

A GRADUAL DECLENSION: CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS AND THE AKP,
2002-2007



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ABSTRACT

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M.A. Thesis, August 2015

Supervised by Dr. Ersin Kalaycıođlu

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This thesis will look at the declension of the military from 2002-2007 not only as a product of the AKP's rise to power but also as a product of decades of volatile social and political change. Primary to the investigation of this question is Turkey's history of civil-military relations. Therefore, in the first chapter a brief history of the military's century-old political and state power is explained. This is then followed by an outline of the social and cultural changes of the 1980s and '90s. Of equal importance, the AKP's rise as a political and cultural force to compete with the military's resurrected rhetoric of Kemalism and democracy will be detailed as the discussion of the military's role is opened up through the European Union accession process. This will be discussed in chapter two. The third chapter will then analyze the military and AKP's use of secularist rhetoric as a tool to maintain and defend their own political power within the state. After traditional Kemalist secularism had taken a turn out of fashion in the 1980s, the new secular rhetoric employed under the watch of Chiefs of General Staff Özkök and Büyükanıt are products of the previous 25 years of politics. Finally, the fourth chapter will evaluate the debate between the military, the civilians, and the government over the rightful, democratic place of the military within the Turkish state.

ÖZET

‘SİVİL-ASKER’ İLİŞKİLERİ VE AKP: AŞAMALI BİR GERİLEME, 2002-2007

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M.A. Tezi, Ağustos 2015

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Anahtar kelimeler: ‘Sivil-Asker’ ilişkileri, Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi

Bu araştırma, 2002-2007 yılları arasında Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi'nin (AKP) bir güç olarak yükselişi ve yaşanan sosyal ve politik değişimler sonucunda Türk Silahlı Kuvvetlerinin (TSK) siyasal gücünün zayıflamasını konu almıştır. İlk olarak, araştırmanın temeli olan Türkiye'nin ‘sivil-asker’ ilişki tarihi ele alınmıştır. Bu nedenle ilk bölümde, TSK'nın yüzyıllık politik ve devlet gücünün kısa tarihine yer verilmiş; 1980 ve 90'ların sosyal ve kültürel değişimi özetlenmiştir. İkinci bölümde; politik ve kültürel güç olarak yükselişte olan AKP'nin, Avrupa Birliği katılım müzakereleriyle TSK'nın rolünün tartışmaya açıldığı dönemde TSK'nın canlandığı Kemalizm ve demokrasi yaklaşımıyla rekabeti detaylı olarak incelenmiştir. Üçüncü bölümde ise, TSK ve AKP'nin ‘laiklik’e bakış açıları ve bunu devlet içinde politik güçlerini kuvvetlendirme aracı olarak kullanmaları analiz edilmiştir. 25 yıl boyunca yaşanan politik gelişmeler ve değişimler sonucu Genel Kurmay Başkanı Özkök ve Büyükanıt'ın yeni laiklik yaklaşımıyla 1980'lerin geleneksel Kemalist laiklik yaklaşımı zayıflamıştır. Son olarak dördüncü bölümde; TSK, sivil halk ve devlet arasındaki TSK'nın devletin içindeki fiili ve demokratik yeri tartışmasını değerlendirilmiştir.

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Introduction

HEROES AND HUBRIS: HOW THE TURKISH MILITARY LOST ALL THAT WAS BEFORE IT

It is often understood that the military and the AKP have been engaged in a romanticized battle royale since the AKP's inception in 2002, flagrantly gunning for the center position in Turkey. While the military and the AKP (Justice and Development Party) have certainly had their debates and disputes about the proper role of the military and the government within the state apparatus, this conflict appeared to become an outright battle in rhetoric and action between the AKP and the military after General Büyükanıt came to the office of the Chief of General Staff in 2006. Prior to this, the conflict had been largely shrouded in the rhetoric of democracy, Europeanization, and Kemalism: rather, a show of "symbols and shadow play" than an overt state conflict of interest as Gareth Jenkins so describes the early relationship of the AKP and the Turkish Armed Forces.¹ The military had attempted to protect its position by asserting its status as the traditional state elite working toward the betterment of civilization for the people of Turkey as Atatürk had. The AKP had begun to insert its counter position by employing the argument in favor of the European, and therefore democratic, idea of restricting the military's role in politics in order to award more power to the civilian realm, i.e. the AKP government.

However, prior to the implementation of these rhetorical musings and the ascent of the AKP to power, the prevailing power of the state, i.e. the prevailing state power of the military at the top of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, had been significantly altered due to Turkey's dynamic social, international, and religious positions during the 1980s and 1990s. The state that was created under the 1982 constitution, which the military

¹ Gareth Jenkins, "Symbols and Shadow Play: Military-JDP Relations 2002-2004," in *The Emergence of A New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, ed. Hakan M. Yavuz, 185-206 (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006).

fundamentally created and defended, had taken a turn away from its intentioned design of keeping the military at the top of the center sphere with the nationalists and Islamists rallying the periphery to reinforce this triangle. Understanding this background and shift in power throughout the 1980s and 1990s prior to the AKP's rise to power in 2002 is thus essential to understanding the arguments for democracy, Europeanization, and the Kemalist/secularist legacy that have been employed by the AKP and the military in the early years of the AKP regime, 2002-2007: an era of the unquestionable declension of the military power. Society had developed outside of the umbrella of the military in the 1980s and 1990s and, therefore, when the AKP came to threaten the establishment of the military authority, the military no longer had the adequate tools or support to respond to any domestic threat to its nearly autonomous power.

What is thus seen in 2002-2007 is a deep-seeded *Kulturkampf*² that represents the beginning of a fundamental inversion of the traditional top-down structure of the Turkish state and society. Once governed under the rigid divide of center versus periphery, society had restructured itself around the guise of an Islamic-based periphery, wielding a new social power and no longer having to share space with the (nearly) obsolete ideology of nationalism. Although the tried and true Kemalist values that the military had espoused for decades were still dear to the hearts of the citizenry, the new shades of Islam that had entered the political scene caught on like wildfire through Anatolia. Essential to the tumultuous times of the '80s and '90s, the question of where do we go from here had captivated the hopes and fears of the conservative and moderate right—a question that the civilian government had no answer for after 1991 and for which the military was no help in steering governments in a clear direction. Rather, the military had trusted that the rise of the center-right political powers would eventually lead Turkey to a promising future. However, when these right powers both failed to deliver stability and repay the military for its support since 1980, the military had hoped that a new strategy in rival to Islamist power would surface. Instead, the center-right AKP had supplied the answer to the question of stability as it appeared as the progressive inheritor of Kemal Dervis's solution for the 2001 economic crisis. Further, the new party was seen as a temporary solution for stamping out the corruption of the politicians of the 1990s. Meanwhile, as the military had figured that it was going

² See Ersin Kalaycioglu's adaptation of this principle to the Turkish case; Ersin Kalaycioglu, "*Kulturkampf* in Turkey: The Constitutional Referendum of 12 September 2010," *South European Society and Politics* 17, no.1 (March 2012): 1-22.

to be left out of the state equation after the rise of the Welfare Party in 1997, it had returned to its traditional modernization and democratic discourse, which it hoped would ultimately preserve the traditional military elite while “democratizing” Turkey on its path toward inclusion in the European Union. However, as the military continued to act as the greatest pressure group of the state during the Europeanization process, it was this move toward the EU, as well as the AKP’s political aptitude, that exposed the fundamentally anti-democratic nature of the military’s political role to the Turkish public, despite the military’s allegiance to supporting democratic ideals throughout its history of political activity.

Looking at the military’s fall from the center, it is perhaps fitting to look at the military as the tragic hero of the state. For decades, the military had been the most trusted institution of the Turkish state, winning the hearts and minds of the Turkish people and capturing their near unfettered support. However, in conceiving of this unblemished image, let us not mistake this cultural adornment for society awarding the military a political *carte blanche*. Most Turks would still choose to keep civilian rule primary to that of the military, believing the return to democratic government at the end of a coup is always best. Rather than unseat the extra-ordinary power of the military, which some argue is undemocratic, civilians choose to keep the military around, hoping in case the politicians get out of hand that the military will be there again to save them and subsequently Turkish democracy.³ Although it has conceived of its interventions and coups as part of its role as the sublime vanguard of the state, the military itself has often taken the support of the people and its traditional elite status for granted: an issue akin to an epic hubris that had not been properly tested prior to the electoral success of the AKP. The military’s outright authority over the system through the 1997 intervention and the military’s less transparent passive-aggressive influence in the National Security Council and “deep-state” apparatus had, for two decades, inflated not only the military’s perception of itself but also the notion that the military was an untouchable state body. It was not until the AKP that this would be challenged, and it shows in Büyükanıt’s flagrant, defensive, and prideful rhetoric in 2006 that the military

³ This assumption is based on the 1997 Turkish Values Survey in which only 33% of respondents said they would be “fine” or “very fine” under military rule. On the one hand, Demirel points out that this statistic is very high for a democratic country, indicating the deep trust in which the people have for the military. On the other hand, given the circumstances the change in the power balance and public approval that we will discuss from 2002-2007, the military would be hardly invited to take over the government for long if at all. See for more detail on this statistic Tanel Demirel, “Soldiers and civilians: the dilemma of Turkish democracy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no.1 (2004): 127-150.

was guarding a sacred hubris that was about to be exposed. After all, the military had thought since the 1980s that it could win over the rising power of the Islamists, and then still win after welcoming the reform initiatives of the EU. Indeed, pride cometh before the fall.

It is thus from this view, from unraveling the changes slowly taking place in Turkish society throughout the period from 1980 to 2007 and then quickly climaxing in 2002-2007, that I will argue and pose this question: how did the AKP start to be on the winning side of the fundamental power struggle between civil and military relations in Turkey? With a view toward seeing 2007 as the launching point for the AKP to cement its single party rule and to embark upon its power-seeking Ergenekon campaign, the military suddenly found itself in a state of declension as the election of the AKP's Abdullah Gül to the presidency, a position which had traditionally been the bully pulpit of the military, could not be stopped despite the military's clearly penned opposition on 28 April 2007. By referring to this process as a state of declension, I seek to express not only the military's institutional decline vis-à-vis politicians and the EU but also the loss of moral character that the military experienced during this period.

In recent days, however, the question of whether this declension is to remain permanent or be merely temporary underlies the relevance of civil-military relations in Turkey today. While democracy has failed to be consolidated under the increasingly authoritarian rule of the AKP, and the idea of EU membership remains a pipedream promoted by only a handful of liberal academics, civilian-based politics have failed to take off after eliminating Turkish military tutelage. Further, after the loss of the AKP's parliamentary majority, a lengthy coalition process, and skirmishes breaking out once again in the Southeast between the PKK and now ISIS, the voice of the military becomes increasingly powerful. What the future holds for the Turkish military appears to have become more and more ominous every day. In the midst of both internal and external turmoil, the influence of the Turkish Armed Forces may be needed in order to evoke domestic stability. The declension of Turkish democracy and regional relations amongst Turkey's Muslim neighbors present an interesting opportunity for the Turkish Armed Forces in the future.

This thesis will look at the declension of the military from 2002-2007 not only as a product of the AKP's rise to power but also as a product of decades of volatile social and political change. Primary to the investigation of this question is Turkey's history of civil-military relations. Therefore, in the first chapter a brief history of the

military's century-old political and state power is explained. This is then followed by an outline of the social and cultural changes of the 1980s and 1990s. Of equal importance, the AKP's rise as a political and cultural force to compete with the military's resurrected rhetoric of Kemalism and democracy will be detailed as the discussion of the military's role is opened up through the European Union accession process. This will be discussed in chapter two. The third chapter will then analyze the military and AKP's use of secularist rhetoric as a tool to maintain and defend their own political power within the state. After traditional Kemalist secularism had taken a turn out of fashion in the 1980s, the new secular rhetoric employed under the watch of Chiefs of General Staff Özkök and Büyükanıt are products of the previous 25 years of politics. Finally, the fourth chapter will evaluate the debate between the military, the civilians, and the government over the rightful, democratic place of the military within the Turkish state.

Chapter 1

THE MILITARY'S GRAND HISTORICAL LEGACY AND THE ADVENT OF DECLENSION

Since Ottoman times, the military had been the bedrock of the Turkish state.⁴ In accordance with the classic evaluation of Turkish society's divide along center-periphery lines, the military has always fallen within the state center throughout the nation's turbulent history.⁵ Within the course of the 20th century, the Turkish Armed Forces intervened in civilian politics three times, in 1960, 1971, and 1980. Both the law, citing Article 35 of the Armed Forces Internal Service Law, and society, which has consistently determined the military to be the most trusted institution in Turkey,⁶ have conceded to this path of state development.

However, what once was clear-cut and proper justification for the army's intervention seems to no longer fit the rules and regulations dictated by the party in power, the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The rules that once held political powers accountable to the Turkish Armed Forces cannot be applied to the current ruling party, and hence, it is the reaction—or rather the relative inaction—of the military to changing social and political forces that has largely allowed the AKP to succeed.

What must first be examined before undertaking such an analysis of these changes, however, is the extent to which the army has established its own role in the Turkish state, both dependent and independent of political, social, and economic factors. Briefly, it is first necessary to undertake the history of the military's establishment as a dynamic body from the late Ottoman era and Republican Era through

⁴ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁵ Serif Mardin, "Center Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" in *Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems*, edited by Engin D. Akarlı and Gabriel Ben-Dor, 7-32 (Bogazici University: Istanbul, 1975).

⁶ Andrew Mango, *The Turks Today* (London: John Murray, 2004), 134.

the two and a half⁷ military coups in the 20th century, the last of which occurred in 1980. Second, a thorough analysis of the state, society, and the military after the devolution of the National Security Council regime and the establishment of the 1982 constitution must also be undertaken in order to discern the precise conditions of the state, the military, the government, and civil society that contributed to the rise of the center-right AKP in 2002 through 2007.⁸

Republican Era through the 1980s

The late Ottoman era

Depending on one's perspective, the late Ottoman period can either be credited or blamed for the Turkish dichotomy of civil-military relations prevailing throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries. The Ottomans had established the authority of the military over the civilian structures, a schism that has been perpetuated within the Republic of Turkey. On the one hand, Yıldız asserts, "The incompatibility of this [Ottoman] model with the contemporary idea of democratic governance... [is] one of the most resonant problems in Turkish politics."⁹ On the other, this model has allowed the military to create additional paths for the state to undertake social and political change. As Evin has aptly put it, "In this respect, the military did not have to be co-opted into the role of guarding the reformist state, but they were conceived as an integral part of it in the first place."¹⁰

The disestablishment of the janissaries in 1826 signaled a shift in the civil-military relationship that would spark a new era of reform lasting from the late Ottoman era through the establishment of the Turkish republic.¹¹ Often characterized by its

⁷ Two and a half, depending on how one qualifies the 1971 military intervention in which the military forced Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel to resign and established a technocratic government in his place; This intervention has been known as the "halfway" coup or "coup by memorandum."

⁸ By defining the Justice and Development Party as specifically a "center-right" party, that is to say that the party is conservative, religiously Islamic, and pro-business, as well as beholden to traditionalist values.

⁹ Ahmet Yıldız, "Turkish Grand National Assembly," in *Almanac Turkey 2005: Security Sector and Democratic Oversight*, ed. Ümit Cizre, 16-25 (Istanbul: TESEV, 2006), 16.

¹⁰ Ahmet Evin, "Changing Patterns of Cleavages Before and After 1980," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, 201-213 (New York/Berlin: deGruyter, 1988), 209.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 209.

decline and its personification as the “sick man of Europe,” the climate of the 19th century Ottoman era strove to adapt Western culture, principles, and government in order to placate its ailing economy and weak institutions. The military was at the head of this intercultural exchange and internal reform. Throughout the *Tanzimat* period, the Ottoman reform period lasting from 1839-1908, the empire began to adapt policies and institutions relevant to constitutionalism and a balance of powers checking the sultanate. As these principles were incorporated, a corps of professional officers in the Ottoman army who were educated in both Western military tactics and Western ideological principles¹² were silently leading resistance movements against the sultanate, who had dissolved the 1876 constitution nearly upon its inception in the Russo-Ottoman War beginning in 1877, from abroad and culminating into what would become known as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).¹³ The military began to see itself as the vanguard of enlightenment principles and thus the revolutionary period—eventually transitioning the Ottoman Empire into the new Turkish Republic. As one Englishman fighting in Ottomans lands in the 1800s recounted:

... The Turk is a good soldier, not in the sense that Germans or Russians ‘make’ good soldiers, but in the sense that the moment a sword is put into his hands, he instinctively knows how to use it with effect, and feels at home in the ranks or on a horse. The Turkish army is not so much a profession, or an institution necessitated by the fears and aims of the Government, as the active but still quite normal state of the Turkish nation.¹⁴

The military was thus embedded into the character of the new state and the identity of the Turk.

Republican Era

¹² In the late Ottoman era, the military had been by far the best educated group in society as it had been the main object of educational reform within the state. Many officers could boast of international experience and training in Europe, which exposed them to Enlightenment ideals and constitutionalism. Further, the state system of education outside of the army was poor, if at all existent.

¹³ It is important that we see the CUP as a significant, collective part of the military; however, it must be noted that this body was often fragmented within the military, harboring four main factions: unionists, liberals, conservatives, and neutral. For further explanation of this dynamic, see William Hale’s chapter on “The Young Turks and their enemies, 1908-1918,” in *Turkish Politics and the Military*.

¹⁴ James Madison McGarity, *Foreign Influence on the Ottoman Turkish Army, 1880-1918* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, Inc., 1968), 48.

As the Turkish Republic was established, the military became an essential tool to ward off external threats at Turkey's borders. However, even before the creation of the new state, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of the Turkish republic, deliberated more carefully whether and how the military could ward off internal threats within the new state and keep the relationship between politics and the military at bay. In 1909, Atatürk said the following about the role of the army and the state:

As long as officers remain in the Party we shall neither build a strong Party nor a strong Army. In the Third Army most of the officers are also members of the Party and the Third Army cannot be first-class. Furthermore, the Party receiving its strength from the Army will never appeal to the nation. Let us resolve here and now that all officers wishing to remain in the Party must resign from the Army. We must also adopt a law forbidding all future officers having political affiliations...¹⁵

After over a decade of revolution and political bickering amongst themselves, Atatürk envisioned a newly established Turkish Armed Forces that was designed to keep the army out of the center of politics and to leave the fighting for the enemy.

After the Turkish Independence War, Atatürk sought to cut the tie between politicians and the army in order to establish a stronger Turkish nation from the beginning. In shrewd response to a reporter who had superficially asked Atatürk about taking time off after the war, he scoffs, "Rest? What rest? After the Greeks we will fight each other, we will eat one another."¹⁶

As the new Turkish Constitution was implemented in April 1924, Article 23 would define the relationship between the army and the government. According to the new Constitution, "no person may be a deputy and hold office under the Government at the same time."¹⁷ No active military officer was to be permitted to serve in either the cabinet or the assembly. In his six-day speech in October 1927—what is known as *Nutuk* in Turkish and is identified as the essential speech for the study of Kemalism—Atatürk made it clear that holding a position in the army was holding its own position in a government office. He states, "I have come to the conclusion that, for the maintenance of army discipline in required measure for the exercise of command, it is

¹⁵ Henry Bienen, *The Military and Modernization* (Aldine, Atherton, Inc.: Chicago, 1971), 118.

¹⁶ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 65.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 72.

incompatible that commanders should at the same time be deputies [in the assembly].”¹⁸ Military officers would have to retire their positions as professional soldiers before committing to a political career. The article sought both to professionalize the army and to maintain order within the Turkish political system. The military oligarchy set up by the CUP had continuously failed over the past decade. The pattern of army mutinies and the emergence of various “savior armies” had interrupted all order within Turkish society. As Kemal had preached throughout his military career, the assembly had seen that the army could not rule a democratic republic. Certainly, to some degree the military was the backbone of the new nation, but its services were much more appreciated fighting outside of Ankara.

This is not to say that the army did not exercise great control within the background of Turkish politics in the early republic. The past political careers of the majority of the assemblymen and cabinet clearly display that there was a pressing interest for the legislature to still strongly support the army. Of this, Atatürk’s publicist stated, “Had it not been for his influence in the army, Mustafa Kemal would not have been able to get his way in the assembly.”¹⁹ A previous military career was the most powerful political tool. In the 1920s, one-sixth of the assembly had had a previous career in the military.²⁰ Until the early 1940s, the military had been the most popular career preceding an assembly seat.²¹ Although the early republic sought to separate the institutions of the army and politics, Turkish politics were certainly not above the military’s influence.

Although Atatürk was largely successful in isolating the military from politics directly, this era of non-interference was not to last long. In a 1931 speech, Kemal states, “There are few countries... where the nation and the army were as closely identified as they were in Turkey. The people’s progress had always been led by the army.”²² Addressing the Army Club in 1931, Kemal charges his army to be the physical and psychological vanguard of the Turkish Republic:

¹⁸ Bienen, *Modernization*, 119.

¹⁹ Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1999), 370.

²⁰ Bienen, *Modernization*, 127.

²¹ Frederick W. Frey, *The Turkish Political Elite* (The M.I.T. Press: Cambridge, 1965), 261.

²² Mango, *Atatürk*, 477.

In our history, in Turkish history, an outstanding exception appears. You know that whenever the Turkish nation has wanted to stride towards the heights it has always seen its army, which is composed of its own heroic sons, as the permanent vanguard for the attainment of the sublime ideals of the Turkish nation.²³

It is this poetic call for a greater Turkish army, an enlightened protector of grandiose ideals, that has been ingrained in the hearts and minds of the Turkish people and underlines the coming state ideology. Thus, what is conceived by the state in this period has carried over throughout the history of the republic and had come to be a part of the representation of Atatürk decades later.

On a further note, what is perhaps most significant in terms of the defining the Republican era legacy is the ideology of Kemalism or Atatürkism.²⁴ Although it is true that Atatürk laid out six “fundamental and unchanging” principles of state development in his 1931 address—the “republican, nationalist, populist, etatist, secularist, and revolutionary”²⁵ principles—it is often misconstrued that these “principles” were to be taken as unchanging, ideological state doctrine rather than as policy suggestions or a description of the current matters of state. Although we can see Atatürk inserting the fundamentals of these principles through his state policy, definitely using these principles as his personal ideology, these ideas had been over-analyzed and bastardized by the secular elite who, struggling to maintain their power after the advent of multi-party politics in Turkey in 1948, have since created a personality cult around the great leader in order to combat peripheral social competitors. Hence, in looking at the popularity of “Atatürkism,” especially looking at civil-military relations post-1980, it is critical that the perceived “ideology” of Atatürkism, i.e. “Atatürkism as they themselves interpreted it,”²⁶ does not obfuscate our understanding of the early institutions and ideals of Turkish democracy.

Problems of the 1950s and the 1960 coup: New Institutions and the Precedence of Military Superiority and Intervention

²³ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 81.

²⁴ See for more information on the development of Atatürkism, Metin Heper, “A *Weltanschauung*-turned-Partial Ideology and Normative Ethics: “Atatürkism in Turkey,” *Orient* 25, no.1 (1984): 83-94.

²⁵ Bienen, *Modernization*, 280.

²⁶ Metin Heper, “State and Society in Turkish Political Experience,” in *State, Democracy and the Military*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, 1-10 (New York/Berlin: deGruyter: 1988), 5.

As the multi-party system emerged in Turkey, the first non-military president and prime minister duo appeared at the head of the Turkish government, respectively, Celal Bayar and Adnan Menderes of the Democratic Party (DP). This marked a new era of political leadership in Turkey that had taken the army off guard as its aligned party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), had lost its prominence within the political sphere. Although the generals and high-ranking officers continued to enjoy the company of Menderes and the DP out of the state's tradition of respect for its officers, this furthered the gap between those at the top and young officers who, struggling for political and economic power, would eventually stage the 1960 military coup. Additionally, Menderes' political miscalculations and economic circumstances would quickly alter the development of multi-party politics in Turkey as the military's young officers, those who were suffering from a significant malaise²⁷, intervened in 1960. The new Constitution, political institutions, and resulting course of history would help the army find its place within the new multi-party system.

Menderes' failed economic reforms exaggerated the conflict between the center and periphery within Turkey in the late 1950s. While Menderes enjoyed a 40 percent growth in national income between 1950 and 1953, this economic growth came to a halt in 1954, which turned into a decline in 1957.²⁸ As Menderes' multi-party system had shifted the balance of power within Turkey's political structure, the Democratic Party's economic policies favoring the new class of capitalist farmers²⁹ had constituted a further blow to the traditional Republican elite. In this sense, economic dissatisfaction was more than a loss in income for the bureaucracy, military, and Republican People's Party; it was a loss of livelihood.³⁰ Despite U.S. aid packages and other attempts to reform and reinvigorate the army financially, many soldiers began to feel that the Menderes regime had failed to further improve the army's prestige to what it used to be.³¹ Such a feeling of neglect for the former center triggered enormous resentment

²⁷ William Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 94.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 94.

²⁹ The opposition to the new class of workers was not just restricted to the traditional CHP and bureaucratic elite. Such a new class of laborers gave rise to a leftist opposition against capitalism within Turkey. Specifically, it gave rise to a group of leftist authors such as Yaşar Kemal who is best known for his novel *Mehmed, My Hawk*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 98.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 97.

toward Menderes and his government, particularly among the young officer corps. When crisis hit in 1959, the Menderes regime was faced with sky-high inflation rates³² and a huge balance of payment deficit. As resentment began to rise, the population became restless, and a coup overturned the government. When Menderes was tried later in 1960, he faced charges of causing personal injuries and damage to property and of passing legislation that violated property rights.³³

Economic factors played a crucial role both in the military's reasons for intervening and in the temporary military regime that was established to fix Turkey's problems in 1960. Although economic affairs were predominantly allocated to the civilian sector of the temporary government, the military regime's National Unity Committee (MBK) focused on solving the inflation problem, the balance-of-payments deficit and the slowing economic growth. While the Menderes regime had previously been working with the IMF to alleviate these problems, the military regime adopted similar IMF-inspired reforms.³⁴ It is difficult to accurately assess the exact impact of these economic policies given the short duration that the military regime was in power. On the one hand, exports and GNP both fell from 1960 to 1961; however, on the other hand, the problem of the 18.8 percent inflation rate in 1959 was solved as it hit zero percent in 1961.³⁵ Furthermore, the MBK focused on land and tax reforms in hopes of fixing socio-economic problems within Turkey's population; but, because of its short tenure, these ideas were not fully realized within this time frame. In order to award the state more control over the economy, the MBK established what it perceived as the reinvigoration of the etatist economy, the State Planning Organization, in the 1961 Constitution.

On another note, the National Unity Committee also established OYAK (The Armed Forces Trust and Pension Fund) on January 3, 1961. This organization was established under the explanation by the MBK that military officers are "only provided a modest living" which leaves them "unable to maintain lifestyles which correspond

³² By July 1959, inflation had reached approximately 32%. See "Inflation Turkey 1959," inflation.eu, accessed July 22, 2015, <http://www.inflation.eu/inflation-rates/turkey/historic-inflation/cpi-inflation-turkey-1959.aspx>.

³³ Ibid., 128.

³⁴ A. Krueger, "Partial Adjustment and Growth in the 1980s in Turkey," in Dornbush and Edwards eds., *Reform, Recovery and Growth, Latin America and Middle East* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 347.

³⁵ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 130.

with their social status.”³⁶ With millions of dollars going into private investment of this share holding company, OYAK rapidly began to expand throughout the 1960s and by extension grew the military’s economic power throughout the 20th century.

As the MBK established a new constitution, it also formulated a new code for the Turkish Armed Forces. Subsequently, it created a new role for the army in politics and society. The Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Law of January 1961, Article 35 established the army as the formal protector of secularism: thus, also a major component of all state institutions, both political and economic. The article is as follows: “The duty of the Turkish Armed Forces is to protect and preserve the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic as defined in the constitution.”³⁷ With this clause, the 1960 coup established political hegemony over the entirety of the Turkish homeland, not just in matters of national security but most importantly in matters of domestic security. This frequently cited article was the means by which the Turkish Armed Forces was able to historically and socially justify its numerous interventions throughout the 20th century. The clause soon became a precursor for the army to intervene at any point when the republic’s principles, i.e. its own interests, were at stake. Thus, the 1960 coup and its resulting institutions gave the military the necessary means and tools through which to consolidate its power over Turkish political institutions. However, it would partially be the army’s own internal politics that would prevent it from accomplishing complete hegemony over a stabilized society, leading to several coup attempts in the early ‘60s.

1961-1980: The Army under a New Constitution, From Disorder to Order within the Military and From Order to Disorder within the State

It is important to differentiate between the nature of the two full military coups in 1960 and in 1980, especially in terms of their political consequences. The different natures of the military coups in Turkey influenced the post-coup political regime in different ways. Therefore, between these two coups, there are many social changes between 1961 and 1980 that must be noted in order to understand both the causes of the

³⁶ Ismet Akca, “Military-Economic Structure in Turkey: Present Situation, Problems, and Solutions,” TESEV Publications (Istanbul: 2010), 8.

³⁷ Gareth Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play: Military-JDP Relations, 2002-2004,” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, edited by M. Hakan Yavuz, 185-206 (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2006), 187.

1980 military coup and its consequences, most specifically the status quo that was created prior to the coup. Although another major military invention, the 1971 “halfway coup,” took place within these decades of change, what remains foremost relative in the course of this study are the social and political climate that were the foundations precipitating such interventions.

The 1960s coup was carried out by a group of young officers who had no plan to establish a certain type of regime when carrying out the coup but rather carried out the coup to protect the nation from the Democrat Party, which was determined to be violating the principles of democracy. Only after carrying out the coup did the military establish a board of experts in the fields of government and democracy to write the 1961 constitution. Thus, as this constitution had been drafted by a group of ideological elites, the '61 Constitution had established a political and social system exceeding Turkey's actual socioeconomic level of development and capacity at the time.

Further, the young officers who had staged the coup were unable to act as an established unit throughout the next decade. This was made evident from the start as different groups of officers began to gather around different camps supporting various political and military actors. As the return to civilian government had been difficult for the politicians, who were struggling to form a coalition, the revolutionary young officers had had difficulty looking upon a Turkey that could potentially function differently than the Turkey they had envisioned. The idea of an amnesty bill for members of the Democratic Party had caused uproar amongst the young officer rank and file and had triggered severe mistrust among some of civilian politicians, particularly of Ismet Inonu.³⁸ Although Chief of General Staff Cevdet Sunay had declared that another coup so soon after 1960 was irrational, the whole of the military was hardly listening to this. The factious nature of the army had failed to be solved by the National Security Council (MGK) regime. As Hale has put it, “The most serious problem for the senior commanders was that some of their juniors did not believe that they had shot their last bolt at the time of 21 October Protocol of 1961” (i.e. the establishment of a civilian government and constitution).³⁹

The story that follows was quite serious at first at the time; however, as events unfolded and various powers desperately grasped for control, the end becomes quite

³⁸ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 153.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 154.

comic in hindsight. Already on 9 February 1962, commandant of the Military College Talat Aydemir had called upon the radical faction of the military to meet and discuss an alternative to the newly established constitution.⁴⁰ This plan, the 9 February Protocol as it was known, was largely unorganized and ill-conceived; however, the failure of this half-hashed plan did not prevent tensions from culminating just days later on 22 February. A series of bizarre communications had taken place between various officials and Aydemir, convincing him that the “air force junta” was out to destroy him and, subsequently, putting his troops on alert.⁴¹ Just hours later, an officer of the Presidential Guard Regiment, Major Fethi Gurcan, overthrew his superior to take over Cankaya. However, as Gurcan was unable to act himself without the approval of Aydemir, time lost between lines of communication was time gained for the government. As Aydemir had suggested Gurcan not arrest the government, the politicians escaped the capital and recouped. Pro-government commanders had quickly changed the minds of the dissenting rebels, and Aydemir called off the coup.⁴² However, this was not the end of Aydemir’s schemes. With Aydemir and Gurcan remaining at large (as Inonu did not court martial them for fear of military backlash), on 8 March the parliament passed a new law making it illegal to criticize the 27 March coup or to declare that any party was the successor of the Democratic Party. Additionally, the power of the National Security Council was strengthened. Despite these reforms and checks, however, through a series of clandestine meetings and subsequent actions, other actors in the military had stirred Aydemir to launch a second coup.⁴³ On 20 May, Aydemir, Gurcan, and what was left of their supporters (mainly the members of the military academy) took hostage Ankara’s radio stations and proclaimed that the “Armed Forces had been obliged to take power.”⁴⁴

Upon hearing this, an Ankara-based Lieutenant-Colonel Ali Elverdi got in his car, drove to the radio station, and, holding Aydemir’s men at gunpoint, made a radio announcement that Aydemir’s coup was not legitimate. Soon, central radio stations were cut, General Sunay had ordered an air strike on Aydemir’s supporters if they did

⁴⁰ Ibid., 154-155.

⁴¹ Ibid., 157.

⁴² Ibid., 160.

⁴³ Such meetings and events are further detailed in Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 165-166.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 167.

not surrender, and Aydemir was found and arrested at a friend's house the next day. As Hale has put it, the subsequent attempted military coups of 1962 and 1963 "looked like no more than a reckless piece of adventurism by an impetuous ex-colonel."⁴⁵ Therefore, the Turkish Armed Forces could not be conceived as an identifiable whole, much less as a serious political contender ordering specific directions within the state apparatus.

Therefore, the problems of the 1960s precipitated by the constitution led to the problems of the 1970s.⁴⁶ The over liberalization of Turkish society had exacerbated the divide between the left and the right. The rise of Turkish political voices to either the left or the right by the 1970s had resulted in "not repression but excess of expression" amongst non-state actors.⁴⁷ Initially, the military could not handle this under the disorganized body of the young officers. After all, the military had created nothing more than an excessively liberal version of two-party politics, the same two-party system that had frustrated the military to undertake the 1960 coup. However, once the military had imposed a technocratic government after the "halfway" coup on 12 March 1971, marking a final end to the disestablishment caused by the insufferable young officer corps, it had become a corporate body in essence and was, again, able to act as a unitary body capable of dispensing a common opinion. Achieving one voice, the military was able to fight back against this "non-consensual party competition."⁴⁸ This consensus marked an important point for the military: Speaking with one voice, the military could now rise above political parties to intervene in the state in order to impose its own will. Marching in one step, the military was determined to make sure that party competition would not defile the state again as it had in the 1960s and 70s.

Although the 12 March 1971 intervention was successful in its reestablishment of the military body, as well as in quelling violence temporarily, the new government in power under the Justice Party had failed to accomplish any substantive legislative reform as the social reforms drafted in this new mood of liberalism still precipitated by the 1960s were continuously blocked by the conservative parliament led by Prime

⁴⁵ Ibid., 138.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 121.

⁴⁷ Metin Heper, *The State Tradition*, (Walkington, England: The Eotheon Press, 1985), 122-123.

⁴⁸ Ustun Erguder and Richard I. Hofferbert, "The 1983 General Electiosn in Turkey: Continuity or Change in Voting Patterns," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, 81-102 (New York/Berlin: deGruyter, 1988), 82.

Minister Suleyman Demirel, who constantly complained about the constitution.⁴⁹ Additionally, although this was for the benefit of the military itself, the young revolutionary military groups who had supported these radical social reforms had been quickly stamped out through a military purge after the 12 March 1971 intervention. Therefore, state channels and institutions that would support such reforms were few. Where really here the civilian government should have taken measures to implement further stability, it did not. Instead, it continued to complain of the lack of law and order meanwhile watching for the army to continue staging coups.

Culminating with the above factors, on the eve of the 1980 coup, the common reality for most Turkish citizens was the prevailing political violence that had manifested itself to look something like an all-out street war. By 1980, an average of 20 political killings per day took place across Turkey.⁵⁰ Further, polarization in the TGNA had become so extreme that it had rendered the parliament from electing a president in 1980. Disparities on the right between the National Action Party (MSP) and the National Salvation Party (MHP) and the failure to form a coalition between the two predominant parties, the Justice Party (AP) and the CHP had resulted in complete “immobilisme of the governments and parliaments,” a problem which had been plaguing the state for almost a decade but had proved to have finally reached its breaking point.⁵¹

The 1980 coup: A new political system under old rulers

As the military rolled its tanks into the streets on 12 September 1980, it quickly did what all previous military regimes had done: promised a quick return to stability and a democratic, civilian-led government. However, the severity of the political violence and polarization that had propelled the military to undertake this full-fledged coup necessitated more than a government change and the implementation of a few new laws. It was thus so that the military, under the auspice of the National Security Council regime, closed down any thoughts that it might again try to manage change through the same avenues that it had in 1971. Instead, the military quickly conveyed

⁴⁹ Ergun Ozbudun, “Development of Democratic Government in Turkey,” in *Perspectives on Democracy in Turkey*, ed. Ergun Ozbudun, 1-58 (Ankara: Turkish Political Science Association Publication: 1988), 20.

⁵⁰ Heper, *The State Tradition in Turkey*, 122.

⁵¹ Ozbudun, “Development,” 24-25.

that a larger change in the status quo was needed and that the country was ripe for constitutional change, again, just 20 years after implementing its second one.⁵²

Unlike the 1960 military coup, the 1980 coup had been critically and meticulously planned and was undertaken by a select group of six leading military officers including the General Staff. Since the 1971 intervention had established the military as a corporate body, the General Staff experienced few problems subordinating the entirety of the Turkish Armed Forces. Before the coup, Kenan Evren and other leading officers were reported to have gone through the troops group by group in order to explain the reasons for the upcoming intervention and requesting the forces' unwavering support.⁵³ Additionally, Evren had kept communication open with officers outside the MGK as well.⁵⁴ It was thus with an iron fist that the military as a solidified whole was able to break through the weak political and social systems to assert its will and order over the entire republic of Turkey.

The military had envisioned a society that was not only stable and democratic but also resistant to the legislative polarization that had caused the failing of the pre-coup political system. Seeing political stability as the foremost objective, the 1982 constitution diagnosed that Turkey was made unstable by two factors: (1) the leftist/communist/Soviet/separatist threat, and (2) the inability of politicians to take this threat seriously and form adequate policies to combat it.⁵⁵ Therefore, the 1982 constitution was designed to be the solution to Turkey's institutional problems rather than a democratic document based from Turkey's long national, historical, and imbedded state and civil ideals. The military regime had created an environment of fear, not only of reemerging political violence but also of exercising freedom of speech and assembly. In order to preserve the stable implementation of a democratic regime, the military would take any means, democratic or not, to initiate and preserve this new status quo.

First the military sought to eliminate all political parties perceived to have contributed to this political instability. Placed in the 1982 constitution were several

⁵² Ibid., 25.

⁵³ Kemal Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army-Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980," in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, ed. Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, 137-158 (New York/Berlin: deGruyter, 1988), 151.

⁵⁴ Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 249.

⁵⁵ Ahmet Evin, "Changing Patterns," 208; Ersin Kalaycioglu, *Turkish Dynamics: Bridge Across Troubled Lands* (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005), 127.

provisions banning members of previously established parties from entering the political realm. For a period of ten years, leaders, deputy leaders, secretary general, and members of the central executive committees of pre-existing political parties were banned from participating in political parties and entering into the Turkish Grand National Assembly. In addition, members of the parliament were banned from participating in political parties and institutions for five years.⁵⁶ The military was determined that the politicians responsible for the weakening of the state in the 1960s-70s would not corrupt the establishment of the new constitutional regime. Additionally, in order to maintain the integrity of new political parties, virtually all criticism of the state and elite positions was banned. Heavy restrictions were put in place on political parties associating with trade unions, foreign party organizations, and women's and youth organizations.

The 1982 constitution curtailed political participation not only by banning pre-existing political parties from participating but also by setting a steep election threshold. Under the Electoral Law, a new 10% election threshold was put in place restricting smaller minority parties from entering the parliament under a party organization. The measure was designed to prevent political chaos amongst an exorbitant amount of dissenting parties and polarization as had been the case in the 70s.⁵⁷

The military established a tutelage state system under the auspice of the president, which significantly altered the previous position and function of the presidency. The 1982 constitution set up *de jure* legislative supremacy and *de facto* executive supremacy. While the legislature maintained its traditional role as the anchor of the state power, an ominous executive power, encompassed in the office of the presidency, was established to watch down upon the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The presidency is erected as a super supervisor with no political and legal responsibility—just sheer unchecked power. He cannot be impeached, only tried for treason; however, this is an incredibly vague process.⁵⁸ The president can meddle in all branches of government and can call and reside over the prime minister in a meeting amongst other ministers. This gargantuan power share followed the military's trend of filling existing power gaps within society. After a decade of a failing political system

⁵⁶ Ozbudun, "Development," 26.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵⁸ Kalaycioglu, *Turkish Dynamics*, 127-128.

caused by what was perceived to be the fault of corrupt politicians, the military established a political system that could no longer be ruined by petty politicians and their political games. Instead, a new type of presidency was established in order to strong-arm these politicians when they would fall out of line.

However, with the establishment of this strong presidential power guided by the military, the National Security Council sought to implement a more democratic social system that would jointly reinforce the rule of the president and the military are the top. The Turkish-Islamic synthesis (or Military-Turkist-Islamist triangle) that the military developed designated the presidency and the military to hold the collective interest of the state at the top; meanwhile, the Turkists (nationalists) and Islamists would ride on the military-presidential coattails as the guiding power within the Turkish state. Other bureaucrats would additionally stabilize the system. This system would utilize the parties of the Turkists and the Islamists to fight over the spoils of the system and to fill the power vacuum after the leftists, socialists, and trade union representatives had been imprisoned during the period of martial law. This system was built largely in response to the threat of Left internally and the greater threat of Soviet power externally.⁵⁹ Naturally, developing the Right would negate the re-development of the Left. Henceforth, nationalism and Islam were used as the political tools to keep the new regime in check.

Further, the civilian aide of the Turkish-Islamist synthesis helped to contribute to the high level of economic growth in the 1980s. Despite the military's secularist leanings, the Islamist sector began to flourish throughout the 1980s and 90s as it largely invested in private corporations and benefited from the establishment of neoliberal policies.

Eventually the first parliamentary elections took place on 6 November 1983, although only three political parties were eligible for participation: The Motherland Party (ANAP), the Populist Party and the Nationalist Democratic Party (MDP). ANAP won 52.9% of the parliamentary seats.⁶⁰ The preceding constitution had been put to a vote in 1982 along with the presidential elections, which General Evren had won.

Thus, from the Ottoman times to the third republic, we see the military come full circle: from a revolutionary force, to an apolitical army, to a constitution-making

⁵⁹ Isik Ozel, "Political Islam and Islamic Capital: The Case of Turkey," in Jeffrey Haynes, ed., *Religion and Politics in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 143.

⁶⁰ Ozbudun, "Development," 28-29.

political force. The state and society had come to terms with their expansive, active military; however, following the 1982 constitution the military had difficulties coming to terms with the internal and external changes that it would face in the coming decades.

Post-1980 Order and the Military

Characteristics of the State after 1982 and the Rise of New Problems

The state after 1982 is a peculiar beast. On the one hand, the state, in which the military had emerged as its leader, had again become an all-encompassing power, a “Papa State”⁶¹ so to say. Evin identifies this construction complicit with the patrimonial state tradition. The theory behind this, alluding to the 1980 coup in context, is as follows:

It was the state in the first place which had provided the framework for a democratic system with all the freedoms associated with it. However, the politicians had been unable to appreciate the system, and moreover, had committed the sin of subverting it through manipulation for their own gains. The state giveth and the state taketh, too. What was seen to be the sin of the politicians was the fact that they were not content to operate within the perimeters defined for them, and as a result they would come to grief.⁶²

This system of state development, in turn, subordinates all political activity under the guise of the state. This state establishment is what controls the power of its actors, and it is what keeps the status quo in check. However, the state’s greatest weakness has often been its downfall. Once the state is penetrated, its all-encompassing powers must be transferred as a total package. Falling into the wrong hands, this package could be lethal, a fatal flaw in the design.

On the other hand, this state system grew separately from the system that was actually developing among the periphery of society. Although the state is overarchingly intimidating, the state actually has very little power to implement and enforce laws, cultural mores, and norms.⁶³ The demographics of Turkish society experienced tumultuous changes between the 1960 coup and the AKP’s rise to power in

⁶¹ Heper, *State Tradition*, 103.

⁶² Evin, “Changing Patterns,” 208.

⁶³ Ersin Kalaycioglu, “Political Culture,” in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, ed. Metin Heper and Sabri Sayari (London: Routledge, 2012), 175.

2002. Socially and economically, the very fabric of Turkish society was re-crafted. The society that was once guided by the traditional axis of a center-periphery divide⁶⁴ was suddenly rupturing at its very core as the periphery slowly gained increasing influence after the 1980 coup—notably still under the same state structure that the military had crafted in its image, i.e. within the realm of the 1982 constitution and the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. These changing dynamics are important to understanding how the AKP could come to power in 2002 and how the military could eventually relinquish its autonomy to such a political actor.

There are three important characteristics of Turkish society that must be studied in order to see how political and social circumstances shifted during the next two decades, even in light of the established 1980 political and social order. Social mobilization throughout Turkey, the breakdown of the bipolar Cold War international order, and the changing rule and ideologies of the Turkish population throughout the 1980s and 1990s will be discussed in this section as precursory shifts to the realization of larger changes from 2002-2007 concerning the military and the EU, the power struggle with increasingly conservative Islamic government officials, and anti-military social movements, which will be discussed in respective chapters later.

1. Social mobilization

Patterns of social mobilization within Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s not only altered the geographic and social structure of Turkey but also the framework of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis that the military had laid out after the 1982 constitution.

In 1950, Turkey was a predominantly agrarian society with only 25% of its population rooted in cities. However, over the next 60 years, the population would flock to cities in search of economic prosperity, leading to a reversal of this statistic. Although this mobilization began in the 1950s/1960s, a better half of the change occurred following the economic expansion of the 1980s.⁶⁵ In 1980, 44% of Turkish

⁶⁴ See Sarif Mardin's classic text, "Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" in *Political Participation in Turkey: Historical Background and Present Problems*, ed. Engin D. Akarli and Gabriel Ben-Dor, 7-32 (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press, 1975).

⁶⁵ For example, still in 1973, 38% of Turkish households were "below subsistence level." See Özbudun, "Development," 36.

citizens lived in urban areas; by 2002, approximately 66% of the population lived in the country's cities while only 34% lived in its villages.⁶⁶

These statistics signal not only horizontal (geographic) mobilization but also vertical (social) mobilization. Cities tend to offer a better economic situation to those migrating from rural areas. For example, “most studies on rural-to-urban migration observed that urban migrants are generally younger, better educated, more skilled, and presumably also more energetic and ambitious than the average rural population.”⁶⁷

The remarkable growth and globalization of the post-1980 economy led to the rise of not only a remarkable growth rate and international competition in Turkey but also a curious social dichotomy and culture springing from these economic changes. Under the legacy of the 1980 National Security Council regime and the leadership of Turgut Özal⁶⁸ in the 1980s, the Turkish economy underwent an astonishing transformation, not only providing more incentives for businesses but also increasing Turkey's role in the international market and trade. After the implementation of economic reforms in January 1980, the economic growth rate immediately skyrocketed.

On the one hand, against this backdrop one development that had reemerged after the 1980s coup was a new identifiable bourgeoisie. According to Özbudun, because of the historical development of Turkey and government incentives given to businesses rather than agriculture, it was not until 1980 that an identifiable bourgeoisie could be conceived as politically and economically significant. This bourgeoisie had gained its strength through the emergence of several family share-holding companies that had emerged during the 1970s. During this decade, the bourgeoisie had developed around nationalistic sentiments reinforcing the government's protectionist policies to shield Turkey's economic development from foreign capital.⁶⁹ Thus, when the military regime had sought to instill its own ideological hegemony over the state, the

⁶⁶ World Bank, “Urban Population (% of total),” accessed June 19, 2015, <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS?page=2>.

⁶⁷ Özbudun, “Development,” 37.

⁶⁸ Prior to the military coup, Turgut Özal had been appointed Minister of Finance by Prime Minister Sulyeman Demirel. Özal began implementing economic reform packages designed to implement liberal, free-market economic policies as early as January 1980. Although the large part of the pre-coup government was disposed of by the military regime, Özal's position as chief economic advisor was preserved through the NSC regime until he became the prime minister in 1983. He is often acknowledged as the proprietor of Turkey's neoliberal market economy, opening up Turkey to the global economy and encouraging privatization, and saving Turkey from the economic crisis of the late 1970s.

⁶⁹ Caglar Keyder, “The Agrarian Background and the Origins of the Turkish Bourgeoisie,” in *Developmentalism and Beyond: Society and Politics in Egypt and Turkey*, ed. Ayse Oncu, Caglar Keyder, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, 7-32 (Cairo: The American University of Cairo Press, 1994), 62.

bourgeoisie had to relinquish its nationalist sentiments and, therefore, its “ideological coming-of-age.”⁷⁰ Internationalization was the new non-negotiable ideology instituted by the military. However, rather than lose their economic power, the bourgeoisie was on board for whatever ideological course in which the military regime would steer them—as long as this direction was leading toward profit. Thus, the internationalization of the Turkish bourgeoisie facilitated a smooth transition for Turkey into the world economy.⁷¹ The bourgeoisie’s lost identity, however, contributed to the reinforcement of a stronger alternative ideology.

On the other hand, the military had allowed for the penetration of some ideologies into economics, as long as the military apparatus itself supported these ideologies and felt that they could be controlled. As the process of social mobilization rapidly took hold in Turkey, the Islamists, who the military had propped up as social power after the coup, not only gained prominence from the success of its so-called “green capital” but also from the development of its social organizations, which often facilitated economic ties. Patrimonial ties were strengthened through the development of *tarikats*, small Islamic brotherhoods functioning jointly as economic networks, and the organization of MUSIAD (Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association), as well as connections facilitated through Islamic schooling. While the state allowed for this emergence of Islamic capitalism and association throughout the ‘80s, the unanticipated fall of the communist threat rendered the proposition of a strong Islamic Turkey irrelevant, which will be discussed in the next section. However, in the midst of the uncertainty of the 1990s, alternative social organizations in Turkish society (which were not particularly strong to begin with) had effectively died out, and these Islamic brotherhoods were left as the strongest cohesive force amongst civil society.⁷² Civil society, therefore, had become subordinate to the increasing power of Islam. Although the military had anticipated and supported the rise of Islamic society in the 1980s, it had failed to anticipate the continuing emergence of Islam in the 1990s. As Islam had come to present itself as a threat to the military’s autonomy at the top of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis it had built, it failed to develop a cohesive strategy to combat this rise of political and social Islam. Prior to the coup, the Islamic tradition had

⁷⁰ Ibid., 64.

⁷¹ Ibid., 66.

⁷² Ersin Kalaycioglu, “Political Culture,” 175.

remained a counter-culture of the periphery. However, as Toprak conceived in 1988, the Islamic tradition was “now a counter-culture which has extended itself to the more prominent sectors of urban society such as civil service, free profession, political parties and the press.”⁷³ Thus, what is witnessed here from the short-term perspective is the rise of Islam—from a long-term perspective, this signaled the rise of the periphery.

Further, this rapid social mobilization was boosted by the military struggle with the PKK. In 1984, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party)—the radical, armed faction of the Kurdish movement in Turkey that had been operating in exile in Syria in the early 1980s and had slowly made it way back into Turkey in 1984—expanded its operations from staging attacks on a local scale to a national scale. Rather than staging a series of regionalized local attacks, the PKK instead began to attack the state itself. As a result, the death toll rose from around 1,500 in 1980-1984 to over 20,000 soldiers, armed Kurdish fighters, and civilians who have died in the armed conflict with the PKK during the height of the conflict in the 1990s.⁷⁴ Further, in the midst of economic growth across Turkey, the 1990/1991 embargo against Iraq had devastated the economy of the Southeast by comparison, isolating this region even further from the rest of the country. The threat of violence and the economic situation in the Southeast triggered two movements: one away from the government and toward the PKK and a second in a massive flight to the city, predominantly in the west of Turkey. Some scholars argue that up to 2.5-3 million people were internally displaced across Turkey largely because of this conflict.⁷⁵ This migration largely accounts for the dramatic rise of rural to urban migration that is calculated above.

Thus, by the early 2000s, we see a new Turkey composed of cities filled with villagers, an economically empowered Islamic counter-culture, and by and large a majority of an entire regional population uprooted from their homes.

2. International System

⁷³ Binnaz Toprak, “The State, Politics, and Religion in Turkey,” in *State, Democracy and the Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, edited by Metin Heper and Ahmet Evin, 119-136 (New York/Berlin: deGruyter, 1988), 136.

⁷⁴ Kemal Kirisci and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of a Trans-state Ethnic Conflict* (London/Portland: Frank Cass, 1997), 126.

⁷⁵ Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey*, 135.

The circumstances under which the 1982 constitution was established changed drastically after the break up of the bipolar international order as the Soviet Union finally collapsed on December 31, 1991. On the one hand, the anti-left social order that the military had facilitated in the 1980s was reinforced by the fall of the Soviet communist system. Seeing the Soviet Union's own personal failures and the global rise of the political right, the collapse of the Soviet Union further discouraged any chances for a regeneration of the left. On the other, however, the entire rerouting of the social and political order during the post-Cold war era marked a period of political uncertainty for which the military had not been prepared, posing itself as a greater threat to stability in Turkey. No longer needing to demonize the communists or the left—either to counter their own internal security threat or to support the international ambitions of their NATO partners—Turkey had no clear, identifiable enemy to fight. Thus, the search for a new enemy and new alliances ensued.

The post-Cold war era marked the clear beginning of a new era of globalism, economic liberalism, and privatization. Concomitantly, as a new world geography began to take shape and Soviet satellite states began to fall around Turkey, the bipolar order that had so clearly defined world politics had broke into pieces, blurring the edges of international and national politics alike. Externally, the break up of the Soviet-bloc created several new states around Turkey's borders with Europe and the Caucasus. No longer dealing with a single Soviet hegemon, Turkey was forced to conceive new relations with individual powers—including its direct neighbors in Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and the Balkan countries. New national identities brought ethnic identities to the surface, and these surfacing ethnic identities triggered new ethnic conflicts. Internally, from the consequences of the Cold War we can see the predominant identities promulgated after 1980, Turkey's national identity and its Islamic identity, shine through as these ethnic conflicts unfold. As the 1975 Helsinki Accords were no longer valid, the mass redrawing of the European map triggered inward looking thoughts akin to a second Sevres syndrome, putting Turkey, the new open, globalized Turkey, back on the inward-looking defense.⁷⁶

The war in the Balkans after the break up of Yugoslavia in the mid-1990s not only created conflict amongst NATO and the larger international community but also became a political call to action in Turkey. Outraged by the slaughter of Balkan

⁷⁶ Ersin Kalaycioglu and Ali Carkoglu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 16.

Muslims, predominantly Bosniaks, Albanians, and those of Turkish descent, this conflict became a rallying point for Turks, who united under the call to stop the slaughtering of their Muslim-Turkic brothers, left over from their common Ottoman past.⁷⁷ Bülent Ecevit's Democratic left Party was the first to react to the plight of the Balkan Turkish speaking populations, but it was particularly the right wing, conservative and Islamic-based parties in Turkey that picked up on this religious-ethnic struggle, imposing a dialogue of "us" vs. "them" that played upon the old Ottoman notions of religious identities based in the old imperial institutions.⁷⁸ Although the DYP and the SHP coalition government effectively used diplomacy to mitigate the conflict, those Islamist parties who seemed to have little chance of winning the elections, and thus found no cost of acting as an irresponsible opposition, were not satisfied with this political-diplomatic solution.

Internally, the activities of the PKK had been given a new life after the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1989. As the rest of the country began to prosper throughout the early '90s, the Southeast's predominant income from channeling supplies to Iran and Iraq during the war had been cut off, insetting a massive economic decline in what was already known as a less-developed region.⁷⁹ The Gulf War of 1991 then added fuel to this impetus, allowing for PKK groups to operate from a foothold in Northern Iraq. Subsequently, the aforementioned mass violence and migration ensued. After decades of suppression and denial of a specifically official Kurdish identity within Turkey, Turkish society and government were forced to acknowledge the possibility that there exists an identity separate from the singular, state-defined Turkish identity.

Much political debate grew around this conflict concerning the identity of the Kurds. On the one hand, political actors thought that Kurds could be better integrated through economics and migration to cities. On the other, Islamic-based politicians thought that Islam would prove to be the best means in which to include Kurds as an official cultural community into the state apparatus. The issue was further discussed by civil society organizations and businesses. Notably, leading Turkish businessman Sakip Sabanci published a report in November on the economic situation in Eastern Turkey. Sabanci called for new investment in this region and the establishment of new

⁷⁷ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 12.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 13.

government institutions to monitor them.⁸⁰ By the end of the decade, however, it was clear that the vast majority of Kurds were convinced that the answer to the Kurdish question was not with the PKK but rather with civil society itself.⁸¹ Additional reports were carried out by the human rights associations of IHV and the IHD, as well as the Helsinki Citizens Assembly (HCA) in Turkey, and several conferences focusing on the Kurdish issue were organized in Istanbul.⁸² Finally, in 1995, the state issued what we can most closely define as its “opinion” on the subject as it amended Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law, calling for a stricter definition of “separatist” propaganda. This paved the way for a freer and more open discussion of the Kurdish question in the years following.⁸³

After witnessing life in the Southeast themselves while fighting in these areas, the Turkish Armed Forces became aware that the remedy to expel the PKK was not important in fighting the PKK but in preventing recruitment among impoverished Kurds in the Southeast.⁸⁴ Throughout the conflict in the ‘90s, the military recommended economic strategies for eliminating the conflict in the Southeast; however, due to budgetary constraints and government changes, the military was not able to exert pressure upon these governments to implement such policies, leaving the military to implement its own campaign, which virtually amounted to a tree-planting project.⁸⁵ The institution of the Turkish Armed Forces did not truly believe that peace in the Southeast was an option.

Finally, in combination with Turkey’s increasing privatization and expansion into the global market, Turkey sought new economic and political partnerships with its Western neighbors, the European Union, in order to firm its position in the new international competition. In 1995, Turkey signed a Customs Union Agreement with the EU, marking the beginning of an increased partnership during the new decade. Although the Customs Union almost strictly affected Turkey’s economic realm,

⁸⁰ See Kirisci and Winrow, *The Kurdish Question in Turkey*, 150 and 185.

⁸¹ This is based on a TOBB (Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey) survey carried out in 1995 among 1267 subjects, predominantly Kurds. Participating in peace talks with the PKK was favored only by 4.2% of these participants. The report concluded, “The solution does not lie with the PKK. An agreement should be reached with the people of the area.” See Kirisci and Winrow, 149.

⁸² For more details see Kirisci and Winrow, 150.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸⁴ Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstances* (Oxon: Routledge, 2001), 69.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

political and social significance was gained when in 1999 Turkey was accepted as an eligible candidate for membership in the EU by the EU. Turkey was looking for a neighborhood in which it could align itself at times of need, especially after the tumultuous events of the '90s, and it had seemingly found an alliance with the EU to be suitable to Turkey's aims. However, as the EU and Turkey had embarked upon different courses of development, changes after the Cold War, particularly (for our purposes here) in the development of professional, parliamentary-controlled armies, had increased the distance between the two. This partnership and its implications for society and the military will be further discussed in the third chapter.

3. Changing rules and ideologies

As the previous military regimes had done, the 1980 National Security Council regime had sought to reestablish a democratic republic and return to a civilian-led state. However, what looks like a democracy on paper is not always democratic in practice—especially in Turkey, where the constitution may be considered a sacred document but rule of law is often subject to malpractice, if practiced at all.

By 1988, just six years after the implementation of a new constitution that was first and foremost designed to stabilize the country, some scholars had already declared Turkey an “unstable democracy.”⁸⁶ However, the history of the republic shows that while Turkey is committed to building democracy, it is not always committed to democratic ideals. The military is committed to these ideals but its elitist tendencies often sour this commitment.⁸⁷ Thus, although the rules of Turkish politics and society changed after the 1980 coup and continued to change throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the normalization of this brandished practice of rule of law was sustained. There have always been problems of varying magnitudes with respect to rule of law in Turkey. Further, the move away from the “stability” that the military has so admittedly attempted to incorporate into all realms of political and social life post-1980 was a larger sign that the idea of State that the military thought it could uphold forever was rapidly diminishing. Soon, as we can already see from the above circumstances, the state and civil society would develop outside of the military's control.

⁸⁶ Ozbudun, “Development,” 1.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1.

After the Cold War, the Soviet threat diminished, and the Turkist-Islamist-Military triangle quickly lost its influence as a whole established order as one-by-one the links began to break between the three sides. Islamists were strengthened by the economic gains befitting of the ever-growing Islamic green capital industry; meanwhile, nationalists were strengthened and then weakened by the changing international system and the rise of both external and internal conflicts ending in the late '90s. What is left of this triangle to discuss is the military, which here and in the following chapters we will discuss, especially in particular relation to the Islamic leg of the triangle rising with the AKP.

Much of the society that the military had established in 1980-1982/3 had come to a standstill by the early 2000s. The Kemalist regime in speech and in thought had fast been eroding as the military from the outset had allowed Islamic speech to persist—even as early as during the mid-80s when Kenan Evren made references to the Koran in public. The idea of an established Kemalist state was nothing more than social propaganda used only when convenient for reinforcing the military's power. What the military did not predict was the social agency that Kemalism would take. As Islam and nationalism had reached the masses, the ideology of Kemalism that the military tried to prop up had once again fallen harder upon the ears of those traditionally disposed to being in the military's center circle: intellectuals, educated urbanites, and students.⁸⁸ As Karpat observes, “on the eve on the 1980 takeover, Kemalism as a state philosophy no longer had a formal organized representation.”⁸⁹ Thus, it may be for this reason—the fact that Kemalism was paid lip service by the military national Security Council and its government in the 1980's rather than developed by society—that the military's imposition of this state philosophy could not compete with the implementation of Islam in the national dialogue. Although the influence of Kemalism in word was quite extensive after 1980, its application of day-to-day life in Turkey was questionable, at best.

The conflict that broke out between Islam and the military surrounding the events of the 28 February 1997 “post-modern” coup is particularly telling of this diminishing phase of Kemalism. Although this intervention appeared as a victory for the military at first, the rise of the center-right AKP in 2002 signaled that this victory

⁸⁸ Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, *Rising Tide*, 10.

⁸⁹ Karpat, “Military Interventions,” 149.

was nothing more than a temporary solution to a lasting problem. The 28 February process—the 18-point program that the military had forced Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan to accept⁹⁰—ultimately failed in its mission to undermine political Islam, purge Islamists from the state apparatus, and curb religious education and Islamic capital gains. Although the military had played upon the public’s nostalgia for protecting Atatürk’s idea of secularism, the military’s show of force was not enough to counter the electoral challenge of the Islamist conservatives of the AKP. In 1997, the center-right certainly saw itself as down in power; however, it was not yet out. After the Constitutional Court’s banning of the Welfare Party in 1998, the remnants of the party were able to recollect and reform themselves into a new party, the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi – FP), and when the FP was banned the Young Turks of that party were able to regroup and reform themselves into the democratic conservatives of the AKP in 2001. With a new strategy, the AKP had taken a huge lesson from the 1997 coup and what transpired in its aftermath as it realigned its political strategy to work within and around the secularist establishment of the military in order to recollect and cement its conservative populist agenda. The coup had shown the future AKP that there would never be long-term room for a center-right party that did not promote Kemalism and modernity first.⁹¹ With a new strategy in mind, the AKP would use this as a launching point to power.

Further, in 1996 the Susurluk incident exposed the fundamental basis of Turkish political organization, losing public trust and reinforcing the idea that social orders and rule of law are arbitrary. After a 3 November car crash left a former police chief, right-wing assassin connected to the mafia, and his girlfriend dead, as well as a member of the parliament injured, a series of clandestine networks against the backdrop of the state began to unfold layer by layer. These networks began to be known as the “deep-state” by the public and media, suggesting that state institutions were connected and profiting from organized crime and illegal trade across Turkey. Politicians and institutions from across the political spectrum were implicated; however, the state itself largely remained

⁹⁰ Even those governments that followed the Welfare – True path coalition government failed to implement a huge majority of the 18 points adopted in the meeting of the MGK on February 28, 1997. In fact, it was only the eight-year uninterrupted, mandatory national education was the only article among the eighteen points incorporated into the MGK decisions were implemented for about ten years, the rest were not implemented by the governments that followed (<http://blog.milliyet.com.tr/iste-size-pek-hoslanmayacaginiz-bir-28-subat-yazisi/Blog/?BlogNo=358783>).

⁹¹ Ziya Onis, “The Political Economy of Turkey’s Justice and Development Party,” in *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Parti*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz, 207-234 (Glen Canyon: The University of Utah Press, 2006), 212.

closed off from the investigations.⁹² Suspiciously, the investigation of the event was carried out until the military was implicated, the case soon concluding after.⁹³

Although at the time most of the evidence from the Susurluk case that we know today was not founded until the following decade,⁹⁴ the incident created a lack of trust in the current Welfare–True Path Party coalition government and sparked rallies across the country calling for transparency. While such a call for transparency is a positive development for democracy, evidence of the deep-state would set precedence for future investigations into this alleged deep-state apparatus during the AKP’s era, targeting allegedly dubious groups and implicating the military.

The AKP and the way forward

The cliché that the late ‘80s through the ‘90s, especially post-Cold War, was an era of turbulence and uncertainty, is no exaggeration. The 1980s military regime had successfully crafted a nearly new state, drafting a new political order under a new constitution designed to crush all political norms of the previous two decades and creating a new social order propping up and controlling its traditional periphery under the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. However, the popular notion amongst the military and traditional center powers that this political and social system was impenetrable proved to be grossly false. As we will see in the proceeding chapters, Turkey quickly outgrew the military’s 1980s’ order, and the rising power of the AKP was aware of this.

However, in the same vein, what this chapter has sought to do is dispel the myth that the army’s decline in the early 2000s was solely due to the AKP. Events and changing circumstances throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s are jointly the cause for the declension of the military, as is the rise of the AKP. The events detailed above have

⁹² “Susurluk report blames the state for remaining silent,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, January 24, 1998, accessed July 4, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/susurluk-report-blames-the-state-for-remaining-silent.aspx?pageID=438&n=susurluk-report-blames-the-state-for-remaining-silent-1998-01-24>.

⁹³ Stephen J. Fallagan and Samuel Brannen, *Turkey’s Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations* (Washington D.C.: Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2009), 7.; Fikri Saglar, “If Susurluk had been solved, we would not be facing Ergenekon,” *Today’s Zaman*, September 28, 2008, accessed July 1, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/interviews_if-susurluk-had-been-solved-we-would-not-be-facing-ergenekon_154519.html.

⁹⁴ The Susurluk incident was brought back into the limelight after former police chief Ibrahim Sahin was indicted in the Ergenekon trial. See “Key Ergenekon Suspect says military hired him,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, n.d., accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/10764045.asp> and “Turkey’s most shocking scandal back on the agenda with Ergenekon,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, nd. Accessed July 1, 2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/10750341.asp> for more details.

largely left out the military's influence and involvement. This is for good reason: the military is largely left out of this picture of development in order to see more clearly the advancing developments of these areas of society *without* the military perspective. While of course it would be equally false to paint the military entirely outside the picture of '80s and '90s Turkey, these decades hold a significant amount of change apart from what was dictated by the military and its generals. Although the military's activities throughout this era by no stretch of the imagination had diminished behind the aura of what is now known as the deep-state, the transparent involvement of the military in politics had considerably weakened, especially before 1997. Arguably, in a democracy it is these transparent developments that truly count toward democratization—at the ballot box specifically. Therefore, after the 2001 economic collapse especially, the AKP was the people's, who were unaware of the shadows and strings being pulled by the military behind the scene, choice of government in 2002. This, the military, of course much to its dismay, had to accept at that moment. Times had changed; the military had not. Society had begun to develop outside of the umbrella of the military in the '80s and '90s, and therefore, when the AKP arises and threatens its establishment, the military does not have the adequate tools to respond. Before the economic and political problems plaguing Turkey had reached their breaking point, much like it they had in the military interventions of 1960 and 1980, the AKP had swooped in to solve them.

It is this transition from the military supervision of the 1980s to the advent of the AKP's party government rule that the rest of this thesis will investigate, focusing on the fundamental shifts in power in 2002-2007. In order to get the clearest analysis of how most precisely the military fell from grace during the last decade and a half, both the military's relationship with the AKP and the extenuating circumstances of civil society, international relations, and popular debates and ideologies must come under examination. How did Turkey's relations with the EU change the Turkish Armed Forces relations within the state and society? How did the electoral preferences of the people alter the precedence of military over civilian government? How did popular debates over secularism contribute to the ire of the AKP versus the military, and how did the military's response fail to address the political needs of Turkey? This and much more must be understood in order to comprehend why, contrary to the previous four decades in Turkey, the military's 2007 e-memorandum failed to thwart the change of the AKP government.

Chapter 2

DECLINE BY “DEMOCRACY”: CHANGING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, THE MILITARY AND THE EU

Traditionally, the military has spearheaded Turkey’s move toward Westernization and a principled alignment with Europe. Among Turkey’s elite center, European values are seen as just, civilized, enlightened, and democratic, whereas traditional Turkish (or Ottoman) values are seen as unenlightened, primordial, and backwards; thus, it was no surprise that Turkey would push toward membership in the European Union in the 1980s and 1990s. However, prior to the December 1999 Helsinki summit and Turkey’s subsequent accession agreement, there had been no public debate or discussion of a possible EU membership. Rather, such an alignment was “self-understood among the political elite.”⁹⁵ Therefore, after the establishment of the pro-nationalist outlook of the Turkish-Islamist synthesis in the early 1980s, the military would appear to be the only leg of this triangle—it being the only part that was a member of the traditional Republican political elite—to support and comprehend the implications of the EU alignment. Karpat observes in 1988 that the “reshaping of the national identity in the light of the Turks’ own national culture and religious ethos have broadened the scope of modernization in such a way as to relegate the West, without abandoning it, to a second position while giving priority to a new historically rooted socio-cultural Turkish identity.”⁹⁶ Certainly Islamists and nationalists had next to no interest in such a European alliance in the early ‘80s. However, the changing dynamics of the ‘90s complicated this opinion.

In 1995 Turkey signed the EU Customs Union, which immediately accelerated trade liberalization and regulatory reforms between the EU and Turkey and, therefore,

⁹⁵ Gamze Avcı, “Turkish Political Parties and the EU-Discourse in the Post-Helsinki Period,” in *The Politics of Modern Turkey: Volume IV*, edited by Ali Carkoglu and William Hale, 3-23 (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2008), 5.

⁹⁶ Karpat, “Military Intervention,” 156.

also accelerated EU support.⁹⁷ Finally after a long application process, supported by the U.S. and Turkey's NATO partnership, in 1999 Turkey embarked upon its journey as a candidate country of the European Union. Turkey desired to maintain its own national pride and identity, but it was not opposed to opening itself to the opportunities and benefits, both in security and economics, provided by the EU.

Although this specifically Turkish identity may appear to diminish the cause of the alignment with the West, the new social order promulgated on the ideologies of Kemalist principles and Sunni Islam—after having largely booted out the power of the nationalists following the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan and the cooling of the conflict with the PKK—shifted the dialogue in Turkey from a traditionally inward looking view to supporting Turkey's ties with the EU. Further, the flagging relations between Turkey and the United States, who predominantly wanted to assert power in the Middle East, led to a fallout in the Turkey-U.S.-NATO relationship after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which added further ideological purpose and strategy to Turkey's bid for EU alignment. Therefore, Turkey's two predominant power players at the turn of the millennium, the AKP and the Turkish Armed Forces, were united under one opinion—pro-Europeanization. Given the complexities and perplexities of Turkish politics, both the military and the AKP had its own means and ends for achieving such an international partnership, ultimately snagging a loose thread between the two powers and in the delicate fabric of Turkish society. While the military had been seeking EU membership as an end to the development of Atatürk's modern republic, the AKP had been seeking the EU membership as an end to the military's power over the politicians.

Through the years 2002-2007, although Turkish society and politics were open to the advent of EU policy and perspectives, the Turkish Armed Forces soon became disillusioned with the Europeanization process as it little by little realized that this alignment fundamentally influenced the balance of power among domestic political actors. As Avcı puts it, "the Turkish public and politicians became increasingly aware that EU accession is a costly process and will generate losers as well as winners."⁹⁸ Or, as Jenkins puts it, "the Europe that Atatürk so assiduously imitated no longer exists. Not only are today's EU members expected to cede a measure of sovereignty to Brussels but, as the EU made clear in November 2000, Turkish membership would

⁹⁷ Onis. "The Political Economy of Turkey's Justice and Development Party," 213.

⁹⁸ Avcı, "Turkish Political Parties and EU Discourse," 6.

require the radical reform of several of the keystones of the Kemalist state.”⁹⁹ As the traditional elite thought they were moving toward a brighter, enlightened future with their European partners, some of the powers that the EU had asked Turkey to cede were quickly overwhelming the traditional power structure of the proud Republic. Particularly from the military’s perspective, the long awaited city (or rather civilization) on a hill had proved nothing more than another Battle of Vienna for the strong military state of the Turks—a point of retreat in Turkey’s figurative struggle to enter Europe. Further, the military realized that the European Union saw the military as the singular obstacle to Turkey’s membership. The AKP was ready to capitalize on this opinion, and it instituted dozens of reforms and harmonization packages in order that Turkey comply with this EU criteria. But, as eventually the reform period would stop in the political realm after accession negotiations were launched, further reforms of the civil-military relationship came to a halt. However, whether inside or outside the climate of reform, the affects of the EU’s democratization methods had already taken hold of the citizens of Turkey and had caused the public to begin to question the traditional relationship between military, civilians, democracy, and coups.

As Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu identify, Turkey had two main hopes for its partnership with the EU: enhance job opportunities in Europe and improve rule of law and democracy.¹⁰⁰ Although the former does not so much concern the military, the latter—the hope of achieving rule of law and democracy within Turkey—had been popularly approved as the military’s primary internal function for decades. The military’s guardianship of the state, which checked and intervened into the political realm in order to make sure politicians were aligned with the state-espoused definition of democracy, had made the Turkish Armed Forces the state’s foremost authority on democracy and rule of law. Each time these principles had been perceived to be neglected by the government, the military stepped in. Thus, not only did EU membership threaten the sovereignty and control of the state as a whole, but it also undermined the de facto and de jure balance of power within the traditional state apparatus. While the Turkish Armed Forces had safeguard the state and democracy for decades against the corruption of politicians, this definition of democracy and stability was only so legitimate as long as one recognized the supremacy of the military over the

⁹⁹ Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism*, 124.

civilian. As civil society gradually began to open up and alternative, peripheral discourses were seizing social and political power, Turks felt that the unchecked power of the military could possibly need to be checked. Thus, Turkey began to outsource its ideological and institutional checks on democracy and rule of law to the EU.

Changing International Relations: U.S.-Turkish Fallout in Iraq and Turkey's Place in the "Broader Middle East"

Following the post-Cold war regional shifts and instability in Turkey's neighborhood, the post-9/11 world offered no rest for Turkey's tempestuous domestic and foreign affairs. The 9/11 attacks triggered a U.S.-led global war on terror that would be realized in Turkey's backyard. The United States had called on a renewed alliance of NATO powers to fight this War on Terror; however, meeting much resistance from Europe, the alliance was divided into two camps, Europeanists and Atlanticists, going in two different directions. A long-time partner of the United States and simultaneously a contender for European Union membership, this position put Turkey, both the civilian government and the military, in an incredibly uncomfortable position. On the one hand, the United States had only recently started to encourage democratization, taking "risks for reforms," and Turkey's move toward the EU in the late 1990s.¹⁰¹ Prior to this, the U.S.-Turkish relationship had remained largely one-dimensional. On the other hand, security issues had been central to the U.S.-Turkish alliance since World War II.¹⁰² Therefore, it was not until the post-9/11 relationship and the Iraq War, with the terrorist threat lying in Turkey's neighborhood in the Middle East and EU relations gradually opening up, that the Turkey-U.S. relationship combined the historical U.S. security trajectory and the recent rhetoric of democratization more similar to the EU.

In February 2003, the Pentagon had prepared for an invasion of Iraq through the north of the country, a plan that would involve U.S. troops moving through Southeast Turkey. As Turkey had been a compliant security ally of the United States for decades, the Pentagon had bet on Turkey's agreement to join the invasion as a U.S. partner. However, given Turkey's reluctance to embroil itself in Middle Eastern affairs while it

¹⁰¹ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, "Turkey and the United States," in *The Politics of Modern Turkey, Vol. III*, ed. Ali Carkoglu and William Hale, 193-213 (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 200.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 193.

held open prospects for European membership much of the government and the military establishment had been reluctant to push for such a military operation. The threat in Iraq was not clearly defined according to the Turkish government, army, and civilians.¹⁰³

Therefore, as the Pentagon pushed its plan onto Turkey, the AKP government tried not to get involved in making a clear decision. It thus pushed the government's vote on the issue back until after the National Security Council meeting on 28 February 2003. The government hoped through the meeting that the council would be able to work up the armed forces into action, and the military would then be able to take the blame for the parliamentary decision and, thus, the backlash from the public.¹⁰⁴ The next day when the parliament put the operation to a vote, however, the AKP backbenchers that the party had counted on to pass the vote proved unreliable, and the vote on the operation was put down. Neither the military nor the government wanted to shoulder the blame for a potential military defeat that could erupt the conflict in the region.¹⁰⁵

The U.S. response to Turkey's decision was less than warm. On 7 May 2003, U.S. Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz called out Turkey's decision on CNN Turk, identifying Turkey's vote as a "big, big, mistake" and insisting that may "seemingly do deals" with Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.¹⁰⁶ In April 2003, the *Boston Globe* claimed the following:

...from the outset, the behavior of the Kurds has been the model of an ally, and the behavior of the Turks has been the model of the opposite—unacceptable for a fellow NATO members and borderline suicidal for a new and shaky government facing a mountain of economic woe.¹⁰⁷

Finally, the Hood Incident on 4 July 2003 exploded the sour relationship between Turkey and the United States. After a group of Turkish Special Forces were detained by U.S. soldiers in northern Iraq and forced to sit with hoods over their heads in captivity, the Turkish public exploded in protest. According to Chief of General Staff

¹⁰³ William Hale, *Turkey, US and Iraq* (London: London Middle East Institute at SOAS, 2007), 159.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 112.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 114.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

General Hilmi Özkok, this marked “the biggest crisis of confidence” in U.S.-Turkey relations.¹⁰⁸ Anti-American media within Turkey was exploding in popularity, and the continued criticism of Turkey in the American media did not help this.

It was not until 2005 that the Turkish-U.S. alliance had begun to warm again: when Washington had begun to look at Turkey as the exemplar of Muslim democracy within the U.S.’s “Broader Middle East Initiative,” i.e. the active democratization of the region.¹⁰⁹ However, with one foot in EU political reforms and another boot in maintaining the EU’s military ideas for the Middle East, Turkey chose to largely look to its European neighbors for council throughout 2002-2007 rather than across the Atlantic to its embittered American ally. Iraq had partially set the course for Turkey’s choice of alliances and foreign policy trajectory throughout these five years.

The Acquis and Civil Military Relations: Reforms we know for certain that the EU wants from Turkey

Although there are many specific ambiguities (which will be discussed later in this chapter in regards to civil-military relations) within the EU’s accession criteria for Turkey, there is no doubt about the EU’s desire to see the Turkish Armed Forces under civilian, democratic control. In the EU’s 1998 report on Turkey, the first of the so-called Turkey Progress Reports, the EU said the following of the Turkish military:

The lack of civilian control of the army gives cause for concern. This is reflected by the major role played by the army in political life through the National Security Council. A civil, non-military solution must be found to the situation in Southeast Turkey, particularly since many of the violations of civil and political rights observed in the country are connected in one way or another with this issue.¹¹⁰

Although without assessing exactly what it means by “civilian control,” it is obvious that the EU sees the Turkish Armed Forces’ semi-frequent role in domestic politics as problematic. What it analyzes as the military’s greatest political mouthpiece is the

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 126.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 145.

¹¹⁰ As quoted in European Commission, “2002 Regular Report on Turkey’s Progress Toward Accession,” (Brussels, 2002), 15, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2002/tu_en.pdf.

National Security Council. Further, the EU awards primary agency to the military as the leading state actor in the Kurdish conflict.

Greenwood outlines that there are five underlying dimensions of civil-military relations and the EU: military and state, military and executive, role of the legislative, military and domestic security community, military and society at large.¹¹¹ Ultimately, the goal of EU reforms is to increase transparency between the civilian and military sectors, increasing communication and providing for a balance of power in decision making on security matters. The military must be organized around the needs of protecting the civilian rather than preserving the domestic role of the political elite. The military should act for the interest of the greater nation rather than the state that it has traditionally represented. Although this seems clear on the one hand, on the other hand there is no suggested structure by which candidate countries should properly reform their civil-military apparatus. However, it was thus indisputably so, according to both sides, that Turkey would have to reform at least some of its armed forces and security sector in order to comply with the *acquis* and gain acceptance as a member of the European Union.

The 2002 EU-Turkey Progress Report can be seen as a launching point from which the AKP government could begin to see the comments and criticisms that the EU has for Turkey's military apparatus. Military officers are no longer allowed to act as a substitute for a provincial governor in his absence.¹¹² Membership in the National Security Council was successfully amended to include nine civilian members (as opposed to five, previously) and five military members. Additionally, the MGK lifted emergency rule in the Southeast. However, despite the reforms, the EU does not seem pleased with the amount of political weight the opinions of the MGK carries. The report has pointed out the large degree to which the military controls the defense budget; however, it fails to issue a clear judgment on the issue or to suggest any actions.¹¹³ Another cause for concern is the distinction between civil and military courts. In the previous year, the military had tried 358 civilians within its court system

¹¹¹ David Greenwood, "Turkish Civil-Military Relations and the EU: Preparation for Continuing Convergence," in "Governance and the Military: Perspectives for Change in Turkey," ed. Sami Faltas and Sander Jensen, 21-68 (Groningen: The Centre for European Security Studies, 2006), 29-31.

¹¹² European Commission, "2002 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Toward Accession," 20.

¹¹³ It was not until 2003 in a strategy paper and report on *Continued Enlargement* that the EU suggested more specifically that Turkey should reduce the military's control of the defense budget. The report states, "full parliamentary control over military expenditures must be ensured both in terms of approving expenditures and in terms of auditing the budget." See Greenwood "Turkish Civil-Military Relations in the EU," 34.

(predominantly cases of men avoiding military service or insulting soldiers). The most oft-repeated phrase seen throughout the report is “civilian control of the military.” However, the prognosis of this problem is more explicit than any remedy. The EU made perfectly clear that Turkey’s civil-military relations are problematic, but at the same time, it failed to initially offer a further explanation as to how this could be amended.

On the one hand, the EU was weary of the Turkish Armed Forces in the democratization process. On the other hand, the EU wanted the military’s fighting power in their league. It was determined that the EU would need “the TAF in the struggle against terrorism” or “to make up for the EU’s own shortcomings in order to become a global power,” according to some EU officials.¹¹⁴ Although the EU felt that there was much work to be done within the Turkish Armed Forces, this work was ultimately to the advantage of the pre-existing European Union members whose militaries had been shrinking and undeniably weakening over the past several decades.

The EU and the AKP

After signing the accession agreement in 1999, the coalition government between ANAP and MHP had begun to draft laws and amendments to fit EU accession criteria; however, this process and successful implementation had been much delayed due to the MHP’s conflicting desire to preserve the “national interest.”¹¹⁵ In contrast, as soon as the AKP was elected into parliament Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, at that time the unofficial party leader of the AKP, jet off on a tour across European capitals in order to lobby for Turkey’s place in the EU. Contrary to domestic party tradition, the AKP was the first conservative, Islamic-based party to be openly pro-EU. The AKP realized that the European Union had the potential to ensure economic prosperity, democracy, and religious freedom¹¹⁶: three principles that it knew would ensure them electoral success. After all, the EU’s approval rating from 2003 to 2005 stood firmly at around 70%.¹¹⁷ Likewise, the European Union realized that the AKP not only offered a powerful armed

¹¹⁴ Nuran Yildiz, “The Representation of the Turkish Armed Forces in the Press during Turkey’s EU Membership Process: The Case of the 2 November 2004 Press Briefing,” *Ankara Avrupa Calismalari Dergisi* 9, no.1 (2010): 172.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

¹¹⁷ Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, *Rising Tide*, 123.

force against the rise of Islamic terrorism after September 11th but also a powerful ideological example of moderate Islamic democracy that it hoped would help to promote stability amongst other Muslim nations across the Middle East¹¹⁸—although, in light of its secular military rival, the AKP knew it would have to be careful in framing its Islamic powers. After missing the last two major EU enlargements in the 1970s and 1990s due to its relative political and economic instability,¹¹⁹ Turkey could not afford to miss another opportunity such as this. Thus, the AKP charged forward ready to take on whatever reforms the EU suggested.

Between 2002 and 2004, the Turkish government implemented eight EU harmonization packages that fundamentally changed the nature of the relationship between the military, civilians, and politicians. Perhaps most importantly, the two amendments passed in July and August 2003 in conjunction with the Seventh Harmonization Package changed the balance between civilian and military power in the National Security Council in favor of civilian supremacy.¹²⁰ Not only was the ratio of military to civilians reversed but also the frequency of meetings was decreased to once every two months. Further, the National Security Council's decision-making capability was downgraded from being an almost autonomous institution to a sheer "advisory board," which would be headed by a civilian Secretary General.¹²¹ Additionally, the operation of defense expenditures by the Court of Accounts was altered by this package. According to Cizre, the transparency that this package had inspired had opened up a whole new prospectus for military and civil society. A new public debate on the role of the military and democracy, much like what had taken place within European democracies after the Cold War, was now opening up within Turkish civil groups and public forums of debate and discussion.¹²² Although the AKP did not often participate in such debates for fear of confrontation, it was certainly pleased by such a civilian-led shift.

¹¹⁸ Umit Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Umit Cizre, 132-171 (Oxon: Routledge, 2008), 134.

¹¹⁹ Ziya Onis, "Turkey, Europe, and Paradoxes of Identity: Perspectives on the international context of democratization," in *The Politics of Modern Turkey, Volume IV*, edited by Ali Carkoglu and William Hale, 24-48 (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2008), 44.

¹²⁰ Natalie Tocci, "Europeanization in Turkey: Trigger or anchor for reform," in *The Politics of Modern Turkey, Volume IV*, edited by Ali Carkoglu and William Hale, 70-82 (Oxon/New York: Routledge, 2008), 71.

¹²¹ William Hale and Ergun Ozbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 87.

¹²² Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 139.

Since 2003, the AKP has been talking about constitutional change in order to not only meet its own national needs for social and legal change but also to meet the needs of the EU accession requirements, also known as the *acquis commentaire*. Prime Minister Abdullah Gül drew a clear line between this possible reform and the EU in his 23 November address to Parliament:

We are going to prepare a new constitution, which will promote freedom and participation [of all members of society] to replace the one that is now in force and constrains our country. It will conform to international standards, first of all those of the EU. Holding individual rights and freedoms as superior principles and being based on pluralist and participatory democracy, it will convey the idea of a state built on democracy and rule of law.¹²³

The AKP jumped into the political scene determined to identify itself with the EU, thereby cementing its image with the idea of freedom and rule of law in Turkey. The AKP was vehemently pushing for a positive, pro-EU identity that would “dispel fears” it would rule Turkey under Islamic laws.¹²⁴ Rather, the AKP wished to be seen as a moderate, conservative party that the public and the military could trust.

The AKP’s commitment to Turkey’s EU membership was the most legitimate path by which the party could simultaneously fulfill its commitment to its moderate, center-right values.¹²⁵ Seeing as the AK Party’s unofficial leader was still barred from politics in 2002 after reciting Islamic poems in public and being implicated in the 28 February 1997 process, the AKP capitalized on its pro-EU sentiment in order to fend off domestic secularists’ accusations that the party was acting contrary to the Kemalist state interest. Although the AKP was ultimately pushing for a weaker military, it realized that it first had to take into account the military’s sensibilities and appease its power until it could fight it.¹²⁶

Finally, as the 14 July 2004 harmonization package was passed, the curtailing of civilian-military relations by the AKP seemed to be on track with the EU *acquis*. The Chief of the General Staff was no longer permitted to select candidates for the boards of YÖK (Board of Higher Education) and RTÜK (Radio and Television Advisory

¹²³ As quoted in Avci, “Turkish Political Parties and EU Discourse,” 14.

¹²⁴ Cizre, “The Justice and Development Party and the Military,” 134.

¹²⁵ Tocci, “Europeanization in Turkey,” 78.

¹²⁶ Greenwood, “Turkish Civil-Military Relations and the EU,” 41.

Board).¹²⁷ The State Security Court, which had been criticized for separating the trials of military and civilians, had been dissolved by a constitutional amendment previously in May.

By the time of issue of the 2004 EU-Turkey Progress Report, Turkey's civil-military relations had reached a status of praise rather than of criticism as it had received over the previous six years of reports. The report appraises Turkey as having changed so that, "the government has increasingly asserted its control over the military." Although this was a positive sign for the civilianization process, the EU made sure that Turkey still knew that it had some way to go: "The process of aligning civil-military relations with EU practice is *underway*; nevertheless, the armed forces in Turkey continue to exercise influence through... informal mechanisms."¹²⁸ The years prior to 2004 had certainly laid the foundation for a road to be paved between the EU and Turkey; however, this road was not fully laid quite yet. Unfortunately, after the opening of accession negotiations in 2005, the building of this democratic pathway just got harder. As Jenkins emphasizes, the AKP had failed to realize that the road ahead to EU membership was a two-lane road: "The criticisms (after 2004, Cyprus, and being pressed to extend the CU to them now) highlighted the failure of the AKP leadership to understand that meeting EU standards meant more than merely passing legislation; and, with their attention focused on the potential benefits of Turkey entering the EU, they appeared unable to understand [the] extent to which accession would also bring the EU into Turkey."¹²⁹

The Military and the EU: Historical Longing, Modern Hesitations

The imposition of EU-related reforms put the military in an increasingly difficult place. On the one hand, civilian supremacy over the military was a necessary requirement for EU acceptance, a *sine qua non*.¹³⁰ The military, with its traditional platform of modernization through Westernization, could not disagree with a Turkish-EU alliance. The military could not prevent its country from achieving the very goal

¹²⁷ Gareth Jenkins, *Political Islam in Turkey: Running West, Heading East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 174.

¹²⁸ As quoted in Greenwood, "Turkish Civil-Military Relations and the EU," 35.

¹²⁹ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 174.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

that Atatürk would have (theoretically) striven to achieve. Further, the majority of the population supported Turkey's potential accession to the EU.¹³¹ Going against popular opinion and thus democracy would have spelled disaster for the military.

On the other hand, the decision to begin accession into the European Union was an ideological turning point for the military. Within the 1982 Constitution, the military was still the vanguard of the Turkish state, both in internal and external matters. By complying with the EU's request to disengage with politics, the military informally compromised its symbolic power over the state and civilians in order to pursue the path of Western democracy rather than stabilizing its balance of power within the Turkish state. By disengaging, the military put faith and credit into the EU and the civilian government's control over state institutions, signifying to the civilian realm that it was free to do the same. As the military began to cede some of its authority in favor of EU negotiations, the balance of power began to shift in Turkey. The military accepted that it would have to publicly cede some of its power in order to survive in the new, modern globalized world, united with the European Union, even if this was not what it had thought or hoped EU membership would entail.

This is not the first time that the military has compromised part of its strict vision of Kemalism. In the 1980s, the rise of neoliberal, privatized, international economic policies present a clear affront to the Kemalist statist economy. However, due to the pressure of both the international economic community to conform and the domestic collapse of the economy, the military saw the inevitable failure of any efforts to prevent the economic changes and quietly stepped aside.¹³² Therefore, we must keep in mind that this cession of military power is not unprecedented in the Turkish Armed Forces. Despite the military's flagrant flexing of its might throughout the 20th century, the military is a victim to changing social circumstances and global ideologies, too.

However, as Karpat has asserted that the state began to see alternative paths to modernity aside from the West in the 1980s, sections of the military also saw the opportunities of these paths in the early 2000s. Two opinions arose among the military in opposition to the pro-EU faction: Atlanticists and Eurasianists. Atlanticists, who were mostly educated in the United States, saw the EU as the second coming of Sevres, trying to lure Turkey into membership in order to tear it apart.¹³³ A larger alliance with

¹³¹ Ibid., 186.

¹³² Hale, *Turkish Politics and the Military*, 289.

trans-Atlantic partners would serve the military best. In contrast, Eurasianists sought to pursue Turkey's interests in its own region, working with Russia, Iran, and Israel.¹³⁴ This faction came into the public eye after speeches by Russian and Iranian leaders were published on the General Staff's website. Overall, the military harbored a number of Euro-skeptics, even amongst the General Staff. However, as it was perceived that European membership was an endpoint of Atatürk's dream, the military as a monolithic entity largely espoused pro-European sympathies. Therefore, the military could not deny the EU's call for a more democratic civil-military relation. The military would present itself as a full-bodied, pro-EU front despite any alleged inconsistencies amongst its generals' opinions.¹³⁵

Further, since the consolidation of the military after the 1971 intervention, the chief of the general staff is largely regarded as the mouthpiece for the military's opinion. Thus, the fact that the Chief of General Staff from 2002-2006, Hilmi Özkök, as well as his predecessor General Yaşar Büyükanıt (2006-2008) and his predecessor deputy chief of staff Ilker Başbuğ (2008-2010), were all oriented toward Europe is in part a factor as to why the military choose to pursue a path toward EU membership.

In 2005, Özkök praised Turkey's alignment with EU reforms while maintaining Turkey's sense of pride that the EU and Turkey are both equal partners in the membership negotiations:

The EU is a great commercial, economic and military partner of Turkey. As a nation who regards the Western values as coinciding with ours, we have always wanted to be with them and act in accordance with the same values from the beginning. Turkey's interest lies in being a full member of this Union. However, it is really inappropriate to consider the membership as a favour done by the EU to us.¹³⁶

¹³³ Rainer Hermann, *Where is Turkey Headed?: Cultural Battles in Turkey* (New York: Blue Dome Press, 2014), 43.

¹³⁴ Then Secretary-General of the MGK, General Tuncer Kılınc, argued in 2003, "Turkey should perhaps seek other alignments with such countries as Iran and Russia." See Metin Heper, "The EU, the Turkish Military," 39.

¹³⁵ Although there is much evidence that there were differences amongst general opinion in the military, General Ozkok adamantly went to great lengths to deny this fact and present the military as a cohesive front. On 28 May 2003, he reported to the newspaper *Milliyet*, "Why should there be conflict of opinion within the military? Other generals know the views of the chief of staff. It is also clear who can disclose those views: the chief of staff himself, the deputy chief of staff, and the secretary-general of the office of the chief of staff, and, concerning their own forces, the commanders of the army, navy, air force, and gendarmerie." Quoted in Metin Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish Military and Democracy," *South European Society and Politics* 10, no. 1 (2005): 40.

¹³⁶ Bastiaan Konijnenbelt, "The Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: An Analysis of Statements Made by the Turkish General Staff," in "Governance and the Military: Perspectives for Change in Turkey," ed. Sami Faltas and Sander Jensen, 155-189 (Groningen: The Centre for European Security Studies, 2006), 171.

This position reflects an unabashed pro-EU sentiment; however, it qualifies that Turkey would not be taken advantage of. Büyükanıt was perhaps the most pro-EU officer amongst the leadership. In 2003 he declared the military's fundamental alliance with the EU, stating that the Turkish Armed Forces was "an unyielding defender of ... a secular and democratic state. This fundamental stance of the military is in full concert with the EU worldview."¹³⁷ However, before taking this as the sole opinion of the officer corps, Başbuğ supplies us with a more balanced perspective, echoing Özkök's opinion:

...we see membership to the EU as an important instrument that will help us take Turkey beyond the level of modern civilizations, a target that was set by Great Leader Atatürk... We believe in the importance of firmly upholding our national interests in the negotiation process with the EU. It should not be forgotten that just as the EU will bring us benefits, Turkey's membership will also pave the way for the EU to become a global power.¹³⁸

This statement is probably closer in line with what the general ranks and officers felt with regards to the EU. Rather than the EU thinking that it had done Turkey a favor by granting it candidacy, the Turkish army felt that it was performing an equal favor to the EU by supplying it with supreme military power. Such rhetoric was optimistic as opposed to those who felt that the EU sought to tear the Turkish Armed Forces apart. Although it may seem minor, such varieties in the army's attitude toward the EU show that differences were arising between the military opinion as it struggled to remain optimistic in light of EU conjectures.¹³⁹ On the one hand, EU membership was a tribute to Atatürk. On the other, Başbuğ's portrayal of the Turkish Armed Forces made the military feel proud—to them, EU membership was a consequence of the Turkish Armed Forces great role in battle, allowing Turkey to flourish into the nation that it has made itself into today. Such nationalist rhetoric in the Turkey-EU-military discourse assured the military as a whole, as well as the civilian sector in support of the military, that the EU would not mean the end of its external and internal powers. However, it was clear that the military was nonetheless moving toward Europe; and according to some analyses, the military itself (particularly Özkök) had come to the conclusion that

¹³⁷ Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish Military," 40.

¹³⁸ Konijnenbelt, "The Role of the Military," 171.

¹³⁹ Tocci, "Europeanization in Turkey," 80.

military interventions into politics could no longer (or never did) stabilize Turkey's democracy. It was time to "give politics a chance."¹⁴⁰

After four interventions, the leadership of the military seemed finally willing to trust not only an external democratic power but also the power of its own people. Although weary, the EU bestowed a small portion of its de facto power back to the people, who the military had previously thought incapable of protecting the country from political Islam and Kurdish separatism.¹⁴¹ The EU may have opened a period of military trust in civilians; however, especially in hindsight of the 2007 e-memorandum, there is no way to accurately gauge the military's perceived trust in civil society. From another perspective, the military's opening up to the EU could have been a case of the military acting out of its "survival instinct": In order to avoid criticism, the military was willing to go along with changes in civil-military relations in order to maintain its international status quo and respect of the citizenry.¹⁴² However, as EU reforms stalled after the opening of accession talks in October 2005, both the concept of survival and civilian will began to appear null as Turkey-EU relations reached a stalemate.

Civil-Military Relations: Common Standards or Exceptional Practice? Facing civil-military relations after the opening of accession negotiations

As quickly as the pro-EU tide came to Turkey, as quickly as it went. Turkey-EU relations suffered a detrimental setback when in 2004 the Republic of Cyprus, still divided from its northern Turkish half, was granted EU membership. In 2005, when Angel Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy were elected Chancellor of Germany and President of France, respectively, the leaders suggested that Turkey negotiate for a "privileged partnership" rather than a full membership.¹⁴³ Further, immediately after the 3 October 2005 opening of accession negotiations, the EU added the stipulation that this move toward negotiations was "no guarantee of eventual membership." No other potential members had been directly warned of any such condition before.¹⁴⁴ The following year

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 80.

¹⁴¹ Heper, "The European Union, the Turkish Military," 37.

¹⁴² Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 141.

¹⁴³ Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, *Rising Tide*, 125.

¹⁴⁴ Jenkins, *Political Islam*, 175.

as tensions with the Republic of Cyprus continued to ignite and the EU continued to demand Turkey open its relations with the island, Turkey did not budge from its position, and the EU closed eight of the thirty-five chapters of the accession process on 11 December 2006. Throughout these trials, the EU's Turkey rhetoric became increasingly confusing and vague, leading to hostility and exposing the ambiguity (and alleged hypocrisy) in the EU's expectations for Turkey. Following such, Turkey, politicians, military, and civilians alike, entered into a phase of Euro-skepticism in which reform and initiative weakened. However, what we will see largely in the next chapters is that despite this weakening and the heightening of the conflict between the military and the AKP, the democratic values that the EU represented were still looked upon favorably by the public, even if the Union itself was not. The international miscommunications between governments and militaries, however, were detrimental to the public's trust in domestic institutions to fulfill such qualities vis-à-vis EU reforms anymore.

In 2005, Erdoğan made the audacious claim that "We have done everything related to the Copenhagen political criteria."¹⁴⁵ Later that year, Defense Minister Gönül declared that civil-military relations were "off the agenda" as he determined that they were not part of the *acquis*. On the one hand, from the EU's perspective, after only approximately five years of EU-focused policies and Turkey's clear failure to implement all of the changes that the EU had demanded of Turkey's civil military relations, how could Turkey determine these two statements? On the other hand, from Turkey's perspective, how could Turkey precisely determine what the EU was thinking when from one year (2005) Turkey's civil-military relations have made "good progress," and then to the next (2006) Turkey's civil-military relations have made "limited progress" since 2002? Further, when EU president Romano Prodi visited Turkey in 2004 and praised Erdoğan for his rapid reforms, how should politicians have reacted when other European leaders then question Turkey's very entrance?¹⁴⁶

As mentioned above, there are often many problems in defining the precise conditions of the EU *acquis*. For instance, Natalie Tocci emphasizes this by posing the following fundamental questions that the EU *acquis* fails to quantitatively answer: "When are human rights respected? When is a country fully democratic? Human rights

¹⁴⁵ Greenwood, "Turkish Civil-Military Relations," 62.

¹⁴⁶ Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the military," 144.

violations and features of undemocratic practice, racism and xenophobia exist within the EU as well as outside it.”¹⁴⁷ So, for our purpose of analysis, it should be asked here: when does the balance between civil and military relations become democratic? Further, if each EU member state has organized their military differently, then which countries should we use as Turkey’s model? This is a fundamental question that the EU could not and cannot entirely answer.

There was and still is a common misconception between the EU and Turkey, both between the governments and their citizens. On the one hand, the army is and has been for decades a deeply engrained cultural force in Turkey that is much beloved and trusted across region, class, and political party.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, after the Cold War the concept of European armies changed. Countries no longer needing protection from the neighboring communist threat, most armies were downsized and professionalized. Therefore, the European understanding of the military and civil-military relations is much different than the Turkish understanding, which, unlike most of Europe, continued to experience instability in its neighborhood and in its southeastern region. In light of this, it must then be asked: should Turkey be awarded special circumstances for the conditions of its civil-military relations according to its unique status? Or should the EU continue, as some Turkish officials have deemed, to make Turkey a “target for excessive reforms” in order to negate the military’s strong cultural and historic influence?¹⁴⁹

As we have noted in the examples above, Turkey’s civil-military relations, as well as a number of other *acquis* requirements, are analyzed vis-à-vis the Turkey-EU Progress Reports every year, which are largely vague and fail to provide concrete suggestions for reform. During the reform years from 2002-2004, the AKP-implemented reforms had seemed to appease Turkey’s European critics. But in the years following, the ill-constructed criticism of the EU had failed to create either an atmosphere in which the AKP felt it could implement reforms over the military power or a trust between the military and the government to allow such reforms. In viewing these opinions and criticism, the EU failed to differentiate between what it viewed as “desirable” versus “essential” reforms.¹⁵⁰ Although the military complied with the

¹⁴⁷ Tocci, “Europeanization in Turkey,” 77.

¹⁴⁸ Carkoglu and Kalaycioglu, *Rising Tide*, 12.

¹⁴⁹ Greenwood, “Turkish Civil-Military Relations,” 44.

majority of the EU's reform processes, the military resisted reforms that allowed for legislative or government oversight of the military or restricted the military's interventions.¹⁵¹ The AKP did not push for either of these two points to be seen through domestically, however, and the EU issued a hard reprobate to these issues in its 2005 progress report. The report declared, "statements by the military should only concern military, defence, and security matters and should only be made under the authority of the government... and the civilian authorities should fully exercise their supervisory functions, in particular as regards the formation of the national security strategy and its implementation."¹⁵² Although the role of coups had been questioned before in Turkish society, what was and was not to remain within the military's national dialogue was puzzling. Thus, without a clear path of reform, the conflict between the AKP and the military remained largely unchecked by any external or internal power from 2005-2007. The opinion of the EU served as more of an advisory board for democracy rather than inspiring any hope that one day the EU would be the future executive of Turkey's international identity.

Conclusion

Although we may conclude that in 2007 the military's power was still largely constituted in its own sphere rather than the civilian sphere, even despite the EU-inspired reforms from 2002-2004,¹⁵³ the reforms in the MGK, the structure of military courts, and the change in the military budget and auditing process all indisputably had a significant impact on the military's domestic operations. Certainly EU-led reforms did impact the military's domestic power channels although the military did not completely retreat to the barracks upon the implementation of such laws and amendments. On the one hand, the implementation of some EU-inspired reforms changed the military's actual power within the state apparatus, specifically the legitimate influence of the National Security Council over matters of state security and defense. And further, the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹⁵¹ Hale and Ozbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism*, 88.

¹⁵² Ibid., 88; See also European Commission, "Turkey: 2005 Progress Report," (Brussels, 2005), http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/archives/pdf/key_documents/2005/package/sec_1426_final_progress_report_tr_en.pdf.

¹⁵³ Yaprak Gursoy, "The Impact of EU-Driven Reforms on the Autonomy of the Turkish Military on the Political Autonomy of the Turkish Military," *South European Society and Politics* 16, no.2 (2011): 293-308.

new civilian notion, which was precipitated by the influence of the EU's post-Cold War standards, of what a military should look like within a democratic state had significantly changed Turkey as the EU had inspired citizens' idea of democracy to change.¹⁵⁴

On the other hand, as we will largely see in the next chapter, EU reforms did not stint the military's political commentary and ultimately its intervention once times got tough for Turkey-EU relations. Once Turkey had determined that accession talks were no longer a guarantee of membership, the auspice of the EU did not determine any provision restricting the military's rhetorical ire against the AKP government. Merely, the EU "condemned" the military apparatus rather than offering solutions or suggestions. It was rather that the EU stood by "watching" Turkey's decisions and movements from afar in 2006-2007 to observe the direction in which the Turkish military would take.¹⁵⁵ However, it would have been more accurate at this time to observe the direction in which the civilian government would take after such an intervention, since it was the civilian government that had begun to embezzle all of the undemocratic aspects of the military once it felt that the Turkish Armed Forces could be controlled and its political power destroyed. It was not enough for the AKP to continue using EU reforms as a check against the military. But rather, as the military had sought to push the government completely from power, the government felt that it should treat the military likewise. After all, there was nothing in the EU acquis guarding the military from the politicians.

¹⁵⁴ Heper, "The EU and the Turkish Military," discusses the change from "rational" to "ideational" democracy as being a fundamental for civilians to comprehend how traditional institutions that are deemed "undemocratic" by the EU came to be view differently by the public in the early 2000s.

¹⁵⁵ "Turkey Faces Military Crisis," *The Guardian*, April 29, 2007, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/apr/29/turkey.eu>.

Chapter 3

SECULARISM ISN'T AS IT USED TO BE: KEMALIST NOSTALGIA AND POST-TURKISH-ISLAMIC SYNTHESIS REALITIES

It seems that Kemalist secularism had packed up and left Turkey after the military had openly supported the rise of Islam as a force to combat leftists, communists, socialists, and separatists throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, after the rise of the Welfare Party in the late '90s and the Islamic-based AKP coming to power on a landslide victory in 2002 to form a single-party government, the military suddenly called back Kemalism on a *tour du force*. The military had realized that the influence of political and cultural Islam had grown outside of its control, threatening a shift in the entire status quo of the state and the balance of power therein. Thus, it was the military's new mission and "duty" to the republic to suppress such a shift in order to protect not only its own power but also the foundations of the state, mostly meaning secularism. Further, the military was determined to make known that it was still in control of the politicians, whose "sin of subverting the system"¹⁵⁶ had not been forgiven despite two decades of civilian rule after 1980. The 1997 "soft coup" delivered the message that although the military had tolerated and even supported the rise of Islam, it would never allow religion to unseat the power of the Turkish Armed Forces at the state center. Although Islam may have been de facto the state ideology for the past two decades while Kemalism sat back quietly inside the scope of the constitution, the military would not allow Islamic politicians themselves to completely defile the secular Kemalist state—even though the military had already defiled secularism enough by its own right. No matter the circumstances, politicians could not simply be allowed to rule over the military, especially by capitalizing on the popularity of the Islamic ideology and besmirching state secularism. Thus, throughout the late '90s and early 2000s the

¹⁵⁶ Evin, "Changing Patterns," 208.

military embarked upon a strategy to toss away its past and discard the ideology that it had once helped to create.

This chapter will examine the period from 2002-2007 in which the military employs secular rhetoric in an attempt to battle the growing power of the AKP's electoral success and Islamic base. There are essentially two rounds of military movements against the AKP, first under Chief of General Staff General Hilmi Özkök and second under Chief of General Staff General Yaşar Büyükanıt. The first round is marked by a more covert yet passive-aggressive movement of “symbols and shadow play,”¹⁵⁷ which we have referred to previously. While acquiescing to the government's EU-based reforms, the military simultaneously stomped its boots at any sign of anti-secularist movements by the government—or rather at the AKP minister's wives who chose to wear the Islamic headscarf—and issued its fair share of both private and public warnings to Erdoğan, Gül, and other leading ministers. More often than not, the AKP backed down from these threats as it foremost sought to prove to the military and the rest of the world that it could maintain its Islamic roots while building democracy as the West sees it.¹⁵⁸ Its constant approval of legislation curtailing the power of the military over civilians was ammunition enough for the AKP to keep up its quiet fight against the Turkish Armed Forces while maintaining face and avoiding confrontation at the same time. The second round, Büyükanıt's period as Chief of General Staff, was immediately marked by a more intensive and pointed rhetoric strongly insinuating the government's fault for betraying Turkish secularism. Büyükanıt's verbose remarks are akin to a proverbial war siren going off, calling back an antiquated, defensive, militant version of Kemalism in order to fight the villainous Islamic threat of the AKP. All tolerance for Islamic sympathies in politics over the last two decades was finished as the military pulled out its blazing gun of secularism in opposition to a possible AKP president.

What we see in the end of this second round after five years of battle is the military's final front against the AKP before its ultimate demise in the Ergenekon trials: the 27 April 2007 e-memorandum, which defines Abdullah Gül's run for the presidency as a blatant violation of the Turkish secular state. Cizre marks this moment in the AKP-military conflict as a decisive shift from a “war of words” to an “all out war” in which

¹⁵⁷ Reference to Jenkins text, “Symbols and Shadow Play.”

¹⁵⁸ Cizre, “The Justice and Development Party and the Military,” 144.

the AKP would now need to develop a “realistic, constructive, and democratic strategy” in order to defeat the military once and for all.¹⁵⁹ What we seen on the part of the AKP, however, is a whole new counter front following the solidification of its presidential power in the election of Abdullah Gül on 28 August 2007.

Kemalist devotion and double crossing: The point at which the politicians can claim secularism

Indeed, it may seem peculiar that the institution that had been the architect of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis could ever highly adore the idea of a secular state. But throughout the 1980s and ‘90s, secularism remained part and parcel to the Kemalist education of the soldier, and as Jenkins aptly puts, “For the TGS, Kemalism is not an ideological coloring into the Turkish state; it is an essence.”¹⁶⁰ However, in light of the circumstances post-1980, rather than heed Atatürk’s strict, almost anti-religious definition of secularism, the military had reinvented and created a new secularism to serve the needs of the new Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Thus, it is hard to say that secularism was *not* a large part of the military’s ideology throughout the ‘80s and ‘90s, but for much of this period, secularism was no longer used as a foil against religion.

After the threat of the left receded in the 1990s, the military had begun to purge those among the ranks who were deemed to be too Islamic or too pious.¹⁶¹ The military thought it had become a master of controlling religion in its own realm. But outside of this scope, the military had, both by its own terms and by accident, lost control of the politicians’ definition of secularism. How much Islamic society could *be* was largely a measurement gauged by the military; but, as it had continued to extend this measure throughout the ‘90s, the military had found that Islam had gradually expanded beyond its control by the end of the decade. The military realized that it could no longer simply pay lip service to Kemalism but it must embody it in action.

Politicians who made anti-Kemalist remarks, such as the young Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in the early 1990s shouting, “There is no room for Kemalism or any other

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 161.

¹⁶⁰ Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play,” 185-186; For more on soldiers’ education and Kemalism, see also Mehmet Ali Birand, *Shirts of Steel* (New York: IB Tauris, 1991), 52-67.

¹⁶¹ Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play,” 195.

official ideology in Turkey's future,"¹⁶² would eventually be punished through the 28 February Process in 1997. However, in 2001 these same politicians came back in disguise under the center-right outfit of the AKP. This time, Erdoğan's party program rang to a different tune: "Our party considers religion as one of the most important institutions of humanity, and secularism as a pre-requisite of democracy, and an assurance of the freedom of religion and conscience."¹⁶³

In contrast to the restrictions of the old secularism, the AKP's definition was inclusive of the rising conservative class of Turks, as well as open to other cadres of society, religious and non-religious. The AKP program definition of secularism stated the following:

[a] principle which allows people of all religions, and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organize their lives along these lines. From this point of view, secularism is a principle of freedom and social peace... Our Party regards Atatürk's principles and reforms as the most important vehicle for raising the Turkish public above the level of contemporary civilization and sees this as an element of social peace.¹⁶⁴

In turn, however, the military rejected this use of secularism that it could not control. The military could not face the AKP's latter comments, which were a brazen affront to the Turkish Armed Forces as an institution and the republic's history:

[The AKP] rejects the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion.... [The party] considers the attitudes and practices which disturb pious people, and which discriminate them [*sic*] due to their religious lives and preferences, as anti-democratic and in contradiction to human rights and freedoms. On the other hand, it is also unacceptable to make use of religion for political, economic and other interests, or to put pressure on people who think and live differently by using religion.¹⁶⁵

Thus, the battle over secularism between the military and the AKP touched off from the party's inception. For almost 80 years, the military had claimed secularism as its own. Although it had failed to nurture and care for it throughout the 1980s and 1990s—

¹⁶² Ibid., 188.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 188.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 189.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 189.

instead giving birth to its bastard and then putting it up for sale to the highest earning green capital businessman—the military’s affinity for the principle was second to none. It would not be duped by the AKP’s peripheral, Islamically rooted definition. The military had taken this as both a challenge and a threat to its very existence. Employing its traditional secular allies, the presidency, the judiciary, and top bureaucrats, the military had prepared itself for battle as the AKP took office.

Round 1: Özkök and “Symbols and shadow play”

General Hilmi Özkök ascended to the title Chief of General Staff on 28 August 2002, just months before the AKP swept the general elections that same year. Özkök was known for being mild-mannered, a secularist but a pious Muslim who was “personally very devout.” Perhaps, too, we could say he was more forgiving—as it was perceived that he was more keen than past chiefs of the general staff to try to reconcile the Islamically-rooted past of the AKP.¹⁶⁶ As we have seen of his personality already in regards to his involvement with the EU, he was more at ease with the newly elected AKP than most of his generals; he was willing to accept that the election of the AKP was “the will of our nation.”¹⁶⁷ He was known for questioning past coup plots and the army’s role in politics. On the one hand, a great part of the Özkök era, which spanned from 2002-2006, is marked by passivity in regards to allowing the AKP to implement EU reforms within the military. On the other hand, this passivity did not entirely render Özkök as the AKP’s doormat. While Özkök may have softened relations between the military and the AKP in many other respects, his secularist rhetoric was frequently on par with the pre-1980s anti-religious defense of secularism. Özkök, however, was not quite as bound to the hard-line rhetoric of Kemalism that other generals had subscribed to. As Heper has encapsulated the general, “For Özkök took Atatürkism—the guiding light of the Turkish military—as a worldview open to change and not as an ideology, i.e. a closed system of thought.”¹⁶⁸

Özkök’s first written note from the General Staff to the AKP ensured the new government that the military would “protect the Republic against every kind of threat,

¹⁶⁶ Jenkins, “Political Islam,” 170.

¹⁶⁷ Hale and Ozbudun, “Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism,” 83.

¹⁶⁸ Metin Heper, “The Justice and Development Party Government and the Military in Turkey,” *Turkey Studies* 6, no. 2 (2005): 217.

particularly fundamentalism and separatism.”¹⁶⁹ However, Özkök recognized that, in actuality, the military could do little to alter the government following the 2002 parliamentary elections given Turkey’s EU bid and, concomitantly, its need to keep the civilian regime in power. Further, a suitable political alternative to the AKP was lacking at the time.¹⁷⁰ Thus, throughout Özkök’s tenure, the military continued to issue a series of increasingly subtle warnings to the AKP government in order to show their disapproval of the party’s actions—resulting in an era of passive aggression rather than an era of forthright defiance and conflict such as we will see in Büyükanıt’s tenure.

Following the ascension of the AKP into the parliament, the military struck its first chord of fear into the AKP leadership after parliamentary speaker Bulent Arınç and his wife, who wears a headscarf, were seen ceremoniously escorting President Sezer to the airport on 28 November 2002. The military walked into Arınç’s office the next day in protest, stood in silence for approximately three minutes, and then left having said not a word. The military had just issued its first “silent warning” to the AKP.¹⁷¹ Arınç had to be reminded that headscarves were forbidden at state functions such as this. Days later, the military’s attention turned toward Prime Minister Abdullah Gül as he was given a list of “Islamic fundamentalists” who were charged with menacing the state. The list was complete with the names of 13,000 civil service workers, 280 private schools, 750 major corporations, 769 associations, 348 charities, and 12 trade unions.¹⁷² The military clearly displayed that Islam was not acceptable in any office of the state.

Even throughout the military’s venture into Islam in the 1980s, the headscarf was still considered *haram* to the secular state. Between Evren and Özal, the headscarf had always been a point of contention that was perceived as “too Islamic” for the state to allow in its educational and state institutions. Thus, the military continued to stand obstinately against the headscarf and the wives of the AKP MPs who wore it. There was no compromise from the military’s point of view. The next year on 23 April 2003, Arınç and his wife hosted a state ceremony marking the 83rd parliament, now chaired by the new prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Because of Arınç’s wife’s headscarf, the military, the opposition, and notable bureaucrats refused to attend the reception,

¹⁶⁹ Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play,” 194.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 185.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 170; See also Hale and Ozbudun, “Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism,” 85.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 170.

despite the fact that the military had attended all 83 prior ceremonies.¹⁷³ Eventually Arınç took his wife's name off the invitations in order to quell the tension; and his wife, as well as the covered wives of other AKP ministers such as Erdoğan and Gül, quit attending state events. Thus, it was no surprise when President Sezer chose not to invite these ministers' wives to the presidential Republic Day event on 29 October 2003.¹⁷⁴ Hale and Özbudun point out that Erdoğan and his wife were essentially prohibited from entering Turkey's presidential palace, meanwhile, foreign dignitaries such as the Bushes accepted the prime minister and his wife into the White House.¹⁷⁵

Eventually, the AKP would grow bold enough to try to remove the ban on the headscarf in universities. Hayrünnisa Gül, the prime minister's wife, would even go so far as to take the state to the European Court of Human Rights.¹⁷⁶ But for every move the AKP would make toward its goal, the military would issue another reaction. Finally, in the heat of the debate, this issue was temporarily put to rest first by the Minister of Justice, Cemil Çicek, who struck down the AKP's proposed change in the Penal Code, causing the AKP to retreat. This reform would have allowed students with headscarves to enter university campuses, criminalizing anyone who would prohibit their entrance.¹⁷⁷ Then, to add insult to injury for the AKP, the decision of the European Court of Human Rights would keep this issue under wraps for a few more years as the court, on 10 November 2005, ruled to uphold the state's headscarf ban in universities. The court declared that the wearing of the headscarf was a "powerful external symbol" of religion and was therefore not protected by the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion.¹⁷⁸

Such a compromise by the AKP ministers and their covered wives did not stop the General Staff's hostile rhetoric toward the AKP. During the 30 April 2003 National Security Council meeting, the military accused the AKP of encouraging "fundamentalist organizations" of brainwashing the Turkish diaspora in Europe; later, the General Staff had summarized the proceedings of that same meeting to the press as

¹⁷³ Global Security, "2003—Sledgehammer/Ergenekon: Turkish Coup Plots," Accessed July 12, 2015, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/tu-military-coup-2003.htm>.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 198.

¹⁷⁵ Hale and Özbudun, "Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism," 85.

¹⁷⁶ However, after much political pressure, Hayrünnisa would later repeal her case.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁷⁸ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 178.

follows: “[The General Staff] had stressed the importance of meticulously protecting the principle of secularism which is one of the basic characteristics of the state.”¹⁷⁹ The military would not allow for fundamentalist or un-secular rhetoric to infiltrate any offspring component of Turkey, whether it was its people abroad or its conservative women at home.

Although overt shows of pressure such as these were quite significant signs of opposition to the conservative government, some sectors of the military still were upset by Özkök’s relative permissive attitude. Despite Özkök’s position caught between a rock and hard place concerning the reforms and rhetoric he could carry out in light of the impending EU accession, the military was a bit suspicious of some of the general’s other actions. For example, unlike his predecessors Özkök met with Erdoğan privately.¹⁸⁰ Further, Özkök had implemented a number of staff changes early on, signifying a disagreement amongst the establishment. After the resignation of Secretary General of the NSC Tuncer Kılınç in 2003, Özkök remarked, “we should get rid of those who merely copy the past and march on the spot.”¹⁸¹

However, time and again, Özkök proved to have the military’s back and attempted to present a unified face of the military, despite any internal quibbles. After Gül and Arınç first appointed Ramazan Toprak, a former soldier who had been expelled from the army for Islamist activity, as head of Parliamentary Defense Committee and then suggested that those tried in the Supreme Military Court should be allowed to appeal to another court, Özkök personally called out Gül and Arınç for such a move attempting to further divide the institution of the military, arraigning them for “encouraging fundamentalists to penetrate and weaken the Turkish armed forces.”¹⁸² On 9 September 2003, Commander of the Land Forces General Aytaç Yalman had met with university rectors to support the ban on headscarves in campus—a meeting that many had speculated had not been approved by Özkök. Five days later, General Özkök issued a statement in support of Yalman’s action, stating, “It is natural that developments related to the national education system which is of vital importance to Turkey should be followed closely and carefully by the Turkish Armed Forces.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play,” 197.

¹⁸⁰ Jenkins, “Political Islam,” 172.

¹⁸¹ Hale and Ozbudun, “Political Islam,” 82.

¹⁸² Jenkins, “Symbols and Shadow Play,” 195.

Later on 30 December, Yalman publicly condemned AKP Minister Fehmi Hüsrev Kutlu for complaining that he felt like he was in the barracks at parliament as military pictures of Atatürk hung around the room.¹⁸⁴ Despite Yalman's known failure to tell Özkök about his remarks prior to them, Özkök publicly supported Yalman's remarks to show the unity of the army.¹⁸⁵ Despite possible disagreements, Özkök continued to utilize Yalman as a mouthpiece. In a meeting of the Association for Kemalist Thought (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği, ADD), Özkök sent Yalman to fill the entire first row of the audience. The meeting took place to mark the 80th anniversary of the abolition of the caliphate, which sent a clear message to the religious contingent of the AKP.¹⁸⁶

The issue of education continued to remain at large between the military and the AKP as in May 2004 the AKP government finally tried to push through its educational reform package, designed to allow Imam Hatip school graduates into university under the same qualifications as those graduating from state institutions. The military quickly deemed that the AKP's move was "designed to damage the principles of secular education" and issued the following warning: "The views and attitudes of the Turkish Armed Forces toward the Republic's characteristics as a democratic, secular and social state ruled by law are the same today as they were yesterday and shall remain the same tomorrow. No one should have any doubt or misapprehension about the thoughts and attitudes of the Turkish Armed Forces in this regard."¹⁸⁷ However, as the military had permitted the opening of the current number of Imam Hatip schools over the previous two decades, this statement seemed hardly a fitting response to the AKP's *raison d'être* in this regard. Eventually, the reform package was passed in the parliament and then vetoed by Sezer. The parliament had limited time to pass the bill before parliamentary recess and, therefore, did not have the energy to fight once again before the national assembly. Erdoğan acquiesced, stating, "As a government we are not ready to pay the price."¹⁸⁸ After further consideration, the AKP was not ready to challenge the military's authority over education.

¹⁸³ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 173.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

¹⁸⁵ Jenkins, "Symbols and Shadow Play," 198.

¹⁸⁶ However, we should also note that Yalman later left the military establishment in 2004, as well as Commander of the Land Forces Sener Eruygur.

¹⁸⁷ Jenkins, "Symbols and Shadow Play," 200.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

Further, throughout the Özkök era the AKP continued to offend the office of many other secular establishments as it made several appointments of pious but unqualified personnel to government positions. From 2002-2006, President Sezer vetoed more than 250 of the AKP's 1,900 appointments because of alleged "ideologically motivated" activity.¹⁸⁹ For example, in Erzincan, the AKP appointed an imam without any medical training to evaluate all provincial doctors in the region in 2004. Two years later in 2006, the government nominated leading Islamic economist Adnan Büyükdeniz to be the governor of the Central Bank. As Büyükdeniz had had no experience outside of Islamic banking, President Sezer swiftly vetoed the AKP's appointment, opting to appoint Durmuş Yılmaz instead, a reputedly pious Muslim on the Central Bank's board of directors whose wife wore a headscarf.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, later in 2006, the AKP appointed Erdoğan's former head of cultural affairs for the city of Istanbul, Şenol Demiröz, as head of the Turkish Radio and Television network. The AKP was making sure to quickly fill government positions with its own.

Such underhanded moves between the military and the AKP largely cooled between the AKP and the military at the end of Özkök's term. Cizre attributes this to the stalemate in Turkey-EU relations, which struck quite a blow to the AKP's confidence that it could reform civil-military relations.¹⁹¹ However, after the killing of Mustafa Yücel Özbilgin, a member of the council of state who had upheld the restriction of women wearing the headscarf at university, leading judges called on the institution "responsible for protecting secularism" to "do their duty," obviously meaning the military.¹⁹² As the General Staff interpreted it, this was an apparent cry from the leading contingents of the secular establishment for the military to get involved and save the republic from religious menaces.

Changing of the Guard, Round 2: Büyükanıt and the Inflammation of Secularist Rhetoric

¹⁸⁹ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 177.

¹⁹⁰ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 177.

¹⁹¹ Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 157.

¹⁹² Jenkins, "Political Islam," 180.

It was anticipated that General Yaşar Büyükanıt would cause a stir between the AKP and the military, especially in anticipation of the 2007 presidential elections,¹⁹³ and indeed he did. In comparison to Özkök, he was loud and flamboyant, asserting his nationalist and secularist viewpoints in spite of government and even foreign opposition. From the get-go, in his handover ceremony—the first handover ceremony of the General Staff to be broadcast on live television—Büyükanıt made a point to remind the government and public that “the army’s duty [is to protect the] fundamental principles of the republic,” i.e. secularism.¹⁹⁴ Again, the next day in a ceremony to commemorate Victory Day, he made it a point to emphasize the importance of secularism in Turkey as he identified that “fundamentalism” and “separatism” were the two gravest threats to the Turkish state.¹⁹⁵ It was obvious that Büyükanıt, as well as his successor Başbuğ, had come to win the battle between religion and secularism once and for all. As Mehmet Ali Birand wrote in his column following the handover, “They [the General Staff] are preparing for a scenario that entails serious tension.”¹⁹⁶ In this, he was certainly right. However, his continued analysis that “Those who know the two [Büyükanıt and Başbuğ] commanders know they both know force and coercion doesn’t lead to a solution and democracy provides the answer.” In this, he would be proved wrong as mounting pressure did not seem to stop the AKP from nominating one of its own for the presidency, inciting the “General Staff” to pen—or rather, type—what would come to be known as the “e-memorandum” on 27 April 2007.¹⁹⁷

Over the next year, the military would take a short break in its secularist rhetoric as it was preoccupied by the possibility of a cross-border operation into Northern Iraq. However, let us not mistake silence for consent between parties. This was merely a temporary quell in the irreconcilable debate between the AKP and the military. Jenkins determines that the military had felt that it had said its peace after the commanders of the Turkish army, navy, and air force had each individually addressed the dangers of

¹⁹³ Hale and Ozbudun, “Islamism, Democracy and the Liberalism,” 89.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁹⁵ “Büyükanıt: There are two threats, fundamentalism and separatism,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 30, 2006, Accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Buyukanit-there-are-two-threats-fundamentalism-and-separatism.aspx?pageID=438&n=Buyukanit-there-are-two-threats-fundamentalism-and-separatism-2006-08-30>.

¹⁹⁶ Mehmet Ali Birand, “Office of the general staff closes doors until 2010,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 30, 2006, Accessed July 18, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/office-of-the-chief-of-general-staff-closes-doors-until-2010.aspx?pageID=438&n=office-of-the-chief-of-general-staff-closes-doors-until-2010-2006-08-30>.

¹⁹⁷ It was not until 2009 that General Büyükanıt admitted to writing the statement himself.

Islam in September 2006, and then Büyükanıt had insured the Military Academy that it was no one's "yes-man" weeks later in October.¹⁹⁸ The military would stay out of the public eye for several months; meanwhile, Büyükanıt was in Erdoğan's face behind closed doors. However, it was only a matter of time until the presidential election was approaching, originally set for 16 May 2007, and the military would have to give up some airtime on the Iraq issue to once again address its greatest ideological nemesis. The months of quiet had merely proved to be a calm before the storm.

On 12 April 2007, Büyükanıt, filled with the fear that the AKP would either nominate Erdoğan or another Islamically oriented official to the presidency, offered his personal suggestions—or rather, warnings from the General Staff—for whom should be the next president. In the midst of addressing a possible cross-border operation into Iraq, Büyükanıt interrupts to address the ideal character of the future president: "We hope that someone will be elected President who is attached to the basic values of the republic, not just in words but in spirit."¹⁹⁹ Two days later, a wave of protests began across Turkey that would support the military's call for a secular state and rally opinion against the government.

The military had put forward its message—a message that it had thought the AKP had received.²⁰⁰ Erdoğan had taken civil society's concerns into consideration, and he had decided not to run. It was predicted he would put forth a compromise candidate. However, a huge game-changer occurred when Arınç appeared at the prime minister's office, insisting that Erdoğan either put himself or Gül forward as the presidential candidate.²⁰¹ If not, then Arınç threatened to run for president himself—a move that Erdoğan knew would be perceived as a brazen affront to the military and deepen the row between them. Thus, Erdoğan put Gül forward as the presidential nominee—setting off an alarm within the military establishment.

¹⁹⁸ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 181.

¹⁹⁹ Hale and Ozbudun, "Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism," 91. For the full Turkish transcript of this speech, see "12 Nisan 2007 Büyükanıt; "Org. Büyükanıt'ın konuşmasının tam metni" FULL-TEXT," *NTVMSNBC*, April 13, 2007, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://arsiv.ntv.com.tr/news/405466.asp>.

²⁰⁰ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 181.

²⁰¹ "First Army, then Arınç, made Erdoğan change his decision," *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 25, 2007, Accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/first-army-then-Arinc-made-Erdogan-change-his-decision.aspx?pageID=438&n=first-army-then-Arinc-made-Erdogan-change-his-decision-2007-04-25>.

After winning almost two-thirds of the vote in the first round of elections, it became clear that the likelihood of Gül's presidency was high.²⁰² Despite all warnings and threats, the politicians cared not to heed these cautions, pressing the limits of the military and thus provoking their wrath. The next day, the AKP would wake up to one final warning from the military to withdraw Gül as its candidate. The General Staff had posted a flagrant warning on its website the night of the 27th around midnight. Excerpts of the statement are as follows:

The problem that emerged in the presidential election process is focused on arguments over secularism. Turkish Armed Forces are concerned about the recent situation. It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party to those arguments, and absolute defender of secularism. Also, Turkish Armed Forces is definitely opposed to the arguments and negative comments. It will display its attitude and actions openly and clearly whenever it is necessary.²⁰³

The military had issued an ultimatum: secularism or out. The Turkish Armed Forces had incited the climax to the rhetorical battle between the military and the AKP that had been brewing for five years. The military had taken a gamble that it would win this hand, forsaking its "progress" in democracy according to the EU and ignoring public cries against coup. However, such an empty threat written by an anonymous author²⁰⁴ and devoid of any specifics was also devoid of respect. Both the EU and the United States issued criticism of the memorandum, and even deputy leader of the CHP, Mustafa Ozyurek, conceded that the military's plan had "backfired."²⁰⁵ In May, the AKP had called early elections. The military had exhausted all of its traditional allies, and it did not have the support to act on its own terms. The military would have to trust the civilians' will for secularism to battle the AKP in the polls. On 22 July 2007, the AKP won the general elections by a remarkable 46.6 percent, and on 28 August, to no surprise, the parliament had elected Abdullah Gül as the next president of Turkey.

Conclusion

²⁰² Jenkins, "Political Islam," 181.

²⁰³ "Excerpts from Turkish army statement," *BBC*, April 28, 2007, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6602775.stm>.

²⁰⁴ It was not until May 2009 that General Büyükanıt had admitted authoring the note.

²⁰⁵ Hale and Ozbudun, 91.

Although the military's secular retort of the AKP's politics had been strong throughout the five-year period between 2002 and 2007, the military's avowal of secularism could seemingly no longer rile the public to action nor evoke fear amongst religiously conservative politicians. Decades of sheer lip service to the original secularist principle of Kemalism had rendered its use worthless against the military's enemies as the center-right had learned how to manipulate its way around it and appeal to the world as "moderate" Muslims. Further, international and domestic actors that once supported the principle as a tool for stability inside Turkey were instead looking to democracy as the new promise of stability in light of both Turkey's EU bid and their need to keep the nation as an example of "moderate," democratic Islam in the midst of neighboring Islamic terrorist organizations.²⁰⁶

Thus, we see that not only did the face of secularism transform throughout the '80s, '90s, and the early AKP era, but also that the power it brought to the military apparatus, which held together the state center, was quickly eroding. The politicians and the conservative majority, not willing to take heed of this, became a party to the military's downfall. Although there was still much domestic opposition to the AKP and its conservative ideology, the military's failure to address these concerns outside the narrow lens of its traditional secular rhetoric had fundamentally deflated the military's power by picking a fight with the opposition that it was not able to back up. It was no longer the '60s or '70s in which the military could channel Atatürk's principles to magically evoke instantaneous public support and strike fear into the hearts of politicians. Atatürkism, after being beaten and battered during the '80s and '90s, was unrecognizable to those hailing from the previous century, crafted and subverted into something new in order to adapt to the military's post-1980 anti-communist agenda. Thus, when world circumstances had changed, the military, despite its deep-seeded public trust and belief in its capability to defend secularism, had trouble convincing politicians that true Atatürkist secularism was what Turkey most desperately needed. In the eyes of the AKP, Islam was still needed as the antidote to remedy the nation's external and internal battles,²⁰⁷ and it had convinced a large portion of the state that this ideology was so needed as well. State secularism no longer held the power it once did

²⁰⁶ Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military," 144.

²⁰⁷ Jenkins, "Political Islam," 179.

over the politicians, and the military after 2007 slowly realized that it could not depend on its traditional role as the vanguard of the secular state to wield the political power it once had.

What had once worked for the military could no longer survive against a government that would not back down, and without the government's retreat, the military could not psychologically conceive of another strategy in its place. It was as if the military had treated the field of secularism like a literal battlefield in which it would have to conquer or retreat: no alternative, win or loss, black and white. But, over time, it was its own inflexibility that would eventually lead to its political slaughter. The secularist vision of Büyükanıt did not fit the vision of society that civilians had for the new Turkey.



Chapter 4

“NEITHER SHARIA NOR COUP D’ETAT—DEMOCRATIC TURKEY”: CIVILIAN PREFERENCE IN THE TURKISH STATE

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the military had kept its trump card out and high, casually waving it in front of the opposition like a fan on a hot summer’s day. The military flaunted and boasted of it. It was proud, and it was without shame. While it held its other cards up its sleeves or in such closed confinements as the National Security Council room, this card held together the democratic consensus of all the military’s political operations. This card, the trump, was public opinion.

The cliché that the military is the most trusted institution in Turkey still did and does ring true. The Turkish Armed Forces in times of war or in times of peace still garner the utmost respect of the citizenry who have valued its institution and actions. In 2001, Jenkins writes, “The political role of the military in Turkey has grown out of a specifically Turkish historical, social, and cultural context. But the military’s pre-eminent role in Turkish life is not merely a historical hangover... the military and military values still lie at the heart of what it means to be Turkish.”²⁰⁸ The military lies at the heart not only of the civilian body but also of the government. In fact, no legislative or executive body had dared to implement policy contrary to the voice of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) from the 1980 coup until 2001.²⁰⁹ The Turkish army was a savior army, preserving and protecting Turkish democracy from crumbling. Even decades after the 1980 coup, it was still the politicians who the people watched with a wary eye, never fully redeemed for having debased the political system in prior decades. The military carried a certain aura about it, shrouded in mystery, that citizens loved, respected, and looked upon in awe.

²⁰⁸ Jenkins, *Contexts and Circumstances*, 9.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 58.

In 1986,²¹⁰ just four years after the military regime had ended, journalist Mehmet Ali Birand set out to discover the myth and legend of the Turkish Armed Forces—how they train, how they fight, and, most importantly, how they live. Despite warnings that Birand was “on a fool’s errand” or “Turkey was not ready for this yet” because the army was a “taboo subject,” he put his subject to trial and met with success. He describes the questions about his work, “So I put the matter to the direct test and wrote to the General Staff, requesting information and assistance for the study I had in mind. The answer confirmed my belief that the army did not want to be a taboo subject. It was the civilian population who had chosen the easy option of setting up the army as sacrosanct.”²¹¹ It was an opening into a mythical realm of ordinary men dedicated not only to preserving the security of the Turkish Republic but also to guarding the values of Atatürk’s state.

Especially prior to the late 1980s, there was a tremendous gap—or rather a canyon—between the military and civilians in Turkey. Veteran politician Süleyman Demirel attests to the primacy of the military, “God first created the Turkish army, then he realized he had forgotten something and added the people as an afterthought.”²¹² In highlighting the structure, the command, and the education of the Turkish Armed Forces, particularly its education in Atatürkism, the role of the military in politics and the divide in the civil-military relationship were also discussed by Birand in his book—eventually revealing that the military had long envisaged its superiority to the civilian population. When a general is interviewed in the book and asked about whether he is concerned with the distance between civilians and the military, he replies, “Of course I am [troubled]. There is no proper dialogue between us. Turkish society has a liking for its army but that’s not enough. We each in our own shell watch the other from a distance. This is one of the major issues taken up by our Chief of General Staff. Now we’re doing our best to open out, but the nature of our work does not permit us to be as forthcoming as you would like.”²¹³

²¹⁰ Mehmet Ali Birand’s novel *Shirts of Steel* was first published in Turkish in 1986 under the title *Emret Komutanım*; however, it was not published in English until 1991.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

²¹² F. Michael Wuthric, “Commerical Media, the Military, and Society in Turkey during Failed and Successful Interventions,” *Turkish Studies* 11, no. 2 (2010): 217.

²¹³ Birand, *Shirts of Steel*, 109.

Indeed, as times changed the army did gradually open up with the new attitude of liberalism persistent in the 1980s and '90s, making more speeches and press conferences, appearing on television, and even managing a website with statements and activities, amounting to a national PR campaign to soften its façade.²¹⁴ However, what critical civilians—many damaged by the dark years of the 1980 military coup²¹⁵ and/or their experience fighting as part of the national service in the Southeast—the AKP, and the EU had imagined for this “opening out” by 2002 was far different than what the military had in mind. Although by and large the Turkish public had felt that the military represented their interests, this is not to be said that there were not already traces of bad blood between the military’s role in politics and a small sector of civilians. Before this blood could dry, the AKP and the EU made sure to pry open the wounded relations, bent on making sure it would heal in the civilians favor. The government was anxious to see the military as a cultural force decline, and eventually the military could no longer save itself from such a decline.

It is thus the mid-1990s—the point at which nationalist and militarist rhetoric first peaked during the violence of the civil war in the Southeast between the military and the PKK and then gradually deescalated into oblivion as the fighting diminished and Abdullah Ocalan was captured— that the dialogue of citizenship gradually opened up amongst intellectuals and civil society organizations. Inspired by the question of “What is a Turk?” which became central for the Kurdish population and minorities, social groups outside of the power triangle of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis began to ask this question for themselves, too. As society became increasingly aware of the conflict in the Southeast, Cizre and Cinar claim that the military began to employ “argumentative rationality” for the first time, seeking approval from society for its actions against the PKK in the midst of the extensive coverage of the conflict in the national media.²¹⁶

Further, Turgut Özal’s liberalism of the 1980s had developed an “anarchic liberalism” that fed into the previous question of identity, citizenship, and free speech. As Göle characterizes this liberalism, “it dismantled traditions, freed individuals, legitimized hedonistic dreams, undermined juristic constraints, heightened aspirations,

²¹⁴ Wuthrich, “Commercial Media,” 227.

²¹⁵ Jenkins, *Contexts and Circumstances*, 6.

²¹⁶ As quoted in Wuthrich, “Commercial Media,” 225.

opened up new markets, and destroyed all obstacles in its way.”²¹⁷ Although largely in criticism Güle states, “What such an interpretation of liberal misses are the crucial elements of citizenship.” However, liberalist loss of a singular Turkish citizenship is precisely the point at which society was pried open enough to reconceptualize and create a space for dissent against the state’s definition of citizenship—particularly, the state’s dominant definition of citizenship through the military. This, in turn, opened up a space for anti-militarist intellectual movements against the mass landscape of military culture in Turkey, paving the way for movements such as conscientious objection.

In 1990, Tayfun Gönül and Vedat Zencir declared themselves conscientious objectors in the popular Izmir weekly *Sokak Dergisi*. In 1992, the Izmir-based organization War Resisters’ Association (*Savas Karsitlari Dernegi* or SKD) was founded. In 1993, the group reached out to the international community and organized the first International Conscientious Objectors Meeting in Turkey. The event hosted delegations from 19 different countries around Europe.²¹⁸ In 1995, the SKD was closed down and then reopened as the ISKD (*Izmir Savas Karsitlari Dernegi*). Over the years, a number of small community-based groups sprung up around Turkey, culminating in the public eye and reaching international attention with the case of *Ülke v. Turkey* in the European Court of Human Rights in 2006. Although conscientious objectors have had problems reaching a great number of followers because of the individualist nature of the concept of consciousness, objectors present a hefty threat not only to the military but also, more importantly, to the military state. One objector declared the following in his public objection:

Believing that silence will amount to supporting wars, and because I do not want to kill, die, be oppressed or exploited, I raise my voice against all authoritarian, hierarchical, nationalist, sexist and militarist structures and declare my conscientious objection.²¹⁹

A mass movement as such would sprawl near anarchy within the military and the state. The conception of conscious objection, which we will detail below, is multi-fold in Turkey—investigating not only militarism and violence but also citizenship, allegiance, state institutions, and gender, all subjects in which the military and state had weaved in

²¹⁷ Güle, “Authoritarian Secularism and Islamist Politics,” 33.

²¹⁸ Usterci and Yorulmaz, 170.

²¹⁹ Altınay, “Refusing,” 98.

their hands through decades of the “national service” requirement and military glorification in politics and in battle.

As conceded by many conscientious objectors themselves, the movement in Turkey was rather small and decentralized throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. However, the existence of anti-militaristic groups and societal opinions and dialogue opposing the role of the military in politics cannot be denied, as well as the popular influence of the EU, as evidenced by the popular banners waving “Neither sharia, nor coup d’etat! Democratic Turkey!” after the 2007 e-memorandum. Through the turbulence and identity crises spawned by the changing international system of the ‘90s and the increased liberalization of society, it was only a matter of time before someone questioned the military itself and then another matter of waiting before that idea was disseminated against the growing cry for Turkey to conform to international standards of military and democracy. Such movements may not have been a climatic fall of the military in society, but these events have certainly precipitated the move one step closer to unhinging the military from mainstream society at the height of the AKP and Islam’s social and cultural height. Certainly, the military had lost its trump card against the AKP in a bad change of hands.

Thus, this chapter will discuss the role of citizenship and the military in order to understand both the thoughts and ideas of the conscientious objectors’ movement in Turkey and what exactly the military has at stake in losing public opinion and its superior space and ideological force within society. It is important to recognize Heper’s point that “For the military, the ideal citizen is not necessarily a non-practicing Muslim.”²²⁰ The understanding of military citizenship runs much deeper than the surface conflict of secularism and Islamists, or the military and the AKP. The thoughts and movements of this group speak for much more than the singular cause of freedom of conscientiousness: they speak for all groups marginalized and “othered” by the Turkish Armed Forces’ and state “national service.” Then, we will examine the mass protests both against the government and the military’s political role in order to see the repercussions of the waning public tolerance for democracy *alla* military. This chapter, foremost, seeks to show to what extent the military has become a cultural force and to emphasize, again, how much the military’s hubris had been cast down by such a change in society.

²²⁰ Heper, “The Justice and Development Party and the Military in Turkey,” 229.

Conscious Objection Movement: Conflicting Ideas of Citizenship and the Glorification of the Military Man

To further discuss the role of conscientious objectors within Turkish society and the state, it is first necessary to discuss the relationship between Turkish citizenship and the Turkish Armed Forces. There are two articles that are essential to the understanding of Turkish citizenship. First, Article 66 of the Turkish Constitution claims, “Everyone bound to the Turkish State through the bond of citizenship is a Turk... No Turk shall be deprived of citizenship, unless he/she commits an act incompatible with loyalty to the motherland.” This article both establishes a link between citizenship and Turkish identity and then relates this idea of being a Turk with providing loyalty to the motherland. This discussion of citizenship within the constitution then extends through Article 72, which defines this role of the “Turk,” i.e. the citizen, within the state:

National service is the right and duty of every Turk. The manner in which this service shall be performed, or considered as performed, either in the armed forces or in the public service, shall be regulated by law.

This clause infers two things—one is that of duty to the state, and two is that of rights. In the interpretation of the Turkish constitution, every Turk *must* perform his/her duty in order to claim a Turkish identity and thus Turkish citizenship. Citizenship, in this case, is bound by duty. Thus, those who have failed to perform their duty cannot be Turks. Further, the issue of “rights” being mixed with national service in this article is problematic. In this framework, rights are seen as something redistributed by the state to citizens. Turks do not get to choose their rights and duties but are rather prescribed them by the state. Rights are not regulated under the universalist constitution for all mankind but are subject to the obedience and status of a person within Turkish law. This means that Turkish citizenship carries certain rights and duties concerning an ambiguous “national service,” which is left up to the judgment of the state. This idea of citizenship is particular to Turkey, and in this sense provides a specific lens through which to begin the discussion of conscientious objection within the state.

From this perspective of citizenship, the state can restrict the rights of those who do not perform their duty to the nation. In the case of *Ülke v. Turkey*, which is discussed later within this chapter, the European Court of Human Rights coined the

term “civil death” to describe the life of conscientious objectors in Turkey.²²¹ Those who are identified as conscientious objectors are subject to several legal restrictions. Those who refuse to perform their military service in Turkey are barred from civilian privileges such as carrying a passport, working in a civil service job, obtaining a marriage license, buying property, etc. Conscientious objectors are often charged for failing to perform their duty to the state or for violating Article 318 of the Military Penal Code, which criminalizes “alienating the public from military service.” Conscientious objectors face heavy fines, imprisonment, and often mistreatment once in prison for allegedly committing these offenses. They are not able to enjoy the freedoms that typically accompany the idea of citizenship. After refusing their call up papers from the army, most conscientious objectors are issued a General Information Search (GBT), similar to a warrant for arrest. This paper keeps many conscientious objectors inside away from society. Instead of wearing a literal ball and chain, conscientious objectors are often prisoners of their own home—trapped by the restrictions that the state imposes upon them for not performing their “duty.”

This entrapment is more than just a legal restriction; it is a social restriction as well. Men who refuse military service are not only legally discriminated against, but they are also socially ostracized. The following is a quote from the anti-militarist human rights activist Coskun Usterci from an interview with Ayse Gül Altınay in her book *The Myth of the Military Nation*:

For many people, we are marginals who stand for naïve, if not absurd and crazy, ideas. Why? Because military service has an important place in the eyes of ordinary people. Ours is a country where a man who has not done his military service is not regarded as a human being. When you look at the polls, you see that the military is the most trusted institution in this country. I mean, in a country where the military enjoys immunity in all realms, from the constitution to the budget discussions in the parliament, who are you to stand up to the military and talk about not doing military service? This is not something people can make sense of.²²²

The role of the military in terms of its heightened social status and economic role within Turkey are still prevalent conditions today. As organizations like OYAK (the Turkish Armed Forces Pension Fund) continue to provide social benefits, tax exemptions, and

²²¹ Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci, *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society* (London: Zed Books, 2009), 9.

²²² Ayse Gül Altınay, *The Myth of the Military Nation* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 88.

property protection that insure an inflated economic status of the military,²²³ the military man is treated as a privileged citizen of the Turkish state. The conscientious objector is his opposite.

In Ayse Gül Altınay's book *The Myth of the Military Nation*, she entitles her third chapter "Becoming a Man, Becoming a Citizen" in reference to the cultural perception of military service's relation both to citizenship and to masculinity. Compulsory male service in the military since 1927 and subsequent military education has socialized the Turkish nation into believing that the "good" citizen is one who has performed his military service. An often-cited quote by the Ministry of Culture in 1938 states, "Just as the army is a school, so is the school an army."²²⁴ The republican military has not only been responsible for exercising and training an army ready for combat, but it has further been responsible for educating the mass citizenry. From military historian Michael Howard, we see that this idea of education is not just particular to Turkey but a larger part of the development of nation-states: "National education after 1870 in most West European countries was to produce generations physically fit for and psychologically attuned to war. It was a necessary part of citizenship."²²⁵ Compulsory military service was designed to produce not just soldiers but enlightened Turkish citizens. Military schools taught more than drills and duty; it taught the duty to the nation. In his analysis of the developing French state, Eugen Weber refers to military schools as "the school of the fatherland."²²⁶ With the abolition of compulsory military service throughout Europe in the late 20th century, this idea within the European landscape has largely faded; however, it still remains strong in Turkey.

Every Turkish student was required to take a National Security course as part of his or her secondary education.²²⁷ This course was taught in every high school in Turkey and was instructed by a military officer. The officer taught according to a specialized state curriculum that preached the importance of national security and the Turks' extraordinary role in battle. Reading through the pages of this course's

²²³ Akca, "Military-Economic Structure in Turkey," 12.

²²⁴ Altınay, *Myth*, 70.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

²²⁷ This requirement was kept in place until 2012.

textbook, this course clearly has more to say about the role of the military in society than about national security. A 1995 textbook from this course states, “Military service, the most sacred service to the nation and the homeland, prepares young people for real life situations. A person who does not do his military service is no good to himself, to his family or to his nation.”²²⁸ In the context of the national security course, this passage not only speaks to future soldiers but also to future wives of soldiers, to future mothers and fathers of soldiers, and to children of soldiers. With a Constitution stating, “Family is the foundation of Turkish society,” the passage touches upon the three essential elements of Turkish citizenship: the nation, the family, and the individual.²²⁹ As Altınay states, the military educational system teaches the cultural norm that the military is more than an “obligation of the state”—it is an essential part of the individual, the family and the nation of Turkey.²³⁰

With compulsory military service and militarized education, every Turk, both male and female, receives some sort of military schooling. With compulsory military service, every Turk is somehow “connected” to the military through direct service or family; and with this connection every Turk is taught this singular idea of citizenship through the army.²³¹ Thus, society’s idea of citizenry is largely a product of the army’s education.

Another issue of this specifically *male* military service is the genderfication of Turkish citizenship through the armed forces. Becoming a soldier is identified as the “stage” in which one is “becoming a man.”²³² Although such an opinion largely depends on a family’s social class, military service is seen as the pinnacle moment of a young boy’s journey into manhood.²³³ Emma Sinclair-Webb describes the nationalistic episode that often accompanies a young boy’s send off to the military:

... the gathering at bus stations all around the country of great family parties, sometimes with musical accompaniment in the form of *davul* (drum) and *zurna*

²²⁸ Ibid., 70.

²²⁹ As defined in Article 41 of the Turkish Constitution

²³⁰ Altınay, *Myth*, 70.

²³¹ Ibid., 70.

²³² Alp Birick, “Rotten report and reconstructing hegemonic masculinity in Turkey,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, ed. Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci (London: Zed Books, 2009) 112.

²³³ Emma Sinclair-Webb, “Our Bulent Is Now a Commando’: Military Service and Manhood in Turkey,” in *Imagined Masculinities*, ed. Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (London: Saqi Books, 2009), 76.

(a wind instrument), or a gypsy band leading the way, with dancing, songs, cheers and the waving of Turkish flags, and the boy hauled up and swaying on the shoulders of elder brothers and uncles, looking like the overwhelmed and bemused adolescent that he usually still is.²³⁴

Webb compares the attention paid to the young soldier during this celebration with that of the young boy's circumcision celebration, and the celebration of the night before his departure in comparison to his stag party.²³⁵ The time is certainly a momentous occasion for a young man. Families sometimes also provide additional support and gifts for their sons once they return. In some families, sons are given cars and financial assistance from the family following their service.²³⁶ For young Turks, the return from the military service is the point at which one can marry, find a job, and is ready to become independent of his family. Most job applications require males to fulfill their military service before being hired in order to ensure that their future employees will not be deployed in the midst of their career. For instance, all companies under Koc and Sabanci holdings inquire about all male candidates' military service.²³⁷

While military service is seen as the moment when one becomes a man, those who have not performed their military service are deprived of celebrating this very public moment. Whatever the reason may be—consciousness, homosexuality, medical reasons—those who have not performed their military service are identified as being less manly than their peers.²³⁸ For some, this pressure to be masculine provides enough reason to hide their consciousness, sexual preferences, or disabilities.

The most humiliating form of demasculinizing for those who cannot or do not wish to become soldiers is the process of receiving a pink slip. In Turkey, men who are openly homosexual cannot serve in the military as it is deemed “unnatural behavior” by Article 153 of Military Law no.1632. In order to identify this “unnatural behavior” or “disease,” these men must undergo a series of psychological tests in an attempt to prove their homosexuality.²³⁹ A series of psychological tests are run in order to ultimately

²³⁴ Ibid., 75.

²³⁵ Ibid., 75.

²³⁶ Birick, “Rotten report,” 114.

²³⁷ Sinclair-Webb, “Our Bulent,” 74.

²³⁸ Birick, “Rotten report,” 112.

²³⁹ Ibid., 113.

determine if one is “feminine” enough to be homosexual.²⁴⁰ Only if the military psychologist sees this applicant as feminine enough, he is then able to obtain what is called a pink slip, declaring him “unfit” for military service.²⁴¹ This status not only signifies the incapability of a man to serve in the army, but it further represents a social stigma that those who are “unfit” for the military are also “unfit” to be men.

While conscientious objectors themselves do not carry a pink slip from the army, society’s perception of any male who has not performed his military service is no different. After being imprisoned four times for a total of 17 months over the course of five years, conscientious objector Halil Savda was eventually declared “unfit” for the military service in 2004 given his obstinate objections.²⁴² Those who find that their conscience goes against this societal groupthink that equates manhood with military service suffer the same social stigma of being outside of society’s norms. Unlike homosexuals though, there is no pink slip that objectors can apply for as they are called unwillingly into the army. Rather, the objector must hide himself or suffer the consequences of disobeying the law. Such as the case of Halil Savda, this often means repeated prison sentencing over a process of several years. The state has no unique way of conceptualizing the objectors, either legally or socially—they are simply another group of men who are “unfit.” To paraphrase Coskun Usterci’s earlier quote, people cannot make sense of what is outside the realm of “normal.” For conscientious objectors, the question that mocks them is not only “why don’t you want to join the military service?” but also, “why don’t you want to fulfill your societal role as a man?”

No alternative military service exists for conscientious objectors in Turkey. All other countries within the Council of Europe, with the exception of Azerbaijan, have legally recognized the rights of conscientious objectors and provide an equal term of alternative civilian service for them.²⁴³ While whether or not an alternative civilian service should be required of conscientious objectors is still a controversial topic today

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 114.

²⁴¹ Ayşe Gül Altınay, “Refusing to identify as obedient wives, sacrificing mothers and proud warriors,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, ed. Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci (London: Zed Books, 2009), 91.

²⁴² Amnesty International, “Document—Turkey: Human Rights Defender Halil Savda Faces Imprisonment Again in Turkey,” March 14, 2011, accessed May 31, 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/EUR44/002/2011/en/45a566ac-c7e1-4dd8-b056-b926810f9b7f/eur440022011en.html>.

²⁴³ Derek Brett, “Annual Report: Conscientious objection to military service in Europe in 2013,” European Bureau for Conscientious Objection: October 2013, accessed May 9, 2014, <http://ebco-beoc.org/files/attachments/2013-EBCO-REPORT-EUROPE.pdf>.

in Europe, the Turkish case is peculiar as the idea of national military service and its social and cultural impact on ideas of masculinity and citizenship are perceived as “inescapable” norms within Turkey.²⁴⁴ Although the constitution does not specifically equate national service with the military in its writing, the fact that there is no possible civilian component of this service implies that the military service is an inescapable part of being a Turk. The fact that there is no alternative service specifically isolates conscientious objectors from the sphere of Turkish citizenship. By restricting conscientious objection from participating in any sort of state service, the state denies conscientious objectors from building any sort of social capital within state institutions. Because they cannot comply with the state’s perception of duty, conscientious objectors are meant to feel like they cannot belong to the nation. Although the majority of conscientious objectors do not wish to take part in any activities that are controlled by the militarized state, the lack of a framework to allow objectors to contribute in any sort of state service is particularly offensive.

While the problems conscientious objectors face can ultimately be erased by a façade of silence, choosing to speak up and assert the right to freedom of conscious brings with it an acceptance of being an “other” within society. As this problem of silence versus speaking out exists similarly within the Turkish LGBT community, the term “patriarchal bargaining” has been used to describe exchanging one’s acceptance within the state and society for the ability to exercise the freedom of conscious.²⁴⁵ Homosexuals, conscientious objectors, and all marginal groups who have been “othered” within the military state must bargain their status as a full citizen in order to fully express their freedom of conscious. Both groups face the same social stigmatism of being outside the class that has served in the army. As the *National Security Knowledge* textbook has informed us, the military prepares one for real life situations. Thus, those who have not performed their military service are deemed as unprepared to live their life as a part of the state. Conscientious objectors are doomed to walk through life in Turkey as non-citizens, ghosts amongst the real bodies of soldiers that the state has created.

²⁴⁴ Sinclair-Webb, “Our Bulent,” 69.

²⁴⁵ Birick, “Rotten report,” 114.

International Influence and Perspectives: Shaping the conscientious objectors' movement in Turkey

While it is extremely difficult to consolidate and provide a significant platform for the conscientious objectors' movement inside Turkey, looking outside to the European Court of Human Rights, Amnesty International, and the United Nations provided a platform for Turkish objectors to be able to reach out and gain ground within their own national movement. Affected by the increase in international dialogue and exchange of European ideas during the 1990s and 2000s, the international community had a strong impact on the conscientious objectors movement in Turkey, especially from 2002-2007. The United Nations, the European Union, and NGOs such as Amnesty International and War Resisters International have all criticized the Turkish state for the lack of rights that conscientious objectors are given. Turkey is the only country in the Council of Europe, with the exception of Azerbaijan, that does not provide an alternative civilian service for conscientious objectors. However, Azerbaijan does not hold objectors in prison as Turkey does.²⁴⁶ The rights of conscientious objectors have been a point of contention between Turkey and the EU as the subject has been mentioned in subsequent progress reports since 2005.

Although soldiers and civilians have been objecting to military service since ancient times, the road to recognizing legal rights for conscientious objectors has been a long course. The first nation to recognize the right to conscious objection was Great Britain in 1916.²⁴⁷ Since then, it has taken some of the other European nations more than 80 years to recognize this right; however, over the course of this time, all have. It was not until 1983 that the United Nations released its first report on conscientious objection. In this report, the following definition of conscientious objection is given:

By conscience is meant genuine ethical convictions, which may be of religious or humanist inspiration... Two major categories of convictions stand out, one that it is wrong under all circumstances—to kill (the pacifist objection), and the other that the use of force is justified in some circumstances but not in others, and that therefore it is necessary to object in those other cases (partial objection to military service).²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Brett, "Annual Report," 3.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 45.

²⁴⁸ A. Speck and R. Friedrich, "Experiences of conscientious objection movements: South

While this general definition of conscientious objection is, by and large, the crux of most states' understanding of the term, the criteria for obtaining conscientious objector status varies from country to country. Thus, the global debate surrounding the affair of conscientious objection is also limited by the experiences of objectors from country to country. While the United States and Canada have professionalized armies, conscientious objectors are only recognized after they have already enlisted in the military.²⁴⁹ In other countries that have compulsory military service such as South Korea, the right to conscientious objection is also not recognized. Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes the freedom of thought, conscience, and religion for people of all nations; however, within this context, it is clear that not all sovereign nations conceive of this right similarly.

As Turkey moved closer to the European Union during the late 1990s and 2000s, the status of conscientious objectors within the EU sphere is perhaps what the EU and many objectors would wish to see imposed in Turkey. Recognizing the right to conscientious objection is a prerequisite to membership inside the EU. As the Council of Europe was the first European organization to address the issue of conscientious objection, the right to freedom of conscience and also the disestablishment of the political and social tutelage of the military are considered *sine pro quo* of the European Union's vision as we have discussed. In this sense, Turkey's inclusion into the European Union presents a challenge to its fundamental idea of citizenship. In order to become a citizen of the larger European community, Turkey must first recognize the right to conscientious objection and thus first change its idea of Turkish national citizenship.

In 2006, in the midst of a stalemate between the EU and Turkey, the landmark case for the relationship between Turkish conscientious objectors and the EU, the case of *Ülke v. Turkey* in the European Court of Human Rights, was adjured after almost a decade of waiting. Osman Murat Ülke was first arrested in Turkey in 1996 for resisting his call to military service. On 1 September 1995, he staged a press conference in Izmir where he publically asserted that he was a conscientious objector and then burned his

Africa, Greece and Paraguay,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, edited by Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci, (London: Zed Books, 2009), 122.

²⁴⁹ Matthew Gutmann, “Military conscription, conscientious objection and democratic citizenship in the Americas,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, edited by Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci, 131-144 (London: Zed Books, 2009), 132.

call-up papers.²⁵⁰ One year later he was arrested and indicted for evading military service. He was sentenced to six months in prison and then, a second time, was enlisted in the army by the General Staff Court. Even before his sentence, in 1996, Ülke had been transferred to the 9th Regiment of the army. Again, refusing his military service, Ülke refused to wear his military uniform and again was punished for his resistance to war. He was charged by a military prosecutor with “persistent disobedience” and imprisoned on this account for five months. After his release, in October 1997, Ülke was sentenced to ten months imprisonment again on charges of persistent disobedience and desertion. Overall, between 1996 and 1998, Osman Murat Ülke served a total of 701 days in prison as he was sentenced to eight separate convictions.²⁵¹ Amnesty International decried Turkey’s treatment of Ülke as a conscientious objector and criticized the state for Ülke’s terms of imprisonment being “a life sentence on the revolving-door principle.”²⁵²

Finally, Ülke made an appeal to the European Court of Human Rights in 1998. The case was not approved until 2004 and the final judgment not rendered until 5 January 2006. The court’s decision stands as follows:

Taken as a whole and regard being had to its gravity and repetitive nature, the treatment inflicted upon the applicant had caused him severe pain and suffering which went beyond the normal element of humiliation inherent in any criminal sentence or detention. In the aggregate, the acts concerned constituted degrading treatment within the meaning of Article 3.²⁵³

Ultimately, the European Court of Human Rights championed Ülke’s cause and provided a harsh critique of the Turkish system. The court referred to Ülke’s status in Turkey as “civil death,” as his testimony described not only harsh imprisonment conditions but also Ülke’s struggle to live in a state of constant fear of being arrested. Ülke was denied the right to legally marry his long-term fiancée and even to legally claim their child as his own as he was forced to cut all ties with the state authority.

²⁵⁰ Kevin Boyle, “Conscientious objection in international law and the Osman Murat Ülke case,” in *Conscientious Objection: Resisting Militarized Society*, edited by Ozgur Heval Cinar and Coskun Usterci, 212-224 (London: Zed Books, 2009), 214.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 215.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 215.

According to the court, this was found to be “unacceptable” treatment in a democratic society.²⁵⁴

Following the rhetoric of Turkish conscientious objectors for the past decade, the case of *Ülke v. Turkey* not only acquitted the case of Osman Murat Ülke, but it also provided a formal critique of the Turkish legal system itself. The Turkish system was not only found guilty of imprisoning Ülke, but it was found to be incompatible with the basic standards of international law, which is to provide basic legal rights that allow for the freedom of conscious. The statement by Osman Murat Ülke following the court’s decision adequately describes the point at which the ECHR left the case for conscientious objection within Turkey:

The European Court of Human Rights, prioritizing Article 3 of ECHR, has revealed that here is a problem [in Turkey] in terms of the general principles of law. Accordingly, crime and punishment must be proportional and each act can only have a single sanction. Before the discussion even gets to conscientious objection, this is the point we are stuck at. Within the framework of current laws, the state lacks the means to try individuals who object to compulsory military service on the grounds of conscience.²⁵⁵

The case was historic as it provided an official critique of the Turkish system and its official judgment that had instructed the system to change. Ülke makes a case in point though that this decision did not pertain to the rights of conscientious objectors specifically as much as it had been a case of identifying Turkey’s gross mistreatment of crime versus punishment. This is first the problem that Turkey must solve before it can specifically address the rights of conscientious objectors. However, although Turkey lost the case against Ülke, it was ultimately within the power of Turkey’s own sovereignty to amend its laws, which it unsurprisingly did not.

One of the major goals of the conscientious objectors and anti-militarists within Turkey has been the abolishment of the Turkish Penal Code Article 318, the article that criminalizes “alienating the public from military service.” The article dictates that public opinion must stand with the military and, ultimately, that the civilian institution is not separate from the military. After being acquitted of charges violating this article in the mid-2000s, Halil Savda articulated his outrage over the nature of this charge:

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 215.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 218.

The existence of such an offence of ‘alienating the public from the military service’ is contrary to Turkey’s Constitution and international conventions it’s a party to. It is not a crime to alienate people from being a doctor, an imam or a journalist. There cannot be a crime called ‘alienating the public from military service.’ I don’t accept such a crime. The current monstrous Article 318 in the Turkish penal code must cease to exist.²⁵⁶

Simply, Savda called for the equality of free speech within Turkish law. Overall, the military is just another job, such as being a doctor, imam or journalist. However, within the Turkish state, it is simply not another job but a lifestyle and an ideology.

As we can see, the military’s cultural force and the power it wields through national conscription gives the state a foothold over the individual and demands that he subscribe to the state enforced culture. However, the military need not force most of the Turkish citizenry to comply with its aims because of its wild popularity and positive relationship with its citizenry, it had long taken advantage of the lack of liberal individualism in Turkish society and total compliance. Thereby, once dissent was voiced, the military failed to craft a just response for those who’s conscience opposed its activities. Worse, the international community was now watching with a disapproving eye. The conscientious objectors’ movement is yet another example of the military’s inability to respond to the inclusive needs and demands of Turkish society after the late 1980s. Although the state offered no answers for objectors, the EU and the international community had provided solutions in Turkey’s absence. As the rift between the military and the AKP grew, politicians chose to remain silent on this issue in order not to further provoke the wrath of the armed forces.

Protests government and the military, “Neither sharia, nor coup d’état”

Increasing liberal dialogue and the growth of causes such as the conscientious objectors movement represent a gradual shift in the idea of citizenship from military to civilian. In order to understand the change in societal forces behind this and the failure to gain popular support behind the e-memorandum, we should additionally look at Wuthrich’s idea of “citizen consumers” in relation to the military.

²⁵⁶ Amnesty International, “Turkey: acquittal in conscientious objections case a win for free speech,” December 7, 2012, accessed May 31, 2014, <http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/turkey-acquittal-conscientious-objection-case-win-free-speech-2012-12-07>.

As Wuthrich studies the relationship between the military, the media, and society, he observes that the increasing influence of commercial media has dictated how the Turkish Armed Forces interacts with society as a consumer of its product—i.e. legitimizing its acts in internal and external politics.²⁵⁷ In such an interaction, the military undergoes a “courting of society and civil groups” before making significant political decisions or intervening. Wuthrich maintains that the military was able to capture societal approval *post-hoc*, as Heper had previously concluded, in its previous coup attempts,²⁵⁸ but the rise of national media after 1980 has since rendered such control “no longer possible.”²⁵⁹ He concludes that since 1997, “all accounts of the more recent alleged attempted interventions assume as foundational that gathering support from civil groups is square one.”²⁶⁰ Thus, the General Staff must be successful in capturing popular opinion before it can go on to seize the entire government.

Certainly this concept of civilian support was obvious in examining the events surrounding the e-memorandum and Büyükanıt’s heightened defensive rhetoric prior to this. Following Büyükanıt’s 12 April speech, two days later on 14 April around 600,000 citizens,²⁶¹ who were organized by around 600 NGOs,²⁶² took to the streets of Ankara, Istanbul, and İzmir to protest secularism, democracy, and Erdoğan’s potential presidency. This allegedly influenced Erdoğan’s decision not to present himself as a presidential candidate. The military perhaps took such a rally as public approval considering the rally largely reinforced the military’s anti-secular accusations against the AKP. Two weeks later, it posted the “e-memorandum” to the General Staff’s website. On 29 April, the same organization of protestors again took to the streets, this time in Istanbul; however, this time their cry for secularism included a caveat. Although the rally was cast strictly in opposition to the government, the title that seemed to grab the most attention from the press was not only directed toward Erdoğan

²⁵⁷ Wuthrich, “Commercial Median,” 219.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 229.

²⁶¹ While the exact number is unknown, most speculate that about 600,000 protestors showed up at Anitkabir in Ankara on April 14. Goksel Buzkurt and Duygu Guvenc, “First Army, then Arınç, made Erdoğan change his decision,” *Hurriyet Daily News*, April 25, 2007, accessed March 30, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/first-army-then-Arınç-made-Erdoğan-change-his-decision.aspx?pageID=438&n=first-army-then-Arınç-made-Erdoğan-change-his-decision-2007-04-25>.

²⁶² Nilufer Zengin, “Thousands Stuck Between Sharia and Military,” *Bianet*, April 30, 2007, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.bianet.org/english/politics/95314-thousands-stuck-between-sharia-and-military>.

and the AKP. “Neither sharia, nor coup d’état—democratic Turkey,” read the sign. The military was being implicated along with the government for failing to provide democracy to the people of Turkey. This sign at such a protest is indicative of a turn of the civilian establishment away from the military and toward a democracy free of military control in the political realm. As journalist and analyst Oral Calislar, who had been jailed during the 1971 and 1980 interventions, remarked of the protests, “They [citizens] seemed to say: ‘We are here. The army need not get involved.’”²⁶³ A new civilian Turkey, enhanced by the rhetoric of the EU and the empowerment of civil society over the previous decade, was ready to step up to the plate and bat against the illiberal secularism of the political regime. Within the AKP opposition, the civilian sector was signaling its willingness to assume the powers that the military had lost over the previous five years, fighting the government by voicing their concerns for Turkish democracy just as the military had. In contrast to the conscientious objectors’ movement, the louder civilian cry was not a call for an end to the culture of militarism but rather an end to the military interventions. Another protestor, a professor of medicine and head of a NGO, Türkan Saylan, stated, “It is obvious that a putsch is not a solution—we’ve seen it, we know it... The armed forces are a party to the preservation of the secular system, and so they shall remain.”²⁶⁴ As another banner declared, “We [the civilians] are the unarmed forces of Turkey.” Civil society had stepped out and up to both defend and criticize the military as standard in any democratic regime.

Reactions to the AKP’s presidential candidate and the military’s statements represented a myriad of opinions reflecting democracy, secularism, and public opinion. Tensions seemed to quell between the government and the military over the summer, early elections were called, and the presidential elections were announced to take place 28 August. Weeks prior to the election, a round of interviews made by the independent Turkish news source outlet Bianet were compiled into an article entitled “Mixed Feelings about Gül in the Streets” helps us to see the divergence in public opinion largely steered away from a neutral view of the military’s role in politics:

“My daughter cried, ‘Mummy I don’t want to wear a headscarf!’ The young people abroad are also feeling uncomfortable. We are already being

²⁶³ “‘Neither sharia, nor coup d’etat,’ Turks want to preserve lifestyle,” *Turkish Press*, April 30, 2007, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.turkishpress.com/news/173822/>.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

discriminated against for being Muslims, but this will increase. Maybe there will be another coup. We will lose 20 to 30 years.”

“This does not match my way of thinking, the way I was brought up. If Gül becomes president, women will be treated as second-class citizens. The army should have reacted long ago.”

“The army has common sense. I hope it does not allow a reactionary regime.”

“When the army reacted before the elections, Erdoğan did not say, ‘We made a mistake’ or take a step backwards. If he did that now, he would give the impression of fear. Even if the army or the CHP react, it won’t help.”

“I think it will be beneficial for Turkey. I do not think it is against laicism. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has received many votes, it has the support of the people. This has been Turkey’s choice.”²⁶⁵

Although these opinions represent a variety of ideas about the military’s political role vis-à-vis the AKP government, the comments are clear that civilians were both wary of another military coup in Turkey and of Gül’s presidency.

Despite political leanings, in the spring and summer of 2007 the Turkish people were crying for secularism and democracy above all. It was clear that the military no longer had the unqualified support it once had for an intervention. Throughout the battle with the AKP, the military had seemed to own and protect the realm of the secular within the state; however, the military had failed to convince the public that it was still too the protector democracy. The EU, the civilian-elected government, and now the civilians themselves had taken democracy as their own work, and the military’s traditional *post-hoc* rhetoric of democracy by coup did not live up to civilian’s new expectation of democracy.

Conclusion

In going back to Wuthrich’s analysis of the opening of Turkish consumer society, the military had simply failed to capture the audience of the Turkish people in opposition to the EU and the AKP. As Wuthrich writes, “the new dilemma for those who want to exert control over society; suddenly, they are constantly struggling with others with competing visions for society, leaving the ‘consumers’ of those visions to

²⁶⁵ Gokce Gunduz, “Mixed Feelings about Gül in the Streets,” *Bianet*, August 15, 2007, accessed March 18, 2015, <http://www.bianet.org/english/politics/101141-mixed-feelings-about-Gül-in-the-streets>.

decide.”²⁶⁶ Indeed, Tanel Demirel also contends that military coups are only acceptable to the civilian population if it and the military feel they are a party to the same fundamental ideas of the state.²⁶⁷ Empowered by the rhetoric of the civilianization of Turkish politics, the Turkish citizen consumer of the 2000’s chose to become a citizen of the “democratic” Turkey represented by the AKP and the EU before it would become a consumer of the Turkish Armed Forces traditional “secular” Turkey. Thus, the primordial ties to the Turkish military and its *post-hoc* coup making had begun to be cut loose.

Such a move can perhaps be illustrated clearly by continuing the game of cards allegory posited earlier: As the military had remained in the shadows throughout 2002-2006, the AKP had become the dealer in this game of political cards, and with the assurance of the EU backing its bid it decided to deal in the civilians. Thus, this necessitated a change in the rules, and the military was forced to throw in its trump card of public opinion, since it was no longer relevant when the civilians decided to join the game.

The military’s first mistake is that it had not allowed for the dual dialogue of citizenship to be opened up between military, conscious, and consumer. Instead, the military continued to blunder on, irresponsive to the rising demands and concerns of the Turkish citizen. It let public claims that it was “trusted,” “sought-after,” and an “institution in demand” clouds the reality that the civilian power was growing up next to it. Through 2007, the citizens were still drinking in the military’s ideology, however, it seems that an outside force had slipped something in it—perhaps liberalism—that the military had denied as a source of concern. Indeed, the military has not been willing to swallow its own pride and taste how the water in the well of civil society had improved.

After peacefully protesting both the government and the military’s e-memorandum in 2007, Istanbul graduate student Ceren Kenar recalls her shock in not having been arrested on 29 April. Contrary to previous protests, she had not been put in jail for expressing her views against the state. In her own words, after her lack of arrest,

²⁶⁶ Wuthrich, “Commercial Media,” 226.

²⁶⁷ Tanel Demirel, “Soldiers and civilians: the dilemma of Turkish democracy,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 40, no. 1 (2004): 134.

she states, “that was the moment I knew Turkey had changed.”²⁶⁸ And indeed, this moment was certainly a watershed for Turkey, its citizens, and the military.



²⁶⁸ Janine Zacharia, “In Turkey, military’s power over secular democracy slips,” *Washington Post*, April 11, 2010, Accessed July 20, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/04/10/AR2010041002860.html>.

Conclusion

FUTILE MISTAKES AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES: LASTING EFFECTS OF MILITARY HUBRIS

As Jenkins posits, the military's role in the Turkish state is both a product of "contexts and circumstances," stemming from both internal and external events and processes. Since 1980, the military itself has been the greatest factor in its destiny. It long wielded the power to pull the strings of political and cultural forces, and indeed did not limit the scope of its power. Foremost of these controls over Turkey after the 1980s was its enablement of Islam and the political right to esteem power against the leftist/communist/separatist/socialist threat that had been perceived as the cause for political instability in the 1970s. However, before considering where the military put its hands into, the military did not heed the doctrine of Atatürkism to which it had so been pledged. Rather than act out of the principles and the ideals of enlightenment, secularism, and democracy as it had since the War of Independence, the military had blindly relied on the creation of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis for sheer stability—much like the "ignorant" civilians and politicians had been relying on the army for stability. Thus, such a move on the military's behalf was no better, no further educated or well thought out, than the actions of the politicians and civilians had been for decades. If the military could no longer apply standards and principles to its quest for stability and democracy, then how could the people ever do so? Further, the military's particular tie with Islamists had caused the military to by and large forfeit its secular identity, which had been its trademark principle from the end of the empire through the execution of Adnan Menderes and beyond.

Two decades later, with the "democratic conservatives" regaining power even after the military had warned the nation of the threat of political Islam and implemented the 28 February process in 1997, a pack of wolves had come in sheep's clothes and the Justice and Development Party was created from the ashes of Erbakan's deposed comrades. This time around, the politicians had learned from their past mistakes with

the military and adopted a new strategy that both masked their acclaimed anti-Western Islamic views and espoused the goals of Atatürk's civilization project, which naturally appealed to a critical mass of the voting age population in Turkey across the right of the political spectrum. The EU was the perfect camouflage for the AKP to disguise its action plan. The EU both supported the idea of moderate Islam in the regional community and questioned civil-military relationships within the Turkish state. Further, the military appeared as the foremost obstacle to European Union membership for Turkey. Therefore, the military should have been wary of the possible affects that would come about with the conjoining of these two international and domestic forces. However, the military accepted these EU-inspired reforms, since its post-1980 peculiarities of Kemalism had accepted EU rapprochement as a sign of "progress" and Atatürk's will. Meanwhile, the military was still trying to recover from its last misjudgment of the founder's will, suffering from its two-decade long failure to defend secularism.

We have seen through this thesis that despite Turkey's continued beloved affection for the military and the AKP's initial hesitancy toward outright scrutiny of the military and its generals, the Turkish Armed Forces had been in a rapid state of decline from 2002-2007, in large part because of the military's own actions. Society had developed quickly and constantly over the first two and a half decades following the military's 1982 constitution, and although the military had watched this development and adapted to it by some measure, it would eventually pay for its mistake of being too reactionary and draconian in the 1980 coup. The military certainly could not think that it could walk away unscathed after having made a deal with the devil of the Kemalist state—i.e. Islamists, so to say—whereby it forsook the holy principle of secularism. Decades of Kemalist lip service could not be saved by a few generals insulting the fundamental convictions of populist politicians, especially as a great deal of citizens likewise espoused the same views as these politicians. Further, the international community had looked unfavorably upon the military's frequent decisions to intervene, and this anti-coup ethos stuck with Turkey's citizenry, especially as the EU was promoted as a key arbiter between the state and fate.

In an interview with *The New Yorker*, a Western diplomat sums up the end of the military's fall as "the coup de grace" precipitated by the loss of the political game to Erdoğan and the massive damages done to the military establishment during the Ergenekon trials. However, the symptoms that he attributes this fall to are only a part

of the problem. “The generals were living in a Kemalist museum,” he says, “It rotted from within.”²⁶⁹ This is certainly the popular conception of the fall of the Turkish military: a battle royale between religion and secularism embodied by the military and the AKP. However, such a summary fails to identify that the military itself had rendered secularism and Atatürkism antiquated, feckless artifacts of an old republic, as soon as President General Kenan Evren began to recite the Koran in public in the 1980’s. The military itself had made a fatal mistake in the 1980s and 1990s by reaching outside the Kemalist microcosm of the Turkish state and lending an arm to political Islam and nationalists. The military was not suited to fully comprehend or adequately reason with life outside the state center, since it was moved into a cocoon of its own by the compliance of the civilian politicians as well, which had served to protect the military from economic hardships of the kind they had suffered in the late 1950’s. However, such a move had also created an officer corps that was removed from the society in which they were embedded, and thus the military failed to empathize with the society that they were to defend. Ultimately, despite its deep engagement in political countering with the AKP from 2002-2007, the military under Özkök and Büyükanıt had been living in its own tiny world, perhaps a miniature of the republic in the 1930s wherein no peripheral forces had been given a voice and Islam was no longer an extremist and existential threat to state power.

The year 2007 was not suited for military intervention. In contrast to previous interventions, the economy had been growing extensively under the AKP, international relations were relatively peaceful, and the political regime was gaining confidence. The year 2007 was a watershed for Turkish civil-military relations precisely because the memorandum had no immediate effect: It did not change the regime nor did it spur direct military intervention. The changing tide of the international movement toward democratization as well as the changing domestic balance of power and public opinion had precipitated a turn in the domestic demand for the military. Staled EU relations encouraged the AKP to piggyback off the reforms it had already implemented and take aim against the military. The failure of the military to block Abdullah Gül’s presidential election had resulted in not only an electoral but also a psychological victory for the AKP. The post-1980s liberalism growing throughout the 1990s and 2000s had opened up a dialogue of what the military’s power should look like against

²⁶⁹ Dexter Filkins, “The Deep State,” *The New Yorker*, March 12, 2012, accessed April 15, 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2012/03/12/the-deep-state>.

civilian power in a democratic regime—and it was not what the Turkish Armed Forces looked like in its current state in 2007. All of these factors challenged the institution of the military, and ultimately the military failed to meet this challenge. The 2007 e-memorandum represents a point of no return for the politicians—a point at which the AKP took the momentum it garnered from its electoral victories in both the presidential and the general elections in 2007 and continued to run head first toward consolidating its power, never looking back.

Although what we see in 2002-2007 is a battle won by Islamists over secularism and European regional hegemony over Atlantic or Eurasian regional interests, the war between the Turkish Armed Forces and the AKP is far from over. Current international and domestic forces have heated up both inside and outside of Turkey, and what is to come as the AKP's electoral time is arguably expiring will determine the fate of Turkish civil-military relations in the long run. Putin's Russia evokes memories of the Soviet Union, concomitantly evoking the West's memories of a stronger NATO alliance. A possible end to the PKK's ceasefire evokes nationalist interests in calling more troops back to the Southeast as in previous decades. The emergence of ISIS as both a regional and an international threat lingering on the border of Turkey and Syria and now beginning to attack Turkish soil challenges Turkey's reluctance to fire on its Muslim brothers fighting Turkey's longtime enemy, the Syrian regime. Further, the emergence of Iran onto the international scene may redefine the traditional and regional alliance system. Both what Turkey expects out of its army and with whom it will ally itself with to fight these battles will certainly be telling. With the threat of violence and war waged between Turkey and either or both the PKK and the Islamic State, the following must be asked: will a secular, American-backed army be best posed to fight and defend the Turkish state in the coming era? Would pursuing regional interests rather than European solve both internal and external security threats? Will civil-military relations improve under such circumstances? What can we anticipate if and when the AKP would exit the political realm? After the recent electoral loss of the AKP in the 2015 general elections and subsequent conflicts, the effects of the 2007 "coup de-grace" may just prove to be a small interruption in the longer history of coup-making and civil-military relations in Turkey. Thus, the year 2007 is a watershed, not an end point.

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