerance and human rights, Turkey's leaders continued down a path of rigid, corrupt and sometimes harshly repressive rule. The military remained the central guardian of Ataturk's legacy, ousting four elected governments in the last four decades of the 20th century. A period of economic openness in the 1980s was the one sustained break in the pattern of state control. […] A turning point came in 2002, when voters rebelled against a spectacular display of corruption and incompetence by the secular parties and elected instead the party of Recep Tayyip Erdogan -a former mayor of Istanbul whose party, despite its Islamic roots, had proved adaptable to the rules of democracy while holding municipal power.[319]

These analyses are not in line with the JDP's own perception of Turkish history, but it eventually approved its identity: an actor to transcend the undemocratic conflicts of the past, capable of creating a new, democratic Turkey.

To summarize, though the peculiarities of Turkish experience in the wider Muslim world were recognized, still, the JDP was considered a success story and an example that should be supported by the West. Ultimately, it was a security question; Islamic radicalism was a threat for the West's security, and the JDP offered an antidote, as it proved that

[318] Ibid., 14.

[319] Sabrina Tavernise, "A Rumble Is Heard in Ataturk's Grave," *The New York Times*, May 20, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/20/weekinreview/20tavernise.html.

democratic Islamism was possible, and this demonstration effect was something the West needed. So, the JDP deserved Western support.

c) The JDP Triumphs: The E-coup of 2007 and the Closure Case against the JDP

The pervasiveness of this argument did not hinder the sudden break in Turkish-EU relations in 2006. Its immediate cause was not Turkey's credentials as a democracy, though the pace of reforms slowed after 2004 and observers had started to talk about reform fatigue.[320] The apparent reason was the deadlock on the issue of Cyprus, but overall, it was the triumph of actors who opposed Turkey's membership categorically. However, the short-term prospects of joining the EU proved to be less important than the JDP's overall credibility as a democratic actor when the army made its move in 2007.

The trigger for the army's actions in 2007 was the upcoming presidential election. The largely ceremonial, but still important post of presidency was occupied by Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the former president of the Turkish Constitutional Court and a staunch secularist. He was elected by the parliament in 2000 for a seven-year term. During his tenure he was able to block some of the JDP's legal initiatives by referring them to the Constitutional Court; he also kept JDP sympathizers out of some crucial bureaucratic posts, such as university presidencies and the High Courts. At the end of his term, the JDP was in a position to elect its own candidate and was not inclined to elect an impartial, "above-party politics" candidate for the post, as its opponents wanted. but the party refused to name a candidate. It was widely speculated that it would be either Erdogan himself or Gul, his second-in-command, a less polarizing figure who

[320] Patton, "AKP Reform Fatigue in Turkey: What Has Happened to the EU Process?"

was also less ambitious and so more suited to a ceremonial post. One big problem was that both their wives wore headscarves, which was perceived by secularists and especially by the army as a symbol of reactionary Islam and an uncivilized life style. The thought that the first lady, who would symbolically represent Turkey in some diplomatic milieus, would wear a headscarf was revolting to the army.

The army was relatively silent until 2007. The truth behind the allegations of planned coups between 2002 and 2007 has been very difficult to ascertain as the legal process against them was also highly political. At this point, it is impossible to determine the exact nature of the generals' actions and reasoning in this period, but the events of 2007 and 2008 are instructive and show why an intervention in between 2002 and 2007 would have been very difficult to execute.

As the presidential elections in the parliament approached, the army started to be more outspoken and openly critical of the government.[321] The political situation was already tense, as Armenian journalist, Hrant Dink, and some members of the Administrative High Court were assassinated at the beginning of 2007, apparently by nationalist extremists. Secularists started to organize a series of anti-government protests called "Republican Rallies," and managed to mobilize hundreds of thousands of people. The JDP finally decided to nominate the less divisive Gul for the post of the presidency, but did not bend to calls to elect an above-party politics candidate. Still, on 27 May 2007, the army published a press bulletin on its website

[321] See, for example, Chief of Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt's comments in The Economist, "Waving Ataturk's Flag," *The Economist*, March 10, 2007.

(hence the nickname "e-coup") implying that a coup was imminent if the threats toward secularism did not end.[322]

The press release began with the statement: "We witness that some circles who had always been trying to erode the fundamental values of the republic, secularism in particular, are mounting their efforts in these last days". Throughout the text, the identity of "some circles" is never revealed. The text goes on to describe the acts done against secularism, but they were confined to an attempt to overshadow the celebrations of a national holiday by the celebrations of Mohammad's birthday. The army emphasized that the perpetrators had cooperated with an unnamed political party in one province and reminded that the use of public schools in this celebration was illegal. It concluded that democracy could survive only when the principles of the republic (secularism, in this case) were respected. If the press release ended there, it could have been considered business-as-usual: the army overstepping its boundaries, being overly sensitive regarding the ceremonial aspects of statecraft, and subtly threatening the civil government. However, it did not end there. In the last three paragraphs, the discussion over the holidays was left aside. The army asserted that the discussions over the presidential elections were a direct threat to Turkey, and that the Turkish army could not be impartial on those issues and would not hesitate to intervene if necessary.

[322] All citations in this paragraph are from the army's press release published in 27 April 2007. The full text was originally published in http://www.tsk.mil.tr/bashalk/basac/2007/a08.htm. But it is no longer available there. It can be found in http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2007/04/27/haber,4AF8A7644B134178BAE514F7AC05186A.html among other websites.

When compared with the previous texts produced by juntas, the striking quality of this text is the lack of subjects; there are no addressees besides the ceremonial final sentence that pays its respect to "the public opinion". It never makes clear who is being talked to, and most sentences are passive sentences without subject. The identity of the offenders is not revealed. The answer to the question on who should do what to appease the army is left completely in the dark.

The press release immediately triggered a debate over whether it could be seen as an ultimatum, but the government perceived it as such and reacted accordingly. It neither dodged the issue, nor took a defensive stance, but chose to deal with it openly. The next day, the government spokesperson, Cemil Çiçek, directly answered the army. He said that armies cannot criticize government policies in democracies. He began with a slightly defensive detour, saying it was the responsibility of the government, not the army to defend the values of the republic, and that the government had pledged to do so. He went on to say that a military intervention was likely to harm the country, its international standing, and its economy. Therefore, a coup was unthinkable. The government was direct, defending itself by emphasizing that the army actually did not mention any unconstitutional action of the government, whereas the action it would take to defend the constitution was extra-legal. The government also tried to appease the army by referring to mysterious "people who try to create hostilities between the Government and the Army".[323]

[323] For the full text of Çiçek's speech, see http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/406662.asp

A clear disagreement about the nature of democracy was evident in the dialogue between these texts. The first text mentioned the word democracy only once, saying that the continuation of Turkish democracy depended on the respect of its fundamental values, i.e., democracy is fragile, and cannot exist without secularism guaranteed by the army. On the contrary, the government's speech was full of references to the concept, and it was portrayed as the only legitimate and efficient problem-solving strategy:

> All of the Turkey's problems will be solved within legal rules and democracy. Any other idea or attitude is unacceptable. Everyone and every institution should work towards the facilitation of this process. We have experienced in the past how other solutions to our problems harmed our country and nation. Our government is determined to strengthen democratic republic based on principles of secular welfare state based on the rule of law; and protect democracy from harm.[324]

In short, the government perceived the army's statement as an unjustified threat to democracy, and presented itself as its defender.

In the ensuing battle of words, the government was far from being isolated as Erbakan had been ten years prior. The army had its supporters, the main opposition party, the RPP chief among them, but the alliance against the JDP was much smaller than the one against Erbakan. The major business association took a somewhat neutral position, but urged the army that "The *de facto* situation created by the Army's declaration is not in line with democratic precedents" and advised the government to hold elections. Some civil society actors that supported the 28

[324] Ibid.

February intervention, such as the Trade Chambers and Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, were critical this time[325].

Crucially, the West's stance was one of solid support for Erdogan's government. It could even be spotted in the carefully neutral language of BBC profiles. In the aftermath of the 2002 election, the BBC profile on Erdogan stated;

> Mr Erdogan has disavowed the hardline Islamic views of his past and is trying to recast himself as a pro-Western conservative. He does not insist on leaving Turkey's NATO and says the country's membership of the European Union is a necessary and useful step. […] Turkey's secular constituency and, of course, the generals, look at Mr Erdogan's new-found moderation with suspicion. Mr Erdogan is said to speak no foreign languages and to know little about the outside world. Many feared ahead of the election that he might change his views again if his party came to power. "If Erdogan were to become prime minister, I think the military would take an attitude of 'wait and see'," one diplomat said. "Erdogan knows what will happen if he oversteps a line.[326]

In 2002, even if Erdogan's moderation was acknowledged, the BBC, like most other Western media, was cautious. BBC finished the profile by citing a diplomat tacitly approving the army's role as a guarantor.[327] By 2007, the language had changed; Erdogan had proved himself:

> The prime minister's past is associated with hardline Islamic views, and his party has its roots in political Islam. But Mr Erdogan has sought to moderate his position since coming to government. The country's generals - the guardians of Turkey's secularist constitution - however, have viewed this apparent moderation with suspicion. Few critics, however, would deny that Mr Erdogan has presided over a government that has

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[325] See, for example, Hürriyet, "ATO'dan Itidal Çağrısı," *Hürriyet*, April 30, 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/atodan-itidal-cagrisi-6432463; Hürriyet, "İTO Başkanı: Tek Çözüm Demokrasi," *Hürriyet*, April 29, 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ito-baskani-tek-cozum-demokrasi-6427981; Hürriyet, "DİSK: Demokrasi Dışı Arayışlara Karşıyız," *Hürriyet*, April 29, 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/disk-demokrasi-disi-arayislara-karsiyiz-6425918.

[326] BBC, "Turkey's Charismatic pro-Islamic Leader," *BBC News*, November 4, 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/2270642.stm.

[327] Ibid.

> reformed and has modernised the country faster and more effectively than most of its predecessors. The economy has grown strongly under his government. The constitution, the police, the army and the judicial system have all been reformed. He also worked to improve relations with the US, which were strained after parliament voted against allowing US forces to pass through Turkey at the start of the Iraq war. His reforms helped secure the start of Turkey's EU memberships talks, and led many Western leaders - George Bush and former British Prime Minister Tony Blair among them - to argue that Mr Erdogan's government can become a powerful example for Turkey's neighbors in Iran, Iraq and Syria.[328]

By 2007, Erdogan was a success story, worthy of emulation by other Islamic countries, and the generals' suspicions over his true motives were counteracted by his performance and the recognition he got from Western leaders. Other publications that let themselves to be less neutral were more sanguine. *The Economist* bluntly said, "If Turks have to choose, democracy is more important than secularism".[329] The European Council bluntly said in a statement "[The Army] should stay in their barracks and keep out of politics".[330]

In fact, the government's response did not fail to mention the international public opinion. The army's actions were not only threatening democracy, but also the country's standing abroad: "All responsible persons should avoid behaviors that blemish Turkey's standing in International Society, harm our position in the modern world, threaten economic

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[328] BBC, "Profile: Recep Tayyip Erdogan," *BBC News*, July 18, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6900616.stm.

[329] The Economist, "The Battle for Turkey's Soul," *The Economist*, May 5, 2007.

[330] Der Spiegel, "Threat of Coup by Secularist Army: Alarm Grows over Political Crisis in Turkey," *Der Spiegel*, April 30, 2007, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/threat-of-coup-by-secularist-army-alarm-grows-over-political-crisis-in-turkey-a-480235.html.

stability, go against democracy and injure the national consciousness".[331] Turkey's international standing was used as a powerful argument against the army by the JDP.

Also, the West's stance had discouraged the secular elites from openly supporting the army. The most obvious example of this distance was the mainstream media's position, which had supported the previous coups. For example, Ertuğrul Özkök, the editor-in-chief of Turkey's most important serious newspaper, *Hürriyet*, and previously an ardent supporter of the army, disapproved of the army's declaration by giving examples from the way how the declaration was received in the West. He wrote that even a pro-Turkish journalist, the editor of the *Los Angeles Times*, Douglas Frantz, criticized the declaration, and this shows that the declaration was the wrong move.[332] Similarly, another mainstream daily that supported the coup of 1997 and was anti-JDP at the time, *Milliyet*, was critical of the declaration. The day after the exchange of words between the army and the government, *Milliyet*, just like *Hürriye*t, dedicated an entire page to the overwhelmingly negative reactions from Western officials and press. An editorial published the same day criticized the JDP's policies harshly, but, ultimately, positioned against the army: "It is inevitable that a declaration published by military with such content would shadow the credibility and respectability of civilian institutions. Such shadows, unfortunately, blemish democratic processes, obstruct the consolidation of our fragile democracy and influences Turkey's perception in abroad negatively".[333]

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[331] For the full text of government spokesperson Çiçek's speech, see http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/406662.asp

[332] Erugrul Ozkok, "Adını Vermeyen Subayın Tahmini," *Hurriyet*, May 15, 2007, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/6515542.asp.

[333] Milliyet, "Gerilimi Aşağı Çekmek Için," *Milliyet*, April 29, 2007, 25.

The JDP did not only stand firm, but called for an early election and won it handsomely, increasing its share of votes from 34 to 46 percent, even though its majority in the parliament dwindled as a third party, the ultra-right NAP made it into the parliament this time, as well as 22 pro-Kurdish independents. Its success was not unexpected. The JDP benefitted from strong economic revival following the crisis of 2001, the continuing collapse of the inept center-right, and its strategy to widen its audience through moderation.[334] Its victory was celebrated in the Western media as a triumph of democracy. *Der Spiegel* represented this mood:

> As far as the West is concerned, Turkey has emerged from this election as a reliable partner. A change of government would have spelled instability, especially if there had been a coalition of the CHP and the radical nationalists in the National Movement Party (MHP), which won 14 percent. That would have sent out alarm signals about a rise of Turkish neo-nationalism. Such a coalition would have meant a "long-term crisis," the Greens warned in the European Parliament. Even Turkey-skeptic politicians in Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats had secretly hoped for an AKP victory.[335]

The army, at this point, had only two options: intervene directly without legitimacy on the global stage and tear apart all likeness of democracy or do nothing. It first chose the latter, but then played one last card. A prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, who had been a longtime ally of the army, opened a case to close the JDP in the Constitutional Court, which had closed its precursors three times since 1970.

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[334] Eser Şekercioğlu and Gizem Arıkan, "Trends in Party System Indicators for the July 2007 Turkish Elections," *Turkish Studies* 9, no. 1 (2008): 214–15; Sabri Sayarı, "Towards a New Turkish Party System," *Turkish Politics* 8, no. 2 (2007): 201–2.

[335] Annette Grossbongardt, "Turkish Election: Islamic Pragmatists Triumph in Turkey," *Der Spiegel*, July 23, 2007, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/turkish-election-islamic-pragmatists-triumph-in-turkey-a-495945.html.

The prosecutor's arguments were based on two premises. First, both international and national norms allow the closing of a political party if its objective is to dismantle democracy, and there was enough evidence showing that the JDP was against secularism. Secondly, he argued, as secularism is the foundation of democracy, especially in Turkey where reactionary Islam is still a threat, the JDP's nominal commitment to democracy should be considered as hypocritical.[336]

In its defense, the JDP denied the hypocrisy argument, and said that there was no concrete evidence that proved the existence of a secret agenda. The progress made in the EU process so far was offered as a counter-evidence: "To accuse a political party which worked day and night to make Turkey a full member of the European Union, which took and still taking all necessary steps to make Turkey a part of democratic and secular Europe of being a focal point for actions against secularism is unreasonable, illogical and unreal".[337] Then, it countered the prosecutor's interpretation of democracy. It argued that there are multiple ways in which to interpret the concepts of secularism and democracy in a regime where people should be allowed to discuss freely how religion and politics should interact. They argued that "Trying to close a political party only because of a difference on its interpretation of secularism is incompatible with universal standards of the secularism principle, freedom of speech and freedoms of political parties".[338] Therefore, the prosecutor's interpretation was too narrow, and

[336] AYMK E.S. 2008/1, K.S. 2008/2

[337] Ibid.

[338] Ibid.

eliminated democracy itself: "If political parties' programs and projects is not compatible with the constitutional structure and principles that does not mean that it is incompatible with democracy. As long as they do not harm democracy itself, political parties can question the constitution and defend different political views".[339] If lengthy technical debates are omitted, the exchange provides a philosophical debate about the relationship between democracy and secularism in which the prosecutor defended that a particular interpretation is *sine qua non* for democracy in Turkey where reactionary Islam is a real threat unlike Western democracies. Conversely, the JDP defended its position by arguing that multiple interpretations are possible within the boundaries of democracy.

The JDP also emphasized possible political implications of the closure case, arguing that the dismantlement of the party in government would cause a governability crisis and harm the country's reputation abroad.[340] Indeed, the position that the Western media took was in line with the JDP's stance. For example, a *New York Times* editorial unambiguously condemned the indictment:

> The lawsuit filed by one of Turkey's top prosecutors last week, asking the country's Constitutional Court to shut down its largest political party, gravely threatens political and economic stability and Ankara's international reputation. The prosecution claims to be defending the forward-looking values of modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. In fact, it degrades those values. Intolerance and contempt for democracy have increasingly characterized the way Turkey's old-guard political

[339] Ibid.

[340] Ibid.

> establishment has responded to the rise of a modern, Western-oriented and democratic political party rooted in the country's majority-Muslim faith.[341]

The debate between the JDP and the prosecutor included a debate about French and Anglo-Saxon versions of secularism, and it is conceivable that the French media would have been less sympathetic to the JDP, who said that the Anglo-Saxon version is more democratic.[342] Yet, *Le Monde*'s editorial about the indictment echoes that of *The New York Times.*

> If one judges the JDP by its actions, one should recognize that the party is uncontestably "practical", it proved that it is both economically liberal and politically pragmatist. It maintained its alliances with US and Israel. This shows its maturity. It regained power in 2007 carried by popular support, because its balance sheet is in its favor: political stability, profound economic reforms, but also its eagerness to join the EU. All this is threatened today, its European aspirations included. One should emphasize that the adversaries of the entry of an Islamic force in the European space are hypocritically using this forcible judicial attack on the JDP to discredit democratic maturity of Turkey.[343]

It is also worth noting that, many actors who sided with the army and the judiciary during the 28 February process, took the opposite stance this time. These actors included the Chamber of Commerce, the Trade Union of the Employers, and Turk-Is, the largest trade union confederation in Turkey. Together with some NGOs, they published a joint statement about

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[341] The New York Times, "Turkey's Democracy on Trial," *The New York Times*, April 21, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/21/opinion/21fri2.html?pagewanted=print&_r=0.

[342] AYMK E.S. 2008/1, K.S. 2008/2

[343] Le Monde, "Démons Turcs," *Le Monde*, April 1, 2008, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2008/04/01/demons-turcs_1029606_3232.html?xtmc=turquie_cour_constitutionnelle&xtcr=38.

the economic dangers of the closure just after the opening of the case.[344] Similarly, big business reacted unfavorably, saying that the case was unacceptable from a democratic point of view and harmful for Turkey's international reputation as well as its commitment to democratic values.[345]

At the end, the court refused to dismantle the party, but instead imposed a monetary fine. This was the result of a complicated legal process. Six of 11 judges voted for its dismantlement and one voted for acquittal. Only four judges suggested a monetary fine, and the supporters of the dismantlement had the majority. However, party closure cases require a qualified majority and, if such a majority cannot be reached, a monetary fine is preferred over closure. In this case, it was the four judges who voted for the middle way who got to write the majority opinion. Unexpectedly, it was these four judges who normally vote in line with the secularist hardline that made the difference in this case. In their official opinion, they wrote that the evidence that the prosecutor brought to their attention showed that some of the actions of the JDP undermined secular principles. They also shared with him the view that a political party that rejects secular principles can be dismantled. They went on to emphasize that the JDP had won the last election with an overwhelming majority, pursued the EU membership goal, did not resort to violence, and did not attempt to transform the secular regime to a theocratic one in its five years in government. "When we take into account that the defendant started the

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[344] Hürriyet, "Yıllardır Sağduyuya Çağırıyoruz Ama...," *Hürriyet*, March 28, 2008, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yillardir-sagduyuyu-cagiriyoruz-ama-8564766.

[345] Hürriyet, "Demokrasilerde Parti Kapatma Kabul Edilemez," *Hürriyet*, March 17, 2008, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/demokrasilerde-parti-kapatma-kabul-edilemez-8473242.

membership negotiations with the EU and actively contributed to the peaceful resolution of international problems, it becomes clear that the defendant used the government power to raise the country to the standards of modern Western democracies."[346] These all showed that there is no immediate danger. Therefore, the evidence presented by the prosecution was not enough to close a political party, which should only be a last resort.[347] To summarize, not only did the decision resonate with the way the case was perceived by the West, but the attitude of the West itself was summoned as evidence in the JDP's favor. The decision, which was a minority view, but the view that made the difference, was partially in line with the view of Global Culture; nothing the JDP did was clearly indicative of an aim to establish a theocratic regime. Its global reputation was considered as counter-evidence. The court did, however, share the secular anxiety that the army propagated.

More importantly, the party had just won elections with an overwhelming majority, and its legitimacy looked secure. At this point, it was impossible to force the party out of the government while saving face; even if the party was shut down, it would simply regroup under a new banner and form the government under new leadership. The only option was to overthrow it by force. The army had never crossed that Rubicon without being sure of global approval. The tense relations between the army and the JDP would endure, but it would be the JDP, and not the army, who would have the initiative after the court's decision. By 2008, the JDP's mandate in the government was secure and the army's influence on politics was waning.

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[346] AYMK E.S. 2008/1, K.S. 2008/2

[347] Ibid.

The JDP's attempt to connect to global culture and gain a reputation as a modernizing democratic force was a success, whereas the army's attempts to present itself as the true guarantor of democracy had ultimately failed. In an environment in which the government was so strong and the legitimacy of a possible coup so low, the army lost initiative.

The connection between the JDP and international actors was far from being without problems. Even in the 2002-2008 period, when the West threw its weight in favor of the JDP, there was a serious wedge between how the party and the Western media perceived democracy. This difference would prove more important as the circumstances changed. In the next section, I will explore the disagreements between the JDP and the West in this early period.

3. The JDP Re-interprets Democracy

The JDP has never openly advocated a local "brand" of democracy built to meet "special circumstances" the way Putin (i.e., sovereign democracy), or indeed, Yalcinkaya, the prosecutor of the 2008 closure case, does. To the contrary, when faced with the party closure trial at the Constitutional Court, the JDP based its defense on the premise that democracy should be thought of as a universal idea which could not be altered according to local, special circumstances. For example, it was argued that "It is beyond doubt that Turkey is a member of the Council of Europe and signed The European Convention on Human Rights. [Court decisions based on this convention] demonstrates that now, in the world, there are no peculiar, unique democracies. Democracies have universal norms and values. Turkey must take these

into consideration".[348] This is consistent with its general discourse. For example, in a speech in 2010, Erdoğan said:

> Our nation suffered much from particularistic concepts. Democracy and law will be for everyone. It will be in its most ideal form. Without delays and postponements. Those who oppose this, believe me, I'm most open here, are thinking about their privileges. […]. No one can argue that a government striving for EU membership so strongly can take any step which is not compatible with the universal and modern standards of democracy. Our route is obvious.[349]

The JDP was openly critical of local democratic "brands", yet, his opponents have long accused it of having a particular understanding of democracy, that of majoritarianism. The JDP refuses this label, but with reservations. Each time JDP officials say they are advocating a pluralist, and not a majoritarian democracy, they add that this is not to deny the importance of majorities. For example, in the JDP's defense in the closure case, it said:

> First, JDP has never perceived democracy as a "majoritarian regime". The emphasis put on "the national will" by our leader and other officials does not mean that democracy is understood as majoritarian democracy. […] Of course, in modern democracies, the right to rule belongs to majorities and not minorities. The regimes where minorities rule are called oligarchies, not democracies. Our party is against an interpretation of democracy that sees democracy as the unlimited government by the majority, it is also against a fake democracy where a minority or category of people rules.[350]

This line of the argument is repeated often by JDP officials. Even in 2001, when the JDP was still an opposition party, Erdogan used the discursive operation "we are not majoritarian, but anti-elitist" to counter criticisms. "We defend that democracy is pluralism

[348] AYMK E.S. 2008/1, K.S. 2008/2

[349] Erdogan's speech on 2 March 2004, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp.

[350] AYMK E.S. 2008/1, K.S. 2008/2

and not majoritarianism, […] and politics should be the mechanism that carries the will of people to ruling power and the mechanism that imposes elites' designs to people."[351]

The emphasis on the importance of majorities clearly nourishes from the common pool of references and symbolism common to all democracies. It is impossible to dismiss it *a priori* as a "populist" perversion of democratic ideals. However, it is also impossible to argue that this discourse is the only way to deploy and interpret the concept of democracy. Although the JDP has carefully avoided characterizing its interpretation as a new, different brand of democracy which is superior or even different from the hegemonic Western brand, as in all democratic discourses, it is a particular interpretation of a multi-faceted concept.

The empirical question is how this discourse shaped the dialogic process that affected the JDP's identity and actions. Did it cause frictions regarding what democracy is and push the JDP toward actions that led to the questioning of its identity as a democratic force by its addressees, the West chief among them? The answer to this question is an unqualified "yes" for the post-2008 period. However, if these frictions had appeared out of nowhere after 2008, the discourse could be considered inconsequential, merely an argument that is only deployed when circumstances demand it. More specifically, one could argue that the JDP's actions were determined by its institutional environment, that the party deploys an interpretation of democracy when it is weak and another when that is no longer convenient because of the changes in the balance of power. Ideas, narratives, and identities are just dependent variables that can be explained by institutional variables. In the remainder of this chapter, I will argue

[351] Erdogan's speech on 8 May 2001, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp. .

that we see a narrative which is consistent with later developments in the period, the golden age of dialogue between the West and the JDP. The party's interpretation of democracy was already causing friction in the dialogue. Therefore, the understanding of democracy that the JDP has consistently used must be an integral part of any causal explanation of the Turkey's political trajectory.

It is also important to note that the majoritarianism debate in Turkey is not new. It can be traced back to the last years of the Democrat Party-era and the coup of 1960. Since then, it has been a persistent theme of political disagreements between the center-left and center-right. The JDP clearly inherited its focus on national will from the center-right and articulated it in Islamist narratives, which already shared its tendency to characterize opponents as elites alienated from the authentic values of the nation. The legacy of the center-right's interpretation of democracy will be discussed in the next section. Then, in the second section, I will discuss how the JDP theorized about democracy, re-interpreted the term, how this interpretation was different from its opponents on the domestic level, and how these differences manifested themselves in "boundary skirmishes" on specific policies. Lastly, I will return my attention to the disagreements between the JDP and the Global Culture and how the majoritarianism debates resonated in the international arena.

a) The Majoritarianism Debate in the Tradition of Turkish Right

The use of the words Left and Right in the Turkish context has been criticized by some intellectuals who were influenced chiefly by İdris Küçükömer's works on Turkish history.[352]

[352] İdris Küçükömer, *Düzenin Yabancılaşması* (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1994).

Küçükömer and his followers argue that these Euro-centric concepts do not fit into a Turkish context, where the Left is elitist and the Right is supported by the majority. The vocabulary had already been institutionalized in the 1960s when the RPP, who was seen as a leftist party by its opponents and most analysts, officially accepted the label. The word "Left" has since been used to refer to Kemalist and Marxist parties who use a progressive and economically egalitarian discourse. In contrast, the word "Right" is used to refer to traditionalist and pro-market political parties. With the exception of ultra-nationalist parties, all right-wing parties can trace back their roots to the DP, which ruled between 1950 and 1960 under the premiership of Menderes. It was he who set up the Turkish Right's vocabulary. Although the Right's ideology did not remain static, several continuities can be spotted.[353] Here, I will focus on the recurring narrative on democracy.[354]

The word "democracy" played a central role in the DP's narrative. This was the distinguishing feature of the center-right as opposed to the other two major currents on the Right, Islamism and ultra-nationalism. Ultra-nationalism has viewed democracy as a secondary good, one which could be ignored when the interests of the nation required the government to take a hardline, and throughout its history, it always felt that such an approach was necessary to overcome Turkey's problems. Islamists, in their turn, had difficulties in coming to terms with this Western invention; it is a game they have been forced to play while

[353] For an excellent account of such continuities (which unfortunately underplays the historicity of its discourse), see Bahadir Turk, *Muktedir* (Istanbul: Iletisim, 2014).

[354] Hamid documents that Islamists in Arab countries occasionally put forward majoritarian ideas, but the vocabulary of the JDP is unmistakably local. Hamid, *Temptations of Power*, 79.

they are building the ground for a new Islamic civilization. In contrast, for the center-right, since Menderes, it is the epitome of the civilization.

Menderes defined democracy as "the regime that guarantees the liberties of the citizens".[355] However, Menderes, like his successors, never got tired of repeating that "democracy does not mean limitless freedom". The freedoms that democracy grants can be used to undermine the government, destabilize the country, and slow down the material progress that the governments strive for. For this reason, the executive should be allowed to determine the limits of such freedoms. The boundary of democratic freedoms is based on governability and stability. Once he came to power, Menderes defined democracy mostly by explaining what it is not.[356] Statements like "democracy does not mean to say whatever comes to mind"[357] or "democracy does not mean absolute and limitless freedom" were typical of the DP's narrative.[358]

If democracy means the regime under which liberties are guaranteed, how can the executive limit them? As Bahadır Turk puts it, from the center-right's perspective, the key feature of democracy is not individual freedoms, but the notion that the elected government is the embodiment of the national will.[359] The combination of "governability" and the "national

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[355] Adnan Menderes, "Meclis Grup Konuşması, 14 Kasım 1957," in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Makaleleri*, vol. 8 (Ankara: Demokratlar Klubu Yayinlari, 1991). Quoted in Türk, *Muktedir*, 31.

[356] Türk, *Muktedir*, 31.

[357] Adnan Menderes, "Meclis Grup Konuşması, 29 Aralık 1953," in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Makaleleri*, vol. 4 (Ankara: Demokratlar Klubu Yayinlari, 1991). Quoted in Türk, *Muktedir*, 31.

[358] Adnan Menderes, "Meclis Grup Konuşmasi, 28 Şubat 1953," in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Makaleleri*, vol. 3 (Ankara: Demokratlar Klubu Yayinlari, 1991), 424. Quoted in Türk, *Muktedir*, 31.

[359] Türk, *Muktedir*, 38.

will" argument culminates in a democracy where there are only two institutions with any bite: elections and litigation (courts are also sometimes accused of being representative of elites and of slowing down the government, but their legitimacy as a whole is not put into question). The use of any other freedom, if it harms the government, it harms the very essence of democracy, or the embodiment of the national will: "Our road is the road to freedom and democracy. But, first of all, the establishment of order is an absolute necessity. If this is not done, if some believe that some street movements can cancel the national will, this will create a dangerous situation".[360] Freedoms are democratic only as far as they do not undermine the elected government.

This ideological construct is a result of another dialogical process, which occurred in the early days of Turkish democracy. The single most important propaganda device that the DP used was its special link to the national will because it used the chief antinomy of Kemalist discourse. Kemalism abolished the traditional forms of authority and established a republic in which the will of the nation reigns supreme, but the masses had been denied a voice. The DP's thrust was to give traditionalist peasant masses a voice and to rule on their behalf. As Menderes proceeded, he felt that the tactics the opposition was using to undermine him were illegitimate as he represented the nation whereas the opposition was simply the self-interested old guard.[361] Tragically, when the court, operating under the influence of the junta, hanged him in 1961, its opponents derived their legitimacy from the way he had limited freedoms and liberties to protect his authority. The military intervention against a right-wing government and the

[360] Adnan Menderes, "Eskişehir Konuşması, 25 Mayıs 1960," in *Adnan Menderes'in Konuşmaları, Demeçleri, Makaleleri*, vol. 9 (Ankara: Demokratlar Klubu Yayinlari, 1991). Quoted in Türk, *Muktedir*, 37.

[361] Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Routledge, 1993), 108–9.

following constant threat of coup allowed the center-right to imagine politics as a struggle between the traditionalist nation and the self-interested, alienated elites; the political system, then, was the center-right, who embodied the national will, and its enemies.

From the very start, the opposition accused Menderes of having a twisted, majoritarian concept of democracy. The junta that overthrew Menderes drew its legitimacy from this argument, and the constitution that university professors wrote for the junta, influenced by the hegemonic social-democratic *ethos* of the time as well as the Kemalist *credo,* was moved by an anti-majoritarian impetus. When the center-right got the government back in the 1965 election, one of its major complaints was that the constitution made the country ungovernable and put too many limits on the exercise of the national will. Since then, majoritarianism became one of the endless debates that characterized the Turkish political arena. The center-right has never abandoned its emphasis on the national will and the requirements of governability while refuting the accusations of majoritarianism on a populist ground. From this perspective, the majoritarianism argument is used by alienated elites, whose interests are not in line with the nation and who have an inauthentic worldview.

The National Outlook did not share the fascination over the national will, as it was reluctant to use vocabulary that contradicted the notion of God's sovereignty, but the dichotomy of alienated elites versus the nation with authentic, that is, Islamic values was put forward even more prominently. Islamists, then, were the real incarnation of this true identity, but the elections failed to show that because the people were manipulated by the elites, including the center-right. When it referred to democracy, though, the National Outlook shared some aspects of the center-right's understanding: it should represent the views of Muslim,

traditionalist masses who were the true "nation", and liberties should be used in a way that respect the views and sensibilities of the Muslim majority. Indeed, until the 1990s, all election platforms included a reference on the importance of limiting freedoms. The religious freedoms angle began to play a prominent role in the National Outlook's discourse only in the 1990s. Erdogan inherited the connection between Islam and nation from Erbakan and reinforced it with the center-right view on National Will. This combination has affected his dialogue with the West, even in the golden days of the conversation.

b) The JDP as Theorist of Democracy

The JDP, as other parties before it, is engaged in an endless task to define what democracy is. The most representative definition in this regard is the one in the 2001 platform. The section committed to the democratization starts with a definition:

> According to our party, in a democratic regime, the laws that the citizens have to abide are made by them. For this reason, democracy is a government where legal rules are formed through the citizen's consent. In a democracy, the ultimate decision and execution prerogative belongs to elected organs and institutions. All decisions about the public life is made by the elected. In a democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people and this quality separates democracy from other regimes.[362]

None of this is novel, and the quote sounds as if it had been taken from one of the pamphlets in circulation in revolutionary France. The American Constitution starts with the famous "We the people", which implies that the convention has the authority to speak for the entire population. At a ceremonial level, the fiction that rulers are the representatives of the population is something a democracy cannot do without. Of course, this is a fiction; by voting every five years, the population neither absolves its differences nor decides to unite around a

[362] JDP, *AK Parti Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı*, 24.

group of people, nor interests and views of the elected representatives are identical with the people who vote for them. The fiction, or myth, of representation is a legitimizing narrative. It can be argued that this myth and the institutions that are based on it produce a more participatory and inclusive social life. It does create, though, the problem of the "tyranny of majority", which preoccupied the founding fathers of the United States and the liberals of the 19th century at length. Modern democracies have had to tackle this issue with another idea, that of fundamental rights and liberties. The JDP, anticipating this problem and a paragraph later, espoused this second idea:

> Winning a contest does not make the majority's will absolute. One of the most important qualities of modern democracy is its refusal to open a debate over the fundamental rights and liberties under no circumstances and its respect for minorities' rights and liberties. Constitutional guarantees over opposition's and minorities rights should be considered an element that reinforces the pluralist character of democracy.[363]

Thus, democracy has another component: fundamental rights and liberties. Those are not open to debate. This is not novel either; it is the defining feature of a liberal democracy, which has, when we talk about the taxonomy of political regimes, become synonymous with democracy, as opposed to Soviet-style popular democracy or Greek direct democracy. There is a body of fundamental rights and liberties, which are recognized universally, defined in the constitution, and guaranteed by an independent judiciary. However, this is a fiction, too; the exact boundaries of this supposedly untouchable area are always in flux. In the United States, whether donating unlimited amounts of money to political parties should be considered as free speech is a major debate. How and to what extent citizen's privacy can be breached by security bureaucracies is a constant problem that becomes more complicated as new technologies

[363] Ibid., 25.

emerge. The status of social rights, such as the right to unionize and the right to be free of extreme poverty, is in no way settled. The number of such examples can be expanded *ad infinitum*. Some of these gray areas are old. For example, the security/liberty duality was widely discussed by Hobbes; others, such as the problems concerning sexual orientations, are the product of recent decades. Just like the myth of representation, there is the myth of fundamental rights and liberties; there is nothing natural about rights and liberties that ought to be protected from the government. They are negotiated and re-negotiated every day. However, that is another myth that democracy cannot do without, the myth of fundamentals, an area that is inviolable and which makes tyranny via elections impossible. This does not mean that "anything goes" as anyone who wants to be recognized as a democrat has to refer to some founding documents, such as the Declaration of Human Rights, and use a common repository of references. But, the extent of these rights, always displays variation from case to case about the forms these fundamental rights take and what other less widely-recognized rights may accompany them.

There is nothing novel with either of the components of democracy that the JDP lists, but the relationship between the two in the party platform is conceptualized is not self-evident. There is a clear hierarchy between the two myths. The myth of representation is essential and it is the defining quality of democracy. The National Will is the source of all legitimacy and democracy's very foundation; the myth of fundamentals, however, is just an element that reinforces the proper function of democracy. It is an auxiliary aspect.

This is not self-evident. For example, the RPP, the JDP's main rival, put forward a very different definition of democracy in its 2008 platform. It started by addressing the hot topic of

secularism: that democracy is not possible without secularism.[364] Only several pages later, it defined democracy. "Democracy's main component is the free individual. […] RPP's main goal is to liberate the individual, to eliminate economic, political, social and cultural hurdles that stop him from developing himself, allow him use his freedoms consciously."[365] Only after emphasizing individual freedoms, the National Will is mentioned, as a complementary principle: "The essence of modern democracy is the full use of fundamental rights and liberties by individual without any obstruction, together with the principles of national will and rule of law".[366] The RPP's hierarchy of democratic principles is the opposite of the JDP's. National Will only earns a passing mention as a secondary principle. The real source of legitimacy for a democratic regime is the individual and its emancipation. This liberal principle is given a social-democratic, Blairite tone by turning the elimination of hurdles that stop the individual from fully developing into the state's duty. This definition is not incompatible with global mythology either, but its priorities, as well as its implications for concrete policies, are radically different. It should be noted also that the RPP's definition that centered on individual liberties did not lead to an unequivocal defense of individual rights. It argued that the expansion of religious rights that the JDP was advocating for would lead to the deterioration of secularism and the Islamicization of public life, thereby weakening individual freedom rather than strengthening it. The nodal point of the entire debate was the headscarf issue; secularists were vehemently opposed to the authorization of wearing headscarves by civil servants and

[364] CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi Programı: Çağdaş Türkiye Için Değişim* (Ankara, 2008), 31.

[365] Ibid., 41–42.

[366] Ibid., 42.

university students. From the RPP's perspective, giving this particular freedom would threaten all others, an argument which the West did not find convincing.

It is also worth noting that the JDP's prioritization of the National Will was constantly repeated to all audiences. It was one of the recurring motives in Erdogan's weekly parliamentary speeches. A typical example of this prioritization can be found in his speech from 9 April 2003:

> When we say that we do not a have a government style which is solely based on our numerical majority, some politicians who lack democratic culture try to present this as if our numerical majority means nothing. They do not know what democracy is and the value of our understanding of participation. They are unaware of the functions of government and opposition: I want to remind you this. Of course, an understanding of government reduced to only numerical majority is not compatible with participatory democracy. But, as opposed to what these people think, you cannot ignore numerical majorities. The numerical majority is send to the parliament by the Nation. It is backed by the Nation.[367]

Again, in 2004, he characterized the myth of representation as the content of democracy, and the myth of limited government as the formal element of democracy:

> Democracy, democratic legitimacy has two complementary elements. One is formal; the other is its content. Formal elements are the legal/technical processes that all actors within the democratic regime should abide. If the organs, institutions and social actors within the system do not abide these legal-technical processes, they are no longer within the realm of legitimacy. The content element means that social will, national will is the essential and determining component of democratic regime. The Parliament and Government is shaped by the national will and acts in accordance with the nation's demands.[368]

Therefore, the myth of representation is the core of democracy while the myth of limited government is just a formal aspect.

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[367] Erdogan's speech to JDP Parliamentary Group, 29 April 2003, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

[368] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 11 May 2004, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

Is this difference on interpretation relevant on policy matters? Did it really shape the JDP's actions? The idea of the supremacy of the National Will meant that, in practice, many of the problems that the JDP faced in its democratization agenda were conceived as boundary problem. What are the rights and institutions which are untouchable, even if the majority of the people or, more accurately, the people who won an election, wish to abolish them?

In the 2002-2008 period, the JDP often faced bureaucratic organizations that claimed that the boundaries of the executive branch could not be decided by the government; in other words, the government cannot decide on its own boundaries. This should be left to the independent judiciary and, in some cases, autonomous bodies, which were in practice aligned with the views of the army.

A good example of these boundary skirmishes is the debate over university entrance exams in 2004. Since 1997, the graduates of the *imam-hatip* high schools, which are nominally vocational schools seeking to train religious officials to be employed by the state, but which have a wider range as many pious parents prefer to send their children to such schools, suffered a penalty (the calculation system is too complex to be discussed here) on the university entrance exams along with all vocational schools students if they sought to register to a department which was not related to their subject of study. In practice, this meant that the graduates of these schools should perform significantly better than their peers if they wanted to study anything other than theology and get a boost if they do want to study theology. In 2004, the government sought to change this system. The Board of Higher Education, an autonomous body which has wide-ranging authority over all universities in Turkey reacted strongly, arguing that it was a violation of its jurisdiction, university autonomy, and the

constitution. Erdogan perceived the Board's reaction as a violation of the National Will rather than a legal gray area.

> What kind of democracy is this? Since when is the Board of Higher Education an executive board? You need to know this: Maybe in earlier times some governments had been ruled by the understandings and attitudes of some pundits and media groups. Such institutions have maybe ruled governments at earlier times. But, know this, we use the authority that the nation gave us as the sovereignty belongs to people.[369]

The problem is of course more complicated. It is not a problem whether university autonomy vis-à-vis elected governments (or tax-payers as Americans would have put it) is a fundamental right, but it is a part of a broader struggle between the secularist bureaucracy and the government. A similar approach can be spotted in issues directly related to political rights. For example, when the proponents of the anti-globalization movement in Turkey tried to protest the NATO summit held in Istanbul in 2004, the government did not let them protest near the summit area. Erdogan cast this as a boundary problem; it is the government which will decide how the freedoms can be used:

> Some marginal groups are using their democratic rights. Of course they will, that is normal. But I have to express one point, which is: We are a democratic country and it is the government and administration which gives freedoms and let them to be used. [...] In democracies, freedoms are not boundless. If we conceive this event as an individual freedom, we too have freedoms that end in the boundaries of the other people's freedoms. [...] We now see some organizations who says "we will rally wherever we want to." No, you cannot. You do not have that right because this affects people's life.[370]

This is a typical view of political rights that the JDP hold: they are sacred, but their limits are to be decided by the government that seeks to protect the rights of the majority which

[369] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 11 May 2004, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

[370] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 22 June 2004, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

are more important than the rights of marginal groups. What is interesting here is not that protests are cast as a traffic or security problem, but rather that they are cast as a boundary problem between the majority's rights and a minority's.

The idea of the National Will already shaped the JDP's actions, and the JDP argued that the boundary between the two myths should be decided by the government, but its reaction to domestic disapproval was different than censure with an international reach. In the next section, I will analyze how the JDP reacted when the criticism became global.

c) The Wedge between the JDP and Global Culture

In the 2001-2008 period, the Western media was mostly in favor of the changes that the JDP was pushing for, especially its efforts to harmonize the country's legal system with the *acquis communautaire*. Of course, the JDP's dialogue with the West was not without problems. It was marked by some important foreign policy disagreements, which were not seen as directly related to the JDP's identity as a democratic actor, such as the Cyprus issue and Turkey's refusal to let U.S. troops use its territory in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Moreover, the harmonization process was never completed, and the EU Commission kept indicating areas that needed more reform without questioning the overall commitment of the JDP to the reform process. There are two topics, however, that were related to the JDP's identity that started a passionate disagreement between the EU officials and the Western media on one hand and JDP officials on the other. Both were related to the JDP's most comprehensive harmonization attempt, the amendment of its criminal law. Both issues followed a similar trajectory. The JDP first attempted to defend its actions, and then backpedaled reluctantly when it realized that the issues were harming its image.

The first one created an instant uproar in September 2004 when the JDP attempted to add a clause that would criminalize adultery to the new Criminal Law. The EU Commission reacted unfavorably, and its spokesman Jean-Christophe Filori said that "the plan could harm Turkey's image"[371] The attempt also resonated across the Atlantic. For example, *The New York Times* warned Erdogan:

> The Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, should postpone sending the new penal code to Parliament, which he is scheduled to do this week, until his party officials revise it - deleting laws against consensual sex and including explicit protections for women. Otherwise, he is handing Europeans who scorn Turkey's European Union membership bid a big reason to vote no in December, when the union will decide whether to start formal accession talks with Turkey. In that unfortunate event, Mr. Erdogan would have no one to blame but himself.[372]

Erdogan briefly attempted to defend the bill by stating that they are a conservative party putting an emphasis on family values and that the majority of the nation supported the motion.[373] The JDP went as far as threatening to shelve the entire reform, infuriating the secular opposition and big business, which saw the issue as trivial at best and a personal/religious crusade on Erdogan's part at worst. However, he quickly backpedaled when the Commission made it clear that it would advise against starting negotiations with Turkey if they remained committed to the clause.[374] This incident, which occupied an entire army of pundits in September 2004, was the beginning of a pattern which still continues today: a JDP leader

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[371] EurActiv, "Erdogan Defends Plans to Criminalise Adultery in Turkey," *EurActiv*, September 6, 2004, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/erdogan-defends-plans-criminalis-news-212420.

[372] The New York Times, "Women's Rights, Turkish Style," *New York Times*, September 12, 2004, http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/12/opinion/womens-rights-turkish-style.html.

[373] Hurriyet, "Erdoğan: Aldatılan Kadını Koruyoruz," *Hurriyet*, September 8, 2004, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/index/ArsivNews.aspx?id=255834.

[374] EurActiv, "Commission Says No Turkey Talks without New Penal Code," *EurActiv*, September 20, 2004, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/commission-turkey-talks-new-pena-news-212309.

makes a comment about the need to regulate women's sexuality or women's inferiority compared to man, faces outrage, and backpedals. However, this example is indicative of the misunderstanding between the JDP and the international community; from the JDP's perspective, the state's involvement with an issue like adultery was natural. In its consideration, the majority was behind the measure, but to the West, it was a deal breaker.

The second *faux pas* that turned the Western media against the JDP was the case against the famous novelist Orhan Pamuk in 2005 (who won a Nobel Award later that year) based on Article 301 of the newly-passed criminal Law, which forbade "insulting Turkishness." Pamuk's crime was to recognize the Armenian Genocide. The article was already controversial in Turkey as several less famous intellectuals were being sued, but when an international celebrity was the victim, it became a scandal on global scale. The EU's Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn described the case as "a litmus test" for Turkish democracy.[375] The case was the result of pressure from an ultra-nationalist NGO, and the indictment was written by a well-known secularist prosecutor, so the leaders of the JDP had been able to dodge the issue by blaming the judiciary, but had been visibly reluctant to change the article. The EU applied considerable pressure to change it, but, instead of altering the rule in any way, the JDP made it mandatory for prosecutors to obtain a permit from the Ministry of Justice when opening cases based on Article 301, taking the issue into its own hands. Erdogan justified this move by implying that intellectual elites were asking for limitless freedom to insult Turkey; the category

[375] EurActiv, "Turkish Novelist's Trial Adjourned until February," December 16, 2005, http://www.euractiv.com/enlargement/turkish-novelist-trial-adjourned-february/article-150980novelist.

of people [*zumre*] he is talking about is deliberately kept ambiguous, but the *zumre* who were most vocal about Article 301 were left-leaning, liberal intellectuals:

> In our legal system as it is in European countries, the article 301 stems from a need. We already said that if ultimately, the practice results in limiting legitimate rights and liberties while stopping crime, we can change the article. No one should worry about that. […] By abusing this principles, some circles are knowingly or unknowingly confusing criticism with insult. What should we do about that? We cannot let it aside. I am sorry but we cannot say yes to have a category of people which have boundless freedom. I have to be frank. They have a network of solidarity and they say we should have limitless freedom within this solidarity network. There is no such thing.[376]

Article 301 was, for Erdogan, again a boundary problem, a problem between the intellectual elite and ordinary people. The Pamuk case, he admitted, showed that Article 301 could be abused and could limit the freedoms of intellectuals too much, but to scrap it was out of question because it would give too much freedom to a "network". The answer was to transfer the jurisprudence to the Ministry of Justice. In other words, eventually the JDP put itself in a position to decide how the freedom of speech would be limited instead of removing the hurdle itself.

To summarize, even in the 2002-2008 period, when the JDP's stance was defensive and the Global Culture was hailing its accomplishments, the wedge between the global conception of democracy and the JDP's understanding of democracy was clear. The JDP acted as the delegate of people and gave freedoms only when they were not in conflict with the majority's rights, which were the rule, while the minority's were the exception. In that period,

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[376] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 26 September 2006, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

when the JDP was struggling with the army from a relatively weak position, this angle seldom created frictions, or boundary skirmishes. Later, however, such conflicts would become much more frequent and pervasive.

4. Conclusion

Between 2002 and 2008, the JDP's policies were hailed as a comprehensive attempt to correct the flaws of Turkish democracy. For many in the West, Turkey was finally moving forward on a linear path to consolidated democracy. It is more accurate, however, to see it as a double movement. On the one hand, the JDP tried to connect with the globally dominant view of democracy and to transform its identity and the country's political arena in line with global expectations. On the other hand, it was re-interpreting the concept of democracy in a way that prioritized the myth of representation, and then built its identity on this interpretation. The difference between these two analyses of the same concept has only occasionally come to the fore. When it did, it ignited a hot-headed debate, but always resulted in the JDP's reluctant retreat. The party, the successor of a movement which had been ousted by the army in the past decade, was dependent on its reputation abroad to keep the army passive, and its reputation was still questionable at the beginning of its government as evidenced by the optimistic but careful language that the Western media used to describe it. By 2007, its reputation as a democratic force was solid, and it was this reputation and its popularity with voters which allowed it to overcome the army and its allies within the judiciary's opposition. Overall, the JDP's trajectory was the product of engagement with the West, but this process had two dimensions: an attempt to be recognized as a democratic force, while reinterpreting the concept.

To see the double movement in this period is important for understanding the events that unfold later. If there had been no double movement, there would have been no attempt to re-interpret the concept but just a passive absorption of Western concepts and institutions. The behavioral change that characterized the upcoming period could be characterized as a break from the past to exploit new opportunities that the support from the Global Culture created. We would see an opportunist actor acting to maximize its grab on power. The narratives would be a simple epiphenomenon that changes completely in response to circumstances. But, instead, we see a persistent ambivalence. Even in the 2002-2008 period, the JDP was interpreting democracy the same way it did after 2008, when its identity was defined by a majoritarian interpretation of democracy, which has shaped its actions and narratives throughout its history. I will discuss how this double movement persisted in the period when it could freely act without fearing the army's meddling and how it used repressive measures to silence its opponents in the next chapter.

The double movement also has repercussions that extend beyond the literature on Turkey. First, we see that the dynamics leading to the regime change have an international component, an element highlighted by Sociological Institutionalists. In the conflict between local actors, in this case, the JDP and the army, we see that the institutions favored by the international community travel thanks to the legitimation effect of its myths. This is not a direct cause-and-effect relation. Rather, the myths of democracy expand the room of maneuver of its proponents, the ones who are able to build a constructive dialogue with the Global Culture. The actors who deny those limits or fail to connect with it find themselves with fewer options unless they stop seeking connections with the actors operating on a global level. This is also

related to the question about why democratization happens in waves; the international discursive framework, and not a domestic variable common to all countries caught by the wave democratization, opens up new possibilities for actors which are willing to espouse the myths of the Global Culture.

Second, the contended nature of the concept democracy is a political problem rather than an epistemological one. As Wittgensteinian scholars working on democratization emphasize, the concept is multi-faceted and its meaning changes from one context to another, and it can only be made intelligible in its specific context. This does not mean that it indicates radically different things in every context because there is one dominant meaning that is put forward by actors in powerful positions. However, local actors develop their own interpretations in dialogue with the Global Culture. This causes friction and boundary skirmishes, which shape actual policies and, quite frequently, result in regimes that do not fit in the dichotomy of authoritarianism/democracy.

CHAPTER V

THE EVOLUTION OF THE JDP'S IDENTITY, 2008-2013

1. Introduction

The literature on Turkey's regime in the 2010s is much less glamorous than the literature of the 2000s. Its concepts were less precise, and its presence in top-tier journals more limited. Most important, it did not seek to contribute to a larger theoretical debate as the literature of the 2000s did. Instead, it sought to make sense of the Turkish case and to address an audience of area specialists. This was not necessarily caused by the lack of theoretical relevance. There was a growing literature on backsliding, hybrid regimes, competitive authoritarianism, and illiberal democracies, all of which apply to the Turkish case. Yet those literatures mostly struggled with building a common vocabulary and, as a result, strong, attractive theoretical models are hard to come by. The scope of the theoretical discussion on de-democratization is much more limited than that of Democratization Theory with capital D and T. Therefore, the dullness of the literature on Turkey is connected with the difficulties of the literature on comparative regimes in general, focusing on observing a fact that may be called, "authoritarian drift" and discuss its immediate reasons.

There are three arguments about the causes of the "authoritarian drift": the EU-centered argument, the hegemonic party argument, and the ideational argument. I call EU-centered arguments those that seek Turkey's change in the loss of an EU anchor: once the membership to the EU became an unrealistic goal for the JDP, it lost its appetite for democratic reforms and

started using authoritarian methods[377]. I call hegemonic party arguments the idea that it was its electoral hegemony and the weakness of the opposition on electoral terms that led the JDP toward its authoritarian policies[378]. Both arguments are weak when considered in isolation; the EU anchor can be a barrier toward authoritarian drift and hegemonic party status can enable an authoritarian move, but they cannot do the work by themselves unless we assume that authoritarianism is a natural instinct that does not require explanation. In the absence of barriers such as foreign influence and balanced party structure, therefore, democracies are bound to descend into authoritarianism. There is no reason to make such an assumption, however. The incentives created supra-national organizations is clearly not a necessary factor for transition to democracy. Moreover, it is impossible to argue that a hegemonic party system necessarily leads to de-democratization, as the examples of Sweden and Japan attest. These are at best secondary arguments that observe some permissive features of the JDP's institutional environment not positive arguments about the causes of the JDP's reactions to that environment. Instead, we should look for factors that energize the movement, rather than discussing the absence of barriers.

Indeed, almost all of the articles about recent developments in Turkey boil down to a cultural or ideational explanation. A political culture that rewards polarization and

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[377] Ziya Öniş, "Sharing Power: Turkey's Democratization Challenge in the Age of AKP Hegemony," *Insight Turkey* 15, no. 2 (2013): 109–12; Fuat Keyman and Sebnem Gumuscu, *Democracy, Identity, and Foreign Policy in Turkey: Hegemony Through Transformation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), chap. 10.

[378] Öniş, "Sharing Power: Turkey's Democratization Challenge in the Age of AKP Hegemony," 112–19; Keyman and Gumuscu, *Democracy, Identity, and Foreign Policy in Turkey: Hegemony Through Transformation*, chap. 1; Pelin Ayan Musil, "Emergence of a Dominant Party System After Multipartyism: Theoretical Implications from the Case of the AKP in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics* 20, no. 1 (2015): 71–92; Şebnem Gümüşçü, "The Emerging Predominant Party System in Turkey," *Government and Opposition* 48, no. 2 (2013): 223–44.

personalistic ruling styles as well as the JDP's own ideology are brought to bear as the most important variable in the equation of Turkish politics[379]. The argument is simple: once the JDP found itself in an unchallenged position and lost the EU's moderating effect, its cultural and ideological tendency that favored authoritarianism kicked in, which pushed the party and its leader toward an increasingly authoritarian path. This is, of course, a plausible explanation. Yet the interesting thing about it is that it functions as a *deus ex machina* solution for the theoretical problems of regime change literature. Democratization literature has linked developments to ambitious structural and institutional theories, while the explanations for authoritarianization, rooted in similar methodological tools, explain the change away by emphasizing the importance of cultural idiosyncrasies. The very *explanans* that was dismissed as inconsequential during the 2000s is re-introduced and solves all problems by a simple gesture. It always existed, but had been repressed by the JDP's need to defend itself against its enemies and raise its international standing. Once the JDP amassed enough power, the democrats became authoritarians. Remark that all elaborate theoretical constructs that imply a durable change which were popular in the 2000', such as the rise of a bourgeoisie not dependent on the state and institutional democratic learning, have evaporated.

The problem with this account is that it ignores the complex relationship between the JDP and the concept of democracy. The JDP, from the very beginning, crafted its identity as a democratic actor in a multi-vocal way. It always insisted that its conception of democracy was

[379] Özbudun, "AKP at the Crossroads: Erdoğan's Majoritarian Drift"; Mehmet Gürses, "Islamists, Democracy and Turkey: A Test of Inclusion-Moderation Hypothesis," *Party Politics* 20, no. 4 (2014): 646–53; Çınar and Sayın, "Reproducing the Paradigm of Democracy in Turkey: Parochial Democratization in the Decade of Justice and Development Party"; Öniş, "Sharing Power: Turkey's Democratization Challenge in the Age of AKP Hegemony."

identical with the Western concept, and it strived to reach the highest universal standards. It never abandoned this claim, even when the narrative produced in the West differed from the JDP's account. Moreover, even during the time when the JDP was seen as the champion of democracy, there were instances that the narratives of the West and the JDP contradicted each other. To characterize the JDP's position as an oscillating point in a democracy/authoritarianism axis ignores such continuities. The JDP appears to be a force that is only capable of moving in a unilinear axis, and the ways it crafts its identity and it connects with the universalistic conception is lost.

The alternative is to look how the identity of the JDP evolved in the crucial 2008-2013 period. What kind of language games were in place during this period? How were the actions of the JDP interpreted by hegemonic players, and how did these interpretations interact with the JDP's identity? How did the JDP's narrative about its own identity align and differ from this dominant narrative? How did the narratives emanating from the Global Culture and the JDP's narrative interact? Also, more concretely: How and when did the JDP's identity as a democratic force stop resonating with the dominant narrative? In other words, I suggest looking at how the concept of democracy was deployed in concrete situations within the dialogue between global and local actors instead of measuring the JDP's actions against an essentialist, *a priori* definition that I find convenient or borrow from a respectable authority.

How does the story work when we take into account such continuities and use a Wittgensteinian conceptual strategy? Firstly, the JDP's democratization process, from the very start, differed from the Western conception. It was a version that prioritizes the myth of representation over the myth of fundamentals, a narrative that allowed the JDP to perceive

itself as the embodiment of the nation and democracy. As long as this narrative was deployed against powers that were seen as authoritarian forces in the West, the two narratives were in sync, despite the fact that the JDP's occasionally deployed the same narrative against freedoms of expression. In the period from 2008 to 2013, as the JDP grew more confident, the frequency of the JDP's *faux pas* increased. This was a period of both concurrence and contestation. By concurrence, I mean a dialogue in which both actors recognize each other's identity by agreeing on the narrative framework by which actions should be interpreted. By contestation, I mean a dialogue in which the actors deploy different narratives to interpret the same action and question each other's identity. When the JDP used its narrative against the Kemalist alliance, it resonated with the West, but when it was used in "boundary skirmishes" against civil liberties, the very meaning of democracy as well as the JDP's identity became contested issues. The actions of the JDP were received in the West as mixed messages. The dual dynamic changed in June 2013 when the Gezi protests rocked the political scene. The Western narrative and the JDP's narrative on this event could not be more different. For the West, it was a call for more democracy and a rebellion against the authoritarianism of the JDP, whereas for the JDP, it was an attempt to destroy democracy. This was the end of the dialogical process as the perception of the two players about each other changed drastically, and they no longer saw each other as fellow democrats.

When we look at the concrete dialogic process, we see that the period between 2008 and 2013 is markedly different from the post-2013 period. The dialogic process before 2013 was marked by two different dynamics: those of concurrence, in which the JDP's actions and its identity as a democratic player are approved by global actors, and those of contestation, in

which local and global actors develop markedly different narratives to interpret the same issues in their relationship to democracy. In other words, the speech acts that confirm the JDP's identity as a democrat and the speech acts that challenge it could be found simultaneously in the narratives that are produced by Western actors. This coexistence is not a source of change, but rather an indication of the instability in the way that the two narratives articulate to each other, On two crucial issues, the JDP's and the global player's narratives aligned and the dynamics of concurrence were in play: the civil-military relations and the role of the high courts in the judiciary. These issues, even if the vocabulary used sometimes differed, were cast by both players as acts of democratization. The JDP's narrative and, hence, its identity was approved by the West. But the dynamics of contestation worked simultaneously with the dynamics of concurrence. This was most pronounced in the field of freedom of the press. In the 2008-2012 period, the JDP came into conflict with the media and consistently attempted to strip the freedoms of the press, based on its interpretation of democracy that gave it the duty to protect the National Will from the Turkish media. In this conflict, in the boundary skirmishes over the extent of the freedom of speech, the West often contested the JDP's views and aligned itself with the press, though there was no consensus. In this process, the JDP insisted that the Western media misinterpreted the situation. Overall, the simultaneous workings of the dynamics of concurrence and contestation evolved into a mixed reputation. The identity of the JDP became unstable and was characterized as a democratic force with authoritarian tendencies.

The tipping point was the Gezi protests during the summer of 2013. The emergence of an actor that claimed to protect rights and liberties changed the narrative about the JDP and the

dynamics of the dialogue. When the government chose to deal with the protestors using police brutality and produced a narrative of "defending the majority's rights against minorities" to justify its actions, the narrative on the JDP's identity was reversed completely. In its previous life-or-death struggle, during the crisis of 2007-08, the JDP was positioned in international media as the democratic actor, its opponents as authoritarian actors. The legitimacy boost that the JDP received on the international level had been crucial to the outcome of the power struggle. This time, the table was reversed and, in a political struggle that felt like a life-or-death situation, the party's adversaries were identified as democrats while the JDP was considered an authoritarian political movement. The JDP's claim to represent democracy was not recognized. This also led to a change in the way the JDP interprets the West's position in the dialogic process. The relationship with the Western media became adversarial. On the foreign policy plane, the JDP tried to link with the West, not through its democratic appeal, but as a security asset against the ongoing chaos in Syria and, more importantly, the resulting refugee crisis. Other than that, the JDP's narrative of democracy and mode of action remained unchanged; it continued to represent itself as the incarnation of the National Will and kept trimming the freedoms of its rivals based on the mandate it won in elections in the name of protecting the National Will.

From a theoretical standpoint, this approach has two consequences. First, it opens an avenue to explain the JDP's trajectory as a whole, but does not create an artificial breach between the JDP as a democrat and JDP as an authoritarian, despite obvious continuities in its narrative. The narratives that the JDP deploys to interpret its environment and its mode of action have been consistent since its establishment, which was a self-declared break from its

past. Both actions that are applauded by liberals and authoritarian policies that have been condemned by its critics are energized by the same narrative, an interpretation of democracy that seeks to empower the elected government and renegotiate its boundaries in the Turkish context. Second, it sheds light on the phenomenon that bedevils the students of democratization theory: the dynamics of the authoritarian backsliding and the rise of the "gray area", which is termed hybrid regimes, illiberal democracies, and competitive authoritarianism. The failure of the explanations based on binary democracy versus authoritarianism stems from the search for two separate social forces that contradict each other, a regime that uses a narrative that is a hybrid of democratic and authoritarian ideologies. The case of the JDP, when approached through the lens of a non-essentialist methodology, demonstrates the existence of a different dynamic. The backsliding is not the result of the clash of two forces, but the built-in ambiguities inherent in the narrative of democracy. The same actor, using an internally consistent narrative, can move in seemingly contradictory directions as the way it defines and appropriates the concept democracy is not identical with the Western concept, though it has been built in dialogue with it. Authoritarian backsliding is not an ordinal movement in a unilinear process, but a player's active re-interpretation of the usage of the concept that is incompatible with other interpretations.

In this chapter, I will first analyze the period between 2008 and 2012 under two rubrics. I will first analyze the processes of concurrence, in which the West's and the JDP's narratives aligned. Then, I will analyze the processes of contestation, in which the JDP and the West contested the meaning of democracy. Subsequently, I will analyze how much the JDP's identity had evolved in the framework of the debates on the Turkish Model, which the Arab

Spring started. Finally, I will analyze the brusque change in the player's identity as perceived by the West, which was triggered by the Gezi events.

2. 2008-12: Processes of Concurrence and Processes of Contestation

The period 2008-2012 was devoid of dramatic political struggles that characterized 2007-08 and 2013-15, peppered with events that gave the observers the feeling that the country's future hung in the balance. The JDP won two elections and one referendum with comfortable margins. It announced several transformative projects that sought to be more inclusive toward minorities, the Alevi, Roma, and, most importantly, Kurdish minorities, but none of these projects bore any fruit. The perception of the JDP in the international arena has gradually become mixed. Already in 2009, just a year after the celebration of the JDP's narrow escape from closure, many media outlets expressed concerns over the direction that the JDP was taking. For example, *The New York Times* published an editorial when President Obama visited Turkey in April 2009, saying "We are concerned about Mr. Erdogan's increasingly autocratic tendencies".[380] Similarly, *The Economist* published a piece about Erdogan's autocratic tendencies, and recommended him "[to work] with the opposition to produce a constitution that met the wishes of all Turks, not just pious ones" to overcome "his image problem".[381] The *BBC* interpreted the JDP's relatively weak performance in 2009 local elections as a result of such autocratic tendencies.[382] However, all three news pieces express

[380] The New York Times, "Mr. Obama and Turkey," *The New York Times*, April 3, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/04/opinion/04sat1.html?_r=0.

[381] The Economist, "The Enduring Popularity of Recep Tayyip Erdogan," *The Economist*, March 7, 2009.

[382] BBC, "Turkish PM's Party Slips in Polls," *BBC News*, March 30, 2009, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7970448.stm.

their concern in moderate language, between praises of the party's accomplishments. As late as 2012, Turkey was considered as a model for Arab countries, which were going through a dramatic period of turmoil, and the model's shortcomings were considered carefully weighed against its strengths. The JDP, in its turn, dismissed criticisms as misinterpretations of the facts on the ground and painted its struggle as attempts to further democracy against anti-democratic forces. Overall, 2008-2012 was a gray period, a time when players had difficulty in deciphering each other's identities.

Where was the regime under the JDP moving between 2008 and 2012? From an ordinal point of view, there are only three options: it was becoming more democratic, more authoritarian, or remaining stationary. Indeed, Freedom House ratings were stable.[383] A closer look, however, immediately shows that there were very important changes. The army's influence had faded completely, and its allies in the judiciary had lost their grip on the High Courts. The public discourse on the Kurdish issue changed drastically, and the denial of the Kurdish ethnic identity effectively ended. These were widely interpreted as democratic advances, but, at the same time, the independence of judiciary vis-à-vis the government and the situation of rights and freedoms, freedom of press in particular became points of concern. In the dialogue between the West and the JDP, two separate processes can be identified. On the one hand, there were processes of concurrence. By concurrence, I mean a situation in which both sides of a dialogue express their mutual commitment to the same interpretation of events, and this shows the mutual recognition of their identities as players that ascribe to the same narrative framework. Indeed, some of the JDP's policies are represented and received as signs

[383] See the online tool at https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/turkey

of mutual commitment to the same democratic values. The JDP and its international audience were in concurrence about what the JDP's policies means for democracy. On the other hand, there are processes of contestation. By this, I mean a situation in which both sides of a dialogue interpret events in different ways and question the validity of the other's interpretation in reference to the supposedly common narrative framework and raise questions about the other's identity. This is a case in which Western actors question the democratic identity of the JDP because of some of its actions, and the JDP insists that these policies have been misinterpreted by the other side. Therefore, from the standpoint of liberal observers abroad and in Turkey, the signals were mixed. The contestation, in this case, was not simply a disagreement over the meaning of an action. In the process of dialogue, two distinct narratives were recognizable, both based on a common vocabulary, but eventually providing different ways to interpret the world around the players and different guides to action. One can also see attempts of persuasion in this asymmetrical relationship: the West invites the JDP to adjust its action in conformity with the rules of the democratic game while the JDP attempts to persuade the West that its actions are indeed democratic and that they are misinterpreting the actions in question. This is why, overall, the narrative we spot on Western media is a mixed, hybrid story whereas the JDP's narrative, the movement was entirely consistent and democratic: all the developments were part of the struggle between the National Will and its enemies. There was a gap between the two narratives about what was being done by the JDP, both centered on the concept of democracy. The two narratives that ran concurrently for early phases when the JDP struggled with the powerful military and its allies within the judiciary who were seen as authoritarian

forces. Later, they began to diverge as the JDP took further steps to consolidate its vision of a democratic regime.

As I discussed in the second half of the previous chapter, the gap between the two interpretations had already begun creating tension. Throughout the period from 2008 to 2012, the tensions became more pronounced, but the dialogue was not shut off. The West kept praising the JDP's accomplishments and viewed it as a partner against authoritarianism and extremism. The JDP kept trying to explain itself and adjust its policies against heavy criticisms regarding freedom of the press. In a way, the dialogic double movement of the 2002-2007 period, that is, of connection and re-interpretation, was still in force. On the one hand, the JDP sought to shape an identity through speech acts and accomplishments in a way that would connect it to the Global Culture. It openly claimed to be the follower of the universalistic values of democracy and kept working on the credibility of its claim. On the other hand, it centered its democratic identity on the concept of the National Will that elected governments are its sole representative and used this narrative to expand the government's power in ways that were usually attributed to authoritarian regimes by the Global Culture. In other words, its re-interpretation was different from the global mythology; the JDP kept seeing the myth of representation as essential and the myth of the fundamentals as an auxiliary principle whereas its Western observers interpreted its actions from a point of view that compared the JDP's practices with established practices in the West, which are based on a supposedly near perfect balance of two myths. The language that the JDP used in these struggles took the form of what I call "boundary skirmishes", a discussion over which areas should be under control of the elected government representing the National Will, and which areas should stay out of its reach

according to the principles of democracy. This was a dialogic process, and the government often adjusted its narrative and policies in response to critics, moving from a maximalist to moderate position. The critics abroad were receptive to the JDP's message as long as it concerned the role of the army and its allies in the High Courts, but the politicization of the judiciary in the struggle against the army as well as the increasing pressure on the freedom of the press rose eyebrows. Overall, the JDP managed to secure its reputation at this period despite its more aggressive posture and more frequent skirmishes.

A separate dynamic that characterized the period was the launch of "opening strategies", publicly announced projects that sought to identify and solve the problems of minorities. There were three such openings: a Kurdish Opening, an Alevi Opening, and a Roma Opening. The goal of these openings was to make the political system more inclusive and extend the JDP's reach beyond its core constituency. The dynamics shaping these strategies was very much related to the JDP's democratization agenda, but the role of the Global Culture was very limited. It is not that Western leaders, the European Union, and the Western media did not comment on these issues, but the JDP carefully avoided referring to Western criticisms in this issue as it was vulnerable to the nationalist narratives that could paint the JDP's attempts to negotiate with the PKK as a betrayal to national interests. The addressees in this process were the marginalized minorities and nationalists who were concerned about the outcomes of these projects. Both the Alevi and Kurdish Openings failed as both groups wanted a level of political recognition and power sharing, whereas the government wanted to give cultural recognition, but considered the political demands of the minorities as attempts to dent the

indivisibility of the National Will. Again, there was a wedge between the JDP's understanding of democratization and the kind of democratization that the minorities were seeking.

Therefore, the period from 2008 to 2012 was not one of democratization, authoritarianization, or confusion. It was an era in which the JDP was realizing its projects and fighting its battles more aggressively, but stayed in line with the identity it had forged in the previous era. The increasing discrepancy between the JDP's and the West's narratives about the events were the result of the difference between the way the two deployed the word "democracy". This difference was already there, but as the JDP had the chance to fight the boundary skirmishes more frequently and aggressively after the defeat of the army and its allies in 2007-08, it became more noticeable. However, the gap did not widen enough to lead the end of the dialogic process. The sides did not cease to recognize each other as partner and fellow democrats. This happened after June 2013, after the events I will discuss in the next section.

a) Processes of Concurrence

i. Civil-Military Relations

The failure of the e-coup in 2007 made it clear that the army was in no position to overthrow the JDP coercively. The disappearance of the army as a political force with a say in major policy decisions was not immediate. The JDP actively pursued dissident elements within the army in the subsequent years, effectively bringing the army under its control. It is difficult to pinpoint a precise date which marks JDP's victory over the army as the process unfolded slowly, but, when the four of the top five generals, including Chief of Staff Işık Koşaner, requested to be relinquished from their duties in 2011 in protest of the arrest of 40 on-duty generals and failed to create the political earthquake they intended, it was over.

The defanging of the Army was primarily accomplished through the judiciary, particularly, through the cases dubbed “Ergenekon” and “Sledgehammer”. It is important to emphasize that this judicial process was mostly undertaken by the JDP’s ally, the Fethullah Gülen network. To decipher these events, it is important to understand the Gülen network before analyzing analyze civil-military relations.

It is difficult to define the network of organizations and individuals centered in Fethullah Gülen. Simply naming it is a challenge. The autonym is the Service Movement [Hizmet Hareketi], but it has been in use for a few years whereas the roots of the network go back to the 1970s, and no one but its sympathizers use it. The term the Gülen Community, or “The Community” is used more widely, but its scope and mode of organization are very different from other Islamic communities. They are also widely known as Fethullahists [Fethullahcilar] or Gulenists [Gulenciler], but it is clearly more than a collection of individuals which prescribes to the ideas of an intellectual and which has an organizational dimension. Also, in recent years, Erdogan has circulated the terms Parallel State [Paralel Devlet] and Paralellists [Paralelciler], and these pejorative terms started to be used widely. These labels are not only a recent invention, but they also ignore the societal dimensions of the group and make it only about its members within the bureaucracy. Perhaps the most accurate term in circulation is the Gülen Movement [Gülen Hareketi], as it captures both its organizational and informal features as a network.

The namesake of the network, Fethullah Gülen, was a *Nurcu* preacher who worked in various cities in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, he started to develop a novel interpretation of Islam, trying to synthesize it with some liberal values, a state-centered

nationalism, economic entrepreneurialism and positive science. Most important, he started to build a community of activists who would work for his vision of society. Unlike many other Islamic communities, he refrained from developing an antagonistic relationship with the secular state, building connections with various elite groups.[384] In the 1980s, the network he established expanded, especially in the fields of business, media, and, most importantly, education. The network became a complex, informal organization with a hierarchical structure and a trans-national dimension, as it expanded its educational initiatives all around the globe, including United States and sub-Saharan Africa. It also sought to place its members in crucial positions within the bureaucracy abusing established principles for hiring and promoting. As a scholar sympathetic to the movement puts it:

> The Gülen community consists of three circles. At the center of the movement is a core group of believers who lead the activities (hizmet) in a spirit of full and unconditional loyalty to the Gülen movement. This core group includes considerable numbers of university graduates who specialized in technical subjects and come from rural areas or small towns in Turkey. The main core of the movement consists of around 30 elder brothers (büyük abiler), some of them Gülen's closest friends and students, who are highly respected and regularly consulted on major day-to-day policies. Most of these elder brothers are fulltime activists who work as professionals with salaries at the Gülen movement's institutions. […] The second circle of people support Gülen's religious-national goals and (in)directly participate in the creation of eser (good work) activities through charities, himmet. This circle includes esnaf (small and medium-sized merchants) and is adamì (businessmen) who constitute a board of trustees of the movement's numerous foundations of the movement. They support the movement's activities in their area through fundraisings organized by local volunteers. Finally, there are those sympathizers who share Gülen's goals but do not participate in their realization. This group is very much involved in the protection of eser, whether the schools, newspapers, or dormitories. […] Thus Gülen's community is less cohesive in its periphery but has a military like discipline at the core.[385]

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[384] Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 181–89; Rusen Cakir, *Ayet ve Slogan* (Istanbul: Metis, 1990), 103.

[385] Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey*, 189.

Throughout the 1990s, secularists were alarmed at his growing influence as members of his network became influential within the bureaucracy. During the episode leading to Erbakan's ousting from power, Gülen, who had always been wary of Erbakan's brand of political Islam, distanced himself from the Welfare Party, but his network was targeted by the army anyway; as a result, Gülen chose to move to the United States, where he still resides. When the JDP came to power, Gülen and Erdogan developed an alliance. At that point, Gülen's disciples were numerous within the judiciary, and they led the assault against the army and its allies between 2008 and 2013 via investigations targeting. After 2013, the alliance broke as the JDP started to be concerned about the network's growing power and attacked the educational institutions that help students prepare for university entrance exams, which were at the center of its influence. In response, Gulen's disciples in the judiciary, and police force arrested several individuals from Erdogan's entourage in the episode called the 17-25 December Graft Scandal. The JDP managed to stop the judicial process and the hostility between the two old allies became open. The struggle between the JDP and its former ally was also a contestation about the meaning of democracy, as the network called Erdogan a dictator and he branded Gülen's activities a threat to the National Will. These events lie beyond the temporal scope of this dissertation, however.

This was done mainly through two large investigations dubbed Ergenekon and Sledgehammer. The first case, Ergenekon, was opened in 2007. At first, it seemed to target some rogue elements within the army, but it quickly evolved to a case against an alleged centralized secretive organization within the state that reached top echelons of the army. The prosecutors threw out increasingly larger nets, even reaching the top generals. The

Sledgehammer case, started in 2010, directly targeted top commanders and was based on allegations that they had made detailed plans to overthrow the JDP government in 2003. Many generals were detained until 2014. The legal validity of these is hard to ascertain as they were political cases carried out by prosecutors who were members of the Gülenist network, which had long pursued a strategy to place its members in important posts within the state machinery. The JDP disavowed the cases that were launched by Gülenists and embraced the view that at least some of the evidence brought against the generals and other detainees had been fabricated. Regardless, the prosecution accomplished the task of effacing the army as a political force against the JDP as it had proven utterly incapable of defending itself.

The JDP adopted a dual rhetoric that we can call "distant association". On the one hand, the JDP persistently defended that these cases were opened and pursued by the independent judiciary, which had nothing to do with the executive branch. On the other hand, it persistently supported the cases in public and underlined their importance for the future of Turkish democracy. Most dramatically, when the opposition leader accused Erdogan of being the "prosecutor of the Ergenekon Case", he replied: "And while we do not claim such a thing, they call us prosecutors. This is good. Why? Because the prosecutor exists in the name of the Nation. Prosecution acts in the name of the nation and we are trying to seek and protect the righteous in the name of the nation. In this sense, we are the prosecutor [of this case]"[386]. The symbolically loaded language that Erdogan used reflects the persistent theme of National Will; both he and the actual prosecutor act in the name of the nation to protect the righteous. Therefore, the Ergenekon case, even if the government was not directly responsible, ran in

[386] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 15 July 2008, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

tandem with its efforts in the struggle of the National Will against the elites. In other instances, Erdogan directly claimed credit for these cases, implying that the cases were part of a grand strategy. For example, he said, in 2010, "When people ask 'Why today? Why now? Why did you wait for 7 years', I say: Turkey's democracy reached the necessary level of maturity only today. The conditions are ripe only today. The way that led here was not easy, this is why we are dealing with these issues today".[387] Moreover, the cases were made possible by legislation passed by the JDP:

> Firstly, the specially authorized courts established upon the adoption of Articles 250 and 251 of the Code on Criminal Procedure (CMK) in June 2005 have been able to investigate crimes of terrorism and secondly, by an amendment of article 250 in June 2009, they were also empowered to investigate military personnel accused of attempts to topple the government in peacetime. These courts were able to investigate nine separate coup plots from its beginning.[388]

To summarize, the JDP, in the period of 2008-2012, supported the cases and symbolically incorporated them in its identity, even though, in practice, they were carried out by people in the judiciary who were not directly affiliated with or controlled by the JDP or the government. In fact, after 2012, when former Chief of Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces İlker Basbuğ was arrested on terrorism charges, Erdogan claimed that the cases went too far[389] and, in the following years, the Gulenists who actively prosecuted these cases and the JDP became worst enemies (see footnote 10). Nevertheless, between 2008 and 2012, these cases were thought about in tandem with the JDP's discourse of democratization and the National Will.

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[387] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 2 February 2010, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

[388] Hakkı Taş, "Turkey's Ergenekon Imbroglio and Academia's Apathy," *Insight Turkey* 16, no. 1 (n.d.): 178.

[389] http://www.todayszaman.com/news-288775-basbug-thanks-erdogan-for-his-support.html

The army's posture was entirely defensive during the legal processes that destroyed its invincibility. It did not have recourse to a discourse that would question the legitimacy of the government. Instead, they argued that the evidence presented by the prosecution had been fabricated and that the accusations were groundless. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the resignation letter of Chief of Staff Işık Koşaner. In his letter, Koşaner argued that the allegations were groundless and confessed his impotence against the cases, saying that as his attempts to stop the arrests were not heard by the relevant authorities, he could no longer defend the right of his staff and, therefore, could not accomplish his duties.[390] Overall, not only was the army unable to function as a veto point in the system as it had for the last five decades, it could not even act as an effective interest group to defend the freedom of its most prominent members. Overall, no matter the actual validity of the allegations, as an institution with a history of overstepping its boundaries, the army could not credibly defend itself once it was obvious that it would be unable to overthrow the government by force.

The West also saw the process as an act of democratization. The legal process was perceived by both the media and the EU as a necessary step for Turkish democracy. The coverage of the cases in the foreign media was positive despite a level of caution. For example, *The New York Times*, in a lengthy piece about Ergenekon, summarized different interpretations of the case, but characterized it as:

> Turkey is a democracy with an elected government, but a powerful elite of military officers, judges and senior bureaucrats has helped steer the country since its inception in 1923, carrying out four coups. This trial is the first real attempt in Turkish history to

[390] http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/vedanin-sifreleri-29880088

> prosecute the leaders of this country's violent nationalist fringe, who prosecutors say have had links to the elite.[391]

The newspaper refrained from picturing the case as if its outcome were known, but still characterized it as the "first real attempt" to deal with anti-democratic forces. The way the struggle was represented changed little over time, and the alleged irregularities got little attention during this period. Erdogan was said to have tamed the generals and normalized the army's role. In the words of *The Economist*, "his biggest accomplishment may be to have defanged the generals".[392] However, nowhere in the Western media did the word "National Will" appeared. Also, the results of this accomplishment were considered cautiously. *The Economist's* next sentence is a warning. "Yet, […], he seems more imperious by the day".[393] Similarly, *Der Spiegel* ends its analysis of the Ergenekon case, which is largely supportive, with a negative note that is at odds with the discourse on the National Will: "Power belongs 'in the hands of the people,' Erdogan promised in a campaign speech a few years ago. He is of course right. But many Turks are now wondering which people he is referring to".[394]

The seemingly inconsistent position of the JDP, that is, the simultaneous disowning and owning of the judicial process addressed both domestic and international audiences. On the one hand, it distanced itself from the process by characterizing it as the act of the independent

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[391] Sabrina Tavernise and Şebnem Arsu, "86 on Trial in Turkish Coup Case," *The New York Times*, October 20, 2008, http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/21/world/europe/21turkey.html.

[392] The Economist, "Turkey's Army: At Ease," *The Economist*, August 11, 2006, 43.

[393] Ibid.

[394] Daniel Steinvorth, "Power Struggle in Turkey: Is Erdogan Strong Enough to Take on the Generals?," *Der Spiegel*, March 1, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/power-struggle-in-turkey-is-erdogan-strong-enough-to-take-on-the-generals-a-680907-2.html.

judiciary, hence respecting the myth of fundamentals and countering the army's defense. On the other hand, it integrated the judicial process into its own identity in order to take credit for the defanging of the army and add the deed to its list of democratic accomplishments. The obvious incoherence had little effect as the critics of the army were ready to overlook it whereas its defenders had no power to resist the purge of generals, which was seen as a step forward by both the international community and the JDP's growing electoral support.

To summarize, the dramatics of concurrence were in place as far as civil-military relations were concerned. The fact that the army's power was curbed was considered more important than the suspicions over the authenticity of evidence presented against them and, overall, it was considered a step forward. The distant association strategy of the JDP worked; the weakening of the army in the period from 2008 to 12 was considered a democratic accomplishment and a confirmation of its democratic identity.

ii. The Executive and the High Courts

The struggle fought in the judiciary was qualitatively different from the one between the army and the JDP. The army had lost its privileged position, which contradicted the democratic narrative both institutionally and discursively; what mattered was not the legal changes that had diminished its autonomy, but its humiliation as its force was now more *de facto* than *de jure*. In the judiciary, the government did not face an extra-legal anomaly, but institutions whose legitimacy was grounded on the myth of fundamentals, a series of rights vested on organizations with the deliberate intention to limit the government's power in accordance with democratic mythology. The government, in the name of National Will and democratization,

aggressively pursued a series of boundary skirmishes that reduced the autonomy of such organizations vis-à-vis the executive branch.

The JDP and the Right in general, had a bumpy relationship with the High Courts, which were perceived as an undue restraint on elected governments and, therefore, the National Will. For the JDP, whose predecessors were shut down by the Constitutional Court, the problem was particularly acute. Moreover, other High Courts, such as the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, the High Court of Appeals, and the Council of State, consisted of judges mostly sympathetic to the secular opposition. To change the posture of the High Courts, the composition of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HCJP) had to be changed, as this institution was in charge of appointments and promotions. A battle over the control of HCJP ensued in 2010. The government changed the way in which the HCJP judges would be selected by amending the constitution via a referendum; 58 percent of the electorate voted in favor of the amendments. Instead of being exclusively elected by High Court judges, the majority of the members of HCJP were now to be elected by judges on the bench, a group closer to the JDP. Even though the way the judges are selected seems less crucial than the army's role in defining a regime's character, the result of this power struggle was equally important.

The amendment was part of a larger package, but the rest, which was related to the *acquis communautaire*, was not controversial. The entire "No" campaign before the referendum was about the changes in the judicial elections. The main opposition party, the RPP, had promised to support the amendments if the three articles regarding the judiciary were scrapped.[395] Not

[395] Hurriyet, "Baykal ve Erdoğan'dan Referandum Anlaşması," *Hurriyet*, December 4, 2010, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/baykal-ve-erdogandan-referandum-anlasmasi-14390259.

only had various political parties, including the two major opposition parties campaigned for a "No" vote, but also, uncharacteristically, the High Courts themselves unapologetically criticized the amendments. Indeed, their position summarized the entire argument of the "No" campaign. A representative summary of this position is the Head of the High Court of Appeals, Hasan Gerceker's speech in the opening ceremony of the Judicial Year, just five days before the referendum: "The principle of separation of powers and independence of the Judiciary is being eliminated. The rule of law is damaged. HCJP is made dysfunctional. The judiciary is being politicized. […] The separation of powers is the most important requisite to hinder the abuse of political power and the realization of liberal democracy".[396] In summary, the "No" coalition, including the High Courts themselves, perceived the reform as an attempt to extend the control of executive branch into the judiciary and, hence, the JDP. The amendments were damaging, not advancing democracy.

The JDP contested this view. The very next day, the Ministry of Justice made an official statement, saying, "These statements are the expression of the goal of maintaining the current tutelage of the High Courts over the entire Judiciary and the *status quo*".[397] Even though the statement did not openly refer to the concept of democracy, the word tutelage, codified as the authoritarian tendencies of the elites in the JDP's narrative, was used. In the aftermath of the referendum, in his victory speech, the relationship between democracy and the diminishing

[396] Hürriyet, "Arka Bahçe Olmayacağız," *Hürriyet*, September 7, 2010, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/arka-bahce-olmayacagiz-15724720.

[397] Hürriyet, "Adalet Bakanlığı'ndan Yargıtay'a Cevap," *Hürriyet*, September 7, 2010, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/adalet-bakanligindan-yargitaya-cevap-15728693.

power of the High Courts would be emphasized by Erdogan more strongly: "Our people finally said yes to advanced democracy, yes to freedoms, yes to replacing the law of the superiors with the superiority of law, yes to the sovereignty of the National Will, yes to the end of tutelary mentality".[398]

One side note is necessary here regarding the word tutelary, which has been used by the JDP and its supporters increasingly as an antonym of democracy. The word originates from the work of American Sociologist Edward Shills, who used the word to refer to partial democratization attempts under the watchful eyes of an authoritarian elite.[399] Later on, the term was used to describe the regimes in which the army exercises a *de facto* power over the elected leaders. The JDP appropriated the term, but modified his meaning by expanding it: various powers that seek to undermine or limit the government are tutelary powers, including the army, The High Courts, and the media. In this sense, the term is used as an antonym of democracy and the National Will.

As such, the JDP framed the 2010 referendum as a choice between democracy and tutelage. The High Courts, they argued, were not the guarantors of democracy, but forces of tutelage. The referendum was the victory of the National Will against the tutelage, and it further aligned the regime in Turkey with universal standards of "advanced democracy", another term which would be emblematic to the JDP's narrative.

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[398] For the full text of the speech, see http://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/istiyoruz-ki-krallarin-degil-kurallarin-egemen-oldugu-bir-turkiye-olsun/6677#1

[399] Shils, "Political Development in the New States."

The Western sources concur. The EU characterized the amendments as a "step in the right direction".[400] President Obama and the German Minister of Foreign Affairs congratulated Erdogan publicly.[401] This was not simply diplomatic niceties; the media also saw that as a tremendous accomplishment. For example, *The New York Times* published an editorial entitled, "A More Democratic Turkey". In it, it said:

> Turkey, already the Muslim Middle East's sturdiest democracy, fortified its freedoms in a referendum on Sunday, with 58 percent of voters approving a package of constitutional amendments meant to end army meddling in civilian politics. That overwhelming "yes" vote showed that Turks are fed up with ultimatums and coups and want elected politicians fully in charge. Turkey's Army and its closely allied judicial establishment long considered themselves guarantors of the militant secularism preached by modern Turkey's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. That claim cloaked a succession of repressive military coups — three in the past half-century. […] The changes also give Parliament a role in selecting some constitutional court judges and roll back the unelected establishment's power to vet judicial nominations. That is normal in Western democracies, including the United States.[402]

The mood in Europe was similar, as *Der Spiegel* summarized for its readers in a recapitulation of the German media: "German media commentators say the referendum will help Turkey's EU aspirations, and that Erdogan's critics are wrong to claim that Turkey will be turned into an Islamic dictatorship as a result of the reform now approved".[403] From the point of view of the Western leaders as well the media, the move brought Turkey more in line with Western

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[400] European Commission, "Turkey 2010 Progress Report," 2010, 8.

[401] BBC, "Turkish Reform Vote Gets Western Backing," *BBC News*, September 13, 2010, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-11279881.

[402] The New York Times, "A More Democratic Turkey," *The New York Times*, September 16, 2010, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/opinion/17fri3.html.

[403] Der Spiegel, "The World From Berlin: 'Turkey Now Needs to Forge a New Political Culture,'" *Der Spiegel*, September 13, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/the-world-from-berlin-turkey-now-needs-to-forge-a-new-political-culture-a-717168.html.

practices and defeated the authoritarian shadows of the past. The concerns over the independence of the judiciary were reported but ultimately dismissed. Even though the vocabulary of the National Will was absent, the JDP and the West confirmed each other's democratic identity: The JDP claimed that the referendum made Turkey a more advanced democracy in a Western sense, and the West agreed; the result was indeed closer to Western practices, and it was an act of Westernization reform realized by an "Islamically rooted"[404] or "Islam rooted"[405] political party.

The episode over the 2010 referendum was a typical boundary skirmish. The JDP called the electorate to rally for the National Will in order to curb the power of the elites whereas the opposition, among them the High Courts, summoned the myth of fundamentals and called the electorate to defend the independence of the judiciary against the executive branch. Not only did a larger proportion of voters back the JDP's vision, but also, in the international domain, the JDP consolidated its image as a democratic force despite concerns in other areas. The dynamics of concurrence were in play. The JDP's narrative and the Western narrative aligned, while the narrative of the "no" campaign was found wanting.

iii. The Kurdish Opening

Another important aspect of the 2008-2012 period was the Openings strategies. The JDP, in this period, tried to reach out to three minority groups: the Kurds, the Alevis, and the Roma. Among these, the Roma Opening was the least controversial and targeted a small minority.

[404] The New York Times, "A More Democratic Turkey."

[405] Der Spiegel, "The World From Berlin: 'Turkey Now Needs to Forge a New Political Culture.'"

Though reliable statistics are non-existent, the Roma population is estimated to be less than a million people. The numbers about Alevis and Kurds are hard to estimate, but both have substantive populations between 10 and 25 million. The Alevis are a religious minority which practices a heterodox form of Islam and has a long history of being repressed by the state, going back to 15th century. Seeing the principle of secularism as insurance against Sunni Islam, they have usually supported left-wing political movements. The JDP's popularity among them was very limited. In 2008, the JDP started a series to identify and address their grievances. At the end, these workshops did not produce a tangible result, and they resonated with neither the Alevi population nor the JDP.[406] The international audiences barely noticed the project.

The Kurdish Opening, which dealt with a twenty-year-old insurgency with geopolitical implications, was different. Retrospectively, it is easy to consider the Opening a failure. At the time, it represented a brusque change from previous vocabulary used by the state, ending the denial of a separate ethnic identity in the public, tearing apart the taboo over the word "Kurdish". It also developed an inter-subjective language in which multiple actors could come together to solve a problem, echoing the theories of deliberative democracy. The process was bumpy, and violence spiked again in 2012, followed by a détente in 2013 and was scrapped entirely in 2015. At the time, however, it created a wave of optimism.

[406] Murat Borovalı and Cemil Boyraz, "The Alevi Workshops: An Opening Without an Outcome?," *Turkish Studies* 16, no. 2 (2015): 145–16.

A little background is necessary here. The pretension that a separate Kurdish ethnic identity did not exist was deemed a necessary condition for being accepted as a legitimate player within the realm of party politics in Turkey since its early beginnings.[407] Even the progressive RPP of 1976 conceptualized the "Eastern Problem" as a problem of regional underdevelopment and the emerging Kurdish Nationalism as a symptom of regional economic disparities to be addressed by purely economic policies.[408] For the Kurdish nationalists rallying around the PKK, the problem was a national problem, a problem of self-determination, assimilationism, and colonialism[409] As such, the national problem lay at the heart of the economic problem as Kurdistan was a colony, exploited by the Turkish bourgeoisie, which was not allowing it to develop.[410] The PKK positioned itself against the denial and went beyond: not only did Kurds exist, but they were an entirely different nation whose right of self-determination had been stolen in the 1920s.[411] When the PKK, using this narrative, became a power to be reckoned in the 1980s, it advocated "revolutionary terrorism" as a political method.[412] Ever since, the analysis and even the naming of the problem became a language game that shaped the Turkish politics: the labels "terrorism problem", "Southeastern problem", and "Kurdish problem" became emblematic of the political identities of the people who uttered

[407] See, for example, Mesut Yeğen, "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity," *Middle Eastern Studies* 52, no. 2 (1996): 216–29.

[408] RPP, *CHP Düzen Değişikliği Programı* (CHP, 1976), 45–56.

[409] PKK, *PKK Kuruluş Bildirisi*, 3rd ed. (Wesanen Serxbun, 1984), 41.

[410] Ibid., 26.

[411] Ibid., 17.

[412] Ibid., 38.

them. Turkish politics has since been shaped by this language game: what terms should be used to define "the problem" have been used the draw the boundaries of legitimacy.

Starting from the late 1980s, two major players within Turkish politics, the Social Democrats and the Islamists, made attempts to transgress the boundaries of the official vocabulary on Kurds. Both actors, instead of joining the chorus, which condemned terrorism and unified behind the state's security apparatus, problematized the excesses of the security measures. In the 1990s, the taboo became progressively untenable, and even the center-right politicians began to timidly transgress it. The public discourse that limited the definition to a security-slash-regional underdevelopment problem was challenged by a discourse, which added recognition and a democratization dimension.

When the JDP stormed the party system in early 2002, it was going to build on these multi-dimensional analyses. It entered the arena in 2001 by simultaneously acknowledging and avoiding the language game around naming "the problem": "Unfortunately, the problem that some of us call Southeastern, some of us Kurdish and some of us call terror is a reality of our country". This is the first sentence of the section entitled, "The East and the Southeast" of JDP's 2001 Program[413]. The title plays the language game and avoids the word Kurdish. The first sentence simply says that there are multiple ways to name the problem and legitimize the use of the "Kurdish Problem" without incorporating it into its own narrative. The subsequent analysis avoids the word Kurd, but refers to recognition of cultural differences and languages other than Turkish. It subtly makes recognition a policy goal while respecting the taboo. Security measures are briefly mentioned, and the importance of economic policies are

[413] JDP, *AK Parti Kalkınma ve Demokratikleşme Programı*, 28.

discussed, but the problem is primarily defined as a democratization problem. The key paragraph reads:

> Solutions grounded in bureaucratic-authoritarian understanding, as they are based solely on security logic, are aggravating the problem in the long-term. Approaches emanating from the framework of a democratic state, even if they create concerns at first, produces results that consolidate the unity and integrity of our nation in the long-term. […] We need to reach the understanding that solely economic development policies cannot solve this problem wholly and an approach that recognize cultural differences in the framework of democratic rule of law should complement it.[414]

This paragraph summarizes the basic pillars of the JDP's discourse on the issue. The problem of economic underdevelopment, i.e., lack of infrastructure and investment, should be solved and security measures should continue, but this should be accompanied with democratization and cultural recognition. What do democratization and recognition entail? The party fleshes these ideas out further: they entail eliminating the excesses of the security measures such as the state of emergency, respecting rights and freedoms, and removing the barriers to the use of the Kurdish language. What they do not entail is an alternative to a unitary state; this point is emphasized multiple times throughout the text.

In 2009, with the launch of the "Kurdish Opening", the JDP actively engaged in trying to solve the problem. On the one hand, it took steps toward the recognition of a separate ethnicity. Some of the legal barriers against the use of the Kurdish languages were lifted, state television established a new channel broadcasting in Kurdish, and the JDP officials have used the word Kurdish more openly. Most important, an inter-subjective process involving many actors to identify Kurdish grievances has been launched. Meanwhile, clandestine talks with the PKK took the form of a negotiation. This new approach could easily be spotted in Erdogan's

[414] Ibid., 30.

speeches in the wake of the Opening process. His first Parliamentary Group Speech after the launch of the Kurdish Opening gives us a clear picture:

> I am not talking about a package [of legal changes], I'm talking about a process. In this process, let's meet with the leaders of the political parties which are both in and out of the parliament. Let's meet with academics, various intellectuals of this country, members of media, civil society organizations, in short, with everyone who has a word to say on this subject. Those meetings, coordinated by our Minister of Interior, are currently being hold[415]

The project of the JDP was to launch a wide discussion about the Kurdish problem rather than to pursue policies emanating from its own analysis. It was conceived as an open-ended discussion, one in which everyone could contribute, something like an academic brainstorming session where all actors would be invited. The government, more specifically the Minister of Interior Besir Atalay, would only coordinate and facilitate the discussion. The solution to the problem would not be imposed by the state, then, but would be developed in a bottom-up manner. In other words, the solution would be developed in an inter-subjective manner rather than an analytical manner. The inter-subjectivity that the process was built on was a significant departure from the past, and its bottom-up, inclusive approach was deemed to be more democratic, but this approach had problems. Some of them, such as the PKK's institutionalized violence and the opposition which sought to alienate nationalist voters from the JDP, were external from the JDP. Others stemmed from the inner contradiction between the JDP's reluctance to grant legitimacy to actors that were claiming to represent Kurdish grievances, including legal pro-Kurdish parties. The problems of this narrative became explosive much

[415] Erdogan's speech on 8 November 2006, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp.

later. In 2008-2012, however, the JDP's moves were unprecedented, and were potentially revolutionary.

The West's position was cautious optimism, and the Openings were considered evidence of the JDP's democratic identity. It is difficult to consider the relationship between the JDP and the West in this particular instance dialogic, however, as the JDP was more concerned about the Nationalist opposition. The leader of the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party, Devlet Bahceli, would say, "Prime Minister Erdogan is using shameless tactics to persuade the people to this destruction project whose sources are in abroad. He will give a progress report to Obama when he meets him in the White Palace about this destruction project".[416] In other words, the project is actually Obama's, and not Erdogan's. The JDP was definitely concerned about the repercussions of these policies with its core electorate, carefully avoiding references to Western sources. Allusions to Western standards and the international approval of the JDP's policies were absent when the Kurdish Opening was in question. In this instance, the building up of the narratives are parallel rather than dialogical, and it is easier to talk about cautious approval rather than concurrence. The dialogic process that shaped the JDP's actions did not involve the West, but rather the nationalistic parties in this process.

Still, the Openings helped the JDP's reputation abroad in its hopeful beginnings. For example, *The New York Times* advised the U.S. and the EU to work for its success and reward the JDP:

[416] Hürriyet, "Bahçeli'den Diyarbakır Resti," *Hürriyet*, November 24, 2009, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bahceliden-diyarbakir-resti-13027781.

> In a show of courage and good sense, Turkey's government has announced a plan to grant long-denied rights to its Kurdish minority, and, it is hoped, finally end an insurgency that has cost more than 40,000 lives. […] The United States and other Western countries that have long pushed Turkey to become more democratic should encourage Mr. Erdogan to keep pressing ahead. Most important, Europe must finally make clear that if Turkey bolsters its democracy and respects the rights of its minorities, it will be welcome in the European Union.[417]

Indeed, the EU's own document's echoes this cautious optimism: "Overall, despite continuing terrorist violence, the government has opened a wide-ranging public debate - covering cultural, political and economic matters- on the Kurdish issue. It is crucial that this debate be followed by concrete measures".[418] As the process unfolded with varying success until July 2015, Western politicians and sources consistently encouraged negotiations between Turkey and the extension of minority rights, approving the JDP's moves toward reconciliation, and expressing disappointment with the re-securitization of the issue. Regardless, this sensitive domestic security issue was not dealt with in the same way that the other issues related to democratization. Almost every news report about the Kurdish problem includes the semi-ritualistic phrase, "The PKK, which is listed as a terrorist group by the United States and the European Union". Even though there is a considerable amount of sympathy for the PKK by the Western public, the Western governments could not support an organization which described its own methods as "revolutionary terrorism" in 1980s and has conducted insurgency tactics for four decades within the boundaries of a NATO member. The JDP, in its turn,

[417] The New York Times, "Turkey and the Kurds," *The New York Times*, November 23, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/24/opinion/24tue2.html.

[418] European Commission, "Turkey 2009 Progress Report" (European Commission, 2009).

carefully avoided associating its policies with the encouragement of foreigners; of course, one may characterize silence as a form of concurrence.

To recapitulate, the Kurdish Opening is neither an instance of the dynamics of concurrence nor a part of a dialogical process. It is, however, a part of the JDP's democratization agenda, and it did contribute to the party maintaining its reputation as a democratic force. The way in which the Opening collapsed is related to the JDP's particular reinterpretation of democracy: the inter-subjective process collapsed later on, in part because the JDP's interpretation of the myth of representation did not allow for a partial representation of the grievances of a part of the Nation. As the collapse happened beyond the scope of this dissertation, it will not be discussed here. From the standpoint of the argument in this chapter, the only reason the Opening project needs to be discussed is that these policies and related narratives contributed to the positive reputation of the JDP in the 2008-2012 period as they were seen as painfully slow steps in the right direction to address a very difficult situation.

b) Processes of Contestation

Based on the information conveyed in the last section, it could be hard to tell what exactly was wrong with the JDP's democratic identity. The army's undue influence on the political sphere was effaced, the lower courts started to play a larger role in the selection of High Court judges in line with the practices of Western countries, and there was a slow and painful, but still democratic attempt to deal with the most difficult problem of the country. Why did people keep talking about authoritarian tendencies and autocratic instincts? To understand the dynamics of contestation, we should look at another issue: the freedom of expression.

The accusations toward the AKP's democratic identity in Turkey were nothing new. As we have seen in the discussion of the closure case, its opponents have always accused the JDP of having a secret agenda to dismantle the secular republic and, by extension, democracy. As we have seen, the prosecution of the cases against the army and the rearrangement of the composition of the High Courts were also cast as an offensive against the independence of the judiciary by the opposition. With some exceptions, those arguments did not resonate with the audience abroad. Yet, as I mentioned in the beginning, already in 2009, the JDP's reputation as a democratic force was being questioned, and the situation deteriorated gradually. Why?

A simple comparison of how *The New York Times* reported the elections in 2009 and 2011 would be illuminating as it reflects the overall change in Western media. In 2009, the newspaper reminded its readership who Erdogan was by saying, "Mr. Erdogan, a former Islamist who has pressed for Turkey's membership in the European Union".[419] At the very end, it added a concerned comment:

> Early in his first administration, Mr. Erdogan was aggressively pushing Turkey's European Union bid. But in recent years the effort seems to have foundered. Mr. Erdogan has been embroiled in battles with his opponents, including Aydin Dogan, a billionaire publisher whose newspapers are sharply critical of the prime minister, and a large cast of former generals and others whom prosecutors accuse of plotting to overthrow Mr. Erdogan's government.[420]

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[419] The New York Times, "Turkey's Governing Party Wins City Races," *The New York Times*, March 29, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/30/world/europe/30turkey.html.

[420] Ibid.

The criticism was not so much about authoritarianism as it was about the about the slowing down of the country's democratization. It is also worth noting that an editorial published four days later, when Obama visited Turkey, echoed the same ideas; it praised the democratic accomplishments of the government while expressing concerns.[421] In 2011, however, the language used to report the election was different. The JDP and Erdogan were introduced to readers as causes for concern rather than reformists who had lost their enthusiasm: "The conservative party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan won a clear victory in parliamentary elections on Sunday with a strong showing that critics worry might be used to further consolidate its power after nearly a decade of rule and to circumscribe civil liberties and its political opposition".[422] This time, instead of briefly mentioning criticisms, the newspaper substantiated and endorsed them:

> Many websites, including YouTube, have been blocked in recent years by the government Internet Monitoring Agency, often without explanation. Critics point to the fact that Turkey currently has more than 60 journalists in jail, many charged with crimes related to their published work, according to the Turkish Press Association. At least two — Nedim Sener and Ahmet Sik, both investigative journalists critical of the A.K.P. and supportive Islamic organizations — have not been notified of their charges since their arrests in March.[423]

This time, the praise was left to the end paragraphs, and was confined to Erdogan's triumph against the army. "Despite these shortcomings, some liberal circles have praised government efforts in challenging the status quo of the powerful military, which has staged three coups and

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[421] The New York Times, "Mr. Obama and Turkey."

[422] Şebnem Arsu, "Erdogan's Party Wins Third Term in Turkish Elections," *The New York Times*, June 12, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/13/world/europe/13turkey.html.

[423] Ibid.

until recently maintained a virtually untouchable place in Turkish politics".[424] Besides the language used in reporting, the newspaper published an editorial, which made the point more directly:

> Over the last nine years, Justice and Development has unleashed the energies of Turkey's entrepreneurs, established civilian supremacy over a coup-prone army and pushed through human rights reforms as part of an effort to bolster Turkey's candidacy for the European Union. Recently, Mr. Erdogan has become more authoritarian and thin-skinned. His party was expected to push for creating a strong new executive presidency designed to let him continue to rule after his term as prime minister runs out. That would concentrate far too much power in a single branch of government.

The same point is shared across the West, and *The Economist* went as far as calling on its readers to vote for the main opposition party:

> The AK Party is all but certain to form the new government. But we would recommend Turks to vote for the CHP. A stronger showing by Mr. Kilicdaroglu's party would both reduce the risks of unilateral changes that would make the constitution worse and give the opposition a fair chance of winning future elections. That would be by far the best guarantee of Turkey's democracy.[425]

The important thing to note here is that the gradual increase in criticism was not related to the key fights with the army and the High Courts, and not even with the PKK, which is not mentioned. The narratives produced by the Western media do not support the JDP's opponents. The only issue which attracts criticism is the way in which Erdogan treats dissenting voices[426]. Indeed, from 2009 to present, there has been a constant barrage of criticism on the issue of the freedom of the press. The number of jailed journalists has been a constant issue, censure over

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[424] Ibid.

[425] The Economist, "One for the Opposition," *The Economist*, June 2, 2011.

[426] The New York Times, "Reading Turkey's Vote," *The New York Times*, June 13, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/14/opinion/14tue3.html.

social media has periodically arisen, and the ways that the JDP pressures newspaper owners have been analyzed many times. As we have seen in the previous chapter, even before 2007, the issue of freedom of speech had occasionally created tensions between the West and the JDP.

To see the dynamics of contestation, let me delve deeper into two examples mentioned in *The New York Times'* quote above: the tax fine that was issued to media mogul Aydin Doğan and the imprisonment of two high-profile journalists, Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener. The first example is from 2009, and the second is from 2011, so they are representative of this period. Both got international attention, as opposed to the JDP's lesser-known targets.

In 2009, Doğan Holding, one of the largest conglomerates in Turkey, was owned by Aydin Doğan. It was fined for tax evasion and was asked to pay $513 million, a sum that allegedly could bankrupt the group. Given the fact that the newspapers had recently exposed the corruption of some foundations close to the government, the conglomerate was generally considered critical to the government and because the legal foundations of the fine were shaky, the move was considered a political attack against the Doğan Group. This raised an international outcry and, eventually, the government and Doğan negotiated and agreed to a smaller sum. Technicalities aside, it was one of the instances in which the meaning of democracy was contested as Erdogan cast the Doğan Group as a threat to the system, while the West strongly defended Doğan.

Some Western outlets reacted strongly. *Der Spiegel* published a lengthy analysis about the tax fine and characterized it as a "blow to the freedom of press", concluding:

> The Doğan case fits with the image that the government in Ankara has conveyed recently. The hope that Erdogan, once a champion of reform, will continue to open up the country and lead it into the European Union is fading. Apparently he feels less obligated than ever to guarantee freedom of the press and the rule of law, the EU's core requirements.[427]

The New York Times dedicated an editorial to the issue, saying, "Turkey has made important strides in the last decade, amending its Constitution, outlawing the death penalty and bringing Turkish law more in line with European standards. Steps like this undermine that progress".[428] Even less enthusiastic media outlets, such as *Le Monde*, said that "The fact is that the government's leader shows his true' colors in his regular oratorical surges against the opposition press".[429] Even the EU's Progress Report expressed concern:

> There are two tax-related procedures opened against the leading national media group Doğan Media Holding. The high fines imposed by the revenue authority potentially undermine the economic viability of the Group and therefore affect *freedom of the press* in practice. There is a need to uphold the principles of proportionality and of fairness in these tax-related procedures.[430]

The interesting point is how the JDP defended itself against this barrage of criticisms. Indeed, if the government had not produced a narrative of boundary skirmishes and had

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[427] Katrin Elger, Daniel Steinvorth, and Isabel Hulsen, "Erdogan Takes on Media Mogul: Political Feud in Turkey Scares Off Foreign Investors," *Der Spiegel*, April 25, 2009, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/erdogan-takes-on-media-mogul-political-feud-in-turkey-scares-off-foreign-investors-a-615422.html.

[428] The New York Times, "A Clear Assault on the Press," *The New York Times*, September 12, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/13/opinion/13sun3.html?_r=0.

[429] Guillaume Perrier, "Erdogan Contre Dogan, Un Duel Au Sommet En Turquie," *Le Monde*, February 28, 2009, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2009/02/28/erdogan-contre-dogan-un-duel-au-sommet-en-turquie_1161633_3214.html?xtmc=aydin_dogan&xtcr=3.

[430] European Commission, "Turkey 2009 Progress Report."

defended the move purely on legal grounds, that the fine would be a technicality, or, at worst, an instance of political cynicism a la *House of Cards.*

The JDP did deny that the case was politically motivated. Two days after the publication of *The New York Times* editorial, Erdogan hosted a dinner with ambassadors in Turkey and told them, "I have no thoughts of applying political or economic pressure on the media, but certain media establishments have no right to see themselves above the law".[431] He simply denied that the tax fine was related to the opposition he faced from the Doğan Group, despite the fact that he had called on his supporters to boycott its newspapers earlier.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the JDP insisted that the media could have a negative effect on democracy when the concept is conceived of as the supremacy of the National Will. For example, Erdogan said, in a speech that touched on his feud with Doğan without naming him:

> Look my friends, the national sovereignty is above everything. Media's sovereignty is not above the nation's sovereignty. Know this: media' sovereignty will be left empty-handed when confronted by national sovereignty, The JDP's route was decided by the Nation and we're walking with the nation. We always say: we didn't walk with the media, we don't walk with them and we became the ruling party despite them. This is how we came to this point.[432]

[431] Orhan Coskun and Selcuk Gokoluk, "Turkey Says $2.5 Bln Doğan Tax Fine Not Political," *Reuters*, September 14, 2009, http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-turkey-dogan-idUKTRE58D5IC20090914.

[432] Erdogan's speech to the JDP Parliamentary Group, 25 May 2010, http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

In the background of this peculiar concept of media sovereignty is the media's role in the ousting of Erbakan's government in 1997. Doğan's complicity with the army at the time was often mentioned by the pro-government media. The international media, at this point, was not entirely opposed to the image of a popular movement struggling with the media conglomerates defending the elites. Indeed, both *The Economist* and *Le Monde*, while expressing concerns, focused on this dimension of the struggle while reporting on the conflict between Erdogan and Doğan, dedicating much of the report to Doğan's past.

Overall, the reporting of the Doğan crisis was nuanced. Some observers interpreted it as a gross violation of the freedom of the press, the EU Commission among them. Others saw it under a more favorable light: even though it created concerns over the freedom of the press, Erdogan's accusations against the authoritarian tendencies of the media were not entirely unfounded. The JDP's narrative resonated with some interpreters, and was rejected by others.

The entire period between 2008 and 2012 was marked by freedom of expression issues. When two prominent investigative journalists, Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener, were jailed in 2011 for being accomplices of the generals who had planned a coup, the Western media's way of interpreting the move was much more unified. The JDP's identity as a whole was questioned. The newspapers, which had already been critical in 2009 raised theirs voice further. *The New York Times* published an editorial entitled, "No way to run a democracy", saying, "Turkey has long provided a heartening model of democracy for the Muslim world. Now, with so many people in the region demanding freedom, Turkey's government is betraying its values and its citizens, pressuring journalists to mute critical reporting about

Prime Minister Erdogan and his administration".[433] *Der Spiegel* said, "As absurd as the accusations against Ahmet Şık and Nedim Şener are, they mark a turning point in the so-called democratization process that has been conducted by the ruling Justice and Freedom (AK) Party government under Erdogan, which has been in power since 2002".[434] Already, the democratization process had gained the qualifier "so-called". The publications that were more sympathetic to the government's interpretation in 2009 were also more critical this time. *Le Monde* published an article entitled, "The Turkish Government increases its pressure against the opposition press".[435] *The Economist* said, "Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's mildly Islamist prime minister, likes to boast that his Justice and Development (AK) party has transformed the country into a 'forward democracy'. But the detention and imprisonment of two investigative journalists on March 6th looks very much like a step backwards".[436] This does not mean that the JDP was written off; there was still a chance for a dialogue, as illustrated at the end of *The New York Times* editorial, which was more reconciliatory than its critical beginning would have suggested:

> Since Mr. Erdogan took office in 2003 (sic), he and his party have changed Turkish society for the better. They have shown that a party rooted in Islam can reinforce democracy by expanding religious freedom. And they have reasserted civilian control

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[433] The New York Times, "No Way to Run a Democracy," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/12/opinion/12sat3.html.

[434] Jurgen Gottschlich, "'The Imam's Army': Arrested Journalist's Book Claims Turkish Police Infiltrated by Islamic Movement," *Der Spiegel*, April 6, 2011, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-imam-s-army-arrested-journalist-s-book-claims-turkish-police-infiltrated-by-islamic-movement-a-755508.html.

[435] Guillaume Perrier, "Le Pouvoir Turc Accentue Ses Pressions Contre La Presse D'opposition," *Le Monde*, November 13, 2011, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/europe/article/2011/11/23/le-pouvoir-turc-accentue-ses-pressions-contre-la-presse-d-opposition_1608029_3214.html?xtmc=ahmet_sik&xtcr=7.

[436] The Economist, "Press Freedom in Turkey A Dangerous Place to Be a Journalist," *The Economist*, March 12, 2011.

> over a politicized military. They must now set these spiraling conspiracy investigations on a sounder legal basis, or risk these achievements and their country's democracy.[437]

What was the JDP's response? It would be wrong to say that it was not the JDP's responsibility as the decision to prosecute had been made by Zekeriya Öz, a member of the Gülenist movement. At the time, the JDP defended the move, just as it claimed credit of the Ergenekon case. It should also be noted that both journalists were ultimately acquitted of charges in 2012, giving in to pressures. The narrative that the JDP used against charges was not aligning with critics, but similar to the judicial processes that reshaped civil-military relations, it was "distant association". That is, the JDP has simultaneously distanced itself from the legal process by the ritualistic calling for the independence of the judiciary while taking credit for its democratic character. How does this work? How can an action so universally criticized be cast as an act of democratization?

The dual dynamics of distant association are best seen in Erdogan's speech at the Parliamentary Group on 8 March 2011, when he countered criticisms regarding the arrest of Şık and Şener. His speech was defensive in tone, and he dissociated the JDP from the act by emphasizing the independence of the judiciary several times and ritualistically repeating his party's commitment to freedom of the press. Then, however, he goes on to justify the move and contest the Western interpretation of the events, by casting the media as an anti-democratic force and by framing the historical role of the media as a "tutelary" institution against the National Will. Hence, after distancing the JDP from the issue, he also associated it with the JDP's historical struggle with the power elite. From his perspective, the media has played a

[437] The New York Times, "No Way to Run a Democracy."

negative role in the history of Turkey's democracy, and the critiques of the JDP are a continuation of a pattern.

> Esteemed friends, we know that freedom of press is possible only and only within democracy. In the absence of democracy, in a situation where the standards of democracy are not advanced, in an environment democracy is threatened and politics is under tutelage, no one can talk of freedom of expression, we very well know, we very well remember how some press took part in operation to dismantle democracy. We know how some journalists and press institutions were tasked to create a chaos and provoke the society to legitimize a military intervention before 1960. As I just told you, we very well know where the headlines were prepared in the 28 February process, how op-ed writers were given orders.[438]

Therefore, the freedom of press is meaningless without democracy, and complicity with anti-democratic forces, a crime that the Turkish press is guilty of, making the freedom of the press obsolete under certain circumstances. Critiquing the government is not a right if it weakens it against the enemies of democracy. From Erdogan's perspective, this is why the Western media was misinterpreting the JDP's acts and accusing it of authoritarianism; they have not understood the context. He directly addressed the Western media in the same speech:

> Some international media outlets declare that they cannot understand what is happening in Turkey and that they are concerned. We are surprised to see that Westerners who emphasize rule of law and independence of judiciary don't understand the situation in Turkey. We should excuse them: Because, in those countries, the press is not a hitman for the gangs, some journalists don't encourage coups, exploits the freedom of press to execute psychological operations. […] My esteemed friends, the allegations of establishing a terrorist organization to disband democracy and constitutional order is an issue which cannot be overshadowed by debates of the freedom of press.[439]

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[438] Erdogan's speech on 8 March 2011, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp.

[439] Ibid.

Therefore, from Erdogan's perspective, the West misinterpreted the situation. The criticisms of the government are not covered by the freedom of the press if they are associated with the anti-democratic, "terrorist" forces that work against democracy. In the past, as Erdogan noted, the media was "the representative of the understanding that disempowers the National Will".[440] He continued, "we derive our political power from the nation only, not from the media".[441] In this framing, the media is represented as a force whose interests are in conflict with the nation. Freedom of the press is an important part of democracy, Erdogan argued, but not when it is used to undermine the National Will. The government's actions are to ensure that the National Will rules supreme, and the boundaries of the freedom of the press should be drawn accordingly.

This is a boundary skirmish in the sense that the Western media and the JDP disagree on what constitutes the boundary between the freedom of expression and the National Will. From Erdogan's perspective, the freedom of the press ends when it seeks to dismantle democracy. Given this and the fact that the JDP is the embodiment of the National Will and democracy, and the media has historically cooperated with the army, all criticism of the government by the press is suspect.

To summarize, between 2009 and 2011, the freedom of expression became a constant tension within the dialogue between the West and the JDP. The party's posture toward the freedom of the press attracted more and more skepticism. In 2009, the media outlets' interpretations about the JDP's actions diverged. All expressed concerns over the freedom of

[440] Ibid.

[441] Ibid.

expression, but some criticized the government for using a strong language whereas others insisted that those actions should be put in context; democratic accomplishments of the JDP and a less-than-stellar record of the media in defending democracy should be taken into consideration. In 2011, the criticisms were universal, despite the fact that the JDP used the same discursive strategies to counter criticisms. The strategy of distant association worked two-fold. On the one hand, the JDP distanced itself from such actions by emphasizing that they were the acts of an independent judiciary, an institution which was not under its control. On the other hand, it associated itself with these actions and cast them as affirmations of its democratic identity, misinterpreted by the West. It does so by framing them as a boundary skirmish. The media cannot be allowed to undermine democracy; this is where freedom of the press ends: "My esteemed friends, the allegations of establishing a terrorist organization to disband democracy and constitutional order is an issue which cannot be overshadowed by debates of the freedom of press"[442]. From this perspective, the JDP's proven record of struggling for democracy and the media's proven record of undermining it should be used in order to draw the boundary between freedom of press and the government's right to defend itself. We see a boundary skirmish, a contestation of the boundary of the freedom of press that amounts to the contestation of the JDP's democratic identity. At this point, the boundary is in flux, but the dialogical process goes on as the Western outlets adopt an ambivalent posture toward the JDP's identity. The meaning of acts in the boundaries of the myth of representation and myth of fundamentals are contested and, hence, the meaning of democracy.

[442] Erdogan's speech on 8 March 2011, available at http://www.akparti.org.tr/tbmm/grupkon.asp

This process is different from the perspective of alternative modernities, that is, a different way to cope with modernity in a post-colonial context. This is not a story of a post-colonial subject emancipating itself from the hegemony of the West by re-interpreting and recombining Western narratives. Even though Erdogan often says that the West is not paying enough attention to the context of its actions, unlike Erbakan before him, he has not sought to develop an alternative civilization or an alternative conception of democracy. There is, rather, a dialogue in which the boundaries of a common definition are tested. In the framework of an asymmetrical dialogue, what the West conceives as retrograde steps are, from the JDP's perspective, the redrawing of the boundary between the myth of representation and the myth of fundamentals in the context of progress from tutelage to advanced democracy. Still, the JDP has not formulated an alternative and has been insistent on its commitment to a universal conception of democracy. It maintains that the West's reaction is a misrepresentation, rather than a different conception.

3. The Turkish Model and the Arab Spring

As the previous three sections showed, between 2008 and 2012, the reputation of the JDP became tarnished, and its status as the champion of democracy has been questioned. Domestically, the opposition started to talk about a civil dictatorship, and the West's criticisms became more vocal. However, when in 2011, a wave of revolutionary movements spread like wildfire in Arab countries and led to the ousting of well-entrenched regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, destabilized the regimes Yemen and Syria, and forced many others to take liberalizing steps, Turkey's regime was largely cast as a model to follow for the new regimes. The viability of the model has been debated in the Arab world and in the West, and the JDP

itself promoted itself as a model to follow for the new governments of these countries. Indeed, this was the moment that Western experts hoped the success of the JDP would spark and transform the JDP truly into an asset for global security. As I discussed in the previous chapter, many prophesied that the moderate, democratic branch of Islamism that the JDP was preaching would be the cure for the authoritarianism and radicalization of Islam in the Middle East and would have long-term security benefits for the region. The Turkish Model failed to materialize, however, and many of the affected regimes changed only a little or not at all, while others descended into brutal civil wars. The Egyptian post-revolutionary government of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had been the most affected by the JDP's example, was overthrown by large protests and the army's intervention in June 2013. The only success story of the Arab Spring, Tunisia, diverged from the Turkish model as the main Islamist party opted to share power with secularists. In 2011 and 2012, Turkey was indeed seen as the example that new regimes should follow.

This is curious given the fact that the JDP's identity was already had a mixed character. Bahar Rumelili argues that the "mixed", liminal representation of Turkish democracy was precisely what made it a model. She defines liminality as a "space where the reach of the universal remains ambiguous due to the boundedness of the particular or where the boundaries are blurred because of the reaching of the universal".[443] In more concrete terms, Turkey occupied a liminal space because it was represented both as a Western and non-Western

[443] Bahar Rumelili, "Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East," in *Decentering the West: The Idea of Democracy and the Struggle for Hegemony*, ed. Viatcheslav Morozov (Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 72.

country, a democratic and non-democratic regime, or something in-between.[444] The Turkish Model's liminal construction provided a good discursive strategy for both Arab reformers and the West. Arab reformers were able to present democracy as a suitable form of government in their local cultural setting,[445] while the West preserved a linear conception of democracy in which Arabs would first meet the standards of a lower benchmark than the ideal, i.e., Turkey.[446] The JDP, on the other hand, saw a chance to expand its influence over the Middle East and boast about being an exemplary country.

As far as the dialogical process that shaped the JDP's identity is concerned, the important dynamic is the last one: how the overall debate on the Turkish Model was seen as a confirmation of the JDP's identity by the party. However, whether the "less than ideal", "*bon pour l'Orient"* democracy should be used as a benchmark was a contested issue in the West. For our purposes, the lack of consensus over Turkey's fitness to be a model illustrates the dynamics of contestation over democracy. While the JDP perceived the Turkish Model as an ideal combination of Islam and democracy, this view was hotly contested.

The JDP's attempt to cast itself as a model was crystallized in Erdogan's famous Cairo Speech, in which he suggested that Egypt adopt Turkish-style secularism:

> I believe that Egypt will see in this transition period and in this aftermath this democratic point: A secular state structure is not atheism, but it assures that everyone will live his religion in the way he sees fit. It is going to see it that way, it should see it in this way. It shouldn't be concerned and the people who prepare the constitution should guarantee this. They should say, 'The State guarantees the beliefs of all belief groups. It treats all equally. This won't stop you from living according to the tenets of

[444] Ibid., 73.

[445] Ibid., 77.

[446] Ibid., 75–76.

> your religion' It should say that. The society will be peaceful if it start and continues this way. The state will respect the beliefs of the Muslims, the beliefs of Copts, and – I'm moving even further- even the beliefs of non-believers and atheists. It will guarantee that too. This is a secular state. But a person cannot be secular. Tayyip Erdogan is not secular, Tayyip Erdogan is a Muslim. But Tayyip Erdogan is the prime minister of a secular country and he is trying to do his job perfectly.[447]

This very controversial quote contains two important discursive operations. One is the fact that he repeats his name thrice. He suggests his leadership style as an ideal. He is Muslim, but the way he rules is secular. The second linguistic operation is in the phrase which is used as filler: "It [the state] will see it that way, it should see it in this way." The way he rules, the way Turkey does things, is a "should"; he is the ideal, and an "is going to", the inevitable future.

This is the way Erdogan represents himself; as a Muslim leader who tries to rule a secular, democratic country perfectly and who advises other Islamists to do the same, to, in effect, emulate him. Yet the way the Turkish Model is discussed in the West was mixed; some praised the model, while others emphasized the flaws of Turkish democracy. Even if there was an underlying, and unexpressed[448], assumption that in the international hierarchy of democracies, young Arab democracies should first match Turkey before moving upwards, Turkey was usually told to perfect its democracy to become a real model.

One example of the first reaction would be that of *The Economist.* Despite expressing concerns over Erdogan's democratic credentials during the elections earlier, in relation to the

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[447] Sabah, "Başbakan Erdoğan'dan Laiklik Açılımı," *Sabah,* September 15, 2011, http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2011/09/15/basbakan-erdogandan-laiklik-acilimi.

[448] Rumelili, "Modeling Democracy: Western Hegemony, Turkey and the Middle East," 77.

Turkish Model, it said, "Whatever the flaws of the Turkish experiment, it is clearly true that Turkey under the AK party presents a more benign picture than many other versions—real and hypothetical—of Islamist rule".[449] Similarly, *Der Spiegel* recommends the JDP's example to the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt:

> Despite the many differences between the two countries, some analysts believe that it is possible, even desirable, for Egypt to follow Turkey's path. The Turkish model espoused by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has inspired many Arab democrats. It is the only successful attempt to date to domesticate political Islam, an attempt that has succeeded both economically and in terms of foreign policy. Of course, to implement this model in Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood would have to follow the example of Turkey's Islamists, that is, to significantly modernize its image of humanity and more clearly distance itself from terror than it has done to date.[450]

Others insist that a flawed model will not do. For example, a *New York Times* editorial tells Turkey: "Mr. Erdogan can legitimately claim a leading role in the Middle East. But he will have more credibility if he strengthens his own democracy".[451] *Le Monde*, while functioning as a platform for a debate, in the editorial of the newspaper, gives similar advice:

> Prime Minister Erdogan's authoritarian tendencies –not to say autocratic- has cast a shadow over the end of his second mandate. Democratization did not followed the pace of economic indicators. The relations with the European Union are virtually frozen, leaving Cyprus divided. His virulent criticisms of his opponents, the prosecution of journalists, and his muscular mode of government leads to concerns over the "putinization" of the prime minister. Mr. Erdogan is the sole master of his party's

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[449] The Economist, "The Turkish Model: A Hard Act to Follow," *The Economist*, August 6, 2011, http://www.economist.com/node/21525408.

[450] Der Spiegel, "The Arab Revolution: A Nile Insurgency and Uncertain Egyptian Future," *Der Spiegel*, January 30, 2011, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-arab-revolution-a-nile-insurgency-and-uncertain-egyptian-future-a-742458-4.html.

[451] The New York Times, "Turkey's Challenges," *The New York Times*, March 24, 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/25/opinion/sunday/turkeys-challenges.html.

> apparatus. He is the only person who decides on who will run for parliamentary seats and who will be in government. The JDP's leader's ambition is to push Ankara towards an American style presidential system. Without a doubt, he will occupy the most important seat. […] A new constitution will reveal the intentions of the Turkish leader as he needs to work with the opposition because his majority needs a few more seats to change the constitution. This is the occasion he can find again his reformist spirit of his first term. Without this, the famous 'Turkish Model' that inspires Arab countries will stay an unachieved model.[452]

For *Le Monde*, Erdogan needed to work with the opposition to pass a new democratic constitution and return to his "reformist spirit" in order to be a real role model. Otherwise, Turkey could and should not be a model.

It is clear that we cannot talk about a consensus regarding the "Turkish Model", neither in Arab countries, where some find it insufficiently Islamic and others insufficiently democratic, nor in Western countries, where some thinks that the flaws are negligible while others think that they are crucial. The divergence of the opinions in the West does not coincide with a fault line, and the debate does not seem to mark the owner's identity in relationship to another domestic or international struggle. Among my resources, *The New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* seem more critical whereas *Le Monde* and *The Economist* seem more accommodating. It is difficult to see a fault line like Left versus Right or continental Europe versus Anglo-Saxon countries that causes this diversion. The debate over the Turkish Model only shows that the JDP's identity became difficult to decode for its Western observers. The status of "role model" was enthusiastically embraced by the JDP, and, for a while, it did resonate with audiences in

[452] Le Monde, "Le Modèle Turc Face À La Tentation Autoritaire," *Le Monde*, June 13, 2011, http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/06/13/le-modele-turc-face-a-la-tentation-autoritaire_1535394_3232.html.

the international community, but created a fruitless debate rather than a wave of enthusiasm and emulation.

The entire debate illustrates the main point: the JDP's identity as a democratic actor was, at this time ambiguous, in the West. The JDP still defined itself using the same concepts and words, but its global audience had difficulties in reconciling some of its actions, done in the name of democracy and National Will, with its own conceptual vocabulary. Unlike the 2002-2008 period, there is a lack of consensus on the character of the JDP. Some, citing old and new accomplishments, saw the JDP's more repressive policies as missteps and others concerning moves that could lead to a reversal. No other actor, however, shares the vocabulary that Erdogan uses to defend the party's media policies, that is, the representation of media as an un-national force whose freedoms should not interfere with the National Will. This boundary skirmish destabilized the dialogue. The West was unable to define its partner's position, and the JDP could no more rely on a Western narrative that would delegitimize its adversaries in its internal struggles. The meaning of the JDP's actions was contested at every level in its relationship to the concept of democracy. The second half of 2013 would bring a much sharper disagreement in this dialogic process.

4. The Tipping Point: Gezi Park

On May 28, 2013, a small group of environmentalist activists started a sit-in to stop the demolition of Gezi Park in Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul, where the authorities planned to build a shopping mall. The police brutally dispersed the small group on the night of May 31st. The small sit-in snowballed into a countrywide uprising. Millions of protestors took to the streets in almost every city in Turkey. Hundreds of thousands of protestors barricaded

themselves in Taksim Square, in a move reminiscent of the 19th century revolutions in Paris. The government agreed to negotiate with the representatives of the protesters, and the country seemed to be on the verge of a revolution. The protestors removed the barricades to ease the tension on June 15th, but that same night, the police attacked the square and re-gained control. The protests lost momentum slowly in the aftermath of the night of June 15th, continuing throughout the summer before eventually dying out.

It is impossible to assign a common cause to the protests other than a will to express their discontent with the government. As Aknur argues, the social movement went through the phases of emergence and coalescence, but it failed to bureaucratize and create a body of representatives who could speak on their behalf.[453] The committee that negotiated with Erdogan failed to produce an enduring legitimacy overcoming the extreme heterogeneity of the protesters.[454] Indeed, it is impossible to identify a common narrative that encompasses all segments of protestors. The socialists saw in the protests an anti-capitalist cause, the nationalists saw a patriotic cause, and the liberals an anti-authoritarian cause. Groups like feminists, environmentalists, and LGBT advocates all brought their own agenda to the square. The pluralism of Gezi Protests resists being capsulated in a coherent, unifying narrative.

For our purposes, the interesting thing is the wedge between the narratives about the protests by the JDP and the West rather than the plethora of narratives produced by the protesters themselves. Indeed, the way that these two narratives interpreted the events and

[453] Müge Aknur, "The Gezi Park Protests as a Social Movement in Turkey: From Emergence to Coalescence without Bureaucratization," *Studia UBB Europaea* 54, no. 1 (2014): 297.

[454] Ibid., 312–13.

related them to the concept of democracy, one based on the myth of representation and the other on the myth of fundamental rights. They could not be more different.

The JDP, after some initial confusion, produced a narrative that incriminated the protests as anti-democratic. The protests were perceived by the JDP as an attempt to hijack the majority's will. It was an act against democracy, and the JDP was democracy's representative. Erdoğan thus reacted to the protests through further police brutality and the organization of counter-rallies. In the apogee of police violence, he made a speech in Istanbul to his supporters:

> The attitude that arose in all Turkey under the pretext of Taksim Gezi Park, esteemed brothers, is definitely not sincere. It is nothing else than an overt attempt of minorities to dominate majorities by evading the nation and national will. We won't allow that. In this country, minorities cannot dominate the majority. Otherwise, the government which came to power by the nation's votes, would be disrespectful to people who voted for it.[455]

For Erdogan, any social movement or mass protest is an attempt to interfere with the electoral process, which is the true heart of democracy. As such, protesting an elected government is not legitimate unless its goal is to make a modest demand from the government. If the protestors target the broader policies and inclinations of the government, the protests are anti-democratic and illegitimate. The JDP, like in 2007-8, was the defender of democracy whereas its rivals were its enemies.

This interpretation and the identities of the actors defined by Erdogan did not resonate anywhere else in the Global Culture. The protests, even in official circles, brought an avalanche of condemnations of police brutality. U.S. Department of State spokeswoman Jen Psaki said, "We believe that Turkey's long-term stability, security and prosperity is best guaranteed by

[455] Cizre and Çınar, "Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process."

upholding the fundamental freedoms of expression, assembly and association, which is what it seems these individuals were doing. These freedoms are crucial to any healthy democracy".'[456] Most importantly, the European Parliament, in a resolution, said that it "strongly condemns the state violence" and "expresses its solidarity with the demonstrators' demands for respect for democracy and democratic and human rights and freedoms; believes that civic rights, women's rights and social and economic rights should not be undermined by any religion".[457] Various European governments condemned the government's response to the protests. For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said, "What's happening in Turkey at the moment does not in my view reflect our understanding of a freedom to demonstrate, freedom to express an opinion".[458]

Those condemnations have two important identity markers. First of all, they do not simply classify Erdogan as a dictator; instead, they interpret the specific action, the government's attitude toward the protestors as nondemocratic. Second, they classify the protestors as democrats. That is, the protestors are the democrats, the ones with whom the Western public identifies, while the government, although elected, is seen as acting undemocratically. This nuanced view is more fleshed out in the analyses appearing in the media.

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[456] BBC, "Turkey Police Clash with Istanbul Gezi Park Protesters," *BBC News*, June 1, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22732139.

[457] The European Parliament, *European Parliament Resolution on the Situation in Turkey*, vol. 2013/2664(RSP), accessed May 15, 2016, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=B7-2013-0309&language=EN.

[458] Deutsche Welle, "Merkel 'Shocked' by Turkish Response to Demonstrations," *Deutsche Welle*, June 17, 2013, http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-shocked-by-turkish-response-to-demonstrations/a-16887172.

Indeed, the Western media's reaction is unanimous this time and follows the same identity markers. The key questions that the media seeks to respond to are: "Who are the protesters? What do they want?" The BBC's analyst answered, "the hopes that blaze behind the eyes of people in masks are about getting rid of Mr. Erdogan and making Turkey a secular democracy".[459] Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times*, who found his way into the protests, said that the message was: "Get out of our faces, stop choking our democracy and stop acting like such a pompous, overbearing, modern-day Sultan".[460] *Der Spiegel* cited a survey done by the Bilgi University: "nine out of 10 surveyed said that what had prompted them to demonstrate was Erdogan's authoritarian style of governing, police violence and the curtailing of democratic rights".[461] The protestors, then, were marked as democrats who were fed-up with Erdogan's authoritarian tendencies.

Were the protestors right? Was Erdogan a dictator as the protestor claimed? The view in the media was more nuanced. It recognized that the demonstrators were not "the people", but a segment of it, and the pious segment was behind the government. Erdogan was not a dictator, but a leader who had, in the past, furthered Turkey's democracy and now ruled in a dictatorial fashion. *Der Spiegel*'s analysis was typical:

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[459] Paul Mason, "Analysis: The Hopes That Blaze in Istanbul," *BBC News*, June 3, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22752121.

[460] Thomas Friedman, "Postcard from Turkey," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/19/opinion/friedman-postcard-from-turkey.html.

[461] Oliver Trenkamp, "The Truth about Erdogan: Turkey's 'Other 50 Percent' Demand a Voice," *Der Spiegel*, June 6, 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/erdogan-plays-dangerous-game-by-ignoring-protester-demands-a-904188.html.

> For years, Erdogan seemed untouchable and, at least until the recent demonstrations began, was the most popular politician in the country. He entered office amid pledges to reform the country and introduce even more democratic freedoms. In his gruff dealings with foreign powers, he gave Turkey a new kind of confidence. He broke the grip on power held by the country's old elite, he kick-started the economy and he calmed the conflict with the country's Kurdish minority. […] But one thing got lost in the shuffle: Democracy. Success made Erdogan even more power-hungry, thin-skinned and susceptible to criticism. Indeed, he began governing in the same autocratic style for which he had bitterly criticized his predecessors. And now, he is faced with significant dangers to his power from several quarters.[462]

This view is echoed universally. For example, the Thomas Friedman article I quoted above said:

> What's sad is that Erdogan's arrogance, autocratic impulses and, lately, use of anti-Semitic tropes, are soiling what has been an outstanding record of leadership. His Islamist party has greatly improved health care, raised incomes, built roads and bridges, improved governance and pushed the Army out of politics. But success has gone to his head.[463]

Similarly, the *BBC*, in its Q&A about the Gezi protests, criticized a comparison with the Arab Spring as all informed observers do. It asked, "Is this a Turkish Spring", and answered:

> Turkey is not comparable to those Arab countries which had never known democracy. Firstly, the government owes its legitimacy to three successive election victories. The AKP won the last polls, in 2011, convincingly with international monitors generally satisfied that they had been conducted fairly. Secondly, Mr. Erdogan and his party appear to still enjoy a bedrock of support in the wider country. A Pew opinion poll taken before the protests suggested that 62% of Turks took a favourable view of him, though it found this support falling sharply in the Istanbul metropolis, and among secular Turks in particular. Thirdly, under the AKP, Turkey has enjoyed economic growth as well as growing prestige as a regional power.[464]

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[462] Özlem Gezer, Maximillian Popp, and Oliver Trenkamp, "Revolt in Turkey: Erdogan's Grip on Power Is Rapidly Weakening," *Der Spiegel*, June 3, 2013, http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/revolt-in-turkey-erdogan-losing-grip-on-power-a-903553.html.

[463] Friedman, "Postcard from Turkey."

[464] BBC, "Q&A: Protests in Turkey," *BBC News*, June 12, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22780773.

Therefore, the JDP could not be categorized together with the Mubarak, Ben Ali, or Assad regimes, but the position taken is not similar to the 2007-8 crises either. This time, the good guys are the JDP's opponents whereas the JDP, Erdogan in particular, is the bad guy. The protestors who took to the streets are Western democrats whereas Erdogan is at fault and is acting despotically. The identifier "democrat" is associated with Erdogan's opponents, whereas the JDP is, even if not lumped together with other Middle Eastern dictators, not considered democratic either. Rather, in the words of *The Economist*, a publication which has been more sympathetic to the JDP than others, Turkey was now a "Zombie Democracy", which "has the outward shape of the real thing, but it lacks the heart".[465]

This re-positioning of identities in the Western media has directly affected the JDP's interpretation of the West's identity. This new alignment was considered a conspiracy. In his counter-rally, the international media and the European Parliament were singled out as mischief-makers:

> No one can play games on us. No one can trap us. No one can hurt us with ugly scenarios. Turkey is not a country international press can operate on. Shamelessly, they are saying this: "We saw the Arab Spring, now, get ready to Turkish Spring". Some of those impertinent people are abroad, others are their extension in Turkey. Turkish Spring happened in 3 November 2003 [the date the JDP came to power], they are unaware of this. Because they have eyes but they don't see, they have ears but they don't hear, they have tongues but they don't tell the truth, the righteous word. But there is the Nation. Turkey cannot be operated using social media. Turkey can never be condemned by parliamentary resolutions which are unable to understand Turkey. EU Parliament made a decision about us. Know your place! Are you entitled to take decisions on Turkey? The first day, I said "I don't recognize your decisions" I return your decision.[466]

[465] The Economist, "Majoritarianism: Zombie Democracy," *The Economist*, June 22, 2013.

[466] Cizre and Çınar, "Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism, and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process."

The palpable anger that filled these words aside, this was also a new alignment. The Westerners who perceived the protestors as democrats were now considered by Erdogan to be shameless, impertinent, ignorant, but, most importantly, mischievous. The media outlets, whose publications were shown as proof of the JDP's democratic identity, were now conspirators trying to create mischief in Turkey and conspire against the Nation. From Erdogan's perspective, the Western players were no longer fellow democrats, but foreign conspirators, as they were intentionally misrepresenting the JDP's and its rival's identities.

In June 2013, the dialogue between the West and the JDP changed drastically. Even though such a change was brewing in the boundary skirmishes of 2008-12, it manifested as a short-lived, supernova-like event: the Gezi protests. The two narratives identified protestors in diametrically opposed ways. For the West, they were people asking for more rights, i.e., more democracy. To the JDP, they were people who were trying to overthrow an elected government, i.e., enemies of democracy. This discrepancy between the two interpretations forced the two players to reassert each other's identities. Thus, the JDP ceased to be a democratic force in the Western narrative, and the West ceased to be a legitimate partner in the JDP's identity. From that moment, this new identification would only reinforce each other. The JDP, who survived this life-or-death struggle without international support, would stop seeking it and become less responsive to critics. The gap between the two narratives would only widen after that point.

A theoretically interesting point is that this complete reversion of identities developed from an event rather than a change in the institutional architecture. Political scientists define a regime from a procedural point of view, looking to a checklist of institutional features.

Minimalist approaches look at a single or a handful of features to categorize regimes. Yet, most political scientists are skeptical of the usefulness of such a minimalist view. Most important, if the army has *de facto* control over the decision-making process, as it did until 2007, that made the boundary between a military dictatorship and democracy blurry as decision-making processes were twisted through undemocratic channels. The Gezi events did not alter the institutional architecture or *de facto* decision-making processes. In fact, it did not change the status of the Turkish Regime as a regime between democracy and authoritarianism either. As far as the question of the regime is concerned, what changed was the supposed direction of change; internationally, authoritarianization became the word which was used to describe the Turkish regime, rather than democratization. As always, Turkey existed in a hybrid space, moving back and forth on a unilinear axis from backwardness to progress. Its democratic deficit no longer stemmed from the army's role, but from the elected government's methods in dealing with the opposition. In the JDP's narrative, the constant progress was, for a moment, threatened by a conspiracy, a rebellion of the retrograde forces of tutelage. From this perspective, the misperception of the West, no matter whether it was intentional or unintentional, signaled that the West's narratives were no longer reliable anchors of universal values.

5. Conclusion

A careful newspaper reader who follows Turkish politics from Western media would see a story about a slow descent into authoritarianism from 2008 to 2013. On the other hand, if we imagine another careful reader, who uses the JDP's own assessments and the pro-government media, he or she would see an entirely different picture: a government tirelessly working for

democracy and the good of the people, struggling with the anti-democratic forces of the elites or a handful of alienated urbanites. Of course, we can also imagine a teacher who instructs his/her students to be informed about both accounts, to compare them and decide for themselves.

What I did here is none of the above. I did not rely on any one of those accounts to understand the truth behind the events, nor did I compare them in order to determine which account was superior. Instead, I conceptualized the two narratives as separate constructions that interacted with and shaped the identities of their producers, and, thus, the course of events. In this case, the story is not about democracy and authoritarianism. It is about contesting the meaning of democracy. To do this, I see two players. One of which is the West, which creates the dominant global narrative; this is not the West of conservative media which believes that democracy is an essentially parochial value whose roots are in Judeo-Christian culture, but rather the cosmopolitan, Universalist version with international reach. This Universalist culture produces a narrative about democracy that is anchored in the Western experience, and it is eager to see other actors which are not categorized as Western to espouse it and to shape their identity in a way that is compatible with its narrative. The JDP is particularly attractive, as it is a political movement whose roots are in Islamism, a transnational ideology that inherently challenges the premises of the West and poses a security threat.

The second construction is that of the JDP, a political party eager to connect with this dominant narrative, but which also interprets the conceptual tools of the dominant paradigm in the light of its own past and experiences. The two narratives largely overlapped in the 2001-2008 period, in spite of some boundary skirmishes, and the JDP built a solid reputation as a

democratic force that could counter the army's assault thanks to this reputation. In the 2008-2013 period, a confident JDP used the same narrative more aggressively, fighting numerous boundary skirmishes to expand its authority. Those struggles sometimes aligned with Western narratives, but sometimes the two players interpreted the boundaries between the myth of representation and myth of fundamentals very differently, especially where the freedom of expression is concerned. Finally, when the JDP's constant push of its boundaries triggered the largest wave of protest in Turkish history, it was the JDP's opponents, and not the JDP, who were identified as democrats by the producers of the global narrative. This caused a break in the dialogical process, as the connection between the identities of the West and the JDP was severed. The party survived the storm and went on to pursue its own views more aggressively, becoming less sensitive to criticisms from the West. Neither the JDP nor the West has changed their ideologies, but the differences between their interpretations have become acute. In other words, it was not the JDP's ideology or strategy that changed in the period from 2008 to 2013, but the way it was perceived in and by the West and, later, the way in which it in turn perceives the West.

In this episode, we do not only see that the meaning of democracy is contested, but also, that this contestation affects political outcomes. A simple action, such as a tax evasion fine imposed on a media conglomerate, can become central to the debate about what democracy is. Questions regarding where the boundaries between freedom of expression and a government's mandate to make decisions are and whether a large media conglomeration's power to influence public opinion is detrimental to democracy come to the fore. This shows the limitations of conceptual strategies that Collier and Levitsky suggest to address the

essentially contested nature of the concept of democracy[467]. We cannot simply turn to formative events such as the American and French Revolutions. Various narratives of democracy were also in circulation throughout both episodes, and the *sine qua non* of contemporary understanding of democracy, that is, universal suffrage, was a point of contention. The other strategy, that is sharpening our definition through intellectual exercises and come up with a taxonomy that categorizes regimes along an ordinal line is also problematic. It creates the impression that regimes change in response to the balance of power between two opposing forces, one pushing it toward democracy and the other pushing toward the authoritarianism. In Turkey's case, it created a paradox: the same political party under the same leadership first moved toward a regime more similar to Western democracies, then far away from it. When we look closely, we see that both movements were energized by the same narrative, but that the relationship between the two different narratives transitioned from alignment to contestation. It was this that shaped both the JDP's identity and the features of the Turkish regime.

[467] Collier and Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research."

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

The dialogic process that this dissertation has illuminated largely ended after the events in Gezi Park. Even though the JDP government occasionally reacted to criticism from the international community, the dialogic process stopped shaping its identity. Western voices no longer recognized the JDP as a democratic force that proved that the values they advocated were truly universal. At the same time, the JDP could no longer rely on Western support in its domestic struggles, and it concluded that the narrative produced in the West was at odds with its vision of society. The mode of interaction was no longer shaped by multiple, contradictory dynamics. It would be too much to say that there was no longer any connection, but the existing links no longer position them as two players on the same side of a struggle. The story I have told could end here. But just as the Hollywood films which does not end when the key conflict ends, I need to go on a little further. The story cannot end with the destruction of the Death Star or the One Ring, we need to see what happened to the main characters to reach closure and to make sense of the entire story. How have the events told changed the Galaxy?

Following the Gezi events, the JDP started to navigate in much more turbulent waters. Just six months after Gezi, the graft scandal of 18-25 December 2013 shook the JDP's power when Gülenist members of the police arrested several individuals from Erdogan's entourage, and audio records incriminating Erdogan and his son were leaked. The government managed to survive only by initiating a major purge of Gülenists within the police force and the judiciary. Later on, the purge widened to include other organizations linked to Gülen's network, most notably educational institutions and newspapers. Despite the allegations, the

JDP fared well in local elections in 2014, and Erdogan won the presidential election in 2015. His Minister of Foreign Affairs Ahmed Davutoglu replaced him as the prime minister. Erdogan, despite occupying a neutral and ceremonial post, has effectively acted as the prime minister, using his grip on the party to control the government. He moved to a lavish palace built for him in Ankara and started to implement a formerly seldom-used law that criminalized insulting the president, opening more than 1000 cases. Since then, Erdogan and the JDP started to push for a major revision in the constitution to transform the parliamentary regime into a presidential regime.

The JDP again faced a difficult situation in the 7 June 2015 election, when it failed to secure enough votes to form a single-party government. Yet, using the fractions among opposition parties, the JDP managed to call for a new election six months later. In the meantime, it stopped the negotiation process with the PKK and re-started the war. This helped to lure the alienated nationalist voters to the polls, and a surge in turn-out accompanied an increase in the JDP's vote, which allowed them to win another term. Since then, guerilla warfare in Kurdish majority towns and bombings in major cities (both by the PKK and the Islamic State) have become part of ordinary life, claiming hundreds of lives. This has brought further limitations on the freedom of expression, and many journalists and academics have lost their jobs.

As far as the JDP's narrative about democracy is concerned, not much has changed. "Democracy" is still a keyword. The title of the first chapter of the JDP's latest electoral platform is still entitled "Democratization and New Constitutional System", and the all-powerful presidential system that it is advocating is cast as a more effective way to struggle

with "tutelary" that is authoritarian, forces[468]. The struggles that it fights are cast as the struggle of National Will against anti-democratic forces. Where its opponents and its Western observers see an authoritarian consolidation of power, the JDP's narrative sees the consolidation of democracy. Moreover, it is still difficult to equate the JDP's regime with those which claim to be democratic without allowing free elections, as its electoral support is substantial and, in spite of problems created by the suppression of the freedom of expression, the elections are not rigged. As far as minimalist conceptions of democracy are concerned, in which free and fair elections are equated with democracy, Turkey should be considered one. The legitimacy of the JDP's electoral victories is not contested. One difference from the pre-2013 period, however, is that Erdogan is now the popularly-elected President of the Republic and, according to the constitution, he is obligated to be above party politics. Nonetheless, he continuously ignores the laws that require him to be neutral. His mode of action is still fighting boundary skirmishes, while consistently expanding the executive's authority vis-à-vis universities, the press, and autonomous public institutions. Since he has been elected president with more votes than his party could secure in parliamentary elections, this dynamic has gained a personal flavor. He still expands his and the JDP's authority to the detriment of individual rights and institutional autonomies, but he also expands his own authority at the expense of the government. This became clear in May 2016 when he forced Prime Minister Davutoglu to resign, using his influence over the JDP. Erdogan has slowly been removing all individuals who have the power to oppose him from within the JDP. It is also apparent from his actions

[468] JDP, "Huzur ve İstikrarla Türkiye'nin Yol Haritasi: 1 Kasim 2015 Genel Seçimleri Secim Beyannamesi," 2015, 31, https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/haberler/iste-ak-partinin-secim-beyannamesi/78619#1.

that the National Will is more equated with his will rather than the JDP's or that of any other institution.

Western public opinion now unanimously views the JDP as an authoritarian force. Since the Gezi events, the Western media has consistently supported the JDP's opponents and, in every meaningful struggle, Erdogan has been seen as an authoritarian force opposing democratic forces, including the struggles within the JDP. Erdogan is frequently ridiculed by American and Europeans comedians for his dictatorial tendencies. He is seen as an authoritarian player, but the regime itself is a mixed bag. Turkey is, overall, seen as a democracy under stress. The Western media often calls on Western governments to not support Erdogan's authoritarianism.

However, the diplomatic relationships between the West and the JDP governments involve cooperation on many issues. What is different from the pre-Gezi era is that there is no dialogue based on the identity of the regime. The Turkish regime is no longer cast as a foreign policy asset and a cure for radical Islamism, but is still seen as a key partner in dealing with the consequences of the Syrian civil war. The Unites States has sought Turkey's assistance in containing the terrorism threat emanating from Syria, deriving from the Islamic State in particular, and the EU is trying to slow the flow of refugees by developing an effective cooperation mechanism with Turkey. The JDP has focused on immediate security concerns and a common struggle against terrorism in its dealings with the EU and the U.S., rather than representing itself as a force that would illustrate the compatibility between democracy and Islam and create long-term democracy benefits, a strategy whose results remain to be seen.

Since 2013, the linkages between Turkey and Western powers have been formulated using the terms of *realpolitik* rather than common democratic identity.

One should also speak of the fate of Democratization Theory on the Anatolian peninsula. In the 2000s, the literature on Turkey's regime has fervently sought the answer to the question, "What explains Turkey's democratization under the JDP government?" In the early 2010s, the question has slowly evolved to "What explains the co-existence of Turkey's authoritarian and democratic tendencies?" The first question had encouraged many theoretically ambitious accounts of the dynamics of change in Turkey, derived from theoretical debates around modernization theory, institutionalism, and conditionality. The second question was as important as the first, but it attracted much less attention. The answers it provided, however, were theoretically less relevant for the literature on regime change as its answer was seen in idiosyncratic causes, such as particular traits of the JDP's ideology and Erdogan's own personality. Overall, the literature made little contribution to our understanding on what happened in Turkey in particular and on dynamics of regime change in general. The ambitious theoretical constructs built to answer the first question became useless as the second question became more prevalent. The answers to the second question, based on the ideational characteristics of the JDP, which had already been documented but left out of the theoretical schemes do not offer a theoretically rich account of the transformation that Turkey went through since 2002. Instead, we only see a pile of conjunctural and opportunistic decisions.

This dissertation has shown that there are important dynamics that tie these time periods and their respective questions together. First, the JDP continued using the word democracy as rallying cries in both periods. Second, the JDP used a definition of democracy that emphasized

the majority's rights over those of the minority and the centrality of the notion of "National Will". Also, in both periods, the JDP's mode of action was not revolutionary; it never attempted to enact sweeping changes, which would alter the entire institutional structure. Even the anticipated move to a presidential regime is not a reconstruction of the entire government; it aims simply to transfer powers from other areas of the executive to the office of the presidency.

The JDP has relied on boundary skirmishes to slowly consolidate control over independent organizations and aspects of social life using the supremacy of the National Will as a legitimizing narrative. It has also constantly maintained that its actions are justified by the mandate given to it by the electorate, no matter the people who challenge the extent of the government's authority are all-powerful generals or angry protestors. The JDP, in all its struggles, has cast itself as the democratizing force that wrestles with authoritarian elites that want to limit the power of the Nation. The elected governments are the embodiment of the Nation, and the forces that want to limit the executive's authority or make it accountable in a way other than elections indeed want to limit the authority of the people and secure the privileges of an elite minority. As more power is transferred to the executive, which is controlled by the JDP, the more the masses become powerful and the overall regime more democratic. The consolidation of the JDP's power is the improvement of democracy as it transfers more power from authoritarian forces to the National Will.

Does this simply mean that prime mover of the entire episode was the National Will or an ideology that is based on the National Will's majority? This would be to simplify the JDP's narrative. From the very start, the argument was to find the proper balance between the power and limits of the executive, but this balance has been defined in a way that favors the mandate

of the National Will. In the realm of principles, the JDP has always insisted that its concept of democracy does not different from the universal one, but when it interprets particular events, there has been a widening gap between the West's and the JDP's interpretations.

The fact is that even though it is seen as an authoritarian force today by the international community and its domestic opponents, the JDP has consistently argued that its actions are indicative of real democracy. It derived its strength from the West's approval when it was vulnerable prior to 2008, and contested the meaning of democracy when the outside world objected to its actions on democratic grounds. Until 2013, the JDP's trajectory had been shaped by a dialogic process with the West. This dialogic process had two components. On the one hand, there were the dynamics of concurrence, in which the JDP's actions were granted legitimacy by the approval of the West. On the other hand, there was the dynamics of contestation, in which the JDP's actions were seen as assaults on rights and liberties that should be. The JDP contested this view by saying that it had simply protected the right of the majority and exercised the power that had been invested in them through the electoral process. Such a view explains the JDP's actions throughout its existence. It always strived to build a regime where the National Will was personified in its rule. Such a view was in harmony with the Western concept of democracy when it was the underdog struggling against the army and its allies, but became incongruous when it was used to stifle individual freedoms, especially the freedom of expression. To summarize, the narrative of democracy that the JDP deployed, despite being different from that of the West, connected with it through a shared identity, particularly in the context of the post-Cold War-era. These two narratives became incongruent when the JDP moved to consolidate its own interpretation of democracy.

For scholars of comparative regimes and democracy, the important question is that how these answers to questions about changes in Turkey's regime managed to stay hidden in plain sight. Neither of the two important dynamics that constitute the pillars of this approach went unnoticed in an empirical sense. The fact that the post-Cold War world created incentives for all actors to be recognized as democratic is considered a platitude, barely worth mentioning. The majoritarian tendencies of the JDP were well-documented, but had first been relegated to footnotes, then re-appeared as something that explained everything, rather than being a part of a coherent theory.

The invisibility of such dynamics stems from the essentialist methodological and conceptual strategies that are used by political science. Political scientists strive to define democracy as clearly as possible, make it a dependent variable, and then see what independent variables may contribute to its emergence. This can be done in a large quantitative study by comparing as many cases as possible or in a case study using process-tracing methods. To adopt such methodologies, democracy should be conceived of as a thing, rather than a relational concept. The study of democracies should be anchored to empirical practices of existing democracies, rather than ideas.

What happens when we use this lens to look at Turkey between 2002 and 2013? We are forced to see that the JDP is an actor that progresses, regresses, or oscillates between a progressive or regressive attitude. We lose the ability to see the JDP as a creative actor whose connection with the Western concept is multidimensional, an actor who builds a narrative and a political regime with an eye to the West, but is still motivated by other *leitmotivs*. The work done by the JDP is lost, it simply moves back and forth on an ordinal axis whose metrics are

known *a priori*. Its ability and will to recombine and redefine the criteria, its travails as an actor, its agency, is lost.

One may ask, "Do we really need to conceive democracy as a relational concept? Would it not be better to conceive it as a substantialist concept with ordinal features?" As the legitimacy of Turkish elections have not been contested, but there are problems concerning other democratic practices, such as the rule of law and civil liberties, one could simply perceive Turkey as either a competitive authoritarian or electoral/illiberal democratic regime, one which combines the electoral features of democracies with repressive features of authoritarian regimes. There are two problems with such an approach, however. First, if we insist on classifying regimes based on a single numerical value on a democracy/authoritarianism spectrum, tremendous changes that have occurred in the last two decades in Turkey would be lost in a pile of numbers, and the regime would appear to move from one medium value to another without hope of capturing the meaning of these changes. Alternatively, we can use a two-by-two box rather than a unilinear spectrum, and hypothesize that Turkey's regime has become more inclusive (in the sense that the bottom tiers of society have more opportunities to have their voices heard), but less liberal (meaning institutions that protect individuals against the state have weakened). Thus, it has moved from a tutelary/oligarchic democracy to an illiberal/populist one. In this case, the change would be visible. Even if we ignore the problems of defining these the two dimensions, however, we end up losing the complex ways in which various dimensions of the democratic narrative and associated institutions interact, and we are forced to analyze these two dimensions, or myths, separately. If we use such a scheme, it would seem that the JDP has simply chosen between myths. As this dissertation has demonstrated,

however, it engaged in redefining the relationship between these dimensions and redrew the borders between these myths with an eye to formulate a balance that is different from the Western standards. If instead of tracking these dynamics, we try to create classifications based on predetermined features, the result is an endless taxonomical debate among scholars in which the number of species and subspecies of democracy and authoritarianism, as well as the appropriate lines dividing them, is a constant and fruitless intellectual debate.

These attempts to create taxonomies end up being taxidermies.[469] Rather than foregrounding compelling theoretical distinctions that help us make analytical sense of empirical observations, they start with reifying democracy and simply categorize empirical cases according to preordained ideal types. They inevitably look for a set of variables that push regimes toward one end of the democratic/authoritarian spectrum, or a balance of such variables, missing peculiar dynamics that produce regimes which do not fit into this binary view. To be able to recite the story of the JDP's transformation, I was forced to change the conceptual strategy that is prominent in theories of democratization. I had to seriously consider a word that had played a key role in shaping the discussion of democratization: the "essentially contested concept" in Collier and Levitsky's seminal article, "Democracy with Adjectives."[470] They argued that democracy was an essentially contested concept, but then recommended scholars ignore the dynamics of contestation. Following the Wittgensteinian interpretivist scholars,[471] I tracked the dynamics of contestation. Unlike them, I did not limit myself with

[469] Asif Agha, *Language and Social Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 2.

[470] Collier and Levitsky, "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research."

[471] Lisa Wedeen, "The Politics of Deliberation: Qat Chews as Public Spheres in Yemen," *Public Culture* 19, no. 1 (2007): 59–84; Lisa Wedeen, "Concepts and Commitments in the Study of Demo," in *Problems and Methods*

domestic contestations and, instead, focused on the interplay between the globally dominant, Western-centered narrative and the domestic narrative. Taking my inspiration from sociological institutionalists,[472] I conceptualized democracy as a global mythology taking root in a Global Culture. As a mythology, democracy is not an "empty signifier" as some post-structuralist philosophers would argue.[473] There is a common vocabulary that all democrats use, which is anchored in the Western narrative. Yet, much like actual mythologies, the common narratives have many incompatible versions, . Much like actual mythologies, the narratives are a way to connect, and a way to celebrate a common identity. There are also ways to contest the narratives, and they can become reasons or manifestations of conflict. The democratic mythology has two pillars: the myth of representation, which is illustrated by the elected officials who embody the will of the people, and the myth of fundamentals, which is represented through the idea that elected governments are limited by some fundamental rights which are guaranteed by some institutional autonomies and an independent judiciary. The boundary between these two, what the government can and cannot do, is always in flux. There is no way to draw this boundary in a Universalist way. There are multiple narratives deployed for a multitude of goals to determine the appropriate boundary. There are no homogenous forces across the board, which seek to push and pull these boundaries in a given direction.

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in the Study of Politics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 274–306; Frederic Charles Schaffer, *Democracy in Translation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Mark Bevir and Asaf Kedar, "Concept Formation in Political Science: An Anti-Naturalist Critique of Qualitative Methodology," *Perspectives on Politics* 6, no. 3 (2008): 503–17.

[472] Meyer and Rowan, "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structures as Myth and Ceremony."

[473] Wendy Brown, "We Are All Democrats Now?," in *Democracy in What State?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

Rather, different actors formulate different narratives about the proper balance and proper boundaries. As a mythology, democracy works in both ways, as a way to connect and as a way to contest.

The JDP's story illustrates the existence of both dynamics. Some of its actions and narratives have been ways to connect with the global democratic mythology. As an elected government, it was the embodiment of the National Will, and other forces such as the army and its allies should not interfere with its right to rule. This portion of the narrative connected it with the dominant mythology, and its identification with the West allowed the JDP to connect with the West and delegitimized the actions of the Army, which eventually left this powerful institution stranded. In this struggle, the JDP was empowered by the dynamics of concurrence; the narratives produced by the West that echoes its narrative. But from the very start the dynamics of contestation were also visible. The JDP formulated its understanding of democracy first and foremost around the concept of the National Will and the myth of representation, the myth of fundamentals being just an auxiliary principle that is meant to reinforce the main myth. This formulation gave way to the boundary skirmishes where the JDP sought to consolidate its power at the expense of civil liberties and institutional autonomies. Even before 2008, there were significant differences between the JDP's interpretation and the West's interpretation about what constitutes "fundamentals". After 2008, those differences became more pronounced as the party fought these boundary skirmishes more frequently and ferociously. Finally, after 2013, as it became clear that more Westernized segments of society considered the pushing of the executive's limits suffocating, a break developed between the two narratives. From that point on, the way the players interpreted each other's identities

changed. The JDP interpreted the West's positioning as a hostile interference with the National Will, and the West started to see the JDP as an authoritarian force and the regime it is building an authoritarianizing regime.

What does this mean for theories of regime change? First of all, the hegemony of democratic ideals on a global plane has played a concrete role in the power struggles involving regime type. It is evident that some regimes are impervious to its charms. There are still some regimes that stay true to the ideals of the Marxist revolutions that shaped their current regimes in the 20th century as well as oil-rich Gulf countries loyal to dynastic and Islamic traditions of rule. It is also evident that social movements that seek to change their countries' regime seek international legitimacy by casting themselves as democratic forces, as movements which seek to align themselves with the dominant narratives. Building the identity of the movement in line with globally dominant narrative win friends globally and the regimes that fail to align with this narrative risk losing their allies and becoming isolated on the international stage unless they have other resources to mobilize, such as oil wealth or, as in China's case, an incomparably large, dynamic economy. We cannot build a theory of democratization on this dynamic alone, which is why there is no Sociological Institutionalist theory of democratization despite the fact that some have hinted at the possibility of such[474]. Democracy is too heterogeneous for the taste of Sociological Institutionalists. The concept of isomorphism does not seem to cover the loose coupling of institutions in many contexts. Why is it so

[474] Hinnebusch, "Globalization, Democratization, and the Arab Uprising: The International Factor in MENA's Failed Democratization."

heterogeneous? Why is there a growing number of countries which cannot be easily categorized as either democratic or undemocratic?

If we consider democracy a myth as the Sociological Institutionalists do, while explaining the dissemination of institutions emanating from the Global Culture, we should remember that mythologies consist of many stories that are not necessarily compatible. The democratic mythology is prone to re-interpretations. Even in its "consolidated" forms, the principles of democracy are in flux. Sure, the power should be entrusted to individuals elected by people, but which people? Should slaves, illiterates, ex-felons, immigrants, and citizens without state-mandated identification be allowed to vote? Who should be allowed to financially contribute to electoral campaigns, and should there be a limit to such contributions? More importantly, how much power should elected officials wield? Can they limit the right to bear arms? Can they ban some forms of expressions such as hate speech, Nazi, communist, or Islamist propaganda? Is an individual leaking the practices of the secret service committing treason or serving democratic transparency? Those boundaries are negotiated and re-negotiated every day. In other words, they are decided via dialogic processes. When there are multiple narratives of democracy, contesting the appropriate way to draw such boundaries, the very meaning of democracy is contested. In Turkey, this happened in a way that broke the dialogic process. What the JDP considers to be crucial to protect democracy is deemed as dictatorial abuse of power by the dominant narrative and the opposition's narrative. Whether such disagreements over valuations that determine what counts as a boundary is a major problem in all or most countries considered to be hybrid regime by political scientists would be a meaningful, new research agenda.

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