

**THE UNEASY DEMOCRATIZATION
OF TURKEY'S LAIC-ETHNOCRACY**

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Abstract

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This study aims to scrutinize Turkey's uneasy democratization process during the post-Helsinki period (1999-2010). The research design of the thesis takes the form of a single case study as it seeks to critically link Turkey's democratization problems with the wider theoretical literature on secularism, post-Islamism and democratization.

Rather than witnessing the clear-cut victory of liberal democracy over non-democracy as espoused by Fukuyamian eschatology, the advent of the Post-Cold War Era witnessed the proliferation of hybrid grey zone which stood between the continuum of democracy and conventional non-democracy. As a result, many scholars opted to construct 'hybrid regime typologies' in order to capture the incongruous yet enduring coexistence of partially democratic and non-democratic features within each political unit. In line with contemporary developments in the democratization literature, this thesis opts to construct a multi-dimensional hybrid regime typology for the case of Turkey.

Besides seeking to capture the core regime principles of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship (1923-1946) under the label of 'laic-ethnocracy', the theoretical framework of the thesis provides an assessable normative benchmark for delineating Turkey's democratization trajectory since the initiation of the multi-party era (1946-1950). After demonstrating how Turkey's successive 'controlled transitions' (1946-1997) consistently aimed at perpetuating ethnocratic hegemony and obstructing the democratic transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist laicism, the thesis seeks to scrutinize the impact of the EU candidacy in shaping the pattern and outcome of the recent democratization process in the domestic arena.

In this respect, the thesis underlines how the ongoing political 'transition process' during the post-Helsinki decade (1999-2009) qualitatively differs from all of the previous transitions which had been guided and forcefully controlled by traditional Kemalist state elites. Yet, the thesis also exposes the limited and partial commitment of the post-Islamist AKP government to forge the democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring 'laic-ethnocratic' regime paradigm namely by assessing its reform performance towards the cultural rights of ethnic and belief-rights of the non-Sunni Muslim minorities (e.g., the sizeable Kurdish ethnic and Muslim-Alevi religious minority).

Overall, the thesis characterizes Turkey's 'post-Helsinki transition' process as a case of uneasy democratization. In this context, the term 'uneasy democratization' does not only highlight the inconsistencies of main domestic political actors in forging clear-cut democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring 'laic-ethnocracy' regime paradigm, but also to a chronic failure to soothe the deeply-seated cleavages within the socio-political arena.

Declaration

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Abbreviations

AKP	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
ANAP	Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi)
AP	Justice Party (Adalet Partisi)
APD	Accession Partnership Document
CHP	Republican People's party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
CKMP	Republican Peasant's Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi)
DP	Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti)
DSP	Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi)
DTP	Democratic Turkey Party (Demokratik Türkiye Partisi)
DYP	True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi)
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EU	European Union
FA	Foreign Affairs
İAMM	Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (İskân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirin Müdüriyeti)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
M-8	Muslim Eight (Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey)
MDD	National Democratic Revolution (Milli Demokratik Devrim)
MHP	Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi)
MİT	National Intelligence Organization (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı)
MNP	National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi)
MSP	National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi)
NPAA	National Programme for the Adaptation of the Acquis

NSC	National Security Council
OHAL	Governorship of the Region of Extraordinary Law (Olađanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliđi)
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan)
PM	Prime Ministry
RP	Welfare Party (Refah Partisi)
RTÜK	Radio and Television Sopreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurumu)
SP	Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi)
TBMM	Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi)
TİP	Labour Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi)
TESEV	Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Türkiye Ekonomik Sosyal Etüdler)
TRT	The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation, (Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu)
WVS	World Value Survey

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As the Native American proverb suggests; “It is a good day to submit the thesis!”

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents Fatma and Bekir who have walked a long and troublesome path for more libertarian and egalitarian world; and walked without any hesitation.

CHAPTER I:

Introduction

This PhD thesis aims to scrutinize Turkey's uneasy democratization process during the post-Helsinki era (1999-2010) which has been mainly marked by two parallel developments:

- 1- Turkey's attainment of the EU official candidacy status at the Helsinki European Council summit of December 1999.
- 2- The rise of the formerly "Islamist" Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP) to power as the new governing political elite of Turkey.

It is plausible to argue that the watershed in the historical trajectory of Turkey's 'controlled transitions' from the Kemalist one-party dictatorship (1946-1999) occurred when the Helsinki European Council summit of December 1999 had accepted Turkey as an official candidate for European Union (EU) membership. The prospect of EU candidacy played a crucial role in shaping the pattern of democratization in post-Helsinki Turkey as the former required the latter to align its civil-military relations and minority right standards to the European level. Hence, (and in addition to the structural economic reform process aspiring to deepen the neo-liberal economic orthodoxy and financial globalization under the conjoined auspices of the IMF and EU), the historicity of Turkey's post-Helsinki era has mainly revolved around a series of political reform initiatives delineated and necessitated by EU conditionality.

In parallel to the attainment of the EU official candidacy status, Turkey's post-Helsinki domestic landscape also witnessed the rise of AKP as the new governing political elite and main domestic political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process. Far from being an integral component of traditional Kemalist state elites, the AKP emerged from the ashes of the Islamist Welfare Party which was ousted from government via the military-orchestrated 'post-modern coup'¹ in 1997. As a result, Turkey's post-Helsinki domestic political landscape has been accompanied by a

¹ 'Post-modern coup' refers to the processes which led to the involuntary resignation of the Islamist Welfare Party from the government due to the coup threats posed by the Turkish Armed Forces. The very term 'post-modern coup' was originally invented by the then General Çevik Bir when he defined the 28 February process as a "democratic post-modern coup, encompassing civil society organizations" (Demir, 2007).

sustained and troubling antagonism over the principle of laicism which simultaneously reflected the ongoing power struggle between a popularly elected post-Islamist AKP government and the traditional military-bureaucratic elites.

The topic of this PhD thesis corresponds to the intersection between two broad sets of literature: Europeanization and Democratization studies. Under the loose heading of Europeanization, various scholars have provided numerous theoretical frameworks and empirical studies while assessing the multi-dimensional impact of EU conditionality to the domestic politics of the EU candidate countries (inter alia Cowles *et al.*, 2001; Olsen, 2002; Featherstone and Radaelli, 2003; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005; Schimmelfennig *et al.*, 2006; Graziano and Maarten, 2007). Following the landmark 1999 Helsinki European Council, a similar body of literature focusing on Turkey's domestic adaptation has also flourished (Uğur, 1999; Ed. Uğur and Canefe 2004; Diez, 2005; Yildiz and Muller, 2008; Grigoriadis, 2009; Usul 2011).

On the other hand, the literature on 'democratic transition and consolidation' has sought to scrutinize the transition process from the authoritarian rule in Southern Europe and Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s (Rustow, 1970; O'Donnell *et al.*, 1986; Di Palma, 1990; Mainwaring *et al.*, 1992; Linz and Stepan, 1996). With the advent of the post-communist era and the EU's eastern enlargement project in the 1990's, the conceptual paradigm of the transition and consolidation literature has been adopted by various scholars to assess 'Eastern European transitions' (Zielonka, 2001; Zielonka and Pravda, 2001).

As far as Turkish studies are concerned, Ergun Özbudun (2000) became the first scholar to evaluate Turkey's chronic democratization problems from the theoretical vantage point of the transition and consolidation paradigm. By uncritically borrowing O'Donnell's (1992) conceptualization of the democratization process as involving two linear progressive stages and adopting Linz and Stepan's (1996) three dimensional criteria for consolidated democracy, Özbudun argued that Turkey has made the transition to democracy four times (first in 1950, second in 1961, third in 1973, and fourth in 1983), but repeatedly failed to achieve democratic consolidation. Similarly, McLaren (2008) copied the same conceptual framework while trying to assess the reasons why Turkey, unlike Spain and Italy, has failed to achieve democratic consolidation.

Yet, Turkey's piecemeal and inconclusive reform endeavours to comply with EU conditionality during the post-Helsinki era have reinforced the futility of pondering on the problems or prospects of democratic consolidation in a country which had never managed to construct a plausible democratic regime in the first place. Furthermore, the EU conditionality emphasis on "respect for and protection of minorities" made it necessary to re-evaluate the character (be it democratic or authoritarian) of any political regime in relation to the minority rights variable. Hence, the purpose of this PhD thesis is to critically bridge the gap between these two broad sets of literature (Europeanization and democratic transition) in order to assess the impact of the EU membership potential both on the domestic political landscape and democratization trajectory of post-Helsinki Turkey.

Since this Ph.D. dissertation aims to scrutinize the particularity of Turkey's post-Helsinki democratization process, it seeks to find a set of answers to a key overarching question: *How has the EU Accession process shaped the pattern and outcome of the democratization process in Turkey?* In order to address this overarching question, the thesis will seek to answer to four interrelated sub-questions:

- 1- On which core principles did the Kemalist one-party dictatorship (1923-1950) seek to build the Republic of Turkey?
- 2- Why did Turkey follow a restricted and inconclusive pattern of transitions (1946-1999) from the Kemalist One-Party Dictatorship?
- 3- How, why and to what extent has granting Turkey an official candidacy for the European Union challenged its enduring "laic-ethnocratic" regime paradigm?
- 4- To what extent does the transition process of the post-Helsinki decade (1999-2009) differ qualitatively from the previous transitions which had been guided by traditional Kemalist state elites?

In order to answer these questions, the thesis will engage with a critical appraisal of the literature on democratic transition and then construct a multi-dimensional hybrid regime typology by adding the dimension of 'Laicism' to Yiftachel's (2006) concept of Ethnocracy. Yiftachel (2006: 11) coined the term 'Ethnocracy' in order to designate a distinct hybrid regime typology which "facilitates the *expansion, ethnicization* and *control* of a dominant ethnic nation over contested territory and polity". Hence, besides instilling Yiftachel's hybrid regime typology of Ethnocracy (organized around five dimensions) with some of the inter-related theoretical themes provided by the

radical democracy literature, the theoretical framework of this PhD project adds the dimension of ‘Laicism’ as the latter plays an integral role in the ‘national identity’ construction of the Kemalist nation-building project.

In this regard, the term laic-ethnocracy seeks to highlight how the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive of the Kemalist ‘modernization’ reforms went hand in hand and became conterminous within the historical context of the single party-era (1923-1946). Indeed, Kemalist Laicism differs remarkably from the Anglo-Saxon versions of secularism as the former have historically deemed strong and all encompassing state control over religion as a vital ingredient of the nation-building project. Borrowing the term “*laïcité*” from the political practices of the French Third Republic (1870-1940) where the successive republic governments had gradually asserted its unilateral authority over the Catholic Church (Kuru, 2009: 142-153), Kemalist state elites established laicism (laiklik) as one of the most foundational principles of the Republic regime. Nevertheless, institutional practices of “laicism” in Turkey have displayed various differences from the “laicism” of the Third Republic of France as well (see chapter Three and Five).

As a result, it is crucial to enumerate the various critical points which the hyphenated term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ embodies.

- 1- Broadly speaking, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ serves to pinpoint the complex and persistent patterns of ‘exclusion’ and ‘domination’ that the Kemalist nation-building project has forged (following the intense demographic engineering and Turkification of the Young Turk Era) by premising itself upon the predominance and imagined homogeneity of the *Turkish and Muslim majority*.
- 2- More particularly, the hyphenated term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ seeks to highlight the close link between the two constitutive elements embedded within the *national identity* construction of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship or, in other words, the fusion between monistic ethno-nationalist Turkish identity and western-looking laic identity. Hence, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ signifies the exclusive identity logic engendered and perpetuated by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.

- 3- Lastly, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ refers to the peculiar and problematic characteristics of Kemalist laicism in conforming to the principles of democratic secularism.

In addition to capturing the core regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship under the label of ‘laic-ethnocracy’, our theoretical model will provide a normative benchmark for delineating and assessing Turkey’s democratization trajectory from the Kemalist one-party dictatorship until the currently ruling AKP government’s Kurdish Opening in 2010. Accordingly, the normative benchmark of our theoretical framework conceptualizes the democratization trajectory of ‘laic-ethnocracy’ as entailing dual dimensions: a) the democratic transformation of incompatible aspects of Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria [see **Table 7**], and b) the democratic deconstruction of Turkey’s severe ethnocratic regime features in line with what Ilan Peleg (2007) characterized as “radical revision towards genuine democracy” [see **Table 4**].

The theoretical framework utilized in this thesis possesses two crucial advantages over hybrid regime typologies within the existing literature. First, unlike various hybrid regime typologies which are exclusively limited to pinpointing the flawed functioning of the institutional features of Dahl’s polyarchy, the underlying premises of our theoretical model incorporate the “third dimension of power” (Lukes, 2005) and, thus, possess an inbuilt tendency to align with the post-structuralist accounts of radical democracy (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001). This, in turn, endows our theoretical framework with a normative commitment to challenge the complex but *longue durée* patterns of ‘dominations’ and ‘exclusions’ perpetuated by a given political regime.

The second advantage of our theoretical framework is its capacity to focus on a network of multiple variables. While the “ethnocracy” dimension focuses on the modes of nation-state building and national identity construction, the “secularism” dimension focuses on the interactive relations between religion (and or religiosity), state and society with respect to pluralist democratic standards.

While critically observing the drawbacks of Dahlian procedural democratic orthodoxy which envisages a static and minimum package of democratic institutions, Charles Tilly (2000:15) argued that “analysts of democratization must shift their gaze from

necessary and sufficient conditions to causal sequences, from static comparisons of multiple cases to dynamic analyses of transformations”. Given that, he urged the necessity to “move from a yes-no checklist to a list of crucial variables” which would enable one “to build a general account of change and variation in regimes on the way to describing paths that lead toward and away from democracy” (Tilly, 2007: 10, 22).

As Tilly remarked further:

When I say “general account”...I do mean to identify a set of explanations for democratization and de-democratization that apply equally to Kazakhstan, Jamaica, and a wide variety of other regimes, past and present. I do *not*, however, mean to propose a general law, a unique trajectory, or a single set of necessary and sufficient conditions for democratization and its reversals (Tilly, 2007:22).

The theoretical framework of this thesis seeks to achieve this by focusing on the variables of nation-state building and secularism.

Without doubt, the democratic standards for ethnic and/or religious minorities do not constitute the sole yardstick to assess and compare the democratic character of political regimes. As a fugitive “mode of being” (Wolin, 1994: 23), the term democracy or democratization is historically an ever expanding concept entailing various crucial components such as labour, women, non-heterosexual rights etc. Since it is impossible to cover a complete set of “necessary and sufficient conditions for democratization and its reversals” (Tilly, 2007:22), delineating the democratization trajectory of a given political unit from the theoretical perspectives of socio-economic or women’s rights would be as important and valid as the theoretical framework utilized in this PhD thesis. Yet, they would be the topic of other studies.

Nevertheless, the pursuit of a theoretical perspective focusing on the variables of nation-state building and secularism is indispensable for the topic and overarching research question that this PhD thesis seeks to address. After all, it is important to underline how Turkey’s central socio-political cleavages have mainly revolved around various contestations over its laic-ethnocratic regime characteristics (e.g., Kurdish problem, Alevi problem). In view of that, the democratic transformation of Turkey’s laic-ethnocracy regime features in accordance with the normative benchmark of our theoretical framework is essential for reconciling these deeply-seated cleavages within the socio-political arena.

Accordingly, this thesis will pursue a historically-informed discussion of Turkey's democratization trajectory by reference to the normative dimension embodied by our theoretical framework. After providing a historical narrative of the core regime dynamics which played a crucial role in shaping Turkey's distinctive trajectory until the Helsinki European Council summit of 1999, the thesis will seek to empirically assess the extent and outcome of the EU-related reform process during the post-Helsinki transition. Hence, the research design of the thesis is based on in-depth analysis of a single case study which will seek to generate theoretically informed propositions and testable hypotheses.

Although the research design is based on in-depth analysis of a single case study, the theoretical framework of the thesis offers a sophisticated model to comparatively assess Turkey's central and chronic democratization problems with the previous or prospective democratization experiences in Southern Europe, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and beyond. Indeed, one of the main advantages of a single case study is that it enables one to engage with a critical dialogue between empirical realities and abstract propositions provided by the existing theoretical literature. This thesis seeks to achieve that by critically linking Turkey's democratization problems with the wider theoretical literature on democratization (e.g., democratic transition, regime hybridity and radical democracy), secularism and post-Islamism.

In order to develop an empirical assessment in line with the theoretical framework and the four research questions, this thesis has utilized an extensive collection of both secondary and primary sources. While providing a long term historical narrative of the main regime dynamics which played a crucial role in shaping the pattern of Turkey's distinctive trajectory until the Helsinki European Council summit of 1999 (Chapter III and IV), the thesis has mainly relied on the secondary source material by utilizing a wide range of books and journal articles. While analyzing the shifting dynamics and underlying limits of the democratization process in post-Helsinki Turkey (Chapter V and VI), the thesis has largely relied on primary sources by utilizing a large volume of newspaper articles, official documents written by both the EU and Turkish authorities, policy reports or survey study analyses undertaken by non-governmental organizations such as Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı, TESEV) and World Values Survey Association.

Any study looking at the democratization process in a particular country has to deal with various sensitive and controversial issues particularly as certain signifiers or labels acquire symbolic importance. In this study, a particular manifestation of this sensitivity arises from the use of the terms ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ minorities. Indeed, persistent sensitivities and controversies surrounding minority issues are practically unavoidable mainly for two reasons. To begin with, there is no universally valid conceptual or legal formula that provides a foolproof definition of what constitutes a minority (Preece, 1997; Fortman, 2011). What is more relevant for this study is that despite inserting the “respect for and protection of minorities” principle into the Copenhagen Criteria; the EU itself “lacks an internal consensus, a firm legal base and clear benchmarks” to enforce uniform universal minority right standards both across its members and candidate countries (Sasse, 2008:843; Hughes and Sasse, 2003).

Secondly, any discussion concerning which ethnic or religious groups should be afforded ‘official’ recognition or which specific set of rights should be given to various minority groups within a given political unit is a highly political and contentious issue as it infringes on the “traditional statist tenets of international relations such as state sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention and the like” (Preece, 1997:354). Given that, the protection of minority rights remains patchy to say the least.

For instance, since its foundation, the Republic of Turkey has interpreted the Treaty of Lausanne (24 July 1923) in a restrictive manner, thus granting official minority status to only three non-Muslim minority groups (namely Jews, Greek-Orthodox, and Armenians). Accordingly, the Republic of Turkey has become a signatory to various UN-led multilateral treaties for the protection of minority groups on condition that these minority rights do not contravene the stipulations of the Treaty of Lausanne. For the purposes of this study (and contrary to Turkey’s ‘official’ discourse), a much ‘wider’ conception of minority groups is adopted. The key minority groups referred to in this thesis are summarized in Table 1.

*Table 1 Matrix of Minority Groups in Turkey**

Ethnic Minorities	Religious Minorities
<i>Kurds</i> : officially not recognized as an ethnic minority.	<i>Alevis</i> : officially not recognized as a religious minority. Comprised of people of both Turkish and Kurdish ethnic descent

<i>Greeks</i> : officially not recognized as an ethnic minority.	<i>Greek Orthodox Christians</i> : officially recognised as a religious minority.
<i>Armenians</i> : officially not recognized as an ethnic minority.	<i>Armenian Apostolic Church</i> : officially recognised as a religious minority.
<i>Jews</i> : officially not recognized as an ethnic minority.	<i>Judaists</i> : officially recognised as a religious minority.
<i>Circassians</i> : officially not recognized as an ethnic minority.	

*The minority groups mentioned in the table above does not intend to provide an exhaustive list of all of the minorities groups residing in Turkey but rather includes those minority groups that are relevant to this thesis.

The thesis consists of seven chapters; Chapter I and Chapter VII are the introductory and concluding chapters. While engaging with a critical appraisal of the literature on democratic transition and hybrid regime typologies, Chapter II will seek to construct a theoretical framework for the case study of this PhD thesis. In line with the theoretical framework, Chapter III will provide a brief historical narrative of the dissolution of the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire and the consolidation of a laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm under the Kemalist one-party dictatorship. Chapter IV will explore the democratization trajectory of Turkey’s ‘controlled transitions’ from the opening of the multi-party period until the forced resignation of the ‘Islamist’ Welfare Party from the government in 1997.

The remaining two chapters of the thesis will scrutinize different aspects of Turkey’s uneasy democratization process during the post-Helsinki decade (1999-2009). Chapter V will elaborate the domestic origins and dynamics of the contested post-Helsinki transition process while seeking to analyze the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of laicism. Chapter VI, on the other hand, will aim to demonstrate the highly limited and partial reformist will of the ruling AKP government in forging a clear cut democratic transformation of Turkey’s enduring ‘laic-ethnocratic’ regime paradigm by assessing its EU-related reform performance particularly towards Kurdish and Alevi minorities.

Admittedly, the last two chapters of the thesis seek to engage with highly controversial and topical issues. As of today, transformation of the formerly ‘Islamist’ AKP leadership under the banner of ‘conservative democracy’ to the new holder of the centre-right tradition and to the new governing political elite of Turkey is still in

process (chapter 5). In a similar vein, the current AKP government's EU-led reform process on the cultural rights of the Kurdish minority and on the belief-rights of the Alevi minority is not complete either (chapter 6). Therefore, one should acknowledge the limits of the conclusions that can be drawn on these highly contemporary political developments.

CHAPTER II:

Theoretical Literature Review

This PhD thesis ultimately aims to assess Turkey's *uneasy democratization process* during the post-Helsinki era (1999-2010) by critically relating it to the theoretical literature provided by democratic transition and hybrid regime typology construction. As stated previously, the distinctive historicity of Turkey's 'post-Helsinki transition' has been mainly marked by two parallel developments: firstly, Turkey's attainment of the EU official candidacy status at the Helsinki European Council summit of December 1999; and secondly, the rise of the formerly 'Islamist' Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP) to power with the early general election of November 2002.

Yet, one cannot reveal the novel characteristics of the 'post-Helsinki transition' without reflecting on the underlying principles which have shaped the main contours of Turkey's politics since the inauguration of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era. Furthermore, the distinctive historicity of the 'post-Helsinki transition process' can be best highlighted by comparing it with the previous trajectory of 'controlled transitions' (first: 1945-1950, second: 1960-1961, third: 1971-1973 and fourth: 1980-1983) which had been forcefully guided under the hegemonic scope of the traditional Kemalist state elites.

Indeed, Turkey's experience with the multi-party parliamentary framework since 1950 provides a challenging case study for the literature on transition and democratic consolidation as it brings various questions to the surface. How does Turkey's historical trajectory of 'transitions' relate or fit into the democratic transition and consolidation literature? Can the literature on hybrid regime typology construction provide a satisfactory account in delineating and assessing the dynamics behind Turkey's historical trajectory of 'transitions'? Furthermore, what kind of hybrid regime typology can characterize the core principles of Turkey's politics and then provide an appropriate conceptual framework to assess the historicity of its *uneasy democratization* process during the 'post-Helsinki transition' period without failing to shed light on the underlying reasons behind the troubling antagonism between the

popularly elected AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of ‘laicism’?

Accordingly, Chapter II will be divided into three sections while trying to provide answers to these questions. Besides exposing some of the problematic and ambiguous aspects embodied by the transition and consolidation literature, the first section will briefly review how various scholars opted to engage with ‘hybrid regime typology’ construction in order to provide appropriate conceptual lenses on the impelling empirical realities of the “third wave of democratization”.² Despite acknowledging their respective contribution to the transition and consolidation literature, section one will also emphasize the common theoretical limitations displayed by those hybrid regime typologies (e.g., defective democracies by Merkel, and competitive authoritarianism by Levitsky and Way) which exclusively lean on the orthodoxy of procedural democratic minimum encapsulated by Dahl’s polyarchy.

Section two, on the other hand, will expose the common advantages of hybrid regime typology construction based on ethno-nationalist state building variable (e.g., ‘Ethnocracy’ by Oren Yiftachel and ‘Ethnic Constitutional Order’ by Ilan Peleg) vis-à-vis those hybrid regime typologies which had been covered in the first section. Section two will also focus on the central arguments provided by Yiftachel’s ‘Open Ethnocracy’ by focusing on its five dimensions.

After providing a literature review for hybrid regime typologies in the first and second sections of the chapter, the third section will seek to construct the theoretical framework of this dissertation by adding up the dimension of ‘Laicism’ to Yiftachel’s ‘Ethnocracy’. While characterizing the core principles of Kemalist one-party dictatorship as ‘*Laic-Ethnocracy*’, the third section will highlight the incompatible aspects of ‘Kemalist laicism’ with ‘democratic secularism’ by reference to three criteria for the latter. Last but not least, the third section will demonstrate how to delineate and assess Turkey’s historical trajectory of transitions from the Kemalist one-party dictatorship (between 1950 and 2010) in accordance with the normative

² Samuel Huntington (1991) coined the term “third wave of democratization” to indicate the global expansion of democracy throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa during a specific time period. According to Huntington, the third wave has started with the democratization in Portugal in 1974 and then continued with the series of democratic transitions during the post-Cold War era.

benchmark embodied by the theoretical framework of this thesis. Finally, the chapter will conclude by posing four research questions along with their corresponding hypotheses.

2.1 Democratic Transition and Regime Hybridity: A Critical Appraisal

2.1.A Ambiguities of the Literature on Democratic Transition

During the previous decades, various scholars have produced enormous amounts of literature under the loose heading of “democratic transition and consolidation”. This vast and diverse body of literature has initially emerged as scholars sought to scrutinize the transition process from the authoritarian rule in Southern Europe and Latin America during the 1970s and 1980s. Accordingly, two academic works have formed the backbone of this literature: 1) Dunkort Rustow’s (1970) inspirational article “*Transition to Democracy: toward a Dynamic Model*”, and 2) the four-volume book edited by Guillermo O’Donnell, Schmitter and Laurence Whitehead (1986) which is collectively titled as “*Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Prospects for Democracy*”. While the former laid the inspirational origins, the four-volume edited work provided a foundation to the literature by analyzing various case studies.

In the fourth volume of their work, O’Donnell *et al.*, (1986: 6) defined “transition” as follows:

What we refer as the “*transition*” is the interval between one political regime and another. While we and our collaborators have paid some attention to the aftermath (i.e., *to consolidation*), our efforts generally stop at the moment that a new regime is installed, whatever its nature or type. Transitions are delimited, on the one side, by the launching of the process of dissolution of an authoritarian regime and, on the other, by the installation of *some form of democracy*, the return to *some form of authoritarian rule*, or the emergence of a revolutionary alternative (*italics added*).

Indeed, the findings of this multi-volume work did not maintain that the dissolution of any *conventional non-democratic regime typology*³ would automatically lead to the installation of democracy. Accordingly, adaptation of a multi-party parliamentary framework based on free and fair electoral procedure at best signaled the inauguration

³ *Conventional non-democratic regime typologies* specifically refer to those political regimes in which formation of multi-party competition based on free and fair electoral procedure is categorically disallowed or banned. During the 20th century, the most common examples of *conventional non-democratic regime typologies* have been Authoritarianism, Totalitarianism and Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (Brooker, 2000; Gleason, 1995; Linz, 2000; O’Donnell, 1979).

of “*some form of democracy*” rather than to the inauguration of or transition to full-fledged liberal democracy.

As O’Donnell *et al.*, (1986: 65) clearly concluded by observing various case studies:

Transition in regime type implies movement from something toward something else. For the countries we have been concerned with, the initial something has been (or still is) authoritarian rule...The subsequent something else may be a political democracy, although present-day Turkey and the recent past of Bolivia, Argentina, and, in a different way, contemporary Nicaragua demonstrate that *other outcomes are possible* (italics added).

But then what are the dynamics behind the failure of making a transition to a democracy which was clearly revealed by the cases such as Turkey, Bolivia or Argentina? Is it possible to analyze or create a new typology for these cases which were referred to as ‘*other possible outcomes*’ or ‘*some form of democracy*’?

The answer to these questions within the ‘transitology literature’ remained somewhat limited as the scholars tended to focus on the role of actors (e.g., soft-liners versus hardliners) or mode of transition (e.g., pacted transition versus ruptured transitions etc.), while trying to provide an account for different trajectories or pathways that countries have followed while transiting from their previous conventional non-democratic regime type. Nevertheless, since the main purpose of these foundational transitology scholars (O’Donnell, *et al.*, 1986: 5) was to scrutinize on “potentialities, dilemmas, and limitations involved in the complex process of the demise of authoritarian rule and its *possible replacement* by political democracy”, the transition literature has remained (and will remain) as a promising and noble intellectual enterprise for the future scholars in coming decades.

Thus, the transition literature became even more relevant and appealing with the advent of the Post-Cold War Era since the latter witnessed the dramatic collapse of the *conventional non-democratic regimes* (e.g. the Soviet Union) and their subsequent replacement by ‘*some form of democracy*’ based on an electoral multi-party parliamentary system. Yet, instead of signifying the clear-cut victory of liberal democracy over non-democracy as espoused by Fukuyamian eschatology, the post-Cold War Era witnessed the proliferation of those political regimes “that are neither clearly democratic nor conventionally authoritarian” (Diamond, 2002: 25). Remarkable diminishment in the number of conventional non-democratic regimes

accompanied with expanding boundaries of the concept of ‘democracy’ itself have prompted scholars to search for new ways of thinking and conceptualizing about the diverse and extensive grey zone which stood between democracy and non-democracy.

In this context, Guillermo O’Donnell’s influential article “Delegative Democracy” (1992) represented one of the earliest and most innovative attempts to conceptualize this diverse and extensive grey zone. While acknowledging that many countries have displaced their formerly conventional non-democratic regimes by adopting a multi-party parliamentary framework based on free and fair elections, O’Donnell pointed out that very few of the newly installed infant democracies were progressing towards the level of ‘representative democracies’. Given this, O’Donnell conceptualized the process of democratization as involving two linear progressive stages. While the first transition would occur when the preceding conventional non-democratic regime gave itself away to the democratically elected government, the second transition would proceed as the newly democratically elected government would move forward to the level of ‘representative democracy’ (or ‘democratic consolidation’).⁴

Accordingly, O’Donnell coined the term “*delegative democracy*” to denote those newly formed infant ‘polyarchies’ which in spite of having completed the first transition did not seem to progress towards the second transition — that is ‘representative democracy’ or ‘democratic consolidation’. More importantly, O’Donnell observed that ‘delegative democracies’ had specific features such as lack of horizontal accountability, personalistic style of leadership where the popularly elected president employs strong majoritarian will to run the country with his machismo. According to O’Donnell (1994: 13), many of the newly established democratic regimes in Latin America (e.g. Argentina, Brazil and Peru) were the “purest Latin American cases of delegative democracy.”

Certainly, O’Donnell’s innovative concept of delegative democracy was also the harbinger of “*democracy with adjectives*” which would become pervasively popular (e.g. illiberal democracy, exclusionary democracy, guided democracy etc) within the

⁴ By “representative democracy”, O’Donnell simply meant the way democracy functions in developed capitalist countries. Throughout his article, O’Donnell also interchangeably used the term “representative democracy” as being equivalent to “consolidated democracy” or “institutionalized democracy”.

democratization literature throughout the 1990's (Collier and Levitsky, 1997). Nevertheless, the essential ambiguity and sterility embedded in O'Donnell's line of thinking in particular and the 'transitions and consolidation literature' in general was that instead of conceptualizing an extensive and diverse grey hybrid zone as lying between the continuum of conventional non-democracy and liberal democracy, he situated it as lying in between the conceptual boundaries of 'democratic transition' (first transition) and 'democratic consolidation' (second transition).

This line of thinking inevitably projected multiple meanings and extensive requisites on the very concept of 'democratic consolidation' as it considered and categorized the hybrid grey zone lying between democracy and non-democracy –where persistent authoritarian features incongruently coexist with *some form* of electoral parliamentary system– simply as 'unconsolidated' democracies (Mainwaring *et al.*, 1992; Linz and Stepan, 1996). Indeed, O'Donnell (1996: 38) himself gradually became critical of this line of thinking in his following articles by pointing out that “some of these polyarchies have been in a state of 'protracted unconsolidation' for some 20 years suggests that there is something extremely odd about this kind of thinking.”

Ergun Özbudun (2000) who uncritically applied 'transition and consolidation' literature of the 1990s to Turkey in his book *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* was bound to follow the same erroneous path. While borrowing from O'Donnell's (1992) conceptualization of democratization process as involving two linear progressive stages (first step is the transition to democratic government and second step is to consolidated democracy) and adopting Linz and Stepan's three dimensional criteria for a consolidated democracy (behavioral, attitudinal and constitutional), Özbudun remarked that “a large gray area exists between the moment of *completed democratic transition* and that of *democratic consolidation*” (italics added). As Özbudun (2000: 4) observed further:

The difficulties of the second transition mean that many of the new democracies lie within this gray area, ranging from democraduras to more or less functioning but *still not fully consolidated democracies* – a fate Turkey shares with many other countries (italics added).

Özbudun argued that Turkey has made the transition to democracy four times (first in 1950, second in 1961, third in 1973, and fourth in 1983) but has repeatedly failed to achieve democratic consolidation.

But is it reasonable to declare Turkey (or any other so called not fully consolidated democracies) as already “*having made a transition to democracy*” (Özbudun, 2000: 1) only because a given country has institutionalized ‘*some form of democracy*’ based on a multi-party parliamentary framework? Although Özbudun and many other scholars have repeatedly warned against an ‘electoral fallacy’ by emphasizing the fact that free and universal elections are only one of the necessary but not sufficient causes of democracy, by declaring Turkey or other countries as cases “*having made a transition to democracy*” they themselves have committed the ‘electoral fallacy’ (Schmitter and Karl 1991: 78; Carothers, 2002: 7-8; O'Donnell, 2002: 8).

2.1.B Hybrid Regime Typologies Based on Dahl's Polyarchy and their Limitations

As conventional non-democratic regime typology constructions increasingly became obsolete and could not provide fully appropriate conceptual lenses to the impelling empirical realities of the Post-Cold War Era, various scholars increasingly shifted their attention from exploring the prospects of ‘democratic consolidation’ and sought to pay closer attention to the incongruous yet enduring coexistence of partially democratic and non-democratic features within each political unit.⁵ Accordingly, an increasing number of scholars opted to engage with ‘hybrid regime typology’ construction not only to explore that expanding imaginary grey area which existed between the continuum democracy and conventional non-democracy but also to provide appropriate conceptual lenses to the impelling empirical realities of third wave democratization.

One of the first serious scholarly attempts which specifically sought to conceptualize and categorize that expanding hybrid grey zone lying in between the continuum of democracy and conventional non-democracy (rather than lying in between the concepts of democratic transition and democratic consolidation) came from Larry Diamond, Andreas Schedler, and Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way whose respective articles were published in the *Journal of Democracy* under the general title of “*Elections Without Democracy*”.

⁵ Indeed, the post-Cold War era has been characterized by the success of proliferation of grey hybrid zone rather than by the clear-cut victory of liberal democracy over non-democracy as espoused by Fukuyamian eschatology (Fukuyama, 1992). On this also see: Zakaria, 1997; 2003; Karl, 1995; Carothers, 1997; Ottaway, 2003; Burnell and Youngs, 2010; Puddington, 2011.

Another noteworthy scholarly contribution which systematically sought to cover the diverse grey zone residing between conventional democratic regimes and conventional non-democratic regimes came from a group of German-speaking scholars who have provided a sophisticated theoretical framework with applied country cases under the title of “*Defective Democracy*” (Merkel *et al.*, 2003). Soon afterwards, Wolfgang Merkel and his associates’ innovative concept of “Embedded and Defective Democracies” were introduced to the English speaking world via the special issue published in the journal *Democratization* (2004).

Besides stressing the necessity to perceive grey hybrid zone as lying in between the continuum of democracy and conventional non-democracy rather than lying between the concepts of democratic transition (first transition) and democratic consolidation (second transition), each one of these hybrid regime typology constructions listed above sought to capture particular and recurring patterns of distortion and violation of democratic principles within a political regime despite the adaptation of a competitive electoral parliamentary framework by that very political regime. This way, respective hybrid regime typology constructions aimed to avoid electoral fallacy. Hence, hybrid regime typologies did not nullify the notion of transition per se but rather press upon the reality that only few cases of transition from conventional non-democratic regimes yield substantial democratic transformation.

Yet, before briefly exposing these hybrid regime typologies (Merkel’s four subtypes of defective democracy, and Levitsky and Way’s competitive authoritarianism), it is necessary to dwell on the very concept of ‘democracy’ itself. After all, classifying any political regime as democratic or not, directly depends on how we define the very concept of ‘democracy’. In this context, Robert Dahl’s (1971) notion of ‘polyarchy’ deserves to be the key reference point mainly for two reasons. Firstly, Dahl’s notion of ‘polyarchy’ stands out as the most parsimonious and representative model for ‘procedural democratic minimum’ orthodoxy within the democratization literature which stipulates a certain amount of *necessary* (but not sufficient) procedural conditions in order to constitute the minimum threshold for any political regime to be considered as ‘polyarchy’ or democracy —hence the very term ‘procedural democratic minimum’.

Secondly and more importantly, all of these various hybrid regime typology constructions presented above heavily lean on Dahl's polyarchy while providing a conceptual definition for the very notion of 'liberal democracy' or 'democratic regime'. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that the 'democratic imaginary' of the bulk of the democratization literature in general and democratic transitions and consolidation literature in particular is largely grounded on Dahl's notion of polyarchy as the latter has been pervasively replicated or adopted with slightly more sophisticated variations by various scholars while establishing the minimum (necessary but not sufficient) procedural conditions to qualify any political regime as 'liberal democracy' (Schmitter and Karl, 1991: 80-82; Potter *et al.*, 2005: 3-4; Collier, 1999: 24; Munck, 2009: 38-52).

From his early work "*Preface to a Democratic Theory*" onwards, Robert Dahl (1956) has parsimoniously sought to establish a certain number of necessary (but not sufficient) procedural conditions which, in turn, would constitute the minimum threshold for any political regime to be considered as polyarchy. Eventually, in his book titled as "*Democracy and Its Critics*", Dahl (1989: 221) provided a finalized version of the seven procedural conditions which are:

- 1- *Elected officials*. Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
- 2- *Free and fair elections*. Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon.
- 3- *Inclusive Suffrage*. Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
- 4- *Right to run for office*. Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for the suffrage.
- 5- *Freedom of expression*. Citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socioeconomic order, and the prevailing ideology.
- 6- *Alternative information*. Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by laws.

7- *Associational autonomy*. To achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organizations, including independent political parties and interest groups.

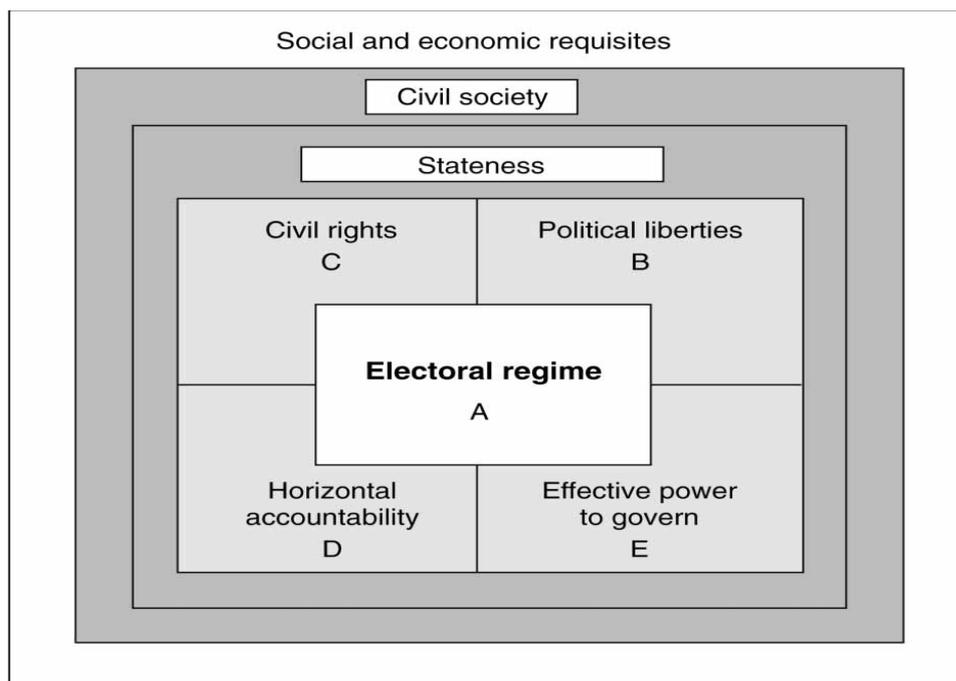
While the necessary procedural conditions between 1 and 4 (elected officials, free and fair elections, inclusive suffrage, and right to run for the office) constitute the dimension of *popular sovereignty*, necessary procedural conditions between 5 and 7 (freedom of expression, alternative information and associational autonomy) denotes the dimension of *liberal constitutionalism*. Hence, by merging two historically different but not necessarily convergent traditions (Mouffe, 1992: 13-14; 2000: 2-3) into a bounded whole —popular sovereignty of the demos supplemented with the civic liberties of constitutional liberalism— Dahl (1971) formulated a parsimonious institutional blueprint for ‘liberal democracy’.

Dahl’s notion of ‘polyarchy’ has gradually become the main conceptual framework to be emulated as it increasingly replaced the previously prevailing Schumpeter’s minimalist approach⁶ who would describe democracy simply as an “institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions which realizes the common good by making the people itself decide issues through the election of individuals who are to assemble in order to carry out its will.” (Schumpeter, 2003: 250). After all, Dahl’s notion of ‘polyarchy’ highlighted that competitive elections executed at regular intervals (procedural conditions listed between 1 and 4) would not fulfill its underlying promises and thus would not be meaningful unless supplemented by the liberal constitutional dimension (procedural conditions listed between 5 and 7). As a result, an increasing number of scholars pointed out to the paucity of Schumpeterian minimalist approach and critically labeled it as an ‘electoral democracy’ while keenly distinguishing it from Dahl’s polyarchy (Diamond, 1999: 8).

After explicating Robert Dahl’s notion of ‘polyarchy’, it is now possible to expose briefly those hybrid regime typology constructions which heavily lean on the Dahlian orthodoxy of procedural democratic minimum. In his article *Embedded and Defective Democracy*, Merkel (2004: 36-42) defines and establishes his root concept of ‘embedded democracy’ as consisting of five interdependent partial regimes which respectively are: 1-electoral regime, 2-political rights of participation, 3-civil rights, 4-horizontal accountability, and 5-effective power to govern [See Figure 1].

⁶ For the defence of the minimalist approach to democracy see: Przeworski, 1999: 23-55.

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework of Embedded Democracy



Source: Merkel, 2004: 37

Furthermore, while subsuming the five partial regimes of the embedded democracy under three dimensions (dimension of vertical legitimacy, dimension of liberal constitutionalism and rule of law, and dimension of effective agenda control) Merkel posits ten necessary procedural conditions or criteria for embedded democracy [see Table 2].

Table 2 Three Dimensions and Ten Criteria of Embedded Democracy

Dimension of Vertical Legitimacy	Dimension of Liberal Constitutionalism and Rule of Law	Dimension of Effective Agenda Control
<p>A. <u>Electoral regime</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Elected Officials (2) Inclusive Suffrage (3) Right to Candidacy (4) Correctly organized, free and fair elections <p>B. <u>Political rights</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) Press Freedom (6) Freedom of Association 	<p>C. <u>Civil rights</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (7) Individual liberties from violations of own rights by state/private agents. (8) Equality before the law <p>D. <u>Horizontal Accountability</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (9) Horizontal separation of powers 	<p>E. <u>Effective power to rule</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (10) Elected officials with the effective right to rule

Source: Merkel, 2004: 42

Indeed, Merkel’s notion of embedded democracy along with ten necessary procedural conditions stands out as an updated replica of the seven necessary procedural conditions encapsulated by Dahl’s polyarchy. After establishing the concept of embedded democracy as the root concept, Merkel (2004: 48-52) proceeds to construct four distinctive subtypes of ‘defective democracy’ which respectively are labeled as: 1- Exclusive Democracy, 2- Illiberal Democracy, 3- Delegative Democracy, and 4- Domain Democracy.

Each of the four defective democracy subtypes corresponds to and is characterized by the impairment of one particular partial regime of the embedded democracy [see **Table 3**]. By discerning four sub-types of defective democracy, Merkel and his associates aim to provide a systematic order to the long list of ‘democracy with adjectives’ and to eliminate the pervasive confusion that inevitably occurred as different scholars had coined numerous labels but referred to the same particular democratic defects in a given political regime (Collier and Levitsky, 1997).

Table 3 Four Diminished Subtypes of Embedded Democracy

Exclusive Democracy	Illiberal Democracy	Delegative Democracy	Domain Democracy
Electoral Regime (partial regime A) is impaired through the direct violation of universal suffrage. Limited or restricted suffrage of citizens.	Civil Rights (partial regime C) is directly impaired.	Horizontal Accountability (partial regime D) is directly impaired.	Non-elected officials have autonomous power over the popularly elected civilian government.

Source: Adopted from Merkel, 2004: 49-50

On the other hand, Levitsky and Way (2010: 5) opted to construct a particular hybrid regime typology under the label of ‘competitive authoritarianism’ which they defined as:

Competitive authoritarian regimes are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely viewed as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents’ abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-à-vis their opponents. Such regimes are competitive, in that opposition parties use democratic institutions to contest seriously for power, but they are not democratic because the playing field is heavily skewed in favour of incumbents. Competition is thus real but *unfair*.

Accordingly, Levitsky and Way point out that the political regimes in Egypt, Zambia, or Kazakhstan *cannot* be considered as examples of competitive authoritarianism

since the so called democratic elections in these countries are entirely carved out from meaningful contest and uncertain outcomes via the employment of blatantly oppressive authoritarian methods. Putin's Russia, Milosevic's Serbia and Tudjman's Croatia, in contrast, may serve as exemplary cases of competitive authoritarianism since the electoral contests in these countries do retain their meaningful character despite the existence of "an uneven playing field between government and opposition" (Levitsky and Way, 2002: 53-54; 2010: 6-7).

Despite their respective merits, each of the mentioned hybrid regime typologies above is characterized by certain limitations. First of all, despite enabling us to pinpoint the flawed functioning of the institutional features of Dahlian polyarchy, all of the hybrid regime typologies outlined above significantly fail to expose and tackle the complex and persistent modes of 'dominations' and 'exclusions' perpetuated by that very political regime (Jayasuriya and Rodan, 2007: 773-774). While Merkel's four subtypes of defective democracy (e.g., exclusionary, delegative, illiberal and domain democracies) perceive hybridity merely as the symptomatic flawed functioning of the specific institutional features of Dahlian polyarchy, Levitsky and Way's competitive authoritarianism narrowly focuses on the intermediate hybrid grey area which fluctuates between the levels of electoral competitiveness and non-competitiveness (Hadenius and Teorell, 2007: 145).

This is simply because both defective democracies and competitive authoritarianism heavily lean on the orthodoxy of procedural democratic minimum which conceptualizes the concept of 'democracy' merely as the effective functioning of a certain number of procedural conditions. From this perspective, enduring modes of 'domination' and 'exclusion' within each political unit are simplistically reduced to a violation or deviation from the necessary procedural conditions encapsulated by Dahl's formula of polyarchy. As a result, each of these respective hybrid regime typologies fails to provide adequate explanatory insights on the underlying dynamics and variables which lead to the complex yet enduring coexistence of partially democratic and non-democratic features within a given political regime.

2.2 Between Ethno-Nationalism and State Domination

In addition to the respective hybrid regime typologies represented above, various Israeli scholars have also produced innovative hybrid regime typologies while

debating how to categorize and analyze the political regime of Israel. Throughout the Cold War Era, western powers had eagerly casted and categorized Israel and Turkey as being rare democratic regimes in the Middle East. However, as the very definition of democracy gradually expanded to incorporate the notion of minority rights with the advent of the post-Cold War era, an increasing number of Israeli scholars challenged the classification of Israel's political regime as a liberal democracy (Smootha: 1990; 1997; 2002; Peled, 1992; Shafir and Peled, 2002).

Among this vibrant literature, Oren Yiftachel's "*Ethnocracy*" (2006), and Ilan Peleg's "*Democratizing the Hegemonic State*" (2007) stood out as the two most remarkable contributions to the literature of hybrid regime typologies. Accordingly, while Oren Yiftachel coined the term 'Ethnocracy' in order to designate a distinct hybrid regime typology which "facilitates the *expansion, ethnicization* and *control* of a dominant ethnic nation over contested territory and polity" (Yiftachel, 2006: 11), Ilan Peleg coined the term 'Ethnic Constitutional Order' to identify those hybrid regimes which provide full dominance to a single ethnic group within the polity by utilizing the state apparatus as medium of control (Peleg, 2007:5). Besides labeling any state that vigorously fosters "the interests of a single ethnopolitical group in a multinational setting" as a hegemonic state, Peleg (2007: 3) broadly defined "Ethnic Constitution Order" as a political regime "built around such a hegemonic state".

2.2.A Common Strengths of Hybrid Regime Typologies based on the Ethno-Nationalist State-Building Variable

Despite the ongoing disagreement between Yiftachel and Peleg on some minor points, it is important to point out how and why each of their respective hybrid regime typologies (ethnocracy and ethnic constitutional order) provides a more sophisticated conceptual framework to transcend the limited characteristics displayed by those hybrid regime typologies which have been briefly covered in the previous section of this chapter (e.g., defective democracies by Merkel, and competitive authoritarianism by Levitsky and Way). To begin with, both Yiftachel's and Peleg's respective hybrid regime typologies keenly expose and challenge the notion of 'domination' (albeit exclusively based on ethnicity) by incorporating the latter into the very definition of the former. While Yiftachel (2004: 648) contends that his theoretical argument of Ethnocracy centers "on the mechanisms of the regime, which explain both the persistent patterns of *ethnic dominance* and its chronic instability", Peleg maintains

that the main goal and essence of Ethnic Constitutional Order “is invariably to maintain and even enhance the *dominance* of a single ethnic or national group within the polity” (Peleg, 2007: 5).

Since both of the hybrid regime typologies are mainly characterized by constructing and maintaining the dominance of a particular ethnic majority to the detriment of minority groups, both authors utilize the Gramscian notion of hegemony into their conceptual analysis. Accordingly, Yiftachel (2004: 667-668) maintains that “A hallmark of the *ethnocratic hegemony* is the common waging of political struggles around the ‘shallower’ state features, while relatively few battles are fought over the ‘deeper’ *ethnic (and class) hegemony*, which is painted as ‘natural’ and universal.” Similarly, Peleg (2007: 3) emphasizes how Ethnic Constitutional Order “persists through an established and ‘dominant symbolic framework’ within the society, an acceptable and unchallenged social reality.”

Both of the authors emphasize how their respective hybrid regime typologies thrive by inoculating a significant portion of their demos with its core political principles. Once these principles are internalized by the large majority of citizens and thus rest upon their active consent, the ethnocratic paradigm (or ethnic constitutional order) consolidates its hegemonic longevity. In this theoretical context, the Gramscian notion of hegemony is equivalent to the ‘radical view of power’ which Steven Lukes (2005: 144) defines as “the capacity to secure *compliance to domination* through the shaping of beliefs and desires, by imposing internal constraints under historically changing circumstances”. After all, any mode of domination can only engender and perpetuate active consent through the hegemonic diffusion of a certain set of norms and practices.

Accordingly, (and unlike the hybrid regime typologies discussed in the previous section of this chapter) both Yiftachel’s and Peleg’s respective hybrid regime typologies are theoretically equipped with the dual capacity to align not only with the procedural democratic minimum but also with the literature on radical democratic theory. In contrast to the orthodoxy of procedural democratic minimum which is keen on providing an institutional design for the concept of ‘democracy’, post-structuralist accounts of radical democratic theory are keen on exposing and challenging the numerous and somewhat intersectional modes of ‘dominations’ and ‘exclusions’ that

pervade human societies (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 153-193; Butler *et al.*, 2000: 11-86; Thomson, 2007: 41-54).

While designating the principles of ‘liberty’ and ‘equality’ as the ‘generative principles’ of our modern democratic imaginary (Smith, 1998: 8-9), the literature on radical democracy “animates democracy and construes it as eternally open to change and improvement” via the wider and more radical interpretation (or universalization) of these two generative principles (Little and Lloyd, 2009: 206). Hence, the dual capacity of these two hybrid regime typologies (ethnocracy and ethnic constitutional order) enables them to perceive the flawed functioning of the institutional features of Dahlian polyarchy within the broader context of ‘dominations’ and ‘exclusions’.

Furthermore, each of these respective hybrid regime typologies may operate under the electoral parliamentary framework. Yiftachel’s (2006: 32) ‘*Open Ethnocracy*’, for instance, designates those cases where the domination of the numerically ethnic majority is embedded within the electoral parliamentary framework. ‘*Closed Ethnocracy*’, on the other hand, exclusively refers to those cases where ethnocratic domination is sustained under the institutional framework of conventional non-democracy (e.g., dictatorships). Hence, (rather than designating the foundation of a free and fair electoral parliamentary system in a given country as an equivalent to ‘transition to democracy’), both of these authors emphasize the normative necessity for the democratic transformation of those complex institutional and discursive mechanisms which are utilized in perpetuating the dominance of a single ethno-national group to the detriment of minority groups.

While delineating the democratization or de-democratization trajectory of their case studies from this particular perspective, Yiftachel (2006: 20-32) comparatively assesses three different routes displayed by Sri Lanka, Australia, and Estonia. On the other hand, Ilan Peleg (2007: 49-77) offers a more comprehensive analytical framework by sketching five distinctive routes which are available for Ethnic Constitutional Order [see **Table 4**]. Hence, besides providing more explanatory framework in analyzing the regime dynamics which lead to a distinctive historical trajectory displayed by a particular case study, both of the respective hybrid regime typologies provide us with an analytical frameworks to assess the prospective

trajectories (democratization versus authoritarian progression) available for their case studies.

Table 4 Five Different Trajectories Available for the Ethnic Hegemonic State

Status Quo	Despite the tension between the ethnic nature of the polity and democratic forces from within and without, the hegemonic state may be determined to maintain its ethnically unequal character.
“Cosmetic” Changes toward Increased Democratization	In view of the pressures to liberalize, the ethnic state may agree to dismantle the most flagrant forms of violations of civic equality but without genuinely changing the character of the hegemonic regime.
Radical Revision toward Genuine Democracy	A meta-constitutional transformation might be introduced, so as to change the character of the polity from ethnic hegemony to individual-based or group-based democracy.
Mild Changes toward Further Ethnicization	The hegemonic state might decide to move in the direction of strengthening its ethnic character but through relatively mild, moderate measures.
Radical Action toward Full Ethnicization	The ethnic majority and its elite might adopt radical initiatives to transform the multiethnic state to a purely ethnic state using harsh measures such as apartheid, expulsion, ethnic cleansing (large-scale killings), or even full-fledged genocide.

Source: Ilan Peleg, 2007: 70-71.

As emphasized earlier in Chapter 1, the theoretical framework of this thesis focuses on a network of multiple variables (see p.16-17). While the “ethnocracy” dimension focuses on the relations between ethnic-national majorities and minorities, the “three secularist criteria” focus on the interactive relations between religion (and or religiosity), state and society with respect to pluralist democratic standards. Without a doubt, the democratic standards for ethnic and/or religious minorities do not constitute the sole yardstick to assess and compare the democratic character of political regimes. Nevertheless, the pursuit of a theoretical perspective focusing on the variables of nation-state building and secularism is indispensable for the topic and overarching research question that this PhD thesis seeks to address.

2.2.B The Five Dimensions of Yiftachel’s ‘Open Ethnocracy’

After evaluating the common strengths and advantages of ‘Open Ethnocracy’ and ‘Ethnic Constitutional Order’ vis-à-vis those hybrid regime typologies which heavily lean on the orthodoxy of procedural democratic minimum (e.g., Merkel’s defective democracies, and Levitsky and Way’s competitive authoritarianism), it is necessary to give further details on the central arguments provided by the former. The theoretical gist of this PhD thesis will tend to focus and utilize Yiftachel’s ‘Open Ethnocracy’

instead of Peleg's 'Ethnic Constitutional Order' as the former incorporates the territorial dynamics of homeland-making into his particular hybrid regime typology. In that respect, Yiftachel's (2004: 648) hybrid regime typology distinguishes itself from Peleg's by emphasizing the dynamics of "contested territories and power apparatus."

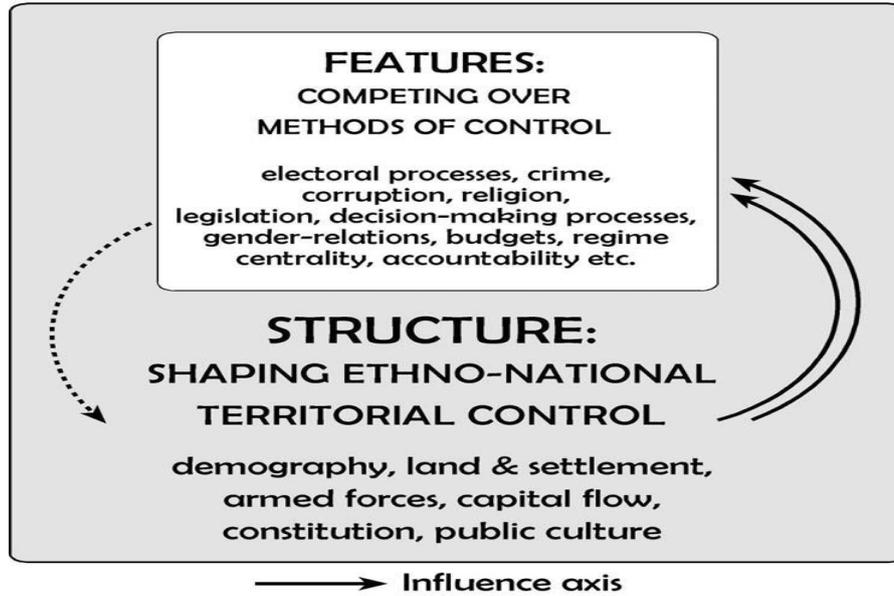
Hence, and unlike Peleg's Ethnic Constitutional Order, Yiftachel's Ethnocracy (2004: 649) does not only draw our attention to the abstract dominance of an ethno-national majority over minority groups but also to *a central* (political-geographical) project of "facilitating the expansion, ethnicization and control of *contested territory* and *state* by a dominant ethnic nation." The political-geographical project of exerting control over contested territories and power apparatus by the dominant nation, on the other hand, presumes the existence of counter-actors who contest that very particular geographical territory and power structure. Indeed, as it will be explored in the coming chapters, Yiftachel's emphasis on the variable of "contested territories and power structures" is highly relevant for the case study (Turkey) of this PhD thesis.

Accordingly, Yiftachel organizes and elucidates his particular hybrid regime typology (open ethnocracy) around *five dimensions* which respectively are titled as: 1- Democracy, 2- regime features and structures, 3- minority status, 4- political instability, and 5- homeland.

1-Ethnocracy and Democracy: Yiftachel posits the contradictory relationship between 'ethnocracy' and 'democracy' as the *first dimension* of his hybrid regime typology. While the term 'democracy' derives from merging the Greek word 'demos' (people) with 'kratos' (power), the term 'Ethnocracy' derives from merging the Greek word 'ethnos' (nation) with 'kratos' (power). Accordingly, Yiftachel (2006: 32) is eager to emphasize how Ethnocracies rest on "*the rupture of the concept of demos*" (italics original) as they are designed to maintain "a rule by, and for, a *specific ethnos*" (italics added).

Figure 2 Structure and Features of the Ethnocratic Regime

Ethnocratic Regime: Structure and Features
A Conceptual Framework



Source: Oren Yiftachel, 2006: 35.

2- Regime Structures and Features of Ethnocracy: In the *second dimension*, Yiftachel (2006: 35-37) seeks to unveil the hybrid logic embedded in ‘open ethnocracies’ by analytically differentiating the concept of *regime features* from *regime structures*. While *regime features* represent the apparent ‘democratic features’ of open ethnocracies (e.g., multi-party elections and constitutional parliamentary framework), *regime structures* constitute the base layer and are comprised of six components: a- demography, b- land and settlement, c- armed forces, d- capital flow, e- constitution, and f- public culture [See **Figure 2**]. Accordingly, while democratic features (regime features) of open ethnocracies tend to operate on a surface level, their ‘deeper structure’ or regime structure (which are comprised of six components) persistently violates democratic norms and procedures by reproducing and advancing the dominance of the ethno-national group within a given territorial-political unit [see **Table 5**].

Table 5 Regime Structures (Six Components) of Open Ethnocracy

Demography	The state’s ethnic composition is of utmost importance, achieved chiefly through controls over immigration and citizenship. In ethnocracies, immigration and citizenship are chiefly determined by affiliation with the dominant ethnic nation.
Land and Settlement	Land and territory are absolutely central for ethno-national politics. As such, the ownership, use and development of land, as well as planning and settlement policies, are shaped by

	the state's project of extending ethno-national control over its (multi-ethnic) territory.
Armed Forces	Violent force is critical in assisting the state to maintain (oppressive) ethno-national control over contested regions and resisting groups. To that end, the armed forces (the military, the police), which bear the name of the entire state, are predominantly affiliated with the leading ethnic nation.
Capital Flow	While the flow of capital and development is deeply influenced by an "ethnic logic", privileging the dominant ethno-classes, these market mechanisms are often represented as free or neutral and hence beyond challenge.
Constitutional Law	Legalism often depoliticizes and legitimizes patterns of ethnic control. Such controls are often premised on redundant, absurd, non-existent, or only partially functional constitutional settings. These are often presented as the law of the land, and subsequently placed outside the realm of legitimately contested issue.
Public Culture	The ethnocratic public space is formulated around a set of cultural and religious symbols, representations, traditions, and practices, which tend to reinforce the narratives of the dominant ethno-national group, while silencing, degrading, or ridiculing contesting cultures or perspectives.

Source: Oren Yiftachel, 2006: 36-37.

Arguably, the description provided by Yiftachel for the regime structures (comprised of six components) is quite parallel to Peleg's characterization of the ten public policies commonly pursued by the Ethnic Constitutional Order [see **Table 6**]. Yet, because open ethnocracies exclusively refer to those cases where ethnocratic domination is sustained within the electoral multi-party framework, Yiftachel (2004: 649) is keen to highlight how the apparent democratic features (e.g., elections, civil and political rights, free media etc) of his hybrid regime typology "fail to be universal or comprehensive, and are typically applied to the extent they do not interfere with the ethnicization project." Hence, rather than directly listing the common policies pursued by his hybrid regime typology, Yiftachel opts for the dichotomy of *regime features* and *regime structures* in order to reveal the complex pattern of *non-democratic* practices and norms that pervasively operate underneath the supposedly democratic framework.

Table 6 Ten Public Policies Commonly Pursued by the Ethnic Constitutional Order

1- Maintaining and expanding the control of the majority over land as a means of physically marginalizing the minority and dominating areas initially in its possession by encouraging internal migration.
2- Establishing the primacy of the majority's language within the polity. Numerous ethnic hegemonies have established language policies designed to force their population to speak the language of the dominant group.
3- Thoroughly dominating the educational system, both logistically and curricularly, as a way of transmitting the majority's culture.
4- Controlling all means of communications and the mass media within the political system.

5- Influencing the “demographic scene” in favor of the dominant ethnic group through citizenship and immigration policies and personal status issues, so as to maximize the majority’s advantage.
6- Controlling all security services, the ultimate coercive arbiter between conflicting ethnic groups, in case all other means fail.
7- Domination of public employment, including in particular the most important political positions with the bureaucracy and the highly sensitive teaching profession.
8- Strict budgetary control to guarantee that the “hegemony project” gets heavily funded while alternative projects do not.
9- Control over the state’s iconography, symbols, and collective memory, including museums, monuments, and names of places.
10- Domination over all the central governmental organizations, including the national courts.

Source: Ilan Peleg, 2007: 64.

3- Ethnocracy and Minorities: The plight of minority groups constitutes the theme of the *third dimension*. Accordingly, Yiftachel (2006: 37) boldly asserts that: “A hallmark of the ethnocratic system is its ability to maintain the *dominance* of the leading ethnonational group which is premised on the *exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation* of minority groups” (italics added). Yet, every minority group does not necessarily become subject to standardized state-sponsored oppression. Those minority groups which are eager to melt or assimilate into the dominant ethno-national group, for instance, can be regarded as relatively benign groups. The approach towards the minorities of indigenous ethnic groups or minorities of bordering rival nations, on the other hand, tends to be more aggressive and oppressive. Thus, Yiftachel (2006: 38) points out that the minority groups in the latter category “are presented and treated, at best, as *external* to the ethnonational project, or, at worst, as a *subversive threat*” (italics added).

4- Ethnocracy and Political Instability: The *fourth dimension* intertwines with the third dimension as Yiftachel explores the structural political instability embedded in ethnocratic regimes. Although ethnocratic regimes manage to maintain a firm and complex control system over minorities, their ‘hegemonic stability’ is not sustainable in the long run. After all, the construction and perpetuation of a single ethno-national group as the dominant and privileged collectivity generates pervasive discontent among minorities and eventually leads to a highly conflictive situation. As Yiftachel (2006: 40) observes:

Within such settings, “external” minorities have several options, which include assimilation (unlikely in ethnocracies), the intensification of their protest to escalating levels of violence, or the establishment of competing frameworks of governance and resource allocation accompanied by disengagement from the state. The last two courses of action tend to reinforce one another and undermine the political stability of divided states and regions.

As a result, ethnocratic regimes tend to display highly divided and polarized societies and in some cases bloody and devastating civil war.

However, the author underlines that mere resistance of minority groups against ethnocratic state control and domination cannot fully account for the habitual volatility displayed by open ethnocracies. Partial democratic features of open ethnocracies also play a vital role in facilitating and vitalizing the minority resistance against the domination perpetuated by the ethnocratic hegemony. As Yiftachel (2006: 40) puts it: “It is the semi-open nature of ethnocratic regimes, their partial democratization, and the limited rights extended to minorities that combine to develop, in a complex process, the situation of *structural instability*” (italics added).

5- Ethnocracy and the Homeland: The *fifth dimension* explores how a given territory acquires sacred meaning as it transforms into a primordial and exclusive space (national homeland) of a particular ethnic group. The political project perpetuated by the ethnocratic regime, as Yiftachel (2006:42-45) keenly points out, cannot be dissociated from its *geographical or spatial* dimension. After all, “Ethnocracies are driven, first and foremost, by a concerted collective project of exerting ethno-national control over a *territory* perceived as the nation’s (exclusive) *homeland*” (Yiftachel and Ghanem, 2004: 651). Furthermore, Yiftachel critically maintains that theoretical literature on nationalism tends to overlook the vital link between space/geography and ethnically centered nation-state building process by privileging time over space; “Yet, national time” as the author emphasizes “can never be divorced from the ongoing construction of a material-geographic national homeland” (Yiftachel, 2006: 44).

Although Yiftachel abstains from incorporating the role of ‘religion’ and ‘state’ into the five dimensions of his hybrid regime typology, it is worthwhile mentioning them briefly. While acknowledging and exploring the supplementary role of *religion* in forging and fortifying the ethnocratic regime paradigm, the author underlines “the general subordination of religion vis-a-vis ethno-nationalism” (Yiftachel, 2006: 17). Hence, ethnocratic regimes tend to sanction or promote ‘ethnicized’ religion which

would assist and serve in consolidating the hegemony of its core principles. The political interpretation and deployment of religion as a superior or contrary to the core ethnocratic principles, on the other hand, are not sanctioned and may trigger furious response by the loci of ethnocratic power structures.

In addition to the instrumental role of religion, the paramount significance attached to the *state* permeates each dimension of Yiftachel's hybrid regime typology as it is "the main vehicle for the regime, providing institutions, mechanisms, laws and legitimized forms of violence to implement the projects articulated by the regime" (Yiftachel and Ghanem, 2004: 648). Yet, the configuration of ethnocratic state apparatus is not only a means to an end but also an end in itself since the very notion of 'state' is sacralised and reified as the organic representation of the dominant ethno-nation. After all, Yiftachel defines the concept of ethno-nationalism as "a political movement that struggles to achieve or preserve *ethnic statehood*. It fuses two principles of political order: the post-Westphalian division of the world into sovereign states, and the principle of ethnic self-determination." (Yiftachel, 2006: 13). Consequently, it is important to realize how the ethno-nationalist principle of forging an indivisible unity between ethnically centred statehood and ethnically bounded demos *deceptively alternates* with the democratic notions of 'popular-sovereignty' or 'self-government'.

2.3 Turkey as a Case of Laic-Ethnocracy

Many scholars have debated whether to categorize the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era (1923-1950) as an exemplar of authoritarian or totalitarian regime typology (Zürcher, 2004a; Kazancıgil and Özbudun, 1997). Yet, instead of narrowly seeking to categorize the Kemalist one-party dictatorship through the conceptual lenses provided by conventional non-democratic regime typologies (e.g., authoritarian versus totalitarian dictatorship) it is more crucial to focus and reflect upon those core principles which the Kemalist one-party dictatorship sought to implant as the foundational and everlasting characteristic of the Republic of Turkey.

Taha Parla and Andrew Davison, in their co-authored book *Corporatist Ideology in Kemalist Turkey* (2004), go beyond this rather sterile authoritarian versus totalitarian regime typology debate by defining the core principles of Kemalist one-party dictatorship period as a "specific variant of rightist, corporatist ideology" which is located somewhere in the midway between two sub-types of "solidaristic corporatism"

and “fascistic corporatism” (Parla and Davison, 2004: 13). Accordingly, the authors maintain that “appropriations of solidaristic corporatism in Durkheimian positivism by the Young Turk ideologue Ziya Gökalp ... underwent some changes within the ideological frame of the Kemalists, who maintained aspects of the solidaristic core articulated by Gökalp, but who also tinkered in part with certain protofascistic tendencies of the interwar period” (Parla and Davison, 2004: 13, 34).

Although analyzing and characterizing the core principles of the Kemalist Republic through a corporatist theoretical framework is not incorrect, it turns out to be somewhat outdated as this particular theoretical medium fails to provide adequate conceptual lenses to address those issues which have occupied the central stage of Turkey’s political landscape during the post-Helsinki era (1999-2009). To begin with, the theoretical framework of corporatism does not possess adequate conceptual toolboxes to analyze and assess the historicity of Turkey’s uneasy democratization process during the post-Helsinki era (1999-2010) which has been heavily marked by the politics of identity and minority rights. For instance, corporatism has no capacity whatsoever to shed light on the underlying reasons behind the sustained antagonism between the popularly elected AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of ‘laicism’ which has dominated the central stage of the post-Helsinki political landscape.

According to this PhD thesis, the ideological gist of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era ultimately boils down to an ethno-nationalist pattern of nation-state building process which has been accompanied by a novel but exclusive ‘national identity’ construction. In that perspective, this project opts to characterize the core principles of Kemalist one-party dictatorship as ‘Laic-Ethnocracy’. Besides instilling Yiftacheal’s hybrid regime typology of Ethnocracy (organized around five dimensions) with some of the inter-related theoretical themes provided by the radical democracy literature, the theoretical framework of this PhD adds the dimension of ‘Laicism’ as the latter plays an integral role in the ‘national identity’ construction of the Kemalist nation-building project.

While the *laicist dimension* of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship has subordinated the dominant Hanafi-Sunni Islam to the ethnocratic state paradigm and prohibited particular forms of the ‘Islamic way of life’ from the public sphere (e.g., religious

garments and religious orders etc), the *ethnocratic* dimension has predicated itself upon the “exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation” of non-Turkish ethnic and non-Muslim religious minority groups⁷. Hence, it is crucial to enumerate the various critical points which the hyphenated term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ embodies.

- 4- Broadly speaking, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ serves to pinpoint the complex and persistent patterns of ‘exclusion’ and ‘domination’ that the Kemalist nation-building project has forged (following the intense demographic engineering and Turkification of the Young Turk Era) by premising itself upon the predominance and imagined homogeneity of the *Turkish and Muslim majority*.
- 5- More particularly, the hyphenated term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ seeks to highlight the close link between the two constitutive elements embedded within the *national identity* construction of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship or, in other words, the fusion between monistic ethno-nationalist Turkish identity and western-looking laic identity. Hence, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ signifies the exclusive identity logic engendered and perpetuated by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.
- 6- Lastly, the term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ refers to the peculiar and problematic characteristics of Kemalist laicism in conforming to the principles of democratic secularism.

2.3.A The Theoretical Contribution of the Thesis: Democratic Secularism versus Kemalist Laicism

Yet, in order to locate and assess both the peculiar and problematic characteristics of Kemalist laicism vis-à-vis the principles of democratic secularism, it is first necessary to pin down the very concept of ‘secularism’ and then delineate what kind of secularism is compatible or not compatible with the contemporary values of pluralist liberal democracy. Indeed, pinning down the concept of ‘secularism’ is highly challenging mainly for two reasons.

⁷ As stated previously, the plight of ethnic minorities constitutes the *third dimension* of Yiftachel’s (2006:37-39) ethnocratic regime typology since the latter is “premised on the exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation of minority groups.”

First of all, the term ‘secularism’ not only carries polysemic meanings but also is a highly contested political concept.⁸ Second, even western countries which are characterized as secular political regimes display different arrangements and practices while regulating the relations between the state and religion. Recently, there has been a flourishing comparative literature which focuses on how historical and political struggles lead to various arrangements of secularisms in each country (Cady and Hurd, 2010; Wamer *et al.*, 2010; Yükleyen and Kuru, 2006; Kuru, 2009).

2.3.A.1 Defining Three Criteria of Democratic Secularism

Nevertheless, it is plausible to establish three different meanings of ‘secularism’ along with its corresponding normative implications for pluralist liberal democracy. First, despite displaying different sorts of arrangements and practices while regulating the relations between the state and religion at the institutional level, those political regimes which are commonly referred to as ‘secular states’ share a substantial family resemblance due to the fact that their governmental legitimacy (popular sovereignty), constitutional principles, and judicial public law procedures are shunned from any set of established religious rules or any institutional religious control. Hence, in its first and most basic meaning (at regime level), secularism simply denotes the negation of theocracy.

In its second meaning (at governmental and institutional level), secularism denotes the ideal of rendering the state reasonably equidistant and impartial towards different religions or religious denominations. In this context, ‘separation between religion and state’ implies an adequate level of *mutual dissociation* between the state and the religion particularly at the institutional level. Alfred Stepan (2000), for instance, dubs this the secularist ideal of joint dissociation between state and religion as the principle of ‘twin toleration’. According to this principle, while institutionalized religion does not interfere with the governmental sphere, the state tolerates and recognizes an autonomously free sphere to religion. Through this way, the state not only ensures the individual freedom of religious worship and of conscience but also promotes religious pluralism in a given society (Stepan, 2000).

While the first two meanings of ‘secularism’ tend to focus more on the regime and the institutional dimension, the third meaning tends to delve more into the individual and

⁸ On the multiple meanings of the term ‘secular’ see: Taylor, 2009; 2007; 1998.

societal dimension. For a long time, the western ‘secularization thesis’ unreflectively posited that the advance of modernization would inevitably result not only in the decline of religiosity (faith and belief) at the individual level but also in the diminution of religion’s role in influencing public life and space. Particularly from 1990’s onwards, however, many scholars came to challenge the basic premises of the ‘secularization thesis’ (Davie, 2007). In contemporary academia, the ‘secularization thesis’ is no longer considered to be an taken for granted approach of scholars but a “theory with a relatively limited application, particularly suited to the European case, but very much less helpless elsewhere” (Davie, 2007: 64).

In this respect, Charles Taylor’s book “A Secular Age” (2007) stands out as one of the most prominent contributions to the ongoing debate. In his substantial book, Taylor soundly observes that our ‘secular age’ is not necessarily characterized by an inevitable decline of religiosity but by the emergence of a condition where belief in God becomes “one human possibility among others” (2007: 3). In this context, Taylor maintains that the term ‘secularity’ involves a particular shift “from a society where belief in God is unchallenged ... to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace” (2007: 3).

If our contemporary ‘secular age’ is most exceptionally characterized by “plurality of forms of *belief* and *unbelief* which are themselves constantly challenging one another and hence interacting and changing” (Bretherton, 2010: 7), then democratically secular states and societies have to be capable of providing a viable and reconciliatory framework both for the ‘believers’ and ‘unbelievers’. This, in turn, leads to the third secularist criteria: besides guaranteeing freedom *of* religion and religious way of life, secularism is a principle which ensures (or should ensure) individual freedom *from* religion and the religious way of life [see **Table 7**].

Table 7 Three Criteria of Democratic-Pluralist Secularism

First Criterion	<i>In its first and most basic meaning, secularism refers to the negation of theocracy by completely shunning public law procedures from any set of established religious rules or any institutional religious control.</i>
Second Criterion	<i>In its second meaning, secularism denotes the democratic ideal of rendering the state reasonably equidistant and impartial towards different religions and/or religious denominations.</i>
Third Criterion	<i>In its third meaning, democratically secular states and societies should guarantee not only the individual’s freedom <i>of</i> religion and religious way of life but also the individual’s freedom</i>

2.3.A.2 A Brief Assessment of Kemalist Laicism vis-à-vis the Three Secularist Criteria (1923-1950)

To begin with, the Kemalist state-elite driven laicist project of the one-party dictatorship era was unambiguously ‘secular’ in its first and most basic meaning of the term (first criteria of secularism) as it fervently shunned the new republican regime from any set of Islamic laws and become the first Muslim country to achieve that. The institutional framework adopted by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship in order to regulate the relations between state and religion, however, did carry problematic and contradictory implications with regards to the second secularist criteria.

Perceiving any institutional autonomous position for religion as a potential threat for the new Republican regime, Kemalist state elites sought to achieve centralized and encompassing state supervision over the religion. Accordingly, the new Republic took exclusive control of administering religious doctrine and worship services of Sunni-Hanafi Islam⁹ through the establishment of Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Reisliği; herefter Diyanet). While preventing any radical interpretation of Islam along pro-Sharia lines, state-sponsored Diyanet would synchronize and integrate the ‘officialised’ version of Sunni-Islam to the higher interest of the Kemalist nation-state building project.

Thus, despite removing the phrase which declared Islam to be the official state religion from the Constitution in 1928 and then inserting the principle of laicism in the Constitution in 1937, Kemalist state elites endorsed a strong and inequitable institutional linkage between Sunni-Islam and the state. This exclusively Sunni-Islam centred characteristic of the Kemalist Republic, in turn, has always been at odds with the acclaimed secularist ideal of guaranteeing religious pluralism and of rendering the state reasonably equidistant towards different religions or religious denominations (second criteria and the meaning of secularism).

In addition to this, Kemalist laicisim held problematic relations with the implications of the third secularist criteria as well. After all, the laicist worldview of the Kemalist

⁹ Hanafi School is one of the four branches of the Sunni Islam. Overwhelming majority of Turkey’s Muslim population adheres to Hanafi-Sunni sect.

state-elites was greatly shaped by the materialist and positivist intellectual current of the 19th century which tended to regard religion/religiosity as inherently incompatible with scientific progress, civilization, and western modernity. As a result, while forcefully diminishing the traditional institutions and socio-cultural weight of Islam from the public sphere, the laicist normative framework of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship regarded the adaptation of western-looking dress code and life style as pre-requisites of extracting the ‘Islamic imagery’ and thus of injecting the ‘western’, ‘progressive’ and ‘contemporary’ identity into the ethnocratic Turkish nation. Thus, the ‘new man’ which the Kemalist Republican ethos sought to create was expected to adopt a ‘secular’ and ‘western-looking’ way of life by imprisoning certain forms of religious expression into his or her inner conscience (Sayyid, 1997; Shively, 2008; Yılmaz, 2005). Observably, the Kemalist state-led exclusion and legally enforced prohibition of particular forms of ‘Islamic way of life’ (e.g., religious garments and religious orders belonging to both orthodox Sunni and heterodox Alevi sects) from the public sphere particularly contradicted with the religious freedom dimension of the third secularist criterion.

Indeed, this particular ‘western-positivist’ thrust of Kemalist laicism (which regarded the eradication of pro-Islamic visibility from the public realm as a pre-requisite for attaining ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’) has always been at unease and in conflict with the religiously conservative values of the Sunni-Muslim majority.

2.3.B Turkey’s Inconclusive Pattern of ‘Transitions’ from the Laic-Ethnocracy

Establishing the core regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era (1923-1950) as ‘laic-ethnocracy’ and highlighting its incompatible aspects with the principles and procedures of the ‘democratic secular state’ is essential in delineating Turkey’s historical trajectory of controlled transitions throughout the multi-party era. Accordingly, Turkey has achieved its first guided transition into the multi-party parliamentary framework when the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti – DP) won the elections in 1950. Ten years of multi-party experience under the Democrat Party government was then followed by three military coups which respectively have occurred in 1960, 1971 and 1980. In each period of direct military rule (1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983), Turkey’s traditional military-bureaucratic elites decisively shaped the rules of the legal-political order by engaging with constitutional and political engineering.

The enduring and pervasive influence of the Turkish Armed Forces in civilian politics has prompted many scholars to commonly label Turkey's hybrid regime typology as 'tutelary democracy'. Framing the decisively influential role of the Turkish Armed Forces throughout the multi-party era as the symptomatic malfunctioning of specific institutional features encapsulated by Dahl's polyarchy¹⁰, however, is highly problematic since the Turkish Armed Forces' enduring military-bureaucratic tutelage over the popularly elected governments has been deeply intertwined with the latter's guardianship role in sustaining the hegemony of those core regime principles (dubbed as 'laic-ethnocracy') *which the one-party Kemalist dictatorship era had sought to implant as the everlasting characteristics of the Republic of Turkey.*

This, in turn, explains the reason why it is essential to contextualize various Dahlian hybrid regime typologies (such as tutelary democracy, delegative democracy, and competitive authoritarianism) within the broader theoretical framework provided by 'laic-ethnocracy'. In that respect, the normative thrust of our theoretical framework conceptualizes the notion of transition from 'laic-ethnocracy' to a 'secular and democratic state' as entailing dual dimensions: The first dimension necessitates the democratic deconstruction and transformation of Turkey's severe ethnocratic regime features in line with what Ilan Peleg characterized as "radical revision towards genuine democracy" [see **Table 4**]. The second dimension necessitates the transformation of incompatible aspects of Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria [see **Table 7**].

Hence, by delineating and assessing Turkey's historical trajectory of transitions (from the inauguration of the multi-party period in 1950 until the currently ruling AKP government's initiative for the 'Kurdish Opening' in 2010) through this normative framework, the theoretical thrust of this PhD thesis will posit the crux of Turkey's enduring democratization problems not simply as a specific violation or deviation from one of the seven necessary procedural democratic institutions encapsulated by Dahl's polyarchy, but as the chronic inability to deconstruct and transform the exclusionary national-identity logic and foundational principles of the Kemalist one-

¹⁰ From a Dahlian theoretical perspective, the enduring and influential role of the Turkish military over civilian politics exclusively amounts to the violation of the first procedural action encapsulated by Dahl's polyarchy which stipulates that "Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials". In the same way, Merkel's 'domain democracy' specifically corresponds to the violation of the principle of "effective power to govern". This particular type of 'democratic defect' is also commonly labelled as 'domain democracy' or 'guided democracy'.

party dictatorship (dubbed as ‘laic-ethnocracy’) into an inclusionary identity logic and principles that are compatible with the values of modern democracy.

Thus, Chapter IV will explore the trajectory of Turkey’s ‘controlled transitions’ by offering a historical narrative from the opening of the multi-party period (1946-1950) until the forced resignation of the ‘Islamist’ Welfare Party from the government via the military-orchestrated ‘post-modern coup’ in 1997. The remaining two chapters of this thesis (Chapter V and Chapter VI), on the other hand, will endeavour to analyze and assess the different aspects of the ‘post-Helsinki transition process’ which have unfolded from the inauguration of Turkey’s official EU candidacy in 1999 until the currently ruling AKP government’s initiative for the ‘Kurdish Opening’ (2009-2010).

While exploring the reciprocal ‘post-Islamist’ and ‘pro-EU’ cognitive turn of the formerly ‘Islamist’ AKP leadership in parallel to the military-led laicist crackdown of the ‘28 February Process’, Chapter V will demonstrate how the sustained antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of so-called ‘*laicism*’ primarily rests upon a fierce disagreement over the religious-identity based demands of the dominant Sunni-Muslim majority (e.g., headscarf ban, status of İmam Hatip high schools, and legal age limit for attending Quran courses). Hence, while keeping in mind the reciprocal interaction between *internal* (domestic) and *external* (international) linkages and the evidently transformative power of the official EU candidacy in ushering a new democratization trajectory for Turkey, Chapter V will tend to focus on the domestic origins and dynamics of the contested post-Helsinki transition process.

At this point, it is important to clarify the use of terms such as ‘Islamist’, ‘post-Islamist’, and ‘pro-Islamic’ as they will be extensively utilized particularly in Chapter IV and Chapter V. In this project, the term ‘Islamism’ exclusively refers to a particular political ideology which articulates “the idea of the necessity of establishing an Islamic government, understood as government which implements the shari’a” (Ismail, 2004: 616). In spite of its varying degrees and the different methods it employs while seeking to acquire governmental power, an ‘*Islamist*’ political actor is the one that ultimately aspires to establish an ‘Islamic state’, which in return, will implement the Islamic laws and moral codes in a given society (Bayat, 2007: 15).

The terms such as ‘pro-Islamic’ or ‘Islamic revivalism’, on the other hand, refer to a process where various actors seek to Islamize everyday life and the social sphere by inserting signs and symbols associated with Islamic cultural traditions (Ismail, 2004: 616). For instance, while a ‘pro-Islamic’ business associations may articulate Islamic ideals of personal integrity and hard-work while engaging in economic activities, ‘pro-Islamic’ human rights groups may aspire for the Islamic ideal of justice while advocating the rights of the oppressed groups. Accordingly, it is important to realize the fact that ‘pro-Islamic’ actors may not necessarily be adherents of an ‘Islamist’ political projects. Yet, it is equally crucial to realize how the ‘pro-Islamic’ actor’s engagement with socio-cultural religious precepts is not only political (that is, not ‘neutral’) but also is “a central strategy of identity politics which, like other forms of politics, is about claims and contestation” (Ismail, 2004: 616).

In this respect, Asef Bayat formulated the concept of ‘*post-Islamism*’¹¹ in order to signify both an emerging empirical condition in some countries of the Muslim world and a conscious political project entailing a cognitive shift from ‘Islamism’ (Bayat, 2007: 10). According to Bayat, the ‘post-Islamist’ condition emerges when a previously Islamist actor “becomes compelled, both by its own internal contradictions and by societal pressure, to reinvent itself, but does so at the cost of a qualitative shift” (Bayat, 2007: 11). Given that, ‘post-Islamism’ refers to a political project entailing a cognitive shift from ‘Islamism’. As Bayat (2007: 11) clearly articulates:

...Post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular. Rather it represents an endeavour to *fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty*. It is an attempt to turn the underlying principles of Islamism on its head by emphasizing rights instead of duties, plurality in place of singular authoritative voice... It strives to marry Islam with individual choice and freedom, with democracy and modernity (something post-Islamists stress), to achieve what some scholars have termed an “alternative modernity...” (Italics added)

Although a ‘post-Islamist’ shift does not necessarily entail the passing away of religiosity or cessation of ‘pro-Islamic’ identity politics, it has to entail an explicit embrace of ‘secularism’ in the first and basic meaning of the term (secularism as the negation of theocracy).

¹¹The term ‘post-Islamism’ was first used by Asef Bayat while examining the rise of Islamic-reformist opposition in Iran. See: Bayat, 1996. Subsequently, Bayat elucidated his ideas on ‘Post-Islamism’ further in his praiseworthy book published in 2007.

Certainly, the term “post-Islamist” can be a vague concept as it only signifies that a given actor has ceased to aspire to the creation of an Islamic state based on Sharia law. Given that, the so called “post-Islamist” actor can still be “pro-Islamic” and thus may seek to Islamize everyday life and the public sphere with Islamic cultural signs or norms. After all, Bayat (2007: 11) remarks that “Post-Islamism is neither anti-Islamic nor un-Islamic or secular.” Nevertheless, the term “post-Islamist” possesses some utility as it clarifies how a previously Islamist actor has gone through a qualitative shift and has no intention anymore of creating an Islamic state based on Sharia law. More importantly, Bayat (2007: 11) emphasizes that post-Islamism “represents an endeavour to fuse religiosity and rights, faith and freedom, Islam and liberty.” Hence, the post-Islamist actor is heavily marked by a discursive characteristic which claims to successfully synthesize Islamic values with democracy.

As far as our case study is concerned, the transformation of the formerly ‘Islamist’ AKP leadership under the banner of ‘conservative democracy’ into the main domestic political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process during the post-Helsinki Turkey, constitutes the most successful example of the ‘post-Islamist’ experience within the Muslim world (see Chapter V). In line with this post-Islamist discursive characteristic, Turkey’s Prime Minister Erdoğan is quite fond of emphasizing how Turkey has successfully proved to the world that Islam and democracy can co-exist and Turkey “has achieved what people said could never be achieved—a balance between Islam, democracy, secularism and modernity” (Quoted by Matthews, 2008).

Nevertheless, and despite AKP’s post-Islamist self-proclamations, this PhD thesis will seek to demonstrate how the balance between AKP’s pro-Islamic stance and democracy is not quite as solid and unproblematic as Erdoğan claims it to be. While acknowledging the relatively more receptive stance of the AKP government in pursuing the EU-led reform process (albeit *only* when compared with the traditional Kemalist military-bureaucratic actors, Baykal’s main opposition CHP, and Bahçeli’s ultra-nationalist MHP), Chapter VI will emphasize how and why the popularly elected ruling AKP government is far from engaging with the clear cut democratic regime change of Turkey’s enduring ‘laic-ethnocratic’ regime paradigm.

As far as the ethnocratic dimension is concerned, Chapter VI will seek to demonstrate that the AKP government’s overall democratic reform performance towards the EU’s

conditionality demands on the cultural rights of *ethnic minorities* has been characterized by “Cosmetic Changes toward Increased Democratization” rather than “Radical Revision Towards Genuine Democracy” [see **Table 4**]. Hence, while opting to undertake selective and partial reform measures towards the cultural rights of non-Turkish but Muslim minorities, the AKP government has persistently sought to preserve the core features of Turkey’s ethnocractic regime paradigm.

In addition to the ethnocratic dimension, Chapter VI also emphasizes the AKP government’s uneasy compliance with the democratic-pluralist implications of the second and third secularist criteria while analyzing its sluggish, ambivalent and inconclusive reform performance towards the belief rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority. While seeking to enthusiastically transform Kemalist laicism’s anti-democratic restrictive aspects towards the religiously observant Sunni-Muslim majority (see Chapter V), AKP government has been quite reluctant to forge a democratic transformation of Kemalist laicism’s partial stance towards the sizeable Alevi-Muslim minority (see Chapter VI).

In this context, it is worth emphasizing the problematic aspects of the recently published book by Ahmet Kuru (2009) who categorizes the ongoing contestation between Turkey’s traditional military-bureaucratic state elites and popularly elected AKP government as a conflict between “dominant assertive secularists” and “resisting passive secularists”. In the assertive secularist ideal type (a la Max Weber), we are told that the state favours a secular worldview in the public sphere and thus actively seeks to exclude religion from the public sphere by confining it to the private domain. Conversely, in the ‘passive secularist’ ideal type, the state maintains neutrality toward various religions and allows their public visibility.¹²

As emphasized earlier, the AKP government’s sluggish performance towards religious belief-rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority is hardly compatible with the label of ‘passive secularism’. Indeed, the AKP leadership’s normative emphasis on religiously conservative sensitivities of the dominant Sunni-Muslim majority along with frequent deployment of religiously-conservative populist discourse, neither leads to the creation of an ‘*equidistant*’ position of the state towards various religions or religious

¹² While formulating two ideal types for state-religion relations, Kuru classifies the religion-state relations in the United States as an exemplary case of ‘passive secularism’. France and Turkey, in contrast, are characterized as the leading models for ‘assertive secularism’.

denominations nor to the foundation of a ‘*neutral*’ reconciliatory framework for non-religious lifestyles (see Chapter VI). Given the limited reformist capacity of the ruling AKP government in accordance with the three democratic secularist criteria and Peleg’s classification of “radical revision towards genuine democracy”, the future prospects of achieving the substantial democratic transformation of Turkey’s ‘laic-ethnocratic’ paradigm are rather dim.

2.4 Conclusion: Articulating the Thesis’s Hypotheses

This chapter has sought to provide a theoretical framework which will be utilized in delineating Turkey’s historical trajectory of transitions since the Kemalist one-party dictatorship. While aiming to systematically assess Turkey’s uneasy democratization process during the post-Helsinki era, this thesis seeks to find a set of answers to an overarching question:

How has the EU Accession process shaped the pattern and outcome of the democratization process in Turkey?

In order to address this overarching question, the study will unpack it into four sub-questions which will then be linked to corresponding hypotheses.

Research Question 1

On which core principles did the Kemalist One-Party Dictatorship (1923-1950) seek to build the Republic of Turkey?

According to this project, the ideological gist of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era ultimately boils down to an ethno-nationalist pattern of nation-state building which has been accompanied by a novel but exclusive ‘national identity’ construction. In that context, the Kemalist Republic is a successor of the Young Turk leadership which has sought to attain the numerical majority and socio-economic predominance of the Turkish/Muslim group against non-Muslim ethno-religious minority groups (particularly Greeks and Armenians) within the Anatolian territories through a violent demographic engineering process.

Following the heritage of the Young Turk era, the Kemalist leadership aimed to inject the dominant Turkish-Sunni majority with a ‘western-looking laic’ national identity. *Within* the particular context of the Kemalist ‘modernization’ or ‘westernization’ reform process, the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive went hand in hand and became coterminous with each other. While the laicist dimension of the Kemalist Republic has subordinated the dominant Sunni Islam to an ethnocratic state paradigm and prohibited particular forms of the ‘Islamic way of life’ from the public sphere (e.g., headscarf, religious orders etc), the ethnocratic dimension of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship has predicated itself upon the “exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation” of non-Turkish *ethnic* and non-Sunni Muslim *religious* minority groups. Therefore,

- **Hypothesis 1**

The core principles which the Kemalist one-party dictatorship sought to establish as the unchangeable and everlasting characteristics of the Republic of Turkey can be best summed up as ‘laic-ethnocracy’.

The first hypothesis will be tested in Chapter III as the latter will seek to provide a selective historical background to the institutionalization of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm during the Kemalist one-party dictatorship. Accordingly, Chapter III will aim to highlight the ideological continuity between the Young Turk era and Kemalist Republic by narrating how the latter extended and bolstered the Turkification and Laicization drive which had been initiated by the former.

Research Question 2

Why did Turkey follow a restricted and inconclusive pattern of transitions (1946-1999) from the Kemalist One-Party Dictatorship?

Although the 1950 elections marked Turkey’s transition from the politically closed conventional authoritarianism of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship, the transition process was deliberately limited to the institutionalization of Schumpeterian competitive elections within the acceptable parameters delineated by the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm. Turkey’s historical trajectory of ‘controlled transition’ from Kemalist one-party dictatorship was followed by successive and varied forms of

military interventions into civilian politics (1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997) which accompanied an extensive political and constitutional engineering process under the supervision of the military. This, in turn, enabled Turkey's traditional military-bureaucratic state elites to effectively manipulate and confine not only the perceived 'internal threats' but also the perceived detrimental outcomes of multi-party democracy on the laic-ethnocratic regime character of the Kemalist Republic.

Indeed, Turkey's historical trajectory of transition from Kemalist one-party dictatorship can be better observed when compared with Spain's transition from Franco's one-party dictatorship. Spain's transition process did not only entail the replacement of Franco's politically closed authoritarian system with the institutional features of Dahlian Polyarchy, but also a substantial democratic transformation of Franco's "hegemonic uninational regime to a semi-federal regime willing to recognize the diverse ethnic legacies of the country" (Peleg, 2007: 108). In stark contrast, the most distinguishing feature of Turkey's trajectory of transition has been its remarkably prolonged ability to contain and to perpetuate the Kemalist ethnocratic hegemony while institutionalizing Schumpeterian competitive elections since 1950.

Besides the longevity of the Kemalist ethnocratic paradigm, the laic dimension of the Kemalist Republic consistently remained at odds with the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria. Noticeably, the Generals of the 1980 military coup modified the 'positivist' and 'religiously restrained' undertones of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism to the extent of rendering the state even more blatantly partial to Sunni-Islam. Nevertheless, once confronted with the rise of the Islamist Welfare Party as the main contender for political power in the mid 1990's, military-state elites repudiated the 'Turkish-Islam synthesis' outlook of the 1980 military coup era and returned to the original 'western-positivist' and 'religiously restrained' overtones of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism. Hence, although the very content of Kemalist laicism did not remain static, its incompatible aspects with the second and third secularist criteria did remain persistent.

Therefore,

- **Hypothesis 2**

By and large, the laic-ethnocratic regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era have remained remarkably resilient in shaping and guiding the trajectory of Turkey's successive controlled transitions.

The second hypothesis will be tested in Chapter IV as the latter will provide a selective historical narrative of Turkey's trajectory of 'controlled transitions' from the opening of the multi-party period until the post-modern coup of 1997. Chapter IV will seek to highlight how Turkey's successive 'controlled transitions' consistently aimed at perpetuating ethnocratic hegemony and obstructing the transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria.

Research Question 3

How and why has the granting of EU candidacy status reshaped the internal dynamics of Turkey's previous trajectory of 'controlled transitions'?

According to this PhD thesis, the critical turning point in Turkey's previous trajectory of 'controlled transitions' occurred in the late 1990's when Turkey was given an official candidacy for European Union membership at the Helsinki European Council summit of December 1999. Besides demanding full subordination of the Turkish Armed Forces to the civilian authority of the popularly elected governments, the EU has required Turkey to raise its standards of minority rights. This, in turn, posed the foremost challenge to the basic features of Turkey's long standing "laic-ethnocratic" regime paradigm.

In addition to the evidently transformative power of the EU in ushering in a new democratization trajectory, Turkey's post-Helsinki domestic landscape witnessed the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) as the main domestic agent of the EU-led democratic reform process (2002-2009). Far from being an integral component of the traditional Kemalist state elites, the AKP emerged from the ashes of the previously banned Islamist Welfare Party which was forced to resign from the government via the military-led 'post-modern coup' of 1997. By appropriating the

leadership of both the EU and IMF-led reform process, the post-Islamist AKP government has gradually reshaped the internal balance of political power to the detriment of the peculiarly laicist military-bureaucratic status quo of the ‘28 February Process’. Given this, Turkey’s piecemeal and cautiously confined EU-led reform process has accompanied a troubling antagonism and polarization between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of ‘laicism’ as the former sought to nullify the latter’s exclusionary and restrictive policies towards the religious demands of the Sunni-majority.

The outcome of the 2007 ‘presidential crisis’ and ‘judicial coup’ are probably the two most symbolic events which illustrate the newly emerging balance of political power between the popularly elected AKP government and the military. Within the new political context of the post-Helsinki period, although the Turkish Armed Forces continued to be ideologically motivated by its self-ascribed sacred duty to protect the ‘fundamental values’ of the Kemalist Republic against perceived ‘Islamic reactionary’ and ‘Kurdish separatist’ internal threats, it can neither execute a sustainable coup d’état (of the style of 1960-1961, 1971-1973, and 1980-1983) nor orchestrate a ‘post-modern coup’ (of the 1997 type). This is something exceptionally significant as it signals a *critical break* in Turkey’s historical trajectory of controlled transitions where the military would seize power directly for a short period of time, set the rules for legal-political order by devising a new constitution and then return to the barracks until another military intervention would be deemed necessary.

Therefore,

- **Hypothesis 3**

The granting of EU candidacy at the Helsinki European Council summit (December 1999) has reshaped the internal dynamics of Turkey’s democratization trajectory as the EU accession conditionality significantly constrained the hegemonic scope of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites to preserve the key features of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm. As a result, the transition process in the post-Helsinki decade marks a critical departure from Turkey’s previous trajectory of controlled transitions.

The third hypothesis will be mainly tested in Chapter V as the latter will seek to provide a selective historical narrative on the domestic dynamics and contours of the ongoing antagonism between the popularly elected AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of 'laicism' which has dominated the central stage of the post-Helsinki political landscape. After pointing to the reciprocal 'post-Islamization' and 'Europeanization' process of the reformist AKP leadership in parallel to the military-led laicist crackdown of the '28 February Process', Chapter V will cover how the AKP government's engagement with the EU and the IMF-led reform process has engendered the gradual and decisive loss of the Turkish Armed Forces' previous predominance in delineating the basic parameters of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy.

Research Question 4

If the recent post-Helsinki transition process (1999-2009) differs qualitatively from the previous transitions which had been guided by traditional Kemalist state elites, then why has Turkey's uneasy and piecemeal transition process under the reign of the AKP government fallen short of amounting to a symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation away from the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm?

Besides precipitating the unprecedented loss of the tutelary powers of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites, the post-Helsinki transition qualitatively differs from the previous controlled trajectory of transitions as the EU accession process has impelled Turkish authorities to engage with the protection of minority rights for the first time since the foundation of the Republic. Accordingly, the EU-led conditionality on the cultural rights of *ethnic minorities* induced the potential for democratizing the Kemalist ethnocratic ideal which has been preconditioned on the homogeneity and dominance of the Turkish language, ethnicity, and culture. In a similar vein, the EU-led conditionality on the religious rights of *non-Sunni-Muslim minorities* offered the potential of 'secularizing' Turkey's enduring institutional and normative mechanisms which have been exclusively partial to Sunni-Islam.

Since EU conditionality on Kurdish and Alevi minority rights challenges the innermost features of Turkey's laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm, it is necessary to assess how the EU-led reform agenda has been taken up by the Turkish authorities in the domestic arena. In this respect, it is important to acknowledge how the AKP

government's relatively more reformist stance and performance on Kurdish cultural rights (albeit only when compared with Baykal's CHP and Bahçeli's MHP) played an important role in paving the way for the opening of Turkey's accession negotiations at the European Council Summit of December 2004. Yet, it is also equally important to observe how the AKP government's overall democratic reform performance towards the minority rights and Kurdish problem has so far limited itself to engender cosmetic (not substantial) changes to Turkey's enduring ethnocratic regime paradigm.

As far as the possible replacement of Kemalist laicism with the principles of democratic secularism is concerned, the AKP leadership's normative emphasis and construction of the Sunni-Islam inspired conservative mores as the dominant values of the nation is hardly conducive to the accomplishment of the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria¹³. Indeed, while enthusiastically transforming Kemalist laicism's restrictive aspects towards the religiously observant Sunni-Muslim majority, AKP has been quite reluctant to accomplish any concrete democratic transformation of Kemalist laicism's partial stance towards the sizeable Alevi-Muslim minority. Quite contrary to the ideals of "passive secularism" (Kuru, 2009), the AKP government has rather fostered the Kemalist laicism's inequitable institutional linkage between Sunni-Islam and the state by sanctifying a more-expansive role for religion in the social sphere.

Therefore,

- **Hypothesis 4**

Despite the critical break in Turkey's historical trajectory of controlled transitions, Turkey's democratization during the post-Helsinki decade falls remarkably short of amounting to a symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation of the 'laic-ethnocratic' paradigm as the AKP government's keen sensitivity towards the democratic demands of the religious Turkish-Sunni majority does not necessarily or evenly extend towards the democratic demands of non-Turkish and non-Sunni-Muslim minority groups.

¹³ As stated previously, the second secularist criteria denote the democratic ideal of rendering the state reasonably equidistant and impartial towards different religions and/or religious denominations. In its third meaning, democratically secular states and societies should guarantee not only the individual's freedom of religion and religious way of life but also the individual's freedom from religion and the religious way of life.

The fourth hypothesis will be mainly tested in Chapter VI as the latter will seek to assess how EU-led conditionality on cultural and religious minority rights (particularly of the Kurdish ethnic minority and the Alevi-Muslim religious minority) has been taken up by the Turkish authorities in the domestic arena. Accordingly, Chapter VI will analyze the extent of the AKP government's reformist performance both towards the Kurdish problem and the rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority.

To conclude, testing each of the hypotheses in respective chapters will eventually enable the thesis to provide a set of analytical answers to the fundamental and overarching question: *How has the EU Accession process shaped the pattern and outcome of the democratization process in Turkey?* Since we have signposted how each of the four different hypotheses will be tested in corresponding chapters, the Thesis will now proceed to Chapter III in order to provide a selective historical background for the consolidation of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm during the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.

CHAPTER III

From Young Turks to the Kemalist Republic: Manufacturing the Laic-Ethnocracy

Various scholars (Zürcher, 2004a; Kazancıgil and Özbudun, 1997) have debated whether to categorize the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era as authoritarian or totalitarian. However, instead of trying to understand the Kemalist political regime through the “symptomatic approach” offered by classical typologies on totalitarianism and authoritarianism (Brooker, 2000), the theoretical chapter of this thesis insisted on focusing and reflecting upon those principles which the Kemalist leadership sought to implant as the grounding basis of their political order. Hence, while narrating the key historically contingent developments which led to the establishment of the Kemalist Republic, Chapter III will seek to test the first hypothesis of the thesis which aimed *to sum up the core principles of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship as laic-ethnocracy*.

As stated previously in the theoretical chapter, the hyphenated term ‘laic-ethnocracy’ mainly seeks to capture three interrelated points:

- 1- The term pinpoints the complex and persistent patterns of ‘exclusion’ and ‘domination’ that the Kemalist nation-state building project has forged by premising itself upon the predominance and imagined homogeneity of the Turkish and Muslim majority.
- 2- The hyphenated term highlights the close link between the two constitutive elements embedded within the national identity construction of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship or, in other words, the fusion between the monistic ethno-nationalist Turkish identity and the western-looking laic identity. Hence, the term signifies the exclusive identity logic engendered and perpetuated by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.
- 3- Lastly, the term laic-ethnocracy speaks to the peculiar and problematic characteristics of Kemalist laicism in conforming to the principles of democratic secularism.

According to this thesis, the ideological content of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era (1923-1946) ultimately boils down to an ethno-nationalist pattern of nation-state

building process which is accompanied by a novel but exclusive 'national identity' construction. As Aletta Norval (2000: 226) remarks:

National identity is the form, par excellence, of identification that is characterised by the drawing of rigid, if complex, boundaries to distinguish the collective self, and its the other... The political frontiers associated with the construction of national identities tend, more often than not, to be paratactical in nature, dividing 'us' from 'them', the 'self' from the 'other', through the drawing of relatively clear-cut frontiers...Far from being given only through 'positive' characteristics, identities coagulate, or are given their unity, in and through that which distinguishes them from others.

In addition to signifying the logic of exclusive national identity construction, the term laic-ethnocracy seeks to highlight how the 'Turkification' and 'Laicization' processes went hand in hand and became coterminous within the historical context of Kemalist modernization reforms.

Not surprisingly, competing retrospective perspectives on the historical origins of Turkey's nation-building process have serious political repercussions for the contemporary state of affairs. For instance, at a ceremony for commemorating the anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death organized by the Turkish Embassy in Brussels on 10 November 2008, the Defence Minister of Turkey Vecdi Gönül delivered a speech where he reiterated Turkey's official state ideology on the nation-building process. Besides emphasizing the crucial steps undertaken by Atatürk for the abolishment of the Ottoman monarchy and the Caliphate, Gönül pointed to the paramount role that the mandatory population exchange between Turkey and Greece had played in the creation of the new Turkish nation-state. As Gönül remarked:

If Greeks had continued to live in the Aegean, and Armenians in various parts of the country, could Turkey have become the same nation-state as it is today? I don't know what words I can use to explain the importance of the population exchange, but if you look at the former state of affairs, its importance will become very clear....Therefore, initial principles of the Republic played an extremely important role in transforming Turkey into a country of people who are genuinely modern, civilized and enlightened" (*Radikal*, 11 November 2008).

Indeed, Gönül's remarks invoke the title of an original article written by Walker Connor (1972): "*Nation-Building or Nation-Destroying?*" In our contemporary world, both the exterminatory mass deportation of the Armenian population in 1915 and the mandatory population exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923 are widely regarded as different modalities of "ethnic cleansing" and thus are condemned as

outrageous acts against 'humanity' and 'civilization'. Yet, this is obviously not the case for the Turkish Defence Minister who regards these incidents as crucial steps “in transforming Turkey into a country of people who are genuinely modern, civilized and enlightened”. In this respect, Chapter III will not only test the first hypothesis but also unravel how the terms such as 'modernity', 'civilization' and 'enlightenment' come to be interlinked with the process of ethnic cleansing.

Accordingly, Chapter III will be divided into two sections. While selectively narrating the historical period from the inauguration of the Tanzimat Era (1839) until the end of the Young Turk Era (1918), the first section will particularly seek to demonstrate the decisive and violent contributions of the Young Turk leadership to the construction of the1 ethnocentric regime paradigm. The second section, on the other hand, will seek to highlight the ideological continuity between the Young Turk era and the Kemalist Republic by narrating how the latter extended and bolstered the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive which had been initiated by the former. The thematic narration of the second section will end with the consolidation of the laic-ethnocentric regime paradigm by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship in the 1930’s.

3.1 Amidst Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Turkism: Enter Young Turks (1839-1918)

While trying to lay out the key historical events which are most relevant for the theoretical framework of this thesis, the first section will be divided into three subsections. The first subsection will briefly cover the reform initiatives undertaken by Ottoman State officials during the Tanzimat Era as the latter was increasingly confronted with two perennial problems: a) how to reduce the widening power discrepancy between industrialized Western Powers and the ailing Ottoman Empire and b) how to avert the inexorable tide of secessionist nationalism across the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire? Accordingly, subsection one will highlight the pursuit of Ottoman Patriotism (Ottomanism) by Ottoman State officials for the sake of averting the tide of secessionist nationalism across the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire.

The second subsection will engage with a brief analysis of Yusuf Akçura’s “Three Types of Policies” (“Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset”) which strives to find an answer to the same perennial question within the Ottoman milieu: What type of national solidarity (Ottomanism, Islamism or Turkism) is the most expedient and may serve the best

interest in strengthening the Ottoman State and protecting its territorial integrity? Or to put it simply: “What is to be done” to save the Ottoman State? Akçura’s article is dubbed as the “Communist Manifesto of Turkism” (Zürcher, 2004: 129) since it is marked by the author’s overtly subjective inclinations toward the ideal of national unity founded upon a “common descent and race” — *Turkism*. In that respect, the crucial points raised by Akçura in “Three Type of Politics” is a harbinger to the ‘Turkification’ policies of the Young Turk Era.

The third subsection will seek to highlight how the territorial loss of the remaining European provinces of the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) has triggered the Young Turk leadership to decisively set the political trajectory of the crumbling Ottoman Empire towards what Peleg categorized as “Radical Action toward Full Ethnicization”.¹⁴ Accordingly, the third subsection will cover the extensive and violent demographic engineering processes undertaken by the Young Turk leadership for the sake of attaining and securing Turkish and Muslim majority across Anatolia.

Indeed, providing empirical evidence for the pervasive ethnocentric logic behind the demographic engineering and settlement policies undertaken by the Young Turks is highly relevant to the theoretical framework of this thesis since Yiftachel’s *Ethnocracy* (2006: 11) does not only refer to an abstract dominance of ethno-national majority over minority groups, but also to a central political project of facilitating “the *expansion, ethnicization and control* of a dominant ethnic nation...over contested territory and polity”.

3.1.A Tanzimat and Ottomanism

After the capture of Constantinople in 1453 by Fatih Sultan Mehmet, the Ottoman dynasty had re-organized its political system by introducing the *Millet System* in 1454 which aimed for a hierarchical organization of communities based on their religious affiliations. Those with Islamic faith, regardless of their ethnic or sectarian background, would constitute *Millet-i Hakime* (dominant nation or the nation which judges and governs). Non-Muslim communities, in contrast, were organized as

¹⁴ As previously stated at the Table 4, this sort of political trajectory unfolds when the “The ethnic majority and its elite...adopt radical initiatives to transform the multiethnic state to a purely ethnic state using harsh measures such as apartheid, expulsion, ethnic cleansing (large-scale killings), or even full-fledged genocide.”

separate millets based on their particular religious confessions. Major non-Muslim religious communities were headed by a high cleric (Millet Başı) who was granted a semi-autonomous role by the Sultan in administrating and collecting taxes from his own religious community. For instance, the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople enjoyed the legal status of an Ethnarch as the head of the Greek Orthodox community and the chief rabbi of the Jewish community had legal status as Haham Başı (Ed. Arat, 2007: 37).

Although the Millet system was forged and designed to sustain the co-existence of different ethnic/religious groups under the ruling Ottoman dynasty, positing it (millet system) as one of the rare or early historical examples of religious pluralism and toleration would be somewhat misleading since the system was primarily preconditioned on the superiority of Muslim Millet (Millet-i Hakime). Referred to as *Milleti-Mahkume* (meaning subordinated nation or millet on whose behalf judgements are given), non-Muslims were subjected to capitation taxes and also exempted from the military and governmental affairs of the Ottoman Empire (Oran, 2004: 36). As Fatma Göçek acutely observes, nationalist historiography tends to portray and to exalt the millet system as a paradigmatic case of religious toleration and pluralism because it serves as a testimony for the “magnanimous” and “benevolent” qualities of the Turkic and Islamic Ottoman Empire (Göçek, 2006: 91-92).

The birth of nationalism with the French Revolution and its dispersion across Europe via the Napoleonic Wars proved to have explosive effects for the territorial integrity of the Ottoman and the Austria-Hungary Empires in particular since both Empires harboured various ethnic or/and religious groups within their domain (Ed. Barkey and Hagen, 1997). After all, pre-national identities which had been previously marked by religious affiliation were transformed into ethnic-national units with a demand for national sovereignty and independence. Accordingly, Greece became the first nation-state to emerge out of the Ottoman Empire as the former waged a national independence war (starting in 1821) against the latter.

Officially launched with the Gülhane-i Hatt-ı Hümayun (the Imperial Edict declared at Gülhane Park) in 1839, the Tanzimat Era (1839-1871) witnessed a wide range of modernization policies in the administrative, military, financial, educational, legal and political arenas of the Ottoman Empire (Hanioglu, 2008; Berkes, 1998). All of these

reforms ultimately and desperately aimed to reduce the widening gap of power between industrialized Western Powers and the ailing Ottoman Empire. Apart from its modernization drive, one of the core policies of Tanzimat (meaning reforms or reorganization) sought to ameliorate and to overcome (if possible) the societal cleavages and disparities instituted by the millet system.

By pursuing a policy of Ottoman Patriotism (Ottomanism) under the motto of *İttihad-ı Anasır*, literally meaning the unity of different ethnic elements, Ottoman State officials aimed to avert the inexorable tide of secessionist nationalism within the Empire. To this end, the Ottoman National Flag and the Ottoman National anthem were adopted in 1844. More importantly, the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856 (the Imperial Edict) strengthened the principle of equality of all Ottoman subjects – irrespective of their religious or ethnic background – before the law by abolishing the extra taxation levied from non-Muslim minorities and by including them in the governmental positions and the military service based on the conscription system of 1844 (Quataert, 2005: 66-68; Hanioglu, 2008: 72-76).

Ottomanism had two main objectives: First, by abolishing inequities instituted by the Millet system, Bab-ı Ali (Grand Porte) endeavoured to bring Muslim and non-Muslim millets together under a common framework of Ottoman citizenship. The reforms did not entail the abolishment of the Millet system per se, but rather its re-organization in order to forge a new form of unity based on the equal status of different millets. As a multi-national Empire which stood at the brink of dissolution, Ottoman patriotism seemed to provide the only viable recipe for political cohesion and territorial integrity (Ed. Bora and Gültekingil, 2009: 88-98).

Apart from achieving domestic tranquility among different ethnic and religious groups, Ottomanism also served as a calculated strategy of foreign policy. By ameliorating the legal and political status of non-Muslim minorities, Ottoman bureaucracy intended to appease the Western Powers and prevent them from utilizing the problems of Christian minorities as a pretext for intervention. For instance, “largely dictated by the French and British ambassadors in Istanbul”, the declaration of the Imperial Edict on 18 February 1856 was directly linked with the negotiations at the Treaty of Paris as it aimed to “boost Ottoman prestige” (Zürcher, 2004: 55). Signed on 30 March 1856, the Treaty of Paris settled the ongoing Crimean War

between the Russian Empire and an alliance of the Ottoman, French, and British Empires.

Given the keen interest of Western Powers to prevent Russia from achieving substantial advances in Ottoman territories, the terms of the peace treaty included the demilitarization of the Black Sea and affirmation by major European powers to uphold the territorial integrity of Ottoman Empire. Although invited to the “Concert of Europe”, the Ottoman Empire remained as a signatory bystander to the Treaty of Paris. Nevertheless, as Zürcher (2004: 55) remarked: “For now, the integrity of the empire was indeed saved and it would be another 20 years before its existence was threatened again”.

The issues that surround the Treaty of Paris constitute an exemplary synopsis for what the renowned historian of the Ottoman Empire İlber Ortaylı (2005) termed “the longest century of the Empire”. While Ottoman Officials were constantly pre-occupied with how to revitalize the imperial strength in order to save the Ottoman State from extinction, European Powers were pre-occupied with how to manage the ‘Eastern Question’— in other words; how to deal with the power vacuum which would arise once the ‘sick man of Europe’ died.

The Tanzimat era (particularly the Noble Edict of 1839 and the Imperial Edict of 1856) culminated in the declaration of the first Ottoman Constitution in 1876. Written under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamit II, the *Kanun-i Esasî* (Basic Law or Constitution) provided the first short lived Ottoman experience with what Bülent Tanör dubbed as “semi-constitutional monarchism” (Tanör, 2007: 149). Article eight of the Basic Law declared that “All subjects of the empire are called Ottomans, without distinction whatever faith they profess” (Tanör, 2007: 145). More importantly, the constitution envisioned the formation of a bicameral General Assembly (*Meclis-i Umumi*). While the Sultan would enjoy the exclusive privilege for appointing the members of Senate (*Heyet-i Ayan*) for life, the members of the Chamber of Deputies (*Heyet-i Mebusan*) would be elected by an indirect (two-stage) voting system in which electoral eligibility was restricted to property owners (Özbudun and Gençkaya, 2009: 8). One third of the deputies in both chambers were constituted by the representatives of non-Muslim millets.

Nevertheless, constitutional mechanisms curtailing the Sultan's autocratic power remained fairly weak. By utilizing his constitutionally vested powers (article 7), Sultan Abdülhamit II announced the prorogation of both chambers indefinitely in 1878 (Tanör, 2007: 160-161). This event would signal the termination of the First Constitutional Era (1876-1878) and the initiation of absolutist rule under the reign of Abdülhamit II (1878- 1908). Accordingly, the declaration of Basic Law in 1876 coincided with the rising turmoil in the Balkan provinces as it was partly designed to soothe the aspirations of Bulgaria, Montenegro and Serbia for full independence. Acting as the protector of Slavic and Christian Orthodox millets within the Ottoman Empire, Russia's involvement in the conflict led to the Turkish-Russian War in 1877. One year later, the Ottoman armies were defeated and Russian troops stood at San Stefano (contemporary Yeşilköy), only 12 kilometres away from Istanbul (Zürcher, 2004: 74). Abdülhamit II would refer to this extraordinary situation when announcing the prorogation of both chambers (Tanör, 2007: 160).

Concerned with the disruption of Europe's balance of power in favour of Russia, Britain intervened once again. Hosted by Bismarck, the Congress of Berlin sought for the equitable management of the 'Eastern Crisis' among the major European powers. The Berlin conference severely shook the political and territorial integrity of the Ottoman State as it entailed significant loss of Ottoman territory "including as it did Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Thessalia, parts of Anatolia and Cyprus, all in all about a third of the Empire's territory and over 20 per cent of its population" (Zürcher, 2004: 80).

3.1.B What Kind of Unity? Prelude to Turkism

Exposing the main ideas put forward by Yusuf Akçura (1976) in his classic article "Three Types of Policies" ("Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset") may provide a good starting point to contextualize the agonizing historical circumstances which culminated in the Turkification policies of the Young Turk era (Ed. Kadioğlu and Keyman; 2011: 90-91). Indeed, one can easily associate the tone of the "*Three Types of Policies*" with Lenin's "*What is to Be Done?*" since the former (just like the latter) is also preoccupied with finding an answer to a perennial question within the Ottoman milieu: which type of national solidarity (Ottomanism, Islamism or Turkism) is the most expedient and may serve the best interest in strengthening the Ottoman State and

protecting its territorial integrity? Or to put it simply: “What is to be done” to save the Ottoman State?

According to Akçura, the policy of creating a new Ottoman nation based on the equal constitutional rights of different ethnic and religious groups within the Ottoman territory had proved to be impractical and futile mainly for two reasons: First, the pursuit of unity based on the equality of different ethnic and religious elements would never appease the dominant Muslim and Turkish majority within the Empire. Second, even if Ottomanism could succeed in granting equal rights to Ottoman citizens irrespective of religious and ethnic background, it could never succeed in quenching the burning aspirations of non-Muslim and non-Turkish elements for national independence. Hence, forging a national solidarity and allegiance merely based on Ottoman territory and Ottoman identity was destined to fail as it was against the spirit of the times (Akçura, 1976: 28).

Given this, the future of the Ottoman State either lay in forging a political unity based on religion (Pan-Islamism) or in forging a political unity based on Turkish race (Pan-Turkism). While the former had been increasingly put to use during the reign of Abdülhamit II (1876-1909) against the encroaching Christian Imperial powers, the idea of national unity grounded on the element of Turkish race was a “new born child” (Akçura, 1976 [1904]: 34). Rather than openly opting for Turkism, Akçura's overall analysis concluded that both Islamism and Turkism contained equal advantages and disadvantages for the Ottoman State.

On the one hand, exclusive accentuation of political unity based on Islam would engender the severe alienation of non-Muslim elements (including non-Muslim Turks) residing within the Ottoman territories and hence would yield to the growing antagonism between religious groups. Exclusive accentuation of political unity based on Turkish descent and race, on the other hand, would inevitably entail the exclusion of non-Turkish elements and thus lead to growing antagonism among the non-Turkish elements (including Muslims) who may resist Turkification (Akçura, 1976: 31, 34). However, despite Akçura's open ended conclusion between Islamism and Turkism, one may discern two key points within the essay which reveal the author's overtly subjective inclinations toward Turkism.

The first key point centres on his interpretation of the Prussian military victory during the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871). According to Akçura, the defeat of France by Prussia was due to (and symbolized) the superior nature of German nationalism over French nationalism. Contrary to the latter, German nationalism was not based on common “conscience and will” but on common “descent and race”. For Akçura, Ottoman authorities were deceived in pursuing the policy of Ottomanism as they remained under the influence of French nationalism. In contrast, German interpretations of nationality – as Akçura (1976: 20) explicitly stated – were much more attuned to the reality. Thus, while referring to the collapse of Napoleon's French Empire in 1871, Akçura (1976: 21) commented that “the vision of forming an Ottoman nation passed away with the French Empire and, like it, can never be revived again”. The author's overt inclination toward Turkism is also revealed while pointing out the potentially influential role that Islam may serve in the political project of Turkism.

According to Akçura, Islam – just like Christianity in the West – should be modified and turned into a facilitator of a nation-building project. “This transformation is almost inevitable” Akçura (1976: 34) posited given the historical tide towards national unity founded upon a common race. Moreover, in the contemporary world, Akçura (1976: 35) observed that religions could only maintain their social and political importance by serving the interests of the races. Therefore, despite acknowledging the infancy of Turkism within the Ottoman Empire throughout the text, and despite providing an indefinite answer to the perennial question (whether Islamism or Turkism would be more suitable and more beneficial to the Ottoman State) of what is to be done, Akçura did have a clear idea about the ‘spirit of the times’ and its ‘inevitable’ implications for the future.

Since its publication, Benedict Anderson's (1983: 6) definition of the nation as “an imagined community- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” has become a classic work. Akçura's attempt to find an answer to a perennial question within the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman context, however, stimulates one to pose further questions: What kind of imagined or idealized unity should this “imagined community” (nation) be based upon and why? If the imagined unity of the “imagined community” is postulated upon the attainment of a ideally homogeneous and monist ethnic category, then what are its implications for democratic theory?

For instance, after categorizing the pattern of populist experience in Eastern Europe as “ethno-populism”, Laclau (2005: 196-197) arrestingly captures the latter’s implications for democracy by soundly remarking that:

There is no possibility of pluralism for ethno-populism. Minorities can exist within the territory thus defined, but marginality has to be their permanent condition once the ethnic principle has defined the limits of the communitarian space. Cleansing of entire population is always a latent possibility once the discursive construction of the community proceeds along purely ethnic lines.

Hence, although Ottomanism and Turkism can both be defined as “imagined communities”, it is necessary to realize that they envision completely different types of socio-political solidarities and thus entail starkly opposite implications for democratic theory.

Certainly, Akçura's essay did not go unnoticed within the Ottoman intelligentsia. One of the responses to “Three Types of Politics” came from Ahmet Ferit (Tek) who, in a letter published in the same journal, criticized Akçura for portraying the three types of policies as if they were completely exclusive of each other. According to Ferit, the top priority of the Ottoman State lay in the pursuit of Ottomanism, and both Islamism and Turkism could become beneficial to the Ottoman State as long as they remained subordinated to the general policy of Ottomanism (Akçura, 1976: 55).

Şükrü Hanioglu claims that until 1913, Ferit's line of thinking enjoyed much more popularity among the Ottoman intelligentsia than Akçura's (Altınay, 2004: 18). Although that might be the case within the Ottoman intelligentsia, some historians also emphasize the fact that the Committee of Union and Progress was already committed to Turkism long before 1913. Given the multi-ethnic nature of the Ottoman Empire, however, most of its members preferred to conceal their Turkism behind the official ideology of Ottomanism (Zürcher, 2004: 129; Akçam, 2004: 65).

Initially, the Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti – hereafter CUP) was founded in 1889. As a secret opposition group inspired by the western ideals of nationalism, positivism and reformism, the CUP aimed to reform the absolutist rule of Sultan Abdülhamit II (1876-1909) and establish constitutional monarchy. By 1906, CUP had managed to transform itself into a political organization by recruiting members particularly from the Third Army in Macedonia. As a result, the CUP had become an umbrella term for various secret organizations and was

interchangeably referred to as the “Young Turks”. Eventually, the CUP played a key role in ushering the Second Constitutional Era (1908-1922) as the Third Army Corps marched to İstanbul in 1908 and forced Sultan Abdülhamit to announce the restoration of the 1876 Constitution.

3.1.C Young Turks in Power: Constructing the Ethnocratic Paradigm via Demographic Engineering

The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) proved to be one of the turning points in this respect as the military alliance among Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro succeeded in driving Ottomans from the remaining European provinces of the Empire. The intensity of the trauma caused by the territorial loss during the Balkan Wars was akin to the one caused by the Berlin conference of 1878. While Macedonia and Thrace were ceded to the Balkan League as spoils of the war, Albania declared its independence. Once again, Istanbul was flooded by hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees (muhacir) who sought a safe shelter within the shrinking territories of the Ottoman Empire. In the meantime, the the Committee of Union and Progress (interchangeably referred to as the Young Turks) had seized the power once again with the Bab-ı Ali Coup in 1913 and got hold of the Ottoman State machinery. As Taner Akçam (2004: 65) remarks:

Upon losing a great segment of its non-Muslim minority population in the Balkan Wars (1912–13), the Committee of Union and Progress, which until then had been unable to make Turkism a necessary component of its rule, now ‘pulled out all the stops.’ ‘It was as if the current of Turkism within the CUP emerged from the clouds of war...’ Thus, the Unionists embarked on a Turkification policy, with anxious haste from having started so late.

This historical period also witnessed the proliferation of various associations, societies and journals —e.g. The Turkish Knowledge Society (Türk Bilgi Derneği), the Turkish Homeland (Türk Yurdu), Turkish Hearth (Türk Ocağı), and Turkish Strength (Türk Gücü) Societies— which aimed to spread the message of Turkism (Akçam, 2004: 65).

Designating the Anatolia region —where the ethnic Turkish majority resided— as the national nucleus of the Empire, Young Turks policies embarked upon achieving and fortifying an ethnocratic paradigm. Accordingly, Young Turks proceeded with an ethnic persecution of the Greek population (1913-1914) living on Thrace and the Aegean coast of the Anatolia. Expulsion of non-Muslim elements from the designated

Turkish homeland (Anatolia) was not only regarded as the necessary ingredient of ethno-national reconfiguration but also of economic nationalization (Zürcher, 2005; Dündar, 2001 and 2008; Üngör, 2011 and 2008).

Following the orders from the Interior Minister Talat Pasha, Mahmut Celâl (Bayar), the head of the Unionist cell in İzmir (Smyrna), directed the Turkification campaign in the Aegean coast, while Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa (Special Organization) had delivered the “necessary” component of violence on the field (Bjørnlund, 2008: 42-50).¹⁵ In May 1914, Unionist leaders approached the Greek Prime Minister Venizelos and tried to make a population exchange deal between the two countries. Four days later, the Greek government announced its approval of population exchange on the condition that it is conducted on a voluntary and simultaneous basis.

The first 'peaceful' and 'consensual' ethnic cleansing contract of the 20th century had already taken place between the Ottoman Empire and Bulgaria in 1913. Based on the peace treaty signed in the aftermath of the second Balkan Wars, 46,764 Bulgarians from the Ottoman Thrace region were exchanged in return for 48,570 Muslims living in Bulgaria. Hence, the proposal for population exchange between the Ottoman Empire and Greece was modelled after this one (Ülker, 2005: 625). But, due to the outbreak of the First World War, the population exchange between Greece and the Ottoman Empire could not be carried out.

What had not been accomplished by the Unionists would be accomplished only a decade later via the Treaty of Lausanne. Nevertheless, “it is estimated that some 150–200,000 Ottoman Greeks left their homes before the outbreak of WWI, either by direct force or, as it is put, 'voluntarily,' i.e. by threats of force” (Bjørnlund, 2008: 48). Businesses and the properties which the Greek immigrants left behind were expropriated and were transferred to 'loyal' Muslim elements.

Due to the critical role of the Defense Minister Enver Pasha, the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of the Central Powers. War conditions triggered and enabled Young Turks to engage in more extensive and brutal demographic engineering

¹⁵ Later on, Celal Bayar would serve as the prime minister of Atatürk in 1937 and then as the third president of the Republic. His ten year long presidency tenure would be terminated via the military coup of 1960 along with the ruling Democrat Party. In his memoirs, Bayar proudly narrates his contributions to the economic Turkification of the Aegean region via the removal of non-Muslim elements (Bayar, 1967: 1568-1571).

in Anatolia. On May 27, 1915, the Ottoman Parliament passed the Tehcir Law (literally meaning “deportation law”) which entailed the forced deportation of the Armenian population living in Anatolia and their relocation to Der Zor in the Syrian Desert. As a result of the death march to Syria which was also accompanied by mass killings, Ottoman Armenians were purged from Anatolia and at least half a million civilians had perished.¹⁶

Although Ottoman officials presented the forced evacuation as a necessary and extraordinary precaution against the Van uprising of 1915, and the potential of further collaboration of the Armenians with the advancing Russian army on the Caucasian front, various historians point out that Tehcir law rather served to cover up for the centrally planned and executed Young Turk policy of mass extermination (Zürcher, 2005; Akçam, 2004). Historians such as Bernard Lewis, Guenter Lewy and Justin McCarthy, on the other hand, dispute the claim of “genocide” and argue that Ottoman bureaucracy had no pre-meditated and deliberate policy for mass extermination. So far, the Turkish State has persistently objected to the employment of the term “genocide” while referring to the “1915 events” and utilized every educational, legal and diplomatic resource available to prevent its acknowledgement as such both in domestic and international arenas.

First of all, contrary to the claims posited by the official Turkish denial discourse, the forced deportation of the Ottoman Armenians was not exclusively restricted to the war zone areas but encompassed the whole of the Anatolian region. A second problematic key point in the denial discourse is that it characterizes the 1915 events as a mutual civil war inflicted by the two fighting parties upon each other. Furthermore, it stresses how deportation policy only amounted to the temporary relocation of the Armenians within the existing boundaries of the Ottoman Empire (not outside of it).

Certainly, deportees were told that they were only going to be relocated temporarily and that they would be able to return to their houses and businesses eventually. The decree issued by the interior minister Talat Pasha on January 6, 1916 clearly reveals whether relocation policy was intended to be temporary or not. According to the decree:

¹⁶ The estimated death toll is contested. The Turkish side tends to claim death toll to be around 200,000. On the other hand, the Armenian side tends to claim death toll to be around two million. A more realistic estimate ranges around between 600,000 and one million.

The movable property left by the Armenians should be conserved for long-term preservation, and for the sake of an increase of Muslim businesses in our country, companies strictly made up of Muslims need to be established. Movable property should be given to them under suitable conditions that will guarantee the business' steady consolidation. The founder, the management, and the representatives should be chosen from honourable leaders and the elite, and to allow tradesmen and agriculturalists to participate in its dividends the vouchers need to be half a lira or one lira and registered to their names to preclude that the capital falls in foreign hands. The growth of entrepreneurship in the minds of Muslim people needs to be monitored, and this endeavour and the results of its implementation need to be reported to the Ministry step by step (Quoted in Üngör, 2008: 25).

Besides ethnicizing the economic field through the demise of a non-Muslim bourgeoisie, the Unionist leaders sought to ensure the ethnocratic hold on the land by ordering the immediate re-settlement of Muslim refugees to the evacuated Armenian villages.

Second, Armenians were expelled to the Syrian region (or were relocated within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire as the Turkish denial discourse would suggest) only because Young Turk leaders had no intention of extending the Turkification policies to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. 'Turkification', as Erol Ülker (2005: 629) keenly emphasizes, "was in the making only within this region. Outside the borders of Anatolia, the Young Turks did not try to nationalise Muslim nationalities. On the contrary, identities were taken as given". Hence, (and leaving aside the debate whether or not there was a pre-meditated and deliberate intention for mass extermination) the events of 1915 have to be regarded as part of the general Young Turk policy of Turkification which sought to achieve the ethnocratic ideal of demographic homogeneity within Anatolia.

During recent years, one of the most pioneering and notable historical studies on this issue was written by Fuat Dündar. In his book Dündar (2008) scrutinizes the coded telegraphic correspondence of the main bureaucratic institution, Directorate for the Settlement of Tribes and Immigrants (İskân-ı Aşâir ve Muhacirin Müdüriyeti - İAMM), which undertook the ethnic reconfiguration process. Founded under the Interior Minister Talat Pasha, İAMM was not only responsible for providing settlement to the Muslim refugees from the Balkans and Caucasus but also for the sedentarization of various Kurdish, Arabic and Turkoman tribes (Üngör, 2008: 22). Throughout his book, Dündar (2008) abundantly demonstrates that deportations of the Greek and Armenian populations were designed and carried out in order to meet the

pre-conceived 10 percent threshold principle. In every region of Anatolia, non-Muslim populations would not constitute more than ten percent of the surrounding Muslim population.

In addition to the non-Muslim population, non-Turkish Muslims also became heavily subjected to Unionist demographic engineering policies. İAAM's general resettlement policy, as Dündar (2006: 41) acutely observes, aimed to “put an end to the existence of demographically homogeneous regions by mixing the Turkish Muslim population with non-Turkish Muslims”¹⁷. To this end, the Unionists uprooted significant parts of the Kurdish tribes from their original habitat and resettled them to Turkish populated areas in western and central Anatolia. Once again, their resettlement was carried out according to the principle of the ten percent threshold.

In order to facilitate the forced assimilation process, the Unionist leadership paid particular attention to separate tribal chieftains and religious notables from the rest of the deported Kurdish population (Dündar, 2006: 40, 41). In the meantime, the non-Kurdish Muslim population (mainly Turkish, Albanian and Bosnian refugees from the Balkans) were settled in the deserted Kurdish areas. Throughout the deportation processes, Unionist leaders anxiously tried to avoid the concentrated settlement of non-Turkish Balkan refugees within a particular region.

For instance, (keeping the Albanian revolt and its declaration of independence from the Ottoman Empire at the end of the Balkan Wars in mind) direct orders from the İAAM in 1915 dictated “scattered settlement” of Albanian refugees “in order for their mother tongue and national tradition to be extinguished quickly” (Üngör, 2008: 26) Hence, the second largest deportation operation was also carried out in eastern provinces where Unionist leaders successfully displaced more than a million of Kurdish population.

Although Chapter III does not intend to cover the Unionist Committee's settlement policies in its entire detail, meticulous analysis provided by historians (particularly during the last decade) on this issue clearly demonstrates and verifies the pervasive ethnocratic logic behind Young Turk policies. Dündar keenly emphasizes how the “Committee issued separate orders for each specific ethnic and religious group, for

¹⁷ See also previous study done by Dündar (2001) which focused on Unionist Committee's settlement policy of Muslim population in Anatolia.

which a separate assimilation policy was developed and pursued” (Dündar, 2006: 42). The overall aim was to construct and to secure the numerical majority of Turkish/Muslim group vis-a-vis other religious and ethnic groups which, in turn, would ensure the territorial and political integrity of the envisioned national homeland Anatolia. This also highlights the conceptual merits of Yiftachel's (2006: 11) theoretical framework since his formulation of ethnocracy as “a central (political-geographical) project of ethnicizing contested territories and power structures” enables us to capture the heart of these issues.

This is also valid for the case of Armenian ethnic cleansing which, unlike the Holocaust, was not motivated by superior race theory. Indeed, Young Turks had three main objectives in regard to solving the ‘Armenian problem’. First, they aimed to eradicate the secessionist Armenian militias which had been operating within the region since the late 19th century and which had been contesting eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire as “Armenian homeland”. Second, they sought to put an end to the continuous intervention of Christian Great Powers on behalf of non-Muslim Ottoman minorities. Third and the most immediate, the Young Turks aimed to demolish any further collaboration or potential of collaboration between Armenian militias and advancing Russian troops. Therefore, by liquidating the civilian Armenian population from Anatolia, the Young Turks provided a ‘permanent solution’ to these problems within the ethnocratic paradigm.

3.2 Consolidation of Laic-Ethnocracy under One-Party Dictatorship (1919-1946)

During the last decades, there has been a growing counter-hegemonic consensus among the historians to interpret the Kemalist ‘revolution’ as the continuation and extension of the Young Turk Era. As one of the leading historians on this issue, Zürcher (1992: 244-246) neatly delineates “Turkish nationalism, secularism, anti trade-unionism, scientific positivism, and Etatism” as the main ideological continuities between the Young Turk and the Kemalist movement. While constructing a new historical periodization based on organic continuities between these two movements, Zürcher’s highly original study asserts that:

My own research¹⁸ has convinced me that not only were the Unionists and the Kemalists indistinguishable socially, ideologically and to a large extent personally, but there exists a causal link between the pre-War and post-War movement. My thesis is that the Committee of Union and Progress in fact took the initiative in starting the national independence struggle after the War, that it helped to launch Atatürk as its leader and that the latter only gradually emerged as the unchallenged leader of what was essentially a Unionist organization. This thesis of course runs counter to the holiest dogmas of Kemalist historiography (Zürcher 1992: 247).

Given that, the second section will aim to highlight the ideological continuity between the Young Turk era and the Kemalist Republic by narrating how the latter extended and deepened the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive which had been initiated by the former.

To this end, the second section will be divided into two subsections. The first subsection will cover the historical period from the War of Independence (1919-1922) until the declaration of the Law on the Maintenance of Order (1925). Accordingly, the first subsection will point out how the initiation of Kemalist modernization reforms in 1924 (e.g., abolishment of Caliphate, Law for the Unification of Education) has triggered the Sheikh Said rebellion. In response, the Kemalist regime utilized the Law on the Maintenance of Order to suppress not only the Sheikh Said rebellion but also the opposition within the country. Hence, the enactment of the Law on the Maintenance of Order (which officially remained in force from 1925 to 1929) proved to be a turning point as it enabled the Kemalist Republic to hasten its modernization reforms while institutionalizing one-party dictatorship.

The second subsection, on the other hand, will highlight how the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive of the Kemalist modernization reforms went hand in hand and became conterminous within the historical context of the Republican one-party dictatorship. Accordingly, while the *laicist dimension* of the Kemalist Republic has subordinated the dominant Sunni Islam to an ethnocratic state paradigm and prohibited particular forms of the ‘Islamic way of life’ from the public sphere (e.g., headscarf, religious orders etc), the *ethnocratic dimension* of Kemalist one party-dictatorship has predicated itself upon the “exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation” (Yiftachel, 2006:37) of ethnic and religious minority groups. Yet, because Chapter II had already assessed the incompatible aspects of ‘Kemalist

¹⁸ In this context, Zürcher is particularly referring to his book titled as “*The unionist factor: the role of the Committee of Union and Progress in the Turkish National Movement 1905-1926*” (Zürcher, 1984).

laicism' in reference to the three democratic-secularist criteria, the second subsection will pay more attention to the Kemalist ethnocentric discourse on the ethnic and religious minorities.

3.2. A From the War of Independence to the Law on the Maintenance of Order

With the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War, the victorious Entente Powers finally provided their own solution to Europe's long standing 'Eastern Question' by signing a peace treaty with the former on 10 August 1920. The Treaty of Sèvres depleted the territorial size of the Ottoman Empire by confining it to central Anatolia. The remaining Ottoman territory would be partitioned among the Allied Powers (Britain, France and Italy) through the establishment of zones of influence. Moreover, the peace treaty included the establishment of Armenia in eastern Anatolia, the secession of Eastern Thrace and the Aegean to Greece and the creation of an independent Kurdistan via future referendum (Ahmad, 1993: 73).

The National resistance movement in Anatolia under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal bitterly rejected and condemned the acceptance of such a treaty by the Istanbul-based Ottoman government as high treason. Their ultimate policy guide and objective was based on the National Pact (Misak-ı Milli) which declared that: "The territories inhabited by an Ottoman Muslim majority (united in religion, race, and aim) formed an indivisible whole, but the fate of the territories inhabited by an Arab majority that were under foreign occupation should be determined by plebiscite" (Zürcher, 2004: 138). Hence, in order to forge the widest armed resistance coalition possible and to attain maximum territorial holding within Anatolia against the occupying Christian powers, Mustafa Kemal's nationalist movement carefully shaped its political discourse of national solidarity around the principle of 'Ottoman Muslim majority' (not around Turkish ethnic majority) throughout the Independence war.

By April 1920, the national resistance movement had already established itself as an alternative government in Ankara by opening the Grand National Assembly. In his opening speech of the National Assembly, Mustafa Kemal elucidated the principle of national borders (hudud-u millî):

These borders have not been drawn only with military considerations, they are national borders. They have been set as national borders. But it should not be assumed that there is only one kind of nation within the Islamic element inside these borders. Within these borders, there are Turks, there are the Çerkes; as well as other Muslim elements. These borders are national borders for kardeş [sibling] nations that lived in a mix way and that have totally unified their goals. [In the article concerning borders], the privileges of each of the Muslim elements within these borders, which stem from their distinct milieu (muhit), customs (adat) or race (irk), have been accepted and certified with sincerity and in a mutual fashion (Quoted in Altınay, 2004: 19).

Within the national solidarity discourse of the War of Independence, all of the different Muslim ethnic groups (Turks, Circassians, Kurds, Laz etc.) had stood in equal footing as “sibling nations” under the umbrella of Islam.

In another speech delivered to the Congress, Kemal crystallized the principles of national solidarity further by asserting that:

Gentlemen...What we mean here, and the people whom this Assembly represents, are not only Turks, are not only Çerkes, are not only Kurds, are not only Laz. But it is an intimate collective of all these Muslim elements...The nation that we are here to preserve and defend is, of course, not only comprised of one element. It is composed of various Muslim elements...We have repeated and confirmed, and altogether accepted with sincerity, that [each and every element that has created this collective] are citizens who respect each other and each other's racial, social, geographic rights. Therefore, we share the same interests. The unity that we seek to achieve is not only of Turks or of Çerkes, but of Muslim elements that include all of these (Quoted in Altınay, 2004: 19).

The elements of the national solidarity discourse (such as “Turk”, “Kurd”, “Çerkez”) deployed during the War of Independence would radically change their meaning with the inauguration of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship as the Turkification of non-Turkish Muslim elements would proceed along with the Turkification of the historiography of National Independence War.

Once Mustafa Kemal's national liberation forces defeated the Greek army in 1922, the Treaty of Sevres was annulled and replaced with a new peace treaty. Signed on 24 July 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne established the territorial boundaries of contemporary Turkey (with the exception of Hatay province which was added to Turkish territory via the referendum of 1939) and thus granted international recognition and sovereignty to the nationalist government in Ankara. On 29 October

1923, the Grand National Assembly officially declared the Republic of Turkey and selected Mustafa Kemal as its first President.

After driving the foreign enemies out from Anatolia and getting exclusive hold of political power, Kemalist cadres have embarked upon a series of drastic and sweeping reforms which would extend and deepen the Turkification and Laicization drive initiated by the Young Turks. One can get an insight into Mustafa Kemal's vision of how to pursue modernization reforms and how to accomplish socio-cultural and political change from his diary notes written in 1918.

If I obtain great authority and power, I think I will bring about by a coup – suddenly in one moment– the desired revolution in our social life. Because, unlike others, I don't believe that this deed can be achieved by raising the intelligence of others slowly to the level of my own. My soul rebels against such a course. Why, after my years of education, after studying civilization and the socialization processes, after spending my life and my time to gain pleasure from freedom, should I descend to the level of common people? I will make them rise to my level. Let me not resemble them: they should resemble me (Quoted in Jung and Piccoli, 2001: 79-80).

The first wave of the Kemalist modernization reforms was initiated on 3 March 1924. The office of the Caliph was abolished and all members of the Ottoman Dynasty were sent into exile. The very same day, the parliament enacted the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (Law for the Unification of Education) which aimed to centralize and nationalize the education system. Remarks made by Ziya Gökalp in 1923, clearly express the overall spirit and purpose of the new educational policy of the Republic:

In this country there are three layers of people differing from one another by civilization and education: the common people, the men educated in madrassas, the men educated in [modern] secular schools. The first is still not freed from the effects of Eastern civilization; the second are still living in Eastern civilization. It is only the third group which has had some benefits from Western civilization... We shall succeed in unifying our learning and education only when we have one civilization; only then shall we be a homogenous nation— intellectually and spiritually. We cannot afford to hesitate any longer (As quoted in Bayar, 2009: 366)

For the sake of achieving national homogeneity, *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* also included the compulsory Turkification of all “foreign and minority schools” (and thus their liquidation) under the centralized control of Ministry of Education (Göçek, 2006: 46).

Education reform is usually hailed as one of the stepping stones of the Kemalist laicization process. The Madrasa system was completely abolished and the autonomy of religious education was brought under the direct control of the Ministry of Education. While article two of Law for the Unification of Education stipulated that “all madrassas and schools which are administered by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or by private foundations are turned over to and brought under the Ministry of Education”, article four authorized the Ministry of Education to establish a Faculty of Divinity which would train religious officials “such as preachers, for the performance of religious services” (Bayar, 2009: 366; Davison, 2003: 337).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations were replaced with the Presidency of Religious Affairs (hereafter Diyanet) which would possess exclusive responsibilities for “administration of all mosques...as well as the appointment and dismissal of all imams [preachers], hatibs [orators], vaizs [preachers], şeyhs [leaders of dervish houses], muezzins [callers to prayer], kayyims [sextons], and all other employees of a religious character” (Davison, 2003: 337). Appointed by the President, the head of the Diyanet —just like the rest of all of the religious officials— would become a “paid employee of the state” (Toprak, 1995: 35). Hence, Kemalist state elites sought to achieve centralized and encompassing state supervision over religion through the establishment the Diyanet.

In the meantime, some of the prominent figures and war heroes of the Liberation War who grew uneasy with Kemal's increasing authoritarian tendencies and his monopolization of power had resigned from the Republican People's Party and established the Progressive Republican Party (Terrakiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası) on 17 November 1924. Their party programme envisioned a more evolutionary reform process and less dictatorial Republicanism. Furthermore, it put more emphasis on liberal economic policies.

The very next year, the first large scale rebellion against Ankara broke out in the Kurdish South East. The armed uprising was headed by a Kurdish religious leader Sheikh Said whose influential position within the Nakşibendi order enabled him to rally the support of a considerable number of Zaza Kurdish tribes (Olson, 2000). The rebellion aimed for autonomous Kurdish governance and restoration of Caliphate and Sharia law. As soon as the news of the insurrection reached Ankara, the parliament declared martial law throughout South East Turkey. Furthermore, on 4 March 1925,

Parliament enacted the *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* (Law on the Maintenance of Order) which empowered the government with extraordinary measures to uproot “all reaction and rebellion, and the instigation or encouragement thereof, or the publication of anything likely to disturb the order, security, tranquility and social harmony of the country” (Jenkins, 2008: 94).

In the following months, Ankara suppressed the rebellion by re-asserting its military might in the region. Sheikh Sait and his followers were hanged. As the member of the National Assembly, Abdülhalik Renda wrote the first government report on Sheikh Sait uprising which was titled as “*Under the Veil of Religion, Rebellion is a Completely National Movement*” (Yıldız, 2001: 245). Hence, according to the Ankara government, the uprising symbolized the new ‘eastern problem’ (replacing the earlier Armenian problem) of the Republic of Turkey.

In a speech delivered at Turkish Hearths (after the suppression of the rebellion), the then Prime Minister İsmet İnönü proclaimed the general guiding principles of the Kemalist Republic in regard to the solution of the ‘eastern problem’. As İnönü openly declared:

We are bluntly Nationalist...and Nationalism is the sole factor of our unity. Other (ethnic) elements have no authority within the Turkish majority. Our mission, at any cost, is to Turkify non-Turkish inhabitants within the Turkish homeland. We will extirpate those elements who oppose Turks and Turkishness. Being Turkish is the primary quality that we demand from those who will serve this country (Quoted in Yıldız, 2001: 155-156).

Evidently, İnönü's remarks sum up the logic of ethnocentric domination in its purest form — a logic that Kemalist establishment will be capable of enforcing unabated until the Helsinki Summit of 1999.

The 'state of exception' created by the enactment of *Takrir-i Sükun Kanunu* was not only deployed for the liquidation of the rebellion but utilized to eliminate all opposition within the country (Tunçay, 1981: 127-171). The government particularly banned those newspapers which held a critical stance on the encroaching authoritarian power of the new Republican regime. More importantly, government authorities falsely, but consciously accused the Progressive Republican Party of encouraging the Sheikh Sait rebellion and for exploiting religion for political purposes. On 3 June 1925, the government closed down the opposition party and the former colleagues of

Atatürk who served in the critical military posts during the Liberation War were ousted from the political arena. As Zürcher (2004: 176) rightly points out: “From the promulgation of the Law on the Maintenance of Order in March 1925, Turkey's government was an authoritarian one-party regime and, not to put too fine a point on it, a dictatorship”.

As a prominent war hero who established the eastern borders of Turkey by defeating Armenian forces in 1919, Kazım Karabekir (2012: 184) would later remark that: “We have won our independence through national struggle but we have lost our freedom through one-party regime”. In a series of interviews with Neşe Düzel (2009) in *Taraf* daily, veteran journalist Taha Akyol used Kazım Karabekir's statements in order to sum up the history of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship period. However, one should note that “losing freedom” for Karabekir within this historical context specifically signified the neutralization and marginalization of his own opposition party (which emerged out of the national resistance movement) under one-party dictatorship. It is worth emphasizing that Karabekir, as the chairman of the opposition Progressive Republican Party, enthusiastically supported the government's decision in suppressing and liquidating the Sheikh Said Rebellion through the declaration of martial law in eastern provinces (Zürcher, 2004: 171). According to this thesis, the consensus between the chairmen of the two opposing parties in dealing with the new ‘Eastern Question’ may sum up this historical period in a more comprehensive way.

3.2.B Deepening the Laic-Ethnocratic Imaginary

After establishing himself as the unchallengeable leader through the Law on the Maintenance of Order, Mustafa Kemal embarked on bringing “the desired revolution in our social life” with increasing pace. In September 1925, the government outlawed all religious shrines, tarikats and dervish convents in the country. In his famous Kastamonu speech, Mustafa Kemal elucidated the reason behind the closure of religious orders and dervish lodges:

I flatly refuse to believe that today, in the luminous presence of science, knowledge, and civilization in all its aspects, there exist, in the civilized community of Turkey, men so primitive as to seek their material and moral well-being from the guidance of one or another *şeyh*. Gentlemen, you and the whole nation must know, and know well, that the Republic of Turkey cannot be the land of *şeyhs*, dervishes, disciples, and lay brothers. The straightest, truest Way (tarikats) is the way of civilization. To be a man, it is enough to do what civilization requires. The heads of brotherhoods will understand this truth that I have uttered in

all its clarity, and will of their own accord at once close their convents, and accept the fact that their disciplines have at last come of age (As quoted in Lewis, 2002: 410-411).

Furthermore, the use of the fez was outlawed with the “Hat Law” of November 1925. In his Great Speech (Nutuk), Kemal asserted that:

It was necessary to abolish the fez, which sat on our heads as a sign of ignorance, of fanaticism, of hatred to progress and civilization, and to adopt in its place the hat, the customary headdress of the whole civilized world, thus showing, among other things, that no difference existed in the manner of thought between the Turkish nation and the whole family of civilized mankind (As quoted in Jenkins, 2008: 95).

Indeed, these statements exemplified the ‘western-positivist’ and ‘religious aversive’ thrust of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship which regarded the eradication of pro-Islamic visibility from the public realm as a pre-requisite for attaining modernity, progress, and civilization. The next year, the Swiss civil code and Italian penal code were adopted. In 1928, the article which declared Islam as the state religion was removed from the Constitution of 1924 [see **Table 8**].

Accordingly, the 1930's witnessed the systematic efforts by the Republican cadres to formulate Kemalism into a coherent ideology. The 1931 action programme of the CHP proclaimed the six guiding principles (‘six arrows’) of the Turkish Republic and enumerated them as: Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Laicism, Reformism, and Statism. Furthermore, CHP's 1935 program declared that “all the principles pursued by the party are the principles of Kamâlism”.¹⁹ With the constitutional amendment of 1937, all of these six principles were enshrined into the Constitution of 1924.

Yet, instead of defining each principle by itself, it is more important to capture the way Kemalist official discourse shapes multiple patterns of interconnection among the six arrows. After all, the concepts such as Laicism, Nationalism, and Republicanism

¹⁹ Although the word “Kamâlism” is no longer used in contemporary Turkish and replaced with “Kemalizm”, the former reflects the attempts of ‘purifying’ Turkish Language in order to get rid of Ottoman influence by either modifying or carving out those words with Arabic and Persian origin. For instance, in the 1931 program of CHP, the principle of Nationalism appears as “Milliyetçilik” and the principle of “Transformationsim” appears as “İnkilâpçılık”. With the 1935 program, the word “Millet”/ “Milliyetçilik” (nation/nationalism) is abandoned and replaced with new Turkish words “Ulus”/ “Ulusçuluk”. Similarly, “İnkilâpçılık” (transformationism) is replaced with “Devrimcilik”. It is no coincidence that the anti-EU and anti-AKP Kemalist opposition during the post-Helsinki period persistently preferred to refer themselves as “Ulusalçı” (nationalist) rather than “Milliyetçi” (nationalist).

by themselves are neither tied down with inflexible meanings nor are rigidly attached to specific connotations. They rather acquire specific meanings with particular connotations as they become internal “moments” of a given discourse (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001: 105-134).

Table 8 Chronology of Kemalist Reforms during the One-Party Dictatorship Era

1923	a) Republic of Turkey is declared on 29 October 1923.
1924	a) Abolishment of Caliphate b) Promulgation of the Law for Unification on the Education (closure of Medrese) c) creation of Religious Directorate d) Weekend Act: Friday becomes workday. Saturday and Sunday become weekend e) A new Turkish constitution was accepted.
1925	a) Replacement of fez with western hat b) Adaptation of Gregorian Calendar System c) The Law for the Maintenance of Public Order was enacted on 4 March 1925. Remained in force until 1929. d) Closure of religious order and Dervish lodges (Tekke, Zaviye and Turbe)
1926	a) Adaptation of new Civil Code from the Swiss Civil Code b) Adaptation of new Penal Code from the Italian Penal Code
1928	a) Adaptation of a new Latin alphabet for the Turkish Language b) Elimination of Islam as a State Religion from the 1924 Constitution
1931	a) Establishment of Turkish History Foundation
1932	a) Ban on the Arabic Ezan (call to prayer) b) Creation of the Turkish Language Association
1933	a) Adaptation of European Measure System
1934	a) Law on Family Names b) Abolition of Ottoman titles and by-names such as Bey, Efendi, and Pasa. c) Women are given the right to vote and to be elected d) Law relating to the wearing of Prohibited Garments (banned religious-clothing)
1937	a) Insertion of Kemalist Six Arrows into the 1924 Constitution including the principle of laicism.

Source: Adopted from Zurcher 2004a

To begin with, while explaining the principle of laicism, CHP’s 1931 programme maintained that “because the view of religion is a matter of conscience, the Party sees it as the main cause of our nation's in contemporary progress to keep separate religious ideas from affairs of the state and the world and from politics.” Borrowing the term “*laïcité*” from the political practices of the French Third Republic (1870-1940) where the successive republic governments had gradually asserted its unilateral

authority over the Catholic Church (Kuru, 2009: 142-153), Kemalist state elites established laicism (laiklik) as one of the most foundational principles of the Republic regime.

Nevertheless, there are differences between the laicism of the Kemalist Republic and the laicism of France's Third Republic. First of all, as Alfred Stepan (2001: 245) notes, “France in 1905 never assumed this degree of management of religion”. Evidently, the Kemalist state-driven laicization project not only demolished ulema’s authority over education and the judiciary but also attentively disallowed any institutional autonomous position for religion since the latter might serve as a potential centre of political power against the new Republican political order.

The difference between the two, however, is not only on the degree of control over the religion. It is important to note that article two of the 1905 French on the Separation of the Churches from the State declares that “The Republic neither recognizes, nor salaries, nor subsidizes any religion” (Kuru, 2009: 151). In stark contrast, the state-funded Diyanet has not only been responsible for the administration of all mosques but also for the monthly salaries of its public employees (imam, vaiz etc.) who are exclusively at the service of Sunni Islam. As stated previously in Chapter II, the exclusively Sunni-Islam centered characteristic of Kemalist Republic has always been at odds with the acclaimed secularist ideal of guaranteeing religious pluralism and of rendering the state reasonably equidistant towards different religions or religious denominations (second secularist criteria).

Furthermore, and within the historical context of Kemalist modernization reforms, Laicism or Laicization is closely interlinked with a series of dramatic socio-cultural reforms (Reformism) which were aimed to raise the Turkish nation to the “level of contemporary civilizations” (e.g. enforcement of western style hat which has outlawed wearing a Fez in 1925, closure of religious orders, ban on Ezan (Islamic call to prayer) in Arabic, replacement of Arabic Alphabet by Latin Alphabet for Turkish language in 1928). Most of these dramatic socio-cultural reforms mirrored the normative framework of Kemalist laicism which regarded the adaptation of western-looking dress code and life style as pre-requisites of injecting the ‘western’, ‘progressive’ and ‘contemporary’ identity to the Turkish nation.

Unlike the French Third Republic, however, Kemalist laicization reforms were not accomplished by the popularly elected governments but under the institutional

framework of one-party dictatorship. Furthermore, and as stated previously in Chapter II, Kemalist state-led exclusion and legally enforced prohibition of particular forms of ‘Islamic way of life’ (e.g., religious garments and religious orders belonging to both orthodox Sunni and heterodox Alevi sect) from the public sphere had particularly contradicted with the religious freedom dimension of the third secularist criteria.

Last but not least, Kemalist laicism is also inextricably linked to the principle of nationalism. For instance, at the speech delivered for the inauguration of Ankara University Law Faculty in 1925, Atatürk summed up the meaning of “Turkish Reformism” by remarking that “our form of government [has] changed the nature of the common tie among the members of the nation for the maintenance of the existence of the nation that persisted for centuries, that is instead of religious and sectarian ties, has assembled the members through the bond of Turkish nationality” (Parla and Davison, 2004: 71).

In the same speech, Mustafa Kemal also specifically noted the term ‘reform’ (inkılab) should not be confused with the meanings associated with the term ‘revolution’ (ihtilal) since the former signified a more profound change than the latter. Hence, unlike Russia's Bolshevik Revolution, Kemalist ‘reformism’ was bounded to dump the Ottoman Millet System into the ‘dustbin of history’ and re-building a ‘western-looking’ nation-state based on the predominance of the Turkish ethnic identity, culture and language.

Not surprisingly, CHP’s action programmes of 1931 and 1935 declared the meaning of the ‘fatherland’ and the ‘nation’ before enumerating and explaining the “six arrows”. While the former was defined as “*the homeland* within the political boundaries of today, in which the Turkish nation lives with its old and sublime history and its works that maintain their presence in the depths of its lands”, the latter was defined as a “political and social whole that is formed by citizens who are connected with one another by the unity of language, culture, and ideal” (CHP Programı, 1931; 1935). Hence, these six guiding principles (six arrows) were built upon these two fundamental ethnocentric features.

Academic literature with Kemalist inclinations usually stresses the ‘inclusive’ character of the nation-building processes in Turkey by pointing to the definition of the Turkish nation provided by the CHP action programmes. From this perspective; the Republican motto of “How happy is the one who calls himself a Turk!” (Ne mutlu

Türküm diyene!) illustrates the fact that Turkish nationalism is not rigidly fixated by any racial or even ethno-religious criteria and thus is capable of ‘including’ people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Although CHP action programmes officially refrained from applying ethnic and/or religious criteria in defining nationhood and thus determining who is a Turk or Turkish citizen, it would be a grave mistake to posit the absence of strong ethno-cultural and even religious dimensions in Kemalist nationalism (Cagaptay, 2006). Following Rogers Brubaker's analysis of (assimilative, political, and state-centred) French nationalism versus (organic, ethno-cultural, and Volk-centred) German nationalism; Ayşe Kadioğlu (2005: 111) observed that:

It is possible to argue that if nationalism is a modern Janus, the Turkish version had two faces as well. While in most instances Turkish nationalism looked similar to the civic French nationalism, there were certain periods in the founding years of the Republic when the organic, ethnic face that is akin to German nationalism became more pronounced.

In a noteworthy study, Ahmet Yıldız (2001) also drew attention to the ethnically bounded and directly discriminatory aspect of Kemalist nationalism by focusing on the remarks made by the then Minister of Justice Mahmut Esat Bozkurt who had declared that:

Ladies and Gentlemen! As a nationalist I have a respect for every nation and nationality. But I should not conceal the fact that if I were not a Turk, I would consider myself as the most unfortunate person on the earth. How happy is the one who *can* call himself a Turk (Quoted in Yıldız, 2001: 212) (italics added).

By putting the last sentence uttered by Mahmut Esat Bozkurt as the title of his book, Yıldız (2001) sought to highlight the subtle but crucial difference between “who call himself a Turk” (Türküm diyene) and “who *can* call himself a Turk” (Türküm diyebilene). While the former reflected the civic and assimilationist face of Kemalist nationalism, the latter revealed its ethnically bounded and directly discriminatory face.

One can also ascertain the dual face of Turkish nationalism (civic-assimilative versus ethno-cultural) by looking at the general pattern of discrepancy pursued by the Turkish State towards ethnic and religious minorities. While Muslim ethnic minorities (Kurds, Laz, Çerkez etc.) were largely projected as “prospective-Turks” and thus were subjected to forced assimilation (albeit not unambiguously); ethno-religious minorities

(particularly Greeks and Armenians) were generally projected as outsiders to the nation-building process and thus became a target of direct discrimination (Yeğen, 2009: 599-600). After all, the War of National Independence (1919-1922) was waged to protect the homeland of ‘Ottoman Muslim majority’ against Greek and Armenian intrusions backed by Christian colonial powers.

Indeed, statements made by CHP general secretary Recep Peker embody the general pattern pursued by the Turkish State towards ethnic and non-Muslim minorities. As Peker remarked:

We consider as ours all those who live among us, who belong politically and socially to the Turkish nation and among whom ideas and feelings such as “Kurdism”, “Circassianism” and even “Lazism” and “Pomakism” have been implanted. We deem it our duty to banish, by sincere efforts, those false conceptions, which are the legacy of an absolutist regime and the product of long-standing historical oppression. The scientific truth of today does not allow an independent existence for a nation of several hundred thousand, or even of a million individuals (...) We want to state just as sincerely our opinion regarding our Jewish or Christian compatriots. Our party considers these compatriots as absolutely Turkish insofar as they belong to our community of language and ideal (Quoted in Dumont, 1984: 29).

In this context, it is important to observe that although the identities of Muslim ethnic minorities (“Kurdism” or “Lazism”) are denounced as false consciousness, identities of “Jewish or Christian compatriots” are taken for granted. In stark contrast to the national solidarity discourse of the War of Independence which had posited the various Muslim ethnic elements (Kurds, Turks and Circassian etc.) as equal and “sibling nations”, the ethnocentric discourse of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship would posit Muslim ethnic minorities as ‘ours’ that had to be freed from their “false consciousness”.

Accordingly, the official Kemalist ethnocentric discourse on nationhood and citizenship was either based on the crude denial of the existence of ethnic minorities or on their assimilative absorption into Turkishness. As exemplified by Peker’s statements, the ‘*crude denial discourse*’ categorically rejected the mere existence of different Muslim ethnic groups by denouncing “Kurdism” or “Lazism” as false consciousness. From this perspective, Kurds or “Mountain Turks” had lost their true Turkish national consciousness in spite of originally belonging to the Turkish race.

'Assimilative absorption discourse', on the other hand, resorted to a relatively more sophisticated Turkification as it paid lip service to the existence of ethnic minority groups as long as they were subsumed under the category of Turkish nation. This approach was summed up by Atatürk's statements such as "How happy is the one who calls himself a Turk!" or "The people of Turkey who founded the Republic of Turkey are called the Turkish nation."

Nevertheless, whether based on crude denial or assimilative absorption discourse, the Kemalist ethnocentric ideal entitled the category of 'Turkish nation' to simultaneously operate both as the specific name of the dominant ethnic group and as the overarching supra-identity subsuming all other ethnic minorities. Hence, (and quite unlike Janus) neither the civic assimilationist nor the ethno-cultural face of Turkish nationalism looked toward the opposite direction. Looking at the big picture, simultaneous deployment of two faces not only complemented each other but also worked as an effective strategy in achieving ethnocentric domination.

After all, assimilation has nothing to do with the 'inclusion' of minority groups who are expected and forced to replace their own culture and language with the culture and language of the dominant ethnic group. For instance, in a speech delivered at the parliament after completing his visit to the Eastern Provinces in 1932, İnönü articulated the "assimilation bargain" (Peleg, 2007: 36) that the Kemalist Republic would offer its minorities. While assuring the sincerity and validity of state's official laws in defining who is a Turkish citizen, İnönü declared that:

In order to become a Turkish nationalist and Turkish citizen, we are not demanding an abnormal thing from any individual who lives in this country. Choosing to be a Turk and accepting to be a Turk is enough to possess all of the rights which are granted to the members of the Turkish nation...This kind of governance and mindset can only strengthen the foundations of the State to become a national and Turkish State as it contributes to the development, expansion and ascendancy of the latter (Quoted in Yıldız, 2001: 290).

These statements clearly reveal how citizenship rights were a necessary precondition for the assimilation of Turkishness as it provided the only medium for the citizens to get acceptance into the nationhood. As far as Kemalist cadres were concerned, all citizens could enjoy equal citizenship rights as long as they complied with Turkish uniformity. Just like other forms of homogenizing tyranny in modern history,

Kemalist ethnocentric discourse had rested on the formula of substituting the concept of “equality” with “national uniformity” (Taylor *et al.*, 1994: 50-51).

3.3 Conclusion

While briefly narrating the key historically contingent developments which led to the establishment of the Kemalist Republic, Chapter III sought to test the first hypothesis of the thesis which called *the core principles of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship as laic ethnocracy*. To this end, Chapter III commenced its narrative from the Tanzimat Era which was characterized by the reform initiatives of the Ottoman State officials as the latter sought to cope with two perennial and existential problems: a) how to reduce the widening power rift between industrialized Western Powers and the ailing Ottoman Empire and b) how to avert the inexorable tide and flare of secessionist nationalism across the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire?

Furthermore, Chapter III highlighted how the territorial loss of the remaining European provinces of the Ottoman Empire during The Balkan Wars (1912-1913) proved to be a critical turning point in finding a definite answer to a perennial question raised by Yusuf Akçura’s “Three Types of Policies” as it prompted the Young Turk leadership to decisively set the political trajectory of the crumbling Ottoman Empire towards what Peleg (2007: 70-71) categorized as “Radical Action toward Full Ethnicization”.

Accordingly, the Young Turk leadership particularly targeted and administered the expulsion of two ethnic-religious minority groups (Armenian and Greek-Orthodox minorities) from Anatolia. Within the context of an ethnocentric paradigm, the devastation and calculated replacement of the Armenian population by the ‘loyal’ Muslim and Turkish groups meant securing the territorial and political integrity of the crumbling Ottoman Empire in key geographical areas. Indeed, providing empirical evidence for the pervasive ethnocentric logic behind the demographic engineering and settlement policies undertaken by the Young Turks was highly relevant to the theoretical framework of this thesis since Yiftachel’s Ethnocracy does not only refer to an abstract dominance of ethno-national majority over minority groups, but also to a central political project of facilitating “the *expansion, ethnicization and control* of a dominant ethnic nation...over contested territory and polity” (Yiftachel, 2006:11).

Furthermore, Chapter III sought to highlight the ideological continuity between the Young Turk era and the Kemalist Republic by narrating how the latter extended and bolstered the Turkification and Laicization drive which had been initiated by the former. After mentioning how the initiation of the Kemalist modernization reforms in 1924 (e.g., the abolishment of Caliphate, Law for the Unification of Education) has triggered the Sheikh Sait rebellion, Chapter III designated the enactment of the Law on the Maintenance of Order (1925-1929) as a stepping stone for the Kemalist Republic to forcefully hasten its ‘modernization’ reforms while arbitrarily suppressing the opposition in the country.

In line with the first hypothesis of the thesis which contended to sum up the core principles of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship as ‘laic-ethnocracy’, Chapter III sought to narrate how the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive of the Kemalist ‘modernization’ reforms went hand in hand and became coterminous with each other. While demonstrating how the laicist dimension of the Kemalist Republic has subordinated the dominant Sunni Islam to an ethnocratic state paradigm and prohibited particular forms of the ‘Islamic way of life’ from the public sphere (e.g., headscarf, religious orders), Chapter III re-emphasized incompatible aspects of ‘Kemalist laicism’ in reference to the three democratic-secularist criteria. Last but not least, Chapter III has demonstrated how the official ethnocratic discourse of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship deepened the “exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation” of ethnic and religious minority groups (Yiftachel, 2006:37) by predicating itself upon the predominance of the Turkish ethnic identity, culture and language.

Certainly, Chapter III has not intended to accomplish any historical contribution to the Turkification and Laicization policies of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era. Nevertheless, establishing the core regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era as ‘laic-ethnocracy’ and crystallizing its incompatible aspects in accordance with the normative dimension of our theoretical framework will play an essential role in delineating Turkey’s historical trajectory of controlled transitions during the multi-party era which is the topic of Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

Historical Trajectory of Turkey's 'Controlled Transitions' (1946-1997)

Chapter IV will provide a selective historical narrative of Turkey's trajectory of 'controlled transitions' from the opening of the multi-party period until the 'post-modern coup' of 1997 in order to test the second hypothesis of the thesis which contended that: *By and large, the laic-ethnocratic regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era have remained remarkably resilient in shaping and guiding the trajectory of Turkey's successive controlled transitions.* Accordingly, Chapter IV will mainly seek to demonstrate how Turkey's successive 'controlled transitions' consistently aimed at perpetuating ethnocratic hegemony and obstructing the transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism by reference to the three secularist democratic criteria.

Turkey has achieved its first guided transition to a multi-party parliamentary framework when the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti – DP) won the elections in 1950. Although the 1950 elections marked Turkey's transition from the politically closed conventional authoritarianism of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship, the transition process was intended to institutionalize Schumpeterian competitive elections within the acceptable parameters delineated by the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm. Ten years of multi-party experience under the Democrat Party government was then followed by three military coups which respectively occurred in 1960, 1971 and 1980. In each period of direct military rule (1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983), Turkey's traditional military-bureaucracy decisively shaped the rules of the legal-political order by engaging in constitutional and political engineering.

Noticeably, successive military interventions into civilian politics (1960, 1971, 1980) which were immediately followed by military-guided constitution-making have been the most visible and condensed medium of maintaining and even recuperating the hegemony of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm within the electoral multi-party context as it enabled Turkey's traditional military-bureaucratic state elites to effectively manipulate and confine not only the perceived 'internal threats' but also the perceived detrimental outcomes of the multi-party parliamentary framework on the laic-ethnocratic regime character of the Kemalist Republic.

Turkey's historical trajectory of transition from the ethnocratic regime paradigm of Kemalist one-party dictatorship can be observed best when compared with Spain's transition from Franco's one-party dictatorship. Spain's transition process did not only entail the replacement of Franco's politically closed authoritarian system with the institutional features of Dahlian Polyarchy, but also a substantial democratic transformation of Franco's "hegemonic uninational regime to a semi-federal regime willing to recognize the diverse ethnic legacies of the country" (Peleg, 2007: 108). In stark contrast, the most distinguishable feature of Turkey's trajectory of transition has been its remarkably prolonged ability to contain and to perpetuate Kemalist ethnocratic hegemony while institutionalizing Schumpeterian competitive elections since 1950.

Alongside the longevity of the Kemalist ethnocratic paradigm, the laic dimension of the Kemalist Republic consistently remained at odds with the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria since the opening of the multi-party era. Notably, the generals of the 1980 military coup modified the 'positivist' and 'religiously restrained' undertones of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism to the extent of rendering the state even more blatantly partial to Sunni-Islam. Nevertheless, once confronted with the rise of the Islamist Welfare Party as the main contender for political power in the mid 1990's, military-state elites repudiated the 'Turkish-Islam synthesis' outlook of the 1980 military coup era and returned to the original 'western-positivist' and 'religiously restrained' overtones of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism. Hence, although the content of Kemalist laicism did not remain static, its incompatible aspects with the second and third secularist criteria did remain persistent.

Besides focusing on the process of socio-political and constitutional engineering that traditional military-bureaucratic state elites undertook in the aftermath of each military coup, Chapter IV will seek to expose the multiple contestations and polarizations which have revolved around both the laic and ethnocratic dimensions. Following Aletta Norval's insistence on the necessity "to investigate the specificity of the political logic of frontiers, and the conditions under which different frontier formations are constituted" (Norval, 2000: 225), Chapter IV will pay specific attention to the shifting dynamics of political frontier formation which accompanied multiple but specific modes of dichotomous division of society into antagonistic camps (Howarth and Norval, 2001: 654-660).

Accordingly, Chapter IV will be divided into *four sections*. While briefly narrating the historical period from the opening of the multi-party era until the demise of the popularly elected Democrat Party via the military coup of 1960, the first section will seek to highlight how the ongoing antagonism between the governing Democrat Party and the opposition CHP at the political level had been mainly reflected in and remained limited to the evident disparity between the religiously conservative socio-cultural values of the dominant Sunni-Muslim majority and the ‘western-positivist’ thrust of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism which regarded the eradication of Islam’s visibility from the public realm as a pre-requisite for attaining ‘modernity’ and ‘progress’.

Section two, on the other hand, will cover the post-1960 coup decade which has been marked by the changing contours of the political cleavages and alliances in reference to the increasingly predominant left versus right ideological divide of the Cold War era. The thematic narration of the second section will cover the era which ended with the constitutional engineering process of the military-led interim governments (1971-1973) which symbolized the newly emerging Cold War alliance among the main domestic actors against the proliferation of anti-NATO leftist movements and burgeoning pro-Kurdish circles.

Section three will focus on Turkey’s third, and the most repressive, military coup since the opening of the multi-party period. Besides briefly covering the political developments leading to the military coup of 1980, the third section will seek to highlight how the general elections of November 1983 marked the installation and legitimization of a highly authoritarian political system which the National Security Council had designed during a three year long military dictatorship (1980-1983).

Last but not least, section four will selectively cover the two political developments which have preoccupied Turkey’s political agenda during the post 1980 coup era: a) the rise of the Kurdish national movement under the hegemonic leadership of the PKK-led guerrilla warfare, b) the electoral rise of Erbakan’s Islamic-revivalist Welfare Party to governmental power. The thematic narration of the fourth section will end with the involuntary resignation of the then Prime Minister Erbakan from office via the ‘post-modern coup’ of 1997.

4.1 Initiation of Multi-Party Politics and the Democrat Party Experience (1945-1960)

4.1.A Guided Transformation of the Laic-Ethnocracy into Multi-Party Context (1945-1950)

Turkey's guided transition from an authoritarian one-party dictatorship took a decisive start on 1 November 1945 when the then President İsmet İnönü, in his speech, gave a clear signal towards the formation of a multi-party politics by publicly sanctioning the formation of opposition parties to compete in the subsequent general elections which would be held in July 1947. Among the various opposition parties which have been established during the following months, the DP rapidly emerged as a viable alternative that could pose a serious challenge to the long standing supremacy of the CHP at the ballot box. Officially registered on 7 January 1946, the DP was headed by Celal Bayar who had reached the peak of his political career by serving as Prime Minister to Atatürk in 1937.

Throughout the transition process, Celal Bayar – as a “veteran Young Turk” – was keen to present his party as a “completely national organization” which aimed to fulfil the legacy of Atatürk's revolution by bringing democracy into the country (Taşkın, 2007: 94-95; Zürcher, 2004: 214). Indeed, all of the four co-founders of the DP (Adnan Menderes, Celal Bayar, Fuat Köprülü and Refik Koraltan) were former parliamentarians whose joint protest against the Land Distribution Law in May 1945 would precipitate their break-up from the ruling Republican People's Party. Given that, İnönü and his followers were reasonably supportive of Celal Bayar's opposition party (at least in the beginning) since they considered the latter as an acceptable opposition that would not deviate from the parameters of the Kemalist Republic.

One can grasp the criteria established by İnönü for the setting up of an acceptable opposition by paying attention to the dialogue that took place between him and Celal Bayar when the latter made an official visit to the presidential office to introduce the policy programme of his DP. After glancing at the party program, İnönü asked three specific questions to Bayar: a) if the party would be disrespectful to the principle of laicism, b) if the party would oppose the educational campaign conducted at the primary school level and in rural areas aiming to inoculate the principles of Kemalist regime; and c) if the party would deviate from the country's newly established pro-Western foreign policy.

Once Bayar gave the right answers to İnönü's questions, the latter ended the conversation by saying "if that is the case, then it is fine" (Birand *et al.*, 2005: 24, 25). In addition to the Kemalist tenets of laicism and nationalism, İnönü paid specific attention to the opposition party's stance on foreign policy since the transition process in the domestic political arena (1945-1950) was considered part of and thus would proceed in parallel to the shifting contours of Turkey's evolving foreign policy which sought for an urgent alignment with the Western capitalist camp in order to cope with the encroaching demands posed by the Soviet Union in the wake of the Cold War Era.

Once confronted with the growing popularity of the DP, the CHP decided to call the general election one year ahead of the expected schedule; that is well before the Democrat Party could complete its organizational activities. Hence, Turkey held its first competitive elections on 21 July 1946. Yet, the elections were not based on the secret voting system and were also accompanied by large scale electoral fraud. As a result, the CHP managed to capture the overwhelming majority of the seats in the parliament and the DP was confined to just 61 seats [see **Table 9**].

Table 9 Results of the 21 July 1946 General Elections

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 465)
Democrat Party	Celal Bayar	13%	61
Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	64%	395

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

In the immediate aftermath of the 1946 general elections, the CHP government closed down the Turkish Socialist Party (Türkiye Sosyalist Partisi) and the Socialist Workers and Peasant Party of Turkey (Türkiye Sosyalist Emekçi ve Köylü Partisi) for advocating class struggles and disseminating Soviet propaganda (VanderLippe, 2005: 142-143). Despite the fact that political parties with Marxist affiliations were not going to be considered as part of an "acceptable opposition", the then President İnönü reassured the legitimacy of the DP with his declaration on 12 July 1947 when he declared himself to be "equally responsible to both parties" and demanded the "genuine cooperation of the leaders of the opposition and the government" (Özbudun,

2000: 17). Thus, the 12th July Declaration proved to be a critical juncture in the transition process as it guaranteed the continuation of multi-party politics.²⁰

One year prior to the 1950 elections, the CHP adopted a relatively more accommodating position towards Islam. To this end, the government introduced non-compulsory religion courses which would be taught at the elementary school level. Furthermore, it oversaw the re-opening of Prayers and Preachers Courses (İmam Hatip Kursları) along with the Faculty of Divinity at Ankara University.²¹ While the former only offered 10-month training courses, the latter was organized under the Ministry of Education, rather than the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Çakır, *et al.*, 2004: 58-59). Hence, through these symbolic legislative gestures, the CHP sought to shield itself from the criticisms of the opposition parties which accused the former for being Islamic aversive. Yet while guiding the transition process, the CHP also took punitive precautions by amending “Article 163 of the Turkish Penal Code to introduce prison sentences of two to seven years for forming an organization or indulging in propaganda activities that sought the establishment of a government based on religious principles” (Jenkins, 2008: 15-16).

A couple of months prior to the general elections of 1950, the ruling CHP government finally responded to the demands of the opposition DP by adopting a new electoral law compatible with universal democratic standards. Certainly, it is plausible to argue that Turkey held its first truly democratic and transparent elections on 14 May 1950 in which the DP acquired a clear victory by gathering 52.68 percent of the total votes. With its wide ranging popular appeal to different ethnic or religious groups, social classes and economic sectors, the DP had successfully channelled the political and socio-economic discontents of İsmet İnönü’s National Chief Era (1938-1945) into an outstanding electoral victory.

Table 10 Results of the 14 May 1950 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 487)
Democrat Party	Celal Bayar	52.68%	408

²⁰ Not surprisingly, İnönü’s 12th July declaration coincided with the day “the Treaty of Assistance with the United States was signed” (Vander Lippe, 2005: 150-151).

²¹ Although these two institutions were originally envisioned by the 1924 Unification of Education Law, the stern positivist current of Kemalist laicism had rendered both of them rather obsolete (Çakır, *et al.*, 2004: 57-58).

Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	39.45%	69
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Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

Under the electoral voting system at the time, 52.68 percent of the vote delivered 408 seats to the DP in the National Assembly [see **Table 10**]. In contrast, CHP could only attain 69 seats despite receiving 39.45 percent of the votes. While Celal Bayar took the presidential office from İsmet İnönü, Adnan Menderes became the Prime Minister. Until the military coup of 27 May 1960, the Democrat Party would stay in office by winning the 1954 and 1957 general elections [see **Table 11 and 12**]. Indeed, with its famous election slogan declaring “*Enough! It is the Nation’s Turn to Speak!*” (Yeter! Söz Milletindir!), the DP would become the forerunner of a populist centre-right tradition in Turkish politics.

Table 11 Results of the 2May 1954 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 535)
Democrat Party	Adnan Menderes	57.61%	490
Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	33.56%	30
Republican Nation's Party	Osman Bölükbaşı	4.85%	5

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

Table 12 Results of the 27 October 1957 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 610)
Democrat Party	Adnan Menderes	47.88%	424
Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	41.09%	178
Republican Nation's Party	Osman Bölükbaşı	7.14%	4
Freedom Party	Fevzi Lütfi Karaosmanoğlu	3.84%	4

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

4.1.B Reign of the Democrat Party and Its Demise by the Military Coup of 1960

During its ten year rule in power, the DP government was definitely much more enthusiastic than the previous CHP governments in appealing and promoting the 'Islamic' and 'conservative' values of the supposedly homogenous Turkish nation. Once coming to power, the Democrat Party government immediately repealed the 1932 ban on reciting the Ezan (Islamic call to prayer) in Arabic. Although the Kemalist press, intellectuals and state elites had considered this as an act of treacherous reaction against the legacy of Atatürk's revolutions, none of the parliamentarians voted against the passage of the legislation since the recitation of Ezan in Arabic resonated deeply with the masses.

The DP government also revoked the ban on religious recitation from the Koran on public radio. Moreover, Prayer and Preacher Courses had acquired a new status in 1951 as they were transformed into full fledged Prayer and Preacher Schools providing four years of middle school and three years of high school education (Çakır,

et al., 2004: 59-60). The relative relaxation on religious activities and publications were accompanied by an exponential rise in mosque construction. By blending its 'religious-friendly' policies with blatantly anti-Communist discourse, the Democrat Party consolidated the electoral support of those popular religious orders and movements (most prominently the Süleymanlılar sect of the Nakşibendi Order and the Nurcu Movement of Said-i Nursî) which had been persecuted and ostracized during the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.

The Democrat Party's more accommodating stance towards religiosity, however, did not prevent it from cracking down on overtly anti-secular activities. When members affiliated with the Ticani religious order started attacking and defacing Atatürk's statues and busts in Kırşehir, the DP immediately resorted to punitive measures by adopting the *Law on the Crimes Committed against Atatürk*²² on 25 July 1951 "which provided for a prison sentence of up to three years for denigrating Atatürk's memory and up to five years for defacing a statue, bust, or portrait of him" (Jenkins, 2008: 121). In 1953, the DP government not only supported the judiciary-imposed closure of the Nation Party (Millet Partisi)²³ for harbouring anti-secular goals but also adopted the Law on the Protection of Freedom of Conscience and Assembly, which provided punitive measures for those who exploited religion or religious feelings by converting them into a tool of propaganda.

Hence, although the antagonism between the Democrat Party and the CHP cannot be explained in terms of an ongoing battle between pro-secularism versus anti-secularism, the former's policies and outlook on religion did partly diverge from the Laic-Turkish identity constructed and promoted by the positivist Kemalist high culture of one-party dictatorship which regarded the eradication of Islam's visibility from the public realm as a pre-requisite for attaining modernity and progress. This, in return, provided enough reasons for the CHP opposition (along with significant segments of the military, state bureaucracy and intelligentsia) to brand the Democrat Party as a 'reactionary' force which endangered the progressive gains of the Kemalist Republic. By 1957, the colonel junta group –which would eventually succeed in carrying out the

²² The law lately has become a subject of criticism in the EU Commission Reports for restricting the freedom of thought and information.

²³ The Nation Party emerged when a religious conservative group within the Democrat Party split in 1948. In direct contradiction to the Kemalist laic principle of state control over religion, its party programme explicitly called for a complete separation between religion and state.

1960 coup– was already active within the military and was looking for an opportunity to oust the government from power.

With its high dosage of partisan policies which aimed at getting hold of the state bureaucracy, army, and judiciary, the DP government made its own significant contribution to the ongoing antagonism with the CHP. Particularly from the mid 1950's onwards, relations between the government and opposition forces deteriorated even further as the former increasingly resorted to anti-democratic measures against the latter by adopting restrictive laws. This included the infamous Press Law of 1956 which the incumbent Democrat Party government frequently utilized for censoring opposition newspapers and imprisoning journalists. In the meantime, the DP government would frequently reassert its superiority and legitimacy against the CHP opposition (and its supporters within the universities and bureaucracy) by projecting itself as the sole representative of that “inalienable”, “indivisible”, and “infallible” national will (Taşkın, 2007: 101).

The steep polarization between the two parties reached its zenith when the Democrat Party announced the formation of an ‘Investigation Committee’ (Tahkikat Komisyonu) on 18 April 1960. Comprised of 15 members chosen from the DP parliamentarians and endowed with wide range powers, the ‘Investigation Committee’ would examine the ‘destructive and provocative activities’ of the main opposition party and the press, and then present its findings to the government within three months. In reply to this action taken by the government, İnönü delivered a controversial speech in the parliament and gave a ‘yellow light’ for a military intervention by remarking that:

Deviating from the course of democratic regime and heading towards a repressive regime is a dangerous trend. If you carry on this direction, even I will not be able to save you...When the conditions are ripe; revolution becomes the legitimate right of nations (Quoted from Ünsaldı, 2008: 183).

İnönü's speech and the subsequent pro-opposition student demonstrations against the restrictive measures of the ‘reactionary’ DP government (which started on 28 April 1960 and led to violent clashes with the security forces) were among the key events that would facilitate the military intervention of 27 May 1960 since these events gave clear signals to the colonel's junta group that a military coup directed against the DP would be welcomed and rejoiced by the civilian opposition.

Yet, because the overwhelming majority of the coup members were middle-ranking officers, the junta lacked an influential high-ranking leader who would be capable of restoring unity within the army. In order to boost the legitimacy of the 1960 military coup and to avert the likelihood of a counter-coup, the colonels invited the recently retired General Cemal Gürsel to Ankara and appointed him as the head of the National Union Committee. On the very day of his arrival, Cemal Gürsel met with a group of law professors from Istanbul University and commissioned them to draft a new democratic constitution for the Republic. While in power, Gürsel fully collaborated with the CHP opposition leader İsmet İnönü (whose orders Gürsel declared were “equivalent to the Prophet’s commandment”) as the two agreed upon the urgency of restoring the parliamentary system under a new democratic constitution while avoiding further fragmentation inside the military (Ünsaldı, 2008: 71).

After the coup, the DP leaders and parliamentarians were arrested and imprisoned in Yassıada –one of the islands in the Marmara Sea– pending trial. After a biased and degrading judicial investigation, the 1960 military junta eternalized the legacy of the Democrat Party by executing the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes along with his Foreign Minister Fatin Rüştü Zorlu and Finance Minister Hasan Polatkan. After his execution on 17 September 1961, Adnan Menderes would become a ‘martyr of democracy’ in the eyes of his mass of followers. All the DP members (including Celal Bayar) who were convicted in the Yassıada Trials were barred from politics for life.

In the meantime, the Constituent Assembly had completed its work on drafting a new constitution for the Republic. By its very nature, the Constituent Assembly was predominantly constituted by the coup coalition forces which successfully had deposed the DP from the power. As the main civilian wing of the military coup, the CHP played a significant role throughout the constitution-making process. The new constitution was put to referendum on 9 July 1961 and received 61.7 percent of the votes. The rejection of the constitution by the 38.3 percent, on the other hand, indicated to the continuing popular support for the disbanded Democrat Party.

4.1.C Conclusion

İnönü provided perhaps the most concise analysis of the transition period when he told the journalist Metin Toker (also İnönü’s son in law):

If I had been of a different mind, if I had wrongly diagnosed the condition of the world and the country, perhaps the People's Party would have fallen from power later [than it did]. But it definitely would have fallen from power, and it would have been destroyed (Toker, 1990: 216).

İnönü's statements speak to the importance of the interaction that took place between the strategic calculations of political actors on the one hand, and macro structural changes (at international and domestic level) on the other, while bringing the transformation to multi-party politics. But more importantly, his statements also provide insights into the peculiar historical trajectory of Turkey's transition from conventional authoritarianism.

Unlike the transition of the Southern European countries from more conventional authoritarianism, Turkey's guided transition from politically closed conventional authoritarianism did not entail any constitutional reform process since the transition process was not intended to achieve a radical democratic break with the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship. Besides the success of the incumbent authoritarian power holders in controlling the transition process to the multi-party context, it is equally important to observe the highly limited reformist propensity of the governing Democrat Party to forge a democratic transformation of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm during its ten year reign in office.

Arguably, the Democrat Party had limited itself to modifying the stern 'western-positivist' thrust of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism. Nevertheless, and despite being explicitly 'secularist' in the first and basic meaning of the term (secularism as the negation of theocracy), the Democrat Party's populist symbolic gestures and discourse towards religious demands of the dominant Sunni majority provided enough reasons for the CHP opposition (along with significant segments of the military, state bureaucracy and intelligentsia) to denounce it as a 'reactionary threat' against the progressive gains of Kemalist Republican laicism.

As a matter of fact, the ongoing political polarization between the governing DP and the main opposition CHP over the normative scope of religion mainly mirrored the evident sociological disparity between the religious-conservative values of the dominant Sunni-Muslim majority and the 'religiously restrained positivist' thrust of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism. Since the 1960 military coups onwards, the

political cleavage between the religious overtones of a dominant Sunni-majority (mainly associated with Democrat Party and successive traditional centre-right parties) and ‘western-positivist’ overtones of Kemalist laicism (associated with CHP and military-bureaucratic tutelage) will continue to be an enduring characteristic of Turkish politics.

4.2 Post-1960 Coup Decade: Reconfiguration of Political Cleavages and Military Intervention of 1971

4.2.A The Military Tutelage Legacy of the 1961 Constitution

After one year of direct military rule (1960-1961), the parliamentary multi-party system was re-installed by the general elections of October 15, 1961. Although Cemal Gürsel (the head of the National Union Committee) became the first President of the post-coup parliamentary era, the results of the 1961 general election frustrated the coup coalition forces since it demonstrated the resilience of the Democrat Party’s centre-right populist tradition at the ballot box. While the Republican People’s Party received 36.74 percent of the votes, the newly founded Justice Party (Adalet Partisi - AP)²⁴ managed to obtain 34.79 percent [see **Table 13**]. In the subsequent general elections of 1965, the Justice Party (under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel) would become the unrivalled successor of the demised Democrat Party by gaining 52.9 percent of the votes [see **Table 14**].

Yet, from the 1961 Constitution onwards, gaining the majority of the votes at the ballot box did not automatically render the incumbent government to possess the full mandate over the “national will”. After declaring the Republican principle of the unconditional sovereignty being vested in the nation, article 4 of the new Constitution specifically emphasized that “the nation shall exercise its sovereignty through the *authorized agencies* as prescribed by the principles laid down in the Constitution” (Constitution 1961) (italics added).

Table 13 Results of the 15 October 1961 General Election

²⁴ In order to become the main successor of the previously banned DP in the 1961 elections, AP had to compete with the New Turkey Party which received 13.73 percent of the votes.

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 450)
Justice Party	Ragıp Gümüşpala	34.79%	158
Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	36.74%	173
New Turkey Party	Ekrem Alican	13.73%	65
Republican Peasant's Nation Party	Osman Bölükbaşı	13.96%	54

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

Table 14 Results of the 10 October 1965 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 450)
Justice Party	Süleyman Demirel	52.87%	240
Republican People's Party	İsmet İnönü	28.75%	134
Nation Party	Osman Bölükbaşı	6.26%	31
New Turkey Party	Ekrem Alican	3.72%	19
Turkey's Worker Party	Mehmet Ali Aybar	2.97%	14
Republican Peasant's Nation Party	Alparslan Türkeş	2.24%	11

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

Accordingly, the 1960 coup engendered the encroachment of the Turkish Armed Forces over civilian politics by granting the former an autonomous guardianship role. While article 110 of the 1961 Constitution rendered the Chief of Staff to become responsible to the office of the Prime Minister rather than to the Defence Minister, article 111 established the National Security Council which served as a powerful advisory body to the Council of Ministers “in the making of decisions related to national security and coordination” (Constitution 1961). The article 35 of the “Turkish Armed Forces Internal Service Code” was amended in 1961 in order to legalize the military’s guardianship over the political system by declaring that the "duty of the armed forces is to protect and safeguard Turkish territory and the Turkish Republic as stipulated by the constitution" (Jacoby, 2004: 133). Besides legitimizing the previous 1960 coup, article 35 of the Internal Service Code would constitute the legal basis of the subsequent military interventions in 1971, 1980, 1997 and 2007 (Bayramoğlu, 2002: 59-119; Cook, 2007: 93-148; Jenkins, 2001).

Furthermore, the new constitution added a second chamber –the Senate– to the legislature. While 150 members of the Senate were popularly elected, 15 members

were appointed by the President. Military officers who previously resided in the National Union Committee were also declared as the ex-officio members of the Senate (Constitution 1961). Moreover, the majoritarian electoral system of the previous DP era was replaced with the proportional representation system which provided more favourable conditions for minor political parties to find representation within the parliament and made it much more difficult for a single political party to secure an absolute majority (Hale, 1980). In accordance with the ‘neutrality principle’ of the bureaucratic state organs, the constitution also aimed to insulate universities, the judiciary, and radio and television broadcast agencies from the partisan policies of elected governments by granting them administrative autonomy and independence.

Another notable novelty introduced by the new Constitution was the creation of the Constitutional Court which would review the constitutionality of laws or amendments passed by the parliament. According to article 57, the Constitutional Court had the authority to permanently dissolve those political parties whose “status, programs, and activities” failed to conform to “the principles of a democratic and laic Republic, based on human rights and liberties, and to the fundamental principle of the *State’s indivisibility with its territory and its nation.*”²⁵

Article 89 of the Law on Political Parties (1965) elucidated the principle of “State’s indivisibility with its territory and its nation” by prohibiting political parties to “harbour the objective of damaging national integrity by creating minorities in the homeland of the Republic of Turkey via the protection, or development, or dissemination of languages and cultures other than Turkish language and culture” (Law No: 648). The same article also prohibited political parties to claim the existence of minorities in the Republic of Turkey based on national or religious differences. Since its inception, the Constitutional Court oversaw the dissolution of 25 political parties. “Most of these rulings” as Özbudun rightly points out, “were based on the alleged violation of the constitutional provisions protecting the indivisible national and territorial integrity of the state or its secular character” (Özbudun, 2010: 126). Without a doubt, the frequency of party closures through the verdict of the Constitutional Court demonstrates the strict ideological adherence of the high

²⁵ The translation of the article 57 into English is adopted from Karpat with only one simple modification. While the Turkish phrase “*Devletin ülkesi ve milletiyle bölünmezliği*” is translated as “*the State’s territorial and national integrity*” in the English translation, I preferred to translate it as “*the State’s indivisibility with its territory and its nation*” in order to underline the ethnocentric and deified “State” spirit embedded in the Turkish original text.

judiciary to the founding laic-ethnocratic principles of the Kemalist Republic (Hakyemez, 2000: 137-265).

On the other hand, one should be reminded of the fact that the 1961 Constitution is usually hailed (particularly among the Kemalist and Leftist intelligentsia) as the most ‘libertarian’ and ‘progressive’ constitution ever adopted in the Republic’s history since it not only endowed (relatively speaking) extensive socio-economic and civil rights upon the citizens but also bolstered the development of political and associational organizations. For instance, article 47 of the new Constitution –for the first time– sanctioned the workers’ right to strike and to bargain collectively through trade unionism²⁶ (Constitution 1961). Yet, as the product of the 1960 coup, the same constitution also marked the beginning of the institutionalization of the military-bureaucratic tutelage over the parliamentary system which endowed non-elected state elites with extensive powers over the popularly elected civilian governments (Can, 2010).

4.2.B Construction of New Antagonistic Frontiers under the Umbrella of Left versus Right Cleavage

During the post-1960 coup era, the political landscape of Turkey increasingly witnessed the configuration of the antagonistic political frontiers along the left versus right ideological divide. By gathering 2.97 percent of the votes (15 seats out of 450) in the general elections of 1965, the TİP became the first Marxist political party in the history of the Republic which succeeded in entering the parliament [see **Table 14**]. It was also during the 1965 election campaign when İnönü, for the first time, identified the CHP’s position within the emerging ideological spectrum as “Left of the Centre” (Esmer, 2006; Ecevit, 2009a). In the following years, the CHP leadership would systematically revise and reformulate the Kemalist “Six Arrows” (particularly the principle of Populism, Statism, and Reformism) in accordance with the principles of social democracy and the welfare state (Ecevit, 2009b).

Without a doubt, the most prominent and leading contributor to the CHP’s ideological transformation was the former CHP Minister of Work Bülent Ecevit who, after

²⁶ During the 1950 election campaign, the Democrat Party promised to grant workers the right to strike while the incumbent CHP government continued to oppose it. Once in power, the Democrat Party government never fulfilled its promise and the CHP opposition supported the cause of workers by defending their right to strike and to bargain collectively.

serving as the general secretary between 1966 and 1971, would eventually replace İnönü as the new party chairman in 1972 (Ecevit, 2009c). Demirel's conservative-right AP had consistently sought to discredit the CHP's new political image by attacking it as "left of the centre is the road to Moscow" ("Ortanın solu, Moskova yolu"). During the 1965 general election campaign, for instance, Demirel countered its main political rival by choosing the slogan "We are right of center and on the path of Allah" (Ortanın Sağındayız, Allah'ın Yolundayız) (Eligür, 2010: 63).

Furthermore, 1965 also marked the initial development of an ultra-nationalist political movement under the leadership of the retired colonel Alparslan Türkeş. After serving as the chairman of the Republican Peasant's Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi – CKMP), from 1965 to 1969, Türkeş's blatantly violence prone anti-Communist and Pan-Turkist movement renamed itself as the Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi - MHP) in 1969. Perhaps, one can grasp the radically changing contours of the antagonistic frontier formation during the post-1960 coup era better by focusing on the comments made by the journalist Taha Akyol. As the founder of the CKMP's (later MHP) youth branch in İstanbul, Akyol explains his change of political allegiance from the ousted centre-right DP to the extreme right MHP by remarking that:

...Those who opposed us were no longer Kemalists but Marxists. Contra Kemalists, we used to champion the national will, Anatolia, and the Turkish customs and traditions...However, we could not say a word against the Marxist claims of class struggle, classless society, exploitation, imperialism, and capitalism. At that political juncture, the rise of Türkeş to the political scene with the slogan of "Nationalist Communitarianism" ("Milliyetçi Toplumculuk") became quite appealing to us. When Marxists claimed that history is comprised of the class struggle, we could now contest it by asserting that history is the struggle of the nations. Hence, the children of the families who used to support Democrat Party rapidly became members of the MHP (Düzel, 2009).

Indeed, Akyol's comments clearly reveal the newly ascending antagonistic logic of the left versus right cleavage during the post-1960 coup era.

The ongoing political radicalization between left and right forces was accompanied by the development of distinctive antagonistic fronts against ethnocentric and laic principles of the Kemalist Republic. Founded in 1970, Necmettin Erbakan's National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi - MNP) signalled the emergence of a new political tradition which aimed to promote the Islamic values and needs of the nation more

explicitly than traditional centre-right parties. As a prominent religious figure within the prevailing Nakşibendi Order (tarikat) and the head of the İskenderpaşa Congregation (cemaat), Mehmet Zahid Kotku played a crucial role in the formation and development of Erbakan's Islamic revivalist political movement.²⁷ According to Sheikh Kotku, the restoration of an "Ottoman-Islamic identity" was the pre-requisite of healing "the core identity [*kimlik*] and character [*kişilik*] of this wounded nation" (Yavuz, 2003: 207). Hence, while emphasizing the importance of state-led investment in heavy industry and favouring the economic interest of small Anatolian businesses in its party programme, Erbakan's MNP yearned for the revitalization of Turkey's Muslim-Ottoman heritage since the latter supposedly encapsulated the organic national identity and authentic cultural values of the nation which had been ruptured by the onslaught of the imitative Westernism and positivist laicism of the Kemalist establishment.

Yet, as far as a significant portion of the political and bureaucratic elites were concerned, the most imminently dangerous political threat to national integrity and security came from the proliferation of those radical leftist movements –particularly among the university youth– which aimed to liberate the country from the 'enslavement of American Imperialism' and 'its domestic capitalist collaborators' by resorting to violent revolutionary acts. Besides endangering Turkey's established pro-Western foreign policy, leftist movements' appeal to militant class struggles and trade unionism were regarded as posing the most detrimental and subversive challenge to the domestic socio-economic and political order.

Without doubt, the accommodation of the newly emerging pro-Kurdish intelligentsia by the leftist groups exasperated the Kemalist ethnocentric establishment even further. For instance, the Labour Party of Turkey played the main role in the organization of 'Eastern Meetings' (Doğu Mitingleri) in 1967 which not only became a popular rallying point against the chronic socio-economic backwardness of the Kurdish populated eastern region but also discrimination against the Kurdish cultural identity and language. Along with Doğan Avcıoğlu's weekly Yön (Direction) movement and Mihri Belli's Milli Demokratik Devrim (National Democratic Revolution- MDD) tradition, the Labour Party of Turkey represented one of the main three currents which

²⁷ For the influential role played by Mehmet Zahid Kotku and his İskenderpaşa Congregation in the foundation of Erbakan's Islamic political movement and in Turkish party politics in general, see Yavuz, 2003:81-102, 207-238; Yeşilada, 2002: 62–81.

have shaped the intellectual and organizational outlook of the splintering leftist movements between 1961 and 1971.²⁸ Unlike Yön and MDD, TİP remained exclusively loyal to the parliamentary system while putting strong emphasis on the categorical leadership and ontological supremacy of the working class in bringing socialist transformation.

The leftist circles around Doğan Avcıoğlu's weekly Yön, on the other hand, became increasingly disillusioned with what they came to refer as 'cute democracy' or 'Philippine democracy' which –they argued– simply served to legitimize the reign of the 'reactionary' capitalist status quo (i.e., the single Justice Party government of 1965 and 1969). Due to Turkey's underdeveloped economy and the fragility of its working class, Avcıoğlu argued that the socialist revolution could only be achieved under the progressive leadership of the '*dynamic forces*' (zinde güçler) or namely the Turkish Armed Forces. Inspired by the collaboration that took place among the university youth, civilian intelligentsia, and junior military officers against the 'reactionary' DP government during the 1960 coup, Avcıoğlu's group actively appealed to the support of the leftist junta groups within the military.

4.2.C The Military Memorandum of 12 March 1971: a pit stop for authoritarian progression

It is worth noting that because the colonels' junta of 1960 did not pose any threat to Turkey's established pro-NATO foreign policy, the United States (even though it was informed in advance) chose to remain neutral to its materialization. However, neither the higher echelon of Turkey's military-bureaucratic establishment nor the US funded counter-guerrilla forces operating in the country were going to remain neutral to the escalation of the leftist movements which aimed to deviate Turkey from the NATO axis. Issued by the top military commanders, the immediate objective of the 12 March 1971 military memorandum was to pre-empt the imminent coup plans of the radical junior officers who were either inspired by or were affiliated with the anti-parliamentarian leftist circles (Yön and MDD). After holding the political parties and the government responsible for driving the country into "anarchy, fratricidal strife, and social and economic unrest", the memorandum urgently called for the formation of a technocratic and non-party interim government "which will neutralize the current

²⁸ For a comprehensive study on the ideological discussions and political strategies promulgated by the three main leftist currents which emerged between 1961 and 1971 see: Şener, 2010.

anarchical situation and which, inspired by Atatürk's views, will implement the reformist laws envisaged by the Constitution" (Özbudun, 2000: 33-34). In order to avoid a complete military take-over, Demirel immediately resigned from the Prime Minister's office.

Unlike the 1960 coup, the 1971 military regime did not suspend the parliamentary procedure but rather chose Nihat Erim (the conservative CHP deputy and close associate of İnönü since the opening of multi-party era) as the most appropriate candidate to lead the new interim government. When the Marxist-Leninist youth groups resumed their terrorist attacks, the newly formed Erim government (under the guidance of the military-led National Security Council) retaliated by declaring martial law in 11 provinces on 27 April 1971. The military utilized the war on 'leftist terror' and arrested thousands of leftist activists (including intellectuals, journalists, students, politicians, and trade unionists) who would soon become subject to the systematic torture campaign of the clandestine 'counter-guerrilla' forces embedded within the state security apparatus. All these provided the preliminary signals of the 1971 military regime's selective repression of the left.

Meanwhile, Erim's interim government embarked upon a comprehensive politico-constitutional engineering process which primarily aimed to restrict the libertarian aspects of the 1961 constitution. For instance, while stipulating the essence of basic rights, article 11 of the original 1961 constitution declared that: "The fundamental rights and freedoms shall be restricted by law only in conformity with the letter and spirit of the Constitution". After the extensive constitutional amendments carried out by the successive interim governments (which revised 35 articles and introduced 9 provisional ones in total), the same paragraph was injected with a series of additional conditionalities and now proclaimed that:

The fundamental rights and freedoms shall be restricted by law only in conformity with the letter and spirit of the Constitution *with a view to safeguarding the integrity of the State with its territory and people, the Republic, national security, public order, or special reasons designated in the other articles of the Constitution*" (Constitution as amended in 1971) (italics added).

Those articles regulating civil and political freedoms (such as right to form associations, the right to establish trade unions, the freedom of the press etc.) were also modified in accordance with the similarly restrictive conditionality discussed

above. As a result, the restriction of constitutionally vested political rights and individual liberties had become a rule rather than an exception. The constitutional engineering processes by the successive interim governments (1971-1973) also featured the creation of State Security Courts in order “to deal with offences directed against the State’s territorial and national integrity, the free democratic system and the Republic” (Constitution as amended in 1971). In line with its foundational mission, the State Security Courts would consistently embark on inflicting harsh imprisonment penalties particularly for pro-Kurdish and leftist intellectual activists.

Last but not least, the military intervention of 12 March 1971 set the stage for the Constitutional Court to dissolve TİP on 20 July 1971 for violating the ethnocentric principle of the “State’s indivisibility with its territory and its nation”. The specific legal-political reasoning behind the closure had to do with the TİP’s approval of a resolution regarding the Kurdish problem in its fourth party congress of 1970. Titled as “Proposal of Peoples” (“Halklar Tasarısı”), the resolution acknowledged the existence of a distinct Kurdish population in the eastern region who had been severely subdued by the assimilative and repressive policies of the successive “fascist ruling class governments”. Besides emphasizing the ethnic dimension of the eastern question and holding the state authorities responsible for the deliberate negligence of the socio-economic development of the region, the resolution declared TİP’s “support for the struggle of the Kurdish people” and their “democratic aspirations and demands” (Alış, 2009: 142-143). In a similar vein, the Constitutional Court also banned the National Order Party on 20 May 1971 for violating the principle of laicism. Yet, because Erbakan and his associates (unlike the political leadership cadres of the TİP) were not charged, they would be able to re-establish their Islamic revivalist political movement under the name of National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi - MSP) in 1972.

To sum up, section two has covered the post 1960 coup decade which witnessed the changing contours of the political cleavages and alliances in reference to the increasingly predominant left versus right ideological divide. Accordingly, section two also aimed to highlight how the constitutional engineering process undertaken by the military-led interim governments (1971-1973) symbolized the newly emerging Cold-War alliance among the main domestic actors against the proliferation of anti-NATO leftist movements and burgeoning pro-Kurdish circles. For instance, during the military-led interim period, Demirel’s centre-right Justice Party (the successor of

the Democrat Party ousted by the previous 1960 military coup) delivered enthusiastic support for the authoritarian constitutional revisions undertaken by the successive interim governments.

Bülent Ecevit, on the other hand, not only protested against İnönü's support for Nihat Erim's interim government by resigning from the general secretary position but also remained as the uncompromising critic of the entire process. In 1972, Ecevit would succeed to replace İnönü as the new party chairman of CHP and the latter would consolidate its position within the ideological spectrum as the centre-left. Nevertheless, and despite the particular differences between their immediate aims, it is important to observe how the two successive military interventions (the 1960 and 1971 military coups) consistently sought to maintain and reinforce the laic and ethnocratic regime principles of the Kemalist Republic.

4.3 Military Coup of 1980 as the zenith of authoritarian progression (1973-1983)

4.3.A Towards 1980 Coup: Escalation of Violence, Political Polarization and Economic Crisis

After two years of military guided intermission period under martial law (1971-1973), parliamentary politics took a fresh start with the general elections of October 1973.

Table 15 Results of the 14 October 1973 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 450)
Justice Party	Süleyman Demirel	29.82%	149
Republican People's Party	Bülent Ecevit	33.30%	185
Democratic Party	Feruh Bozbeyle	11.89%	45
National Salvation Party	Necmettin Erbakan	11.80%	48
Republican Trust Party	Turhan Feyzioğlu	5.26%	13
Nationalist Movement Party	Alparslan Türkeş	3.38%	3

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

By receiving the 33.3 percent of the votes (185 seats out of total 450), Ecevit's social democrat CHP emerged as the first party from the ballot box. While Erbakan's Islamic

revivalist MSP did considerably well by capturing 11.8 percent, the Democratic Party (which was founded by the conservative faction of the AP in 1970 and which claimed to represent the original legacy of the previously banned Democrat Party) gathered 11.9 percent. Given the fragmentation in the conservative and anti-leftist bloc, Demirel's AP was down to 29.8 percent [see **Table 15**].

After the elections, the social democrat CHP formed a reluctant coalition government with the overtly religious MSP. Trying to utilize the popularity he gained due to the Turkish military victory in Cyprus, Ecevit aimed to precipitate early general elections by resigning from the office of prime minister in 1974. Yet, his expectations for early general elections were dashed by Demirel who eventually managed to put up a new coalition government with other right-wing parties in the parliament. Until the 1977 elections, Demirel's AP would lead the 'Nationalist Front' (Milliyetçi Cephe) coalition government against Ecevit's left opposition (Ahmad, 1993: 159-168).

With the return to a multi-party system, the pervasive intensification of the left versus right cleavage within the political arena was accompanied by an unprecedented rise of domestic political violence where Türkeş's neo-fascist paramilitary youth groups (popularly known as 'Grey Wolves' or 'Idealist Youth') had become the leading warring party against militant leftist youth groups (Bora and Can, 2000:51-84). As the deputy prime minister of the first 'Nationalist Front' coalition government, Alparslan Türkeş effectively strengthened his networks within the state security apparatus further (particularly within the Turkish Intelligence Service) against the internal Communist threat.²⁹ However, as McDowall (2000: 412) perceptively observes: "Left-Right ideology, dangerous as it intrinsically was, also constituted both a vehicle and camouflage for other contests: Turk versus Kurd, Sunni versus Alevi, Sunni versus secularist, artisan/trader class versus rural migrant and urban proletariat."

Besides the serious outbreaks of sectarian slaughter initiated by the 'Grey Wolves' against Alevi communities in Kahramanmaraş and Çorum (respectively in 1978 and 1980), the pre-1980 coup period would witness the emergence of new radical political organizations which strived for the creation of an independent Kurdish State through armed struggle. Founded in 1978, Abdullah Öcalan's revolutionary Kurdish

²⁹ Having received 3.4 percent of the votes in the general elections of 1973 (3 seats out of 450), Nationalist Action Party managed to seize two ministry posts under the first 'Nationalist Front' coalition government (1975-1977).

nationalist organization Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan - PKK) would quickly become a prominent actor within the Kurdish Southeast region by proving itself to be an effective instigator of violence not only against its internal competitors but also against Turkish security forces (Jongerden and Akkaya, 2011: 123-142).

Confronted with increasing polarization and escalating political violence, the chief of the general staff Kenan Evren instructed his close associates in September 1979 to make the necessary preparations in deepest secrecy for a complete military takeover in the near future. A couple of months later (on 27 December 1979), General Evren, along with the four force commanders, handed a memorandum letter to the president, Fahri Korutürk (1973-1980), calling for the urgent restoration of national unity and domestic tranquillity under the principle of 'Atatürk's nationalism' (Atatürk Milliyetçiliği). After holding the existing political parties directly responsible for the ongoing disintegration of state authority and emphasizing the legal responsibilities of the Turkish Armed Forces derived from the Military Internal Service Code, the memorandum letter required all political parties "to jointly take all the [necessary] measures against such actions as anarchy, terrorism and secessionism that aim at the destruction of the state" (Özbudun, 2000: 41).

Besides the rapid escalation of militant violence in the streets and the inexorable political stalemate in the parliament, Turkey in the late 1970s also suffered from a deepening economic crisis. On 24 January 1979, Demirel's AP minority government adopted an IMF-led economic austerity package in exchange for much needed foreign credit. The so called "24th of January measures" aimed for sweeping socio-economic transformation as it envisioned the replacement of an import substitution economic with an export-oriented growth model (Pamuk, 1981).

4.3.B Political Engineering under the Reign of the National Security Council (1980-1983)

On 12 September 1980, the Turkish Armed Forces eventually staged a coup within the hierarchical chain of command and Kenan Evren became the new head of state. Until the general elections of 6 November 1983, the National Security Council (comprised by the chief of the general staff and four force commanders) ruled the country with an iron fist. With the declaration of martial law throughout the country, the security

forces launched a comprehensive campaign against ‘subversive’ and ‘anarchical’ organizations. Tens of thousands of people had been arrested and put into prison where torture was both endemic and systematic. During the reign of the National Security Council, Inset (1996: 60) states that:

A total of 650,000 people were detained and most suspects were either beaten or tortured. Over 500 people died while under detention as a result of torture; 85,000 people were placed on trial mainly in relation to thought crimes by association... 15,509 people were fired from their jobs for political reasons; 114,000 books were seized and burned; 937 films were banned; 2,729 writers, translators, journalists and actors were put on trial for expressing their opinions.

While outlawing all the existing political parties and banning their leaders from politics for ten years, Kenan Evren promoted Turgut Özal (the leading architect of the ‘24th of January measures’ who had been appointed by Demirel as the undersecretary for economic affairs during the Justice Party minority government) to the position of deputy prime minister in charge of economic affairs. Moreover, the Generals ensured the implementation of IMF-led neo-liberal austerity measures by adopting repressive measures towards organized labour force. Two days after the 1980 military coup, Generals outlawed the workers’ right to strike and suspended the leftist Confederation of Revolutionary Workers’ Unions (DİSK) along with the ultra-nationalist Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions (MİSK) (Ahmad, 1981).

Determined to a fundamental restructuring of the Turkish political and legal system, the National Security Council devised a new draconian Constitution which “emphasized centralization and concentration of power in the hands of the state with strong oversight powers for the military” (Yeşilada, 1988: 354). On 7 November 1982, the Generals put the new constitution to a referendum and managed to gather a 91.4 percent “yes” vote. The approval of the 1982 constitution via the referendum simultaneously meant –according to the provisional article one– an automatic “yes” vote for Kenan Evren to become the next president of the Turkish Republic (1982-1989). This, in return, explains the reason why the 1982 constitution endowed the Presidential executive office with crucial and extensive powers in appointing the very cream of the highly centralized bureaucratic establishment.³⁰

³⁰ The constitutionally vested powers of the President included the right to appoint the members of the Constitutional Court and the State Supervisory Council, the Chief Public Prosecutor, university rectors, members of the Institute of Higher Education, members of the Supreme Military Court of Administrations, and the members of the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors. Due to the

Furthermore, the 1982 Constitution promoted the status of the National Security Council into a legally binding body in charge of Turkey's national security affairs. Article 118 of the new constitution necessitated the Council of Ministers to “give *priority consideration* to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measures it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the country, and the peace and security of society” (italics added). As a result, the 1980 military coup (followed by the 1982 Constitution) would further expand and fortify the autonomous and non-accountable tutelary powers of the military-bureaucratic institutions over popularly elected civilian governments.

While enhancing the centralization of state power, the Generals targeted an effective depoliticization of society by imposing a series of regulatory laws on trade unions, interest associations and universities. These restrictive features, as Yeşilada (1988: 347-354) notes, emulated the basic features of exclusionary state corporatism. Blatant authoritarian features of the new political system, however, were not only confined to these areas. Perceiving anything related to Kurdishness as an indicator of separatism, the National Security Council reinforced the strict boundaries of the Kemalist ethnocratic paradigm by adopting extremely repressive measures.

One of the most notorious of these measures was the enactment of Law No. 2932 (1983) which imposed a total ban on the use of the Kurdish language. While the first article of the law prohibited the dissemination of any other mother tongue except Turkish, the second article stipulated that “No language can be used for the explication, dissemination, and publication of ideas other than the first official language of countries, recognized by the Turkish state” (Aslan, 2009: 6). In tandem with Law no. 2932, article 26 of the 1982 Constitution also stated that “No language prohibited by law may be used in the expression and dissemination of thought.”

During the three years of military dictatorship, the National Security Council also co-opted and utilized the ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’ (Türk İslam Sentezi) as the most effective antidote for countering the much-exaggerated threat posed by ‘subversive’ leftist ideologies. Originally advocated by a group of intellectuals who founded the

substantial appointment powers of the president, the post-Islamist Justice and Development Party government's nomination of the foreign minister Abdullah Gül for the presidential office in 2007 would trigger ‘regime crisis’ over the principle of laicism (See Chapter VI).

association of the ‘Intellectual Hearths’ (Aydınlar Ocağı) in 1970, which harboured close affiliations with the pro-fascist Nationalist Action Party, the ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’ not only embraced and glorified Islam as the original component of the Turkish nationhood but also endeavoured to insulate the latter from the creeping decadence perpetuated by alien cultures (e.g., godless Communism and cosmopolitan westernism).

By putting Sunni Islam at the service of Turkish nationalism, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis provided an appropriate ideological medium for the Generals to ensure the subservience of the masses to the sacred authority of the state power and to expand the hegemonic appeal of the ethnocentric paradigm. Written under the auspices of the National Security Council, the ‘National Culture Report’ (Milli Kültür Raporu) of 1983 enumerated the ‘military, mosque, and family’ as the three basic institutional pillars of Turkish national culture and unity. During its three year rule of military dictatorship, the National Security Council (1980-1983) also pursued highly supportive policies towards state-run Koran courses, mosque construction and Prayers and Preachers Schools. In a similar vein, the military-led 1982 Constitution endowed the ‘religious culture and moral education’ courses with a compulsory status in the curricula of the primary and secondary school system.

While indicating a partial divergence from the religious aversive policies of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism, the identity logic promoted by Turkish-Islamic synthesis was premised upon the original supremacy of the Turkish-Sunni heritage and thus was highly exclusive of ‘other’ minority groups (Kurds, Alevis and non-Muslim minorities). Indeed, the Grey Wolves (many of whom were detained and tortured along with the leftist activists as part of the military’s restoration of law and order campaign) had a point in grumbling that their ideas were in power but they themselves were in the prison (Çınar and Arıkan, 2002: 29).

4.3.C Conclusion

For the general purposes of the thesis, the 1980 military coup era stands out as one of the most decisive historical episodes in the unfolding of *Turkey’s trajectory of ‘controlled transitions’*. After three years of military dictatorship, electoral multi-party competition resumed with the general elections of 6 November 1983. Among the three political parties which the National Security Council allowed to compete in the

general elections, Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi - ANAP) succeeded in becoming the next single-party government of Turkey by capturing 45 percent of the votes [see **Table 16**]. However, it is important to emphasize that the 1983 elections did not mark the return to democracy but rather the installation and legitimization of a highly authoritarian political system (which the National Security Council designed during the three year rule of the military dictatorship) within a multi-party context. To this end, the National Security Council (1980-1983) not only devised the 1982 Constitution but also passed “more than six hundred laws affecting almost all aspects of social, economic, and political structures” (Özbudun, 2000: 26).

Table 16 Results of the 6 November 1983 General Election

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 400)
Motherland Party	Turgut Özal	45.14%	211
Populist Party	Necdet Calp	30.46 %	117
Nationalist Democracy Party	Turgut Sunalp	23.27%	71

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008a

As far as the democratic implications of the three secularist criteria are concerned, it is important to observe how the generals of the 1980 military coup modified the ‘religious aversive’ undertones of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism to the extent of rendering the state even more partial to Sunni-Islam. Within the ideological context of the Cold War era, the elevation of the Turkish-Islam synthesis into semi-official ideology during the 1980 coup era symbolized a marriage of convenience between Turkey’s military-bureaucratic elites and the conservative-right against the internal threat posed by ‘subversive’ leftist groups.

Similarly, it is also important to observe how the pre-1980 coup period had witnessed the birth of Öcalan’s violence-prone Kurdish national independence movement out of Turkey’s radical leftist movements.³¹ In addition to the harshly restrictive policies deployed for the sake of eradication of Kurdish language and identity, the pervasive and systematic torture campaign inflicted by the 1980 coup era against the Kurdish

³¹ For a good source which sheds light on how PKK originally emanated from the historical and organizational experience of the revolutionary Turkish leftist university-youth movements see: Jongerden and Akkaya, 2011a: 123-142.

activists in the prisons would facilitate the transformation of the PKK into a mass political movement in the coming years.³²

4.4 Guarding the Laic-Ethnocracy against ‘Separatist Terror’ and ‘Islamist Reactionism’ (1983-1997)

4.4.A Containing the PKK’s Violent Kurdish Insurgency within the Ethnocratic Paradigm

Capitalizing on the political vacuum created by the Generals’ ban on pre-1980 politicians and forging a diverse coalition within the conservative right wing political spectrum, Turgut Özal’s ANAP succeeded in becoming the party of government in Turkey from 1983 to 1991. During his premiership (1983-1989), Özal developed his neo-liberal economic agenda further and aimed at an effective transformation of the Turkish economy “into a dynamic, globally competitive, export-driven market economy, which was open to foreign capital, ideas, and technology” (Jenkins, 2008: 147). From 1989 until his premature death in 1993, Özal would also succeed Kenan Evren (the leader of the 1980 coup) and become the eighth president of Turkey. Furthermore, and as an observant Muslim of half Kurdish descent, Özal was not only sympathetic towards the religious demands of the Sunni sectors but also held a relatively liberal outlook with regard to the cultural rights of the Kurdish minority.

While seeking to promote partial political liberalization, the ruling ANAP government repealed the infamous articles of 141, 142, and 163 from the Turkish penal code in 1991. For decades, these articles had been consistently utilized by Turkey’s political establishment to imprison those individuals who were found guilty of engaging with Communist (article 141 and 142) and Islamist propaganda (article 163). Although the infamous Law No. 2932 (1983) was also revoked during the same year, it only allowed “the use of Kurdish except in broadcasts, publications and education” (McDowall, 2000: 429). Another limited progress was achieved through the constitutional reforms of 1995 which the EU demanded from Turkey as a precondition for entering the Customs Union.

³² For the brutal torture and Turkification campaign at the military Diyarbakir Prison see: Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009: 73-92.

However, all of these extremely limited progressive political developments mentioned above were eclipsed by the rapid escalation of the violent secessionist Kurdish insurgency under the leadership of the PKK which targeted Turkish security forces and civilians.³³ In response, the Turkish establishment resorted to highly repressive counter-insurgency measures in order to establish its supremacy and control over the contested South East region. In 1987, three years after the PKK initiated its armed struggle, state authorities established the post of Governorship of the Region of Extraordinary Law (Olağanüstü Hal Bölge Valiliği - OHAL) which granted the governors with extraordinary arbitrary powers in the provinces of the Kurdish South East.³⁴ From 1985 onwards, the Turkish authorities also increasingly armed and salaried the local Kurdish landlords ('village guards'³⁵ or 'köy korucuları') in the fight against the PKK.

In addition to the highly repressive counter-insurgency measures in the region, the Turkish parliament (with the pressure emanating from the military) passed a draconian anti-terror law in 1991 which enabled state authorities to frequently imprison those intellectuals, journalists and political activists who would express dissenting but non-violent ideas on the Kurdish problem (Official Gazette, 12 April 1991). For instance, article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law stipulated that: "Written and oral propaganda and assemblies, meetings and demonstrations aimed at damaging the indivisible unity of the Turkish Republic with its territory and nation are forbidden, *regardless of the methods, intentions and ideas behind such activities*" (italics added).

In 1992, the Turkish military-bureaucratic establishment revised the National Security Policy Document³⁶ and listed the PKK as the most dangerous internal threat to the national security of the Republic of Turkey. The US State Department Report of 1994 estimated that besides having "hundreds of thousands of sympathizers in Turkey and Europe," the PKK had "about 10,000 members, 15,000 armed supporters and 60,000-

³³ Although PKK's guerrilla warfare campaign along with its modern-nationalist outlook and Marxist-Leninist foundations remarkably differed from the Sheikh Said Rebellion of 1925, the former amounted to the 29th Kurdish regional uprising since the declaration of the Turkish Republic. See: Özcan, 2006: 73-119.

³⁴ OHAL would remain in force until 2002 as the Turkish authorities became obliged by the EU Accession conditionality to revoke it.

³⁵ According to the official date provided by the Minister of Interior in 2005, there are more than 58,000 village guards in the state payroll (Ayata and Yüksekler, 2005: 16).

³⁶ Known as the Red Book and critically dubbed as the 'secret constitution of Turkey', the National Security Policy Document outlines the basic parameters of Turkey's foreign and domestic politics while establishing the major internal and external threats to the national security of the Republic of Turkey.

75,000 part-time guerrillas” (US State Department Report, 1994). In addition to possessing strong regional support in Southeast Turkey, the PKK also received aid from external actors – including the governments of Syria, Greece and Russia– and maintained training camps in the Beka Valley of Lebanon and Syria (Turkish Intelligence Organization Report, 1994).

Given the local popularity of the PKK both in Turkey and beyond, the Turkish military, from the early 1990’s onwards, launched a systematic and forced village evacuation campaign for the sake of eradicating any potential support in rural regions of the South East (Jongerden, 2007). Chief of Staff Doğan Güreş (1990-1994) clarified the philosophy behind the forced village evacuation campaign when he exclaimed: “To catch the fish you must dry up the sea”³⁷ (Kemal, 1995). As the Human Rights Watch report of 1994 observed:

In an effort to deprive the PKK of its logistic base of support, security forces forcibly evict villagers from their villages and sometimes burned down their villages. Security forces especially target those villages that refuse to enter the village guard system or are suspected of giving food or shelter to PKK members. Torture and arbitrary detention often accompany such evictions...Such operations resulted in hundreds of thousands of displaced Kurdish villagers. (Human Rights Watch Report, 1994:3)

The military-led forced evacuation and demolition of thousands of villages were not only condemned by international human rights organizations but also by Turkey’s state minister for Human Rights, Azimet Köylüoğlu, who referred to the process as “state terrorism” (Human Rights Watch World Report, 1995). During the 1990’s, the Turkish ‘deep state’ organizations also resorted to widespread extra-judicial killings by murdering thousands of civilians who were deemed as sympathetic to the political cause of the PKK. Overall, it is crucial to observe how all of these repressive counter-insurgency measures undertaken by the Turkish authorities against the PKK-led Kurdish national movement mirror the core features of the ethnocracy regime model which rests upon a central political project of facilitating “the *expansion, ethnicization* and *control* of a dominant ethnic nation...over contested territory and polity” (Yiftachel, 2006:11).

³⁷ As a leftist activist with a Kurdish ethnic origin, Yaşar Kemal is one of the most famous novelists in Turkey. Due to his article in which he criticized General Güreş and the human rights abuses in the Kurdish southeast, Kemal was brought to trial for violating article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law and article 312 of the penal code and then received a suspended charge.

4.4.B Ousting the Islamist Welfare Party from the Government via the 'post-modern coup' of 1997

Yet the rise of violent PKK insurgency was not the only factor boosting the legitimacy of the Turkish Armed Forces to perpetuate its highly active and autonomous role within Turkish politics. In 1994, Erbakan's National View Movement (which had re-established itself under the name of the Welfare Party in 1983) scored a stunning success at the municipal elections. By receiving 19.14% of the votes, Erbakan's party managed to get 28 of the 76 provinces and 327 municipalities throughout the country, including Turkey's biggest metropolitan city Istanbul and the capital Ankara (Akıncı, 1999).

The next year, at the general elections of 24 December 1995, the Welfare Party rose to prominence in the Turkish parliament by receiving 21.38% of the votes which delivered it 158 seats out of a total of 550 [see **Table 17**]. The two main centre right-wing parties, ANAP and the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi - DYP), finished the electoral race just behind the Welfare Party and respectively gathered 19.6 percent (132 seats) and 19.2 percent (135 seats) of the votes. Bülent Ecevit's Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi - DSP) and Deniz Baykal's Republican People's Party, the two political parties representative of the centre left, managed to enter parliament by respectively receiving 14.6 percent and 10.7 percent of the votes.

In order to keep the Islamist Welfare Party out of power, Turkey's leading business elites and media groups pressured the two major centre-right wing parties to form a coalition government. Yet due to the personal animosity between Mesut Yılmaz (the leader of ANAP) and Tansu Çiller (the leader of DYP), the 'Mother-Path' minority coalition government (Ana-Yol hükümeti) proved to be a difficult one. The short-lived minority coalition government between the two centre-right wing parties was eventually torn apart when ANAP voted with the Welfare Party's proposal to establish a parliamentary investigation committee on the alleged corruption cases of Çiller (Meyer, 1997). In order to secure immunity against the corruption charges in the parliament, Çiller decided to forge a coalition government with the Islamist Welfare Party. For the first time in his long political career, Necmettin Erbakan became the prime minister of Turkey on 28 June 1996.

Table 17 Results of the 24 January 1995 General Elections

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 550)
Welfare Party (pro-Islamic)	Necmettin Erbakan	21.38%	158
True Path Party (centre-right)	Tansu Çiller	19.18%	135
Motherland Party (centre-right)	Mesut Yılmaz	19.65%	132
Democratic Left Party (centre-left)	Bülent Ecevit	14.64%	76
Republican People's Party (centre-left)	Deniz Baykal	10.71%	49
Nationalist Movement Party (ultra-nationalist right)	Alparslan Türkeş	8.18%	0
Peoples Democracy Party (party of Kurdish nationalist movement)	Murat Bozlak	4.17%	0

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008b

Soon afterwards, the Military High Command made explicit threats against the 'Welfare-Path government' (Refah-Yol hükümeti) headed by Erbakan. In a public speech delivered on 29 July 1996, the Commander of Air Force General Ahmet Çörekci exclaimed: "Our swords will always be sharp and our jets in the skies will be as tearing as the paws [sic] of a falcon against anti-secular and separatist threats" (Quoted in Yeşilada, 1999: 142). Yet rather than using brute force to take control, the military opted to conduct a psychological warfare campaign against the 'Welfare-Path government' and successfully mobilized officials in the judiciary, business associations, trade unions, universities, and civil society associations in support of the laicist foundations of the Kemalist Republic against the perceived encroachment of the Islamic fundamentalist threat.

In order to monitor closely the activities of pro-Islamic economic corporations, media groups, religious brotherhoods, and civil society associations, a separate intelligence unit 'West Task Force' (Batı Çalışma Grubu) was established at the naval office. As one of the leading military figures during the so called 'February 28 Process', Navy Commander General Güven Erkaya would later state that: "they (the commanders) regarded their mission based on two pillars: first, they should make the Turkish people realize that reactionary activities were a threat, and second, this problem should be solved not by armed forces, but by civilians...civil society....organizations...i.e., *the unarmed forces*" (italics added) (Güney, 2002: 170-171).

Since its inception, Erbakan's National View Movement (Milli Görüş Hareketi) has unequivocally denounced the Kemalist state elites' diplomatic and political ambitions to make Turkey part of the Western and European world. After all, fostering economic or political integration with Europe/West was considered to be equivalent to surrendering the imagined 'core Muslim identity' of the Turkish nation to the material and cultural colonization of Christian civilization. While reflecting on the prospects for Turkey joining the European Common Market in the 1970s, Erbakan asserted that "the children of this great nation cannot be assimilated in a Christian pot [Common Market], its sovereign rights and liberties cannot be abolished by a Christian community. Turkey's future and interests can only be served and protected with the formation of Muslim Common Market in which cultural and historical ties are strong" (Yavuz, 2006: 243-244).

Once he became Prime Minister, Erbakan sought to initiate a forum of the Muslim Eight (M-8). Comprised of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Turkey, M-8 would serve as a Muslim version of the leading industrialized western G-7. Furthermore, Erbakan's foreign policy ambition to forge closer bilateral ties particularly with Iran and Libya caught the attention of the United States. Although the MD-8 "was officially inaugurated at a summit of heads of state in Istanbul on 15 June 1997", neither the organization itself nor Erbakan's coalition government proved to be enduring (Jenkins, 2008: 160).

In addition to this, Erbakan and his senior party members' inflammatory public speeches and controversial gestures not only intensified the ongoing 'pro-laic' versus 'pro-Islamic' antagonistic political frontier construction further, but also precipitated an expansive military-bureaucratic crackdown on Islamic socio-political and economic circles. While appealing to his parliamentary group on 13 April 1994 (that is a couple of weeks later from the victorious 27 March 1994 municipality elections) at the Great National Assembly, Erbakan declared that:

Refah will come to power and a just [social] order (*adil düzen*) will be established. The question we must ask ourselves is whether this change will be violent or peaceful; whether it will entail bloodshed. I would have preferred not to have to use those terms, but in the face of all that, in the face of terrorism, and so that everyone can see the true situation clearly, I feel obliged to do so. Today Turkey must take a decision. The Welfare Party will establish a just order, that is certain. [But] will the transition be peaceful or violent; will it be achieved harmoniously or

by bloodshed? The sixty million [citizens] must make up their minds on that point (quoted from ECHR Grand Chamber, 2003: 10).

According to the pro-Laicist camp, there was no doubt that Erbakan's primary party slogan 'Just Order' (Adil Düzen)³⁸ implied the establishment of sharia law and that he and his followers were ready to shed blood while pursuing their political goals. Statements such as these would be listed as a political and legal justification for the Constitutional Court to ban the Welfare Party. During the court hearings, the defence argued that Erbakan's sentences were deliberately taken out of context and that he was only implying the verbal threats directed to his party and the violence they might have been subjected to by Turkey's deep state (Yüksel, 1999: 465-466). Nevertheless, it was still somewhat controversial on what issue the sixty million citizens of Turkey have to make up their mind and then what type of actions they should precisely follow once they make up their mind.

On 31 January 1997, the Welfare Party mayor of the Sincan Municipality organized a 'Jerusalem Night' which staged a theatrical play celebrating the Palestinian armed resistance against the Zionist invasion of the holy lands. The Iranian ambassador to Turkey also took place in the anti-Israeli event where the Welfare Party mayor Bekir Yıldız delivered a pro-Islamist speech. Four days later (on 4 February 1997), the Generals reminded the Welfare-Path coalition government about the imminence of a military coup by ordering the tanks to roll over the streets of Sincan. Later on, it came out that the Sincan initiative was directly taken by Çevik Bir (the deputy chief of general staff from 1995 to 1998) who described the act as a "fine tune-balance to democracy"³⁹.

Despite the contested nature of the Constitutional Court's decision to ban the Welfare Party, it is important to realize how the confrontational speeches and gestures of Welfare Party members provided vital ammunition for the military-bureaucratic establishment in forging a vigorous and fervent alliance with the civilian sectors

³⁸ In the Third General Convention of the Welfare Party which took place on October 7 1990, Erbakan's National View Movement changed its primary party slogan from the '*National Consciousness*' (Milli Şuur) to the '*Just Order*' (Adil Düzen). The very next year, Erbakan expounded the concept of the 'Just Order' and its socio-economic implications by writing a book titled "The Just Economic Order" (Adil Ekonomik Düzen). Although not calling for the establishment of Sharia political order, Erbakan's socio-economic proposals in "The Just Economic Order" were thoroughly infused with 'Islamic ethical norms'. (Yıldız, 2003: 192).

³⁹ The very term '*post-modern coup*' was also originally invented by General Çevik Bir when he defined the 28 February process as a "democratic post-modern coup, encompassing civil society organizations" (Demir, 2007).

against the internal ‘Islamist threat’. For instance, some of the political figures or parliamentarians from the Welfare Party (such as Şevki Yılmaz, Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, Şükrü Karatepe, and İbrahim Halil Çelik) did explicitly call for the radical replacement of Kemalist laicist order with an Islamic State based on Sharia law.⁴⁰

Once confronted with the steady upsurge of political Islam, Turkey’s military elites repudiated their ‘Turkish-Islam synthesis’ friendly policies of the 1980 coup era and returned to the religiously restrained laicism of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era (Cizre and Çınar, 2003). At the next National Security Council meeting held on 28 February 1997 (which lasted for a nine and a half hours), the Generals devised 18 recommendations to fight perceived Islamic reactionary activities and demanded their implementation from the Welfare-Path coalition government⁴¹ [see **Table 18**].

Table 18: 18 Measures of the 28 February Process

1-	The principle of secularism should be strictly enforced and laws should be modified for that purpose, if necessary.
2-	Private dormitories, foundations, and schools affiliated with Sufi religious orders (<i>tarikats</i>) must be put under the control of relevant state authorities and eventually transferred to the Ministry of National Education (MNE), as required by the Law on Unified Education (<i>Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu</i>).
3-	With a view toward rendering the tender minds of young generations inclined foremost toward love of the republic, Atatürk, the homeland, and the nation, and toward the ideal and goal of raising the Turkish nation to the level of modern civilization, and to protect them against the influence of various quarters: a) An eight-year uninterrupted educational system must be implemented across the country. b) The necessary administrative and legal adjustments should be made so that Koran courses, which children with basic education may attend with parental consent, operate only under the responsibility and control of the MNE.
4-	Our national education institutes charged with raising enlightened clergy loyal to the republican regime and Atatürk’s principles and reforms must conform to the essence of the Law on Unified Education.
5-	Religious facilities built in various parts of the country must not be used for political exploitation to send messages to certain circles. If there is a need for such facilities, the RAC should evaluate the need, and the facilities must be built in coordination with local governments and relevant authorities.
6-	Activities of religious orders banned by Law no. 677, as well as all entities prohibited by said law, must be ended.
7-	Media groups that oppose the TAF and its members should be brought under control. These [groups] try to depict the TAF as inimical to religion by exploiting the issue of personnel whose ties to the TAF have been severed by decisions of the Supreme Military Council (SMC, or Yüksek Askeri Şura) based on their

⁴⁰ In 2003, the European Court of Human Rights approved the Turkish Constitutional Court’s closure of the Welfare Party by 4 to 3 majority. For the pro-Sharia statements made by Şevki Yılmaz, Hasan Hüseyin Ceylan, Şükrü Karatepe, and İbrahim Halil Çelik. (See: European Court of Human Rights Grand Chamber, 2003. *The case of Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party) and Others v. Turkey*).

⁴¹ It is important to note that since the article 118 of the 1982 Constitution required the Council of Ministers to give “a priority consideration” to the decisions taken at the National Security Council meetings, these 18 measures were meant to be more than a recommendation.

fundamentalist activities
8- Personnel expelled from military service because of fundamentalist activities, disciplinary problems, or connections with illegal organizations must not be employed by other public agencies and institutions or otherwise encouraged.
9- The measures taken within the framework of existing regulations to prevent infiltration into the TAF by the extremist religious sector should also be applied in other public institutions and establishments, particularly in universities and other educational institutions, at every level of the bureaucracy, and in judicial establishments.
10- Iran's efforts to destabilize Turkey's regime should be closely watched. Policies that would prevent Iran from meddling in Turkey's internal affairs should be adopted.
11- Legal and administrative means must be used to prevent the very dangerous activities of the extremist religious sector that seeks to create polarization in society by fanning sectarian differences
12- Legal and administrative proceedings against those responsible for incidents that contravene the Constitution of the Turkish Republic, the Law on Political Parties, the Turkish Penal Code, and especially the Law on Municipalities should be concluded in a short period of time, and firm measures should be taken at all levels not to allow repetition of such incidents
13- Practices that violate the attire law and that may give Turkey an anachronistic image must be prevented
14- Licensing procedures for short- and long barrel weapons, which have been issued for various reasons, must be reorganized on the basis of police and gendarmerie districts. Restrictions must be introduced on this issue, and the demand for pump-action rifles, in particular, must be evaluated carefully.
15- The collection of [animal] sacrifice hides by anti-regime and uncontrolled [unregulated] organizations and establishments for the purpose of securing financial resources should be prevented, and no collection of sacrifice hides should be allowed outside the authority recognized by law.
16- Legal proceedings against bodyguards dressed in special uniforms and those responsible for them should be concluded speedily, and, taking into account the fact that such illegal practices might reach dangerous proportions, all private bodyguard units not envisaged by the law should be disbanded
17- Initiatives that aim at solving the country's problems on the basis of " <i>umma</i> " [religious community] rather than "nation" and that encourage the separatist terror organization (Kurdistan Workers Party [PKK]) by approaching it on the same basis [i.e., as a part of the <i>umma</i>] should be prevented by legal and administrative means.
18- Law no. 5816, which defines crimes against the great saviour Atatürk, including acts of disrespect, must be fully implemented.

Source: Günay, 2001: 1-18.

As the National Security Council Decision no.406, taken on 28 February 1997, declared:

...the council examined and evaluated the threat and dangers that result from the destructive activities and statements aimed at destroying the republican regime and the democratic, secular, and social law state—which is committed to Atatürk nationalism and whose basis and characteristics are described by the Constitution—and replacing it with a political religious order... As a result of these views and evaluations, it is decided that...the cabinet should be informed that it should take the measures listed in Annex A in the short, medium, and long term [*18 policy measures of the 28 February B.A.*] in order to prevent the multi-

directional threat to our republic...by groups aiming to create an Islamic republic based on *Sharia* law in Turkey (Quoted in Günay, 2001: 17).

Accordingly, and while endeavouring to reinvigorate the pro-laic education system at the expense of the religious one, the 3rd measure of the 28 February recommendations stipulated the extension of the compulsory education system from 5 to 8 years. This, in turn, automatically meant the elimination of the secondary levels (between grade 6 and 8) of the Preachers and Prayers Schools. The 13th measure specifically demanded the prevention of the “practices that violate the attire law and that may give Turkey an *anachronistic image*” (e.g., headscarf). Measure 17, on the other hand, reasserted the laic-ethnocratic political imaginary by declaring: “Initiatives that aim at solving the country's problems [referring to the Kurdish problem B.A.] on the basis of ‘*umma*’ [religious community] rather than ‘*nation*’ and that encourage the separatist terror organization...by approaching it on the same basis...should be prevented by legal and administrative means” (Günay, 2001: 14, 16) (italics added).

While pressuring Erbakan’s coalition government for the full implementation of the 18 measures, the Turkish Military High Command initiated a series of briefings which aimed to inform and galvanize the ‘*unarmed forces*’ about the gravity of rising Islamic reactionary activities in the country. On April 29 1997, the General Staff invited members of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeals and the Council of State, university rectors and journalists to its headquarters where they were comprehensively briefed by the military’s surveillance intelligence reports on the rising tide of Islamic fundamentalism. On May 21 1997, the Republic’s Supreme Court of Appeals Chief Prosecutor Vural Savaş filed a closure case against the Welfare Party arguing that it became the “focal point of anti-secular activities” (Anonymous, 1998).

In order to soothe the insurmountable political pressure in the country and to avert the occurrence of another direct military coup from, Erbakan reluctantly resigned from the office on 18 June 1997. Siding with the forces behind the 28 February process and deliberately bypassing both Erbakan and Çiller, President Süleyman Demirel nominated Mesut Yılmaz to form the next government of Turkey. Under the watchful eyes of Turkey’s military-bureaucratic establishment, Yılmaz managed to construct a minority coalition government. Without engaging in a direct military takeover, the Turkish military succeeded in ousting a civilian government from power once again.

This section has briefly covered the two political developments which have preoccupied Turkey's political agenda during the post 1980 coup era: a) the rise of the Kurdish national movement under the hegemonic leadership of the PKK-led guerrilla warfare, and b) the electoral rise of Erbakan's Islamic-revivalist Welfare Party to governmental power. Although providing a detailed historical analysis on the emergence and development of these two socio-political movements (PKK-led Kurdish nationalism and Erbakan's Islamist revivalist political movement) is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is important to emphasize their respective antithetical counter-hegemonic relations with the ethnocentric and laicist principles of the Kemalist Republic. By focusing on the process of political and constitutional engineering that traditional military-bureaucratic state elites undertook via the successive military-coups, Chapter IV aimed to expose the multiple contestations and polarizations which have revolved around both the laic and ethnocentric dimensions of the Kemalist Republic since the opening of the multi-party politics.

Parallel to the rise of Erbakan's Islamic revivalist Welfare Party as the main contender for political power, it is important to observe how Turkey's military-bureaucratic state elites increasingly repudiated the Turkish-Islam synthesis outlook of the 1980 coup era and returned to the 'positivist' and 'religiously aversive' overtones of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism. Indeed, by 1997, the Turkish military-bureaucratic establishment had re-written the National Security Policy Document by officially identifying 'Kurdish separatism' (mainly associated with PKK) and 'Islamic reactionism' (mainly associated with Erbakan's Welfare Party) as the two most imminent critical internal threats to the national security of the Republic of Turkey.

Yet, as far as the possible replacement of Kemalist lacisim in accordance with the three secularist criteria is concerned, it is equally important to emphasize that the Islamist revivalist political movement of Necmettin Erbakan (unlike the traditional centre-right parties such as the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes, the Justice Party of Süleyman Demirel and the Motherland Party of Turgut Özal) was not even a consistent or explicit 'secularist' in the first and basic meaning of the term. While fervently contesting the 'restrictive' and 'punitive' aspects of Kemalist laicism towards overtly public religiosity and the 'Islamic way of life', the Welfare Party's confrontational pro-Islamic political discourse was hardly compatible with the democratic implications of the three secularist criteria.

Nevertheless, the 28 February Process would not end with the resignation of Erbakan's Welfare Party from the government. The Turkish Armed Forces –as the Chief of General Staff Huseyin Kivrikoğlu has proclaimed– was “prepared to fight against all kinds of terrorism and fundamentalism as well as against internal and external threats regardless what it costs” (Jung, 2001: 28). While the military continued to pressure the new minority coalition government for the implementation of the 18 measures, the Turkish Constitutional Court outlawed the Welfare Party on 16 January 1998. As will be elucidated in Chapter V, the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment's expansive crackdown on the pro-Islamic camp during the 28 February Process would have significant repercussions on the political developments of the post-Helsinki decade (1999-2009).

4.5 Conclusion

Chapter IV has provided a selective historical narrative of Turkey's trajectory of 'controlled transitions' from the opening of the multi-party period until the 'post-modern coup' of 1997 in order to test the second hypothesis of the thesis which contended that: *By and large, the laic-ethnocratic regime characteristics of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era have remained remarkably resilient in shaping and guiding the trajectory of Turkey's successive controlled transitions.* Accordingly, Chapter IV mainly sought to demonstrate how Turkey's successive 'controlled transitions' consistently aimed at perpetuating ethnocratic hegemony and obstructing the transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism by reference to the three secularist democratic criteria.

In line with the theoretical framework of this PhD thesis, Chapter IV has refuted the popular democratic transition followed by democratic consolidation sequence paradigm which was also applied by Ergun Özbudun (2000) to Turkey. Instead of explaining the historical trajectory of Turkey's transition from Kemalist one-party dictatorship through the conceptual lenses of the 'democratic transition and consolidation' paradigm, this thesis has argued for the utilization of hybrid regime typologies which necessitated the shift of attention “from the prospects and obstacles of democratic consolidation to the origins, conditions, trajectories, institutionalization,

and consequences of democratic defects, opening a new line of research” (Bogaards, 2009: 415).

In this respect, Turkey’s long and troubled experiences with the multi-party electoral system offered a rich laboratory to demonstrate the strengths and limitations of hybrid regime typologies. The theoretical chapter of this thesis has highlighted that although various hybrid regime typologies based on Dahlian procedural democratic minimum (such as ‘delegative democracy’, ‘tutelary democracy’ or ‘competitive authoritarianism’) enable one to point to the flawed functioning of specific institutional features of liberal democracy within a multi-party context, they fail to expose and challenge the ‘longue durée’ patterns of domination and exclusion perpetuated by that given political regime. As a result, the thesis insisted on contextualizing various Dahlian hybrid regime typologies (such as tutelary democracy, delegative democracy, and competitive authoritarianism) within the broader theoretical framework provided by ‘laic-ethnocracy’.

To begin with, Turkey’s first multi-party experience under the Democrat Party (1950-1960) is good example of cases where a popularly elected government derives its political legitimacy from winning the majority of the votes at the electoral box but does not necessarily uphold the western principles of constitutional liberalism and pluralism. Özbudun rightly argues that “Turkey’s first democracy trial, under Prime Minister Adnan Menderes (1950-1960), was a typical delegative democracy that ended with a military intervention” (Özbudun, 2000: 152). As it has been noted in the theoretical chapter, Guillermo O’Donnell’s innovative typology of ‘delegative democracy’ is mainly characterized by weak horizontal accountability (e.g., an ineffective constitutional checks and balances system) over the popularly elected executives who display a highly personalistic style of leadership.

This analysis perfectly corresponds with the majoritarianist populist discourse of the Democrat Party which frequently projected itself as the sole authentic incarnation of that inalienable, indivisible, and infallible “*national will*” (*milli irade*) by reference to the majority of votes it gained from the elections (Taşkın, 2007: 87, 101). Since the Democrat Party experience, narrow emphasis on the “majoritarian logic of electoral politics” along with the elevation of the national will to a “near mythical concept that provides political legitimacy centred on popular sovereignty” has been one of the

enduring features of the Turkish political centre-right wing tradition (Cizre Sakallıoğlu, 1996: 149).

Despite the high relevance of delegative democracy, Levitsky and Way's typology of "competitive authoritarianism" enriches our analysis of Turkey's first experience with multi-party system under the ten year rule of the popularly elected DP further by capturing not only the high dosage of partisanship practiced by the incumbent government in order to gain hold of the state bureaucracy, army and judiciary, but also of the restrictive laws it increasingly adopted from the mid 1950's onwards against opposition parties (mainly the CHP), press, and universities. As we have noted in our theoretical chapter, competitive authoritarianism denotes those political regimes where popularly elected civilian governments engage with various subtle authoritarian manipulations in order to forge an 'uneven playing field' for the opposition. Nevertheless, since competitiveness and uncertainty embedded in electoral contest are not severely annulled, opposition political parties are capable of contesting the incumbent government for political power in elections.

Yet, and as the historical unfolding of Turkey's first decade with a multi-party system demonstrates, the opportunity to challenge the incumbent DP in the general elections of 1961 was aborted by the colonel's coup of 1960 where the main opposition Republican People's Party played a supportive role. Rather than enhancing the liberal principle of unbiased constitutional checks and balances, the new political system designed via the 1960 coup aimed to counter the electoral majoritarianism of the DP by installing the mechanisms of military-bureaucratic tutelage over the parliamentary framework. Successive military coups in 1971 and 1980 would further expand and fortify the autonomous and non-accountable tutelary powers of the military-bureaucratic institutions over popularly elected civilian governments.

Perhaps more importantly, in each period of direct military rule (1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983), Turkey's traditional military-bureaucratic elites decisively shaped the rules of the legal-political order by engaging with constitutional and political engineering. This is why Steven A. Cook (2007: 8) wittingly opted to dub the role of the Turkish Armed Forces (along with the military establishments in Algeria

and Egypt) as “ruling but not governing”.⁴² Indeed, the enduring and pervasive influence of the Turkish Armed Forces in civilian politics have prompted many scholars to commonly label Turkey’s hybrid regime typology as a “tutelary democracy”.

Yet, framing the decisively influential role of the Turkish Armed Forces throughout the multi-party era merely as symptomatic malfunctioning of specific institutional features encapsulated by Dahl’s polyarchy⁴³ is highly problematic since the Turkish Armed Forces’ enduring tutelage over the popular elected governments has been deeply intertwined with the latter’s guardianship role in sustaining the hegemony of those core regime principles (dubbed as ‘laic-ethnocracy’) which the one-party Kemalist dictatorship era had sought to implant as the everlasting characteristics of the Republic of Turkey.

This, in turn, explains the reason why the theoretical thrust of this PhD thesis has posited the crux of Turkey’s enduring democratization problems not simply as a specific violation or deviation from one of the seven necessary procedural democratic institutions encapsulated by Dahl’s polyarchy, but as the chronic inability to forge dual democratic regime change of its ‘laic-ethnocracy’ regime paradigm which would entail: a) the democratic transformation of the incompatible aspects of Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria [see **Table 7**], and b) the democratic deconstruction of Turkey’s severe ethnocratic regime features in line with what Ilan Peleg characterized as “radical revision towards genuine democracy” [see **Table 4**].

Since Chapter IV has provided a selective historical narrative of Turkey’s trajectory of ‘controlled transitions’ from the opening of the multi-party period until the ‘post-modern coup’ of 1997, the thesis will now proceed to Chapter V to assess the changing contours and dynamics of the ‘post-Helsinki transition process’ which has unfolded from the inauguration of Turkey’s official EU candidacy in 1999.

⁴² In his book, Cook (2007: 8) rightly points out that military establishments in Turkey, Algeria, and Egypt “have been content to return to the barracks” only after and “because they oversee the development of an institutional setting—a system—that ensures the predominance of the officers.”

⁴³ From a Dahlyian theoretical perspective, the enduring and influential role of the Turkish military over civilian politics exclusively amounts to the violation of the first procedural encapsulated by Dahl’s polyarchy which stipulates that “Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials”. In the same way, Merkel’s “domain democracy” specifically corresponds to the violation of the principle of “effective power to govern”.

CHAPTER V

Domestic Dynamics and Contours of Contested ‘Post-Helsinki Transition’ (1998-2008)

The last two chapters of the thesis (Chapter V and VI) will seek to scrutinize Turkey’s democratization trajectory since the EU Helsinki Summit by focusing on different aspects of the post-Helsinki transition. After all, and according to this thesis, the critical turning point in Turkey’s previous trajectory of ‘controlled transitions’ occurred in the late 1990’s when Turkey was given an official candidacy for European Union membership at the Helsinki European Council summit of December 1999. Besides demanding full subordination of the Turkish Armed Forces to the civilian authority of the popularly elected governments, the EU has required Turkey to raise its standards of minority rights. This, in turn, posed the foremost challenge to the basic features of Turkey’s long standing ‘laic-ethnocratic’ regime paradigm.

In addition to the evidently transformative power of the EU in ushering a new democratization trajectory, Turkey’s post-Helsinki domestic landscape witnessed the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) as the main domestic agent of the EU-led democratic reform process (2002-2009). Far from being an integral component of the traditional Kemalist state elites, the AKP emerged from the ashes of the previously banned Islamist Welfare Party which was forced to resign from government via the military-led ‘post-modern coup’ of 1997.

While providing a selective narrative on the rise of the formerly Islamist AKP leadership as the main domestic political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process, Chapter V will seek to test the third hypothesis of the thesis which contends that:

The granting of EU candidacy at the Helsinki European Council summit (December 1999) has reshaped the internal dynamics of Turkey’s democratization trajectory as the EU accession conditionality significantly constrained the hegemonic scope of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites to preserve the key features of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm. As a result, the transition process in the post-Helsinki

decade marks a critical departure from Turkey's previous trajectory of controlled transitions.

To this end, Chapter V will focus on the domestic dynamics and contours of the ongoing antagonism between the popularly elected AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of 'laicism' which has dominated the central stage of the post-Helsinki political landscape. Furthermore, (and after pointing to the reciprocal 'post-Islamization' and 'Europeanization' process of the reformist AKP leadership parallel to the military-led laicist crackdown of the '28 February Process'), Chapter V will seek to demonstrate how the AKP government's engagement with the EU and the IMF-led reform process has gradually reshaped the internal balance of political power to the detriment of the peculiarly laicist military-bureaucratic status quo of the '28 February Process'. As a result, Turkey's piecemeal and cautiously confined EU-led reform process has accompanied a troubling antagonism and polarization between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of 'laicism' as the former sought to nullify the latter's exclusionary and restrictive policies towards the religious demands of the Sunni-majority.

Accordingly, Chapter V will be divided into *four sections*. Section one will focus on the political dynamics of the '28 February Process' which eventually led to the rise of the formerly Islamist AKP leadership as the new holder of the centre-right tradition and as the *main domestic* political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process (1997-2002). Section two will emphasize how the "reformist" AKP leadership succeeded in establishing itself as the 'party of the average Turk' by simultaneously engaging with the EU-led democratization and IMF-led neo-liberal economic reform processes during its first term in office (2002-2007). Section three will aim to demonstrate how the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of so-called '*laicism*' primarily rests upon a fierce disagreement over the identity and societal demands of the dominant *religious Turkish-Sunni majority*. Lastly, Section Four will seek to elucidate how the revolving contestation over the principle of 'laicism' between these two power blocs reached a climax during the Presidential election of July 2007 and then re-surged again by a closure case opened against the ruling AKP government in 2008 due to the latter's legislative attempt in the parliament to legalize the headscarf

in university education. The selective thematic narration of the fourth section will cover the period until the Constitutional Court's verdict regarding the closure case of the ruling AKP government.

5.1 '28 February Process' as the Domestic Origins of the Contested Post-Helsinki Transition (1997-2002)

In Turkey we have a marriage of Islam and democracy...The child of this marriage is secularism. Now this child gets sick from time to time. The Turkish Armed Forces is the doctor which saves the child. *Depending on how sick the kid is, we administer the necessary medicine to make sure the child recuperates.*

General Çevik Bir (the Deputy Chief of General Staff on 28 February 1997)

The fourth section of Chapter IV discussed how the Turkish Armed Forces devised and forced the Welfare-Path coalition government to adopt "18 measures" at the National Security Council (NSC) meeting which was held on 28 February 1997. Besides officially identifying 'Islamist reactionism' (mainly associated with Erbakan's Welfare Party) and 'Kurdish separatist terror' (mainly associated with PKK) as the two most imminent critical internal threats to national security, the Turkish Armed Forces' encroaching pressure towards the civilian governments for the implementation of these "18 measures" would continue to last even after the closure of the Welfare Party by the Constitutional Court on January 1998 [see Table 18].

In September 1999, for instance, the then Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu (1998-2002) made sure to proclaim the continuation of military tutelage over civilian politics while delivering a lengthy briefing to the media. After critically pointing to the fact that only four out of the eighteen measures (adopted by the NSC on 28 February 1997) had been implemented by civilian governments, General Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu assertively declared that:

...we see no sign that there are efforts to push ahead with implementation of the remaining articles. We are also face to face with an approach that says that "the 28 February is over". *The 28 February is a process.* It began in 1923 [the year which the Republic of Turkey was founded by Atatürk B.A.] and from that date until the present it has continued to keep up with the threat of Islamic reactionism. We embrace our role as the defenders of the Republic against this threat. *If necessary, the 28 February will continue for ten years... If necessary, it will continue for a thousand years.* When the parliament reconvenes on 1st of October, we are expecting it to enact necessary legislations and thus to implement the rest of the 28 February decisions quickly (Quoted in Piccoli, 2004: 163).

As General Kıvrıkoğlu's remarks clearly reveal, the phrase '*28 February Process*' does not only refer to the far-reaching policy implications of these '18 measures', but also to the suspension of normal civilian politics until the peculiarly laicist military-bureaucratic establishment neutralizes or preferably eradicates the perceived internal Islamist threat.

While retrospectively reflecting on the significant repercussions of the '*28 February Process*' on contemporary political developments in post-Helsinki Turkey, Cizre and Çınar remarked that "No major element of Turkish politics at present can be understood without reference to the *February 28 process*" (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 310).

5.1.A Repercussions of the 28 February Process on Centre-Left Parties

With the rise of Erbakan's Welfare Party as the main contender for political power in the December 1995 general elections, the 'pro-Islamic versus pro-Laic' dichotomy became one of the most important socio-political cleavages in Turkish politics and superseded the withering class centred 'left versus right' political cleavage of the Cold War Era. Under the previous 'left versus right' cleavage of the Cold-War context, traditional military-bureaucratic elites increasingly opted to co-opt right-wing Islamic and nationalist segments within the political spectrum as the most 'natural antidote' against the much exaggerated leftist threat. The political leader of the centre-left Bülent Ecevit, in contrast, stood out as one of the most principled opponents against the 1971 and 1980 military coups (Chapter IV).

Within the new post-Cold War context of the '*28 February process*', however, the main centre-left political parties (Ecevit's DSP and Baykal's CHP) increasingly forged a new political alliance with the military-bureaucratic establishment in support of the laic-ethnocratic foundations of the Republic and actively supported the overthrow of the Islamist Welfare Party from the government. For instance, Ecevit justified the heavy involvement of the military into civilian politics during the '*28 February Process*' by declaring that: "Supporters of the RP are continuously engaged in activities to provoke an armed struggle against the state. No armed forces of any country can remain passive and indifferent to insurgencies against the state, or attacks upon itself" (Ciddi, 2009: 101).

Following the involuntary resignation of the Welfare-Path government (see Chapter IV), Mesut Yılmaz’s Motherland Party, Bülent Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party and Hüsametdin Cindoruk’s Democratic Turkey Party (Demokratik Türkiye Partisi or DTP)⁴⁴ succeeded in forming a new minority coalition government under the heavy pressure of the military-bureaucratic establishment. Obviously, the new minority coalition government owed its existence to the military orchestrated ‘post-modern coup’ and was primarily constructed to keep the Welfare Party and True Path Party away from power.

Serving as the Deputy Prime Minister of the “Mother-Left-D” minority government (between 30 June 1997 and 11 January 1999), Bülent Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Partisi - DSP) succeeded to become first in the electoral race of the April 1999 general elections. While Ecevit’s DSP increased its share of votes from 14.64 to 22.19 percent, Devlet Bahçeli’s⁴⁵ Nationalist Action Party stunned everyone by raising its share of votes from 8.18 to 17.98 percent [see **Table 19**]. Despite the military-led laicist crackdown on the pro-Islamic camp, the newly formed Virtue Party (which replaced Erbakan’s banned Welfare Party) managed to become third by gathering 15.41 percent of the votes. The electoral strength of the traditional centre-right parties, on the other hand, has continued to shrink even further. While Mesut Yılmaz’s ANAP dropped from 19.65 to 13.22 percent, Tansu Çiller’s DYP declined from 19.18 to 12.01 percent.

Table 19 Results of the April 1999 General Elections

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 550)
Democratic Left Party (centre-left)	Bülent Ecevit	22.19%	158
Nationalist Movement Party (ultra-nationalist right)	Devlet Bahçeli	17.98%	135
Virtue Party (pro-Islamic)	Recai Kutan	15.41%	132
Motherland Party (centre-right)	Mesut Yılmaz	13.22%	76
True Path Party (centre-right)	Tansu Çiller	12.01%	49

⁴⁴The Democratic Turkey Party was founded on 7 January 1997 by a group of parliamentarians who had split up from Tansu Çiller’s DYP as a protest against the Welfare-Path coalition government. Despite having only 12 parliamentarians, DTP became the junior partner of the new minority coalition government.

⁴⁵ After the death of Alparslan Türkeş in 1997, Devlet Bahçeli became the new leader of the Nationalist Action Party.

Republican Peoples Party (centre-left)	Deniz Baykal	8.18%	0
Peoples Democracy Party (party of Kurdish nationalist movement)		4.17%	0
Independent		0.87%	3

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008b

Given Ecevit's staunchly laic-nationalist stance during the '28 February Process', his electoral success at the general elections of April 1999 appeased the Turkish military. After the elections, Ecevit became prime minister by constructing a tripartite coalition government among DSP, Bahçeli's MHP, and Yılmaz's ANAP. Despite receiving the third highest number of votes in the 1999 elections, the pro-Islamic Virtue Party was conspicuously excluded from the new coalition government as an unacceptable partner. Hence, with the general elections of April 1999, Ecevit managed to become a leading figure of Turkish politics once again. Yet, unlike the pre-1980 coup era, Ecevit was not reborn as a dovish 'social democrat' but as a hawkish 'laic-ethnocrat'; sharing similar hard-line 'political sensitivities' with Turkey's military-bureaucratic establishment in domestic and foreign policy issues.

Indeed, throughout the 1970's, the possibility of forming a coalition between Ecevit's social democrat CHP and Türkeş's violence prone ultra-nationalist and anti-communist MHP was unthinkable. Within the context of the post cold-war '28 February process', these two political parties converged towards a 'new consensus' and roughly shared similar 'sensitivities' upheld by the Turkish Armed Forces. In Chapter VI, we will cover the difficulties that DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government have encountered while trying to deliver the EU's demands for democratic improvements in 'nationally sensitive' issues such as Kurdish minority rights and the Cyprus problem. At this point, however, it is crucial to emphasize how the formerly centre-left parties (Ecevit's DSP and Deniz Baykal's CHP) had already transformed into a civil and demotic voice of the military-led laicism of the '28 February Process' prior to the onset of Turkey's EU candidacy at the Helsinki Summit of 1999.

5.1.B Repercussions of the 28 February Process on the Pro-Islamic Movement

Yet, just like the democratically regressive transformation of formerly centre-left parties into the 'civil and demotic voice' of Turkey's traditional military-bureaucratic elites, the democratically progressive transformation of former Islamists (popularly

elected AKP government) into the main domestic agent of the EU-led ‘post-Helsinki transition’ is also deeply rooted within the dynamics of the ‘28 February Process’. While narrating the socio-economic and political dynamics behind the reciprocal ‘*post-Islamisation*’ and ‘*Europeanization*’ of the pro-Islamic movement during the late 1990’s, scholars commonly identify two set of factors:

1) The socio-economic ascendancy of vibrant pro-Islamic business classes within central Anatolia provinces (popularly dubbed as ‘Anatolian Tigers’) due to the neo-liberal economic transformation and export-oriented growth strategy adopted by Turgut Özal in cooperation with the 1980 military coup leaders; (Yavuz, 2003; Yavuz, 2006b).

2) The “political learning and maturing experience” derived from the expansive laicist crackdown of the 28 February Process which aimed to shrink the socio-economic, educational and political space of the pro-Islamic camp (Aydın and Çakır, 2007; Uğur and Yankaya, 2008).

Scholars, however, usually differ and disagree about which factor should be considered as more significant and thus primarily responsible for the transformation. Prominent scholar on Turkey’s political Islamist movement, Hakan Yavuz, asserts the primacy of the rising “Anatolian Muslim bourgeoisie” as the key independent variable of the pro-EU and relative democratic transformation of the political Islamist movement (dependent variable). “In the case of Turkey and the AKP”, as Yavuz specifically and boldly remarks “the rise of the Anatolian Muslim bourgeoisie has been at the centre of the ‘silent revolution’, and the democratization and liberalization of Islamic actors has been very much achieved by this bourgeoisie” (Yavuz, 2009: 11). According to this socio-economic structural determinacy approach, “AKP is not the cause of the silent revolution occurring in Turkey, but rather the outcome” (Ed. Yavuz, 2006).

Yavuz’s narrative of rising pro-Islamic bourgeoisie agency is equal to the liberal democratization formula (which is popularly but uncritically endorsed by a great variety of liberal, leftist and Islamic intellectuals or journalists in Turkey), however, suffers from the orthodox Marxist imaginary of economic determinism which not only posits the ‘economic’ and ‘political’ terrains as distinctly separate from each other but also maintains that the developmental changes within the economic base structure

automatically moulds and then directly determines the changes in the ‘political’ superstructure. From this perspective, the ‘political’ terrain does not possess any significant autonomous agency vis-a-vis the supposedly distinct and primarily determinant economic terrain. As a result, the ongoing transmutation within the political terrain appears to be the natural law-like reincarnation of the foregoing structural transmutation within the socio-economic terrain (Laclau and Mouffe, 2001:7-46).

While acknowledging the long-term implications of the socio-economic transformation due to Turkey’s structural shift from import-substitution to export-oriented economic growth strategy in the wake of the 1980 military coup (Gülalp, 2001), this sub-section rejects the wholesale attribution of the formerly Islamist movement’s reciprocal ‘*post-Islamisation*’ and ‘*Europeanization*’ process to the rising pro-Islamic ‘Anatolian business class’ which supposedly radiates a spontaneous liberal democratization drive due to its intrinsic bourgeois quality.

Instead, we tend to attribute primacy to the political dynamics of the ‘28 February Process’ itself which accordingly propelled the formerly Islamist political movement (including not only pro-Islamic business organization MUSIAD but also other organically linked civil society organizations such as the pro-Islamic trade union Hak İş, etc) to cognitively re-evaluate its previous position towards Turkey’s EU membership, neo-liberal economic order and secularism in general. Accordingly, it is crucial to identify and briefly expose the three inter-related repercussions of the ‘28 February Process’ on the pro-Islamic camp.

5.1.B.1 Pro-EU Shift of the Islamic Camp: Virtue Party as a midway between Welfare and AKP

Without a doubt, one of the most obvious repercussions of the ‘28 February Process’ lays in its expansive crackdown on Erbakan’s Islamist socio-political movement. While trying to recuperate against the laicist onslaught of the ‘28 February Measures’, the pro-Islamic camp (politicians, civil society organizations, media and intellectuals etc) increasingly came to re-discover the ‘European Union’ as a political space where they could redress their Islamic-inspired grievances (such as the headscarf issue and religious education) by calling upon western liberal democratic norms of human rights, freedom of religion and conscience, and civilian supremacy over the army.

In this respect, the EU Commission's problematization of the "*major role played by the army in political life through the National Security Council*" provided crucial political leverage against the multi-dimensional crackdown that the Turkish Military has initiated and pursued through the 28 February decisions (EU Commission Report, 1998: 24). As a result, the political portion of the Copenhagen Criteria increasingly became the main reference point of Islamic intellectuals and politicians while criticizing and exposing the democratic deficits of Kemalist laicism and modernity.

When the then president of the Constitutional Court, Ahmet Necdet Sezer,⁴⁶ announced the dissolution of the Welfare Party on the grounds that it became a "centre of the activities contrary to the principle of secularism" on 16 January 1998, all of the Welfare parliamentarians were re-grouped under the newly established Virtue Party.⁴⁷ Because the Constitutional Court unanimously had outlawed 72 years old Necmettin Erbakan from engaging in political activities for five years, the latter directed his veteran associate Recai Kutan to become the new 'caretaker chairman' of the Virtue Party.

As the fourth successive political party representing Erbakan's National Outlook Movement, the Virtue Party dropped the explicitly anti-EU rhetoric of the banned Welfare Party and put heavy emphasis on international human rights norms.⁴⁸ Unlike its predecessor, the Virtue Party's new party programme demanded the full implementation of human rights in Turkey by making explicit references to the European Convention on Human Rights and the Paris Charter for a New Europe (Taniyıcı, 2003: 475). During the electoral campaign for the April 1999 general elections, the Virtue Party embraced the pro-EU platform further while *selectively infusing* liberal democratic principles of the Copenhagen criteria with the *pro-Islamic grievances* aggravated by the punitive and restrictive measures of the 28 February Process.

⁴⁶ Due to his evidently laicist credentials and personal integrity, the Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's tripartite DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government (1999-2002) proposed and then selected Ahmet Necdet Sezer as the tenth President of the Republic of Turkey in May 2000.

⁴⁷ The Virtue Party had already been established by Erbakan's lawyer İsmail Alptekin on December 17th 1997. That is one month prior to the Constitutional Court's final decision on the closure of the Welfare Party (Eligür, 2009: 234).

⁴⁸ For a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the successive political party programmes put forward by political parties of the National View Movement since 1969 and their gradual shift of discourse towards the European Union, western norms of human rights, and the free-market economy after the closure of the Welfare Party, see: Şen, 2004.

For instance, titled as “Turkey under the Sunshine”, the Virtue Party’s election manifesto for the 1999 elections maintained that “From the perspective of Turkey’s interests, we aim at completing the country’s membership process in the EU.” Unlike the banned Welfare Party, the Virtue Party also declared its explicit support for Turkey’s NATO alliance and its position within the US-led western international system by proclaiming: “We believe in maintaining our long-lasting *strategic and defence relationship* with the U.S. and improving our relationship to the level of economic cooperation and investment” (Eligür, 2009: 237).

5.1.B.2 Widening Internal Split between the ‘Reformist’ and ‘Traditionalist’ Faction

In the meantime, the preliminary ‘*Europeanization*’ of the pro-Islamic movement in direct response to the laicist crackdown of the ‘28 February Process’ spurred the crystallization of ongoing ‘reformist’ versus ‘traditionalist’ split within the Virtue Party. The so called ‘reformist’ group within Erbakan’s National View Movement initially came to the foreground at the beginning of the 1990s as the young generation of the ‘Islamist’ political cadres started to occupy more prominent positions within the Welfare Party. The ‘reformists’ were mainly associated with the charismatic personality of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan who at the age of 40 became the mayor of Istanbul by winning 25.19 % of the votes in the municipal elections of March 1994.

Until the mid of 1990’s, the so called ‘reformists’ were not necessarily less radical than ‘traditionalists’ in their commitment to political Islamism. In contrast to the ‘traditionalists’, ‘reformists’ sought to spread the political tenets of Erbakan’s Islamist ‘National Outlook Movement’ to the masses by transforming the parochial nature of the party organization espoused by the ‘traditionalists’ (Çakır, 1994: 76-77). The intergenerational split between ‘reformist’ and ‘traditionalist’ factions which has deepened with the 28 February Process, however, was qualitatively different from the initial one. Within the post-28 February context, the debate between the two factions was focused on the extent of cognitive reinterpretation and alteration of the basic political tenets established by Necmettin Erbakan’s ‘National Outlook View’.

The widening internal split within the Virtue Party became irreversible when the ‘reformist faction’ contested the leadership of the 70 year old ‘traditionalist’ Recai Kutan (Necmettin Erbakan’s caretaker chairman) in the first party congress held on 14 May 2000. Due to the political ban imposed on Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the ‘reformist

faction' nominated 50 years old Abdullah Gül as their candidate for the party leadership. While officially proclaiming his candidacy in a press conference organized on 8 March 2000, Abdullah Gül (2000a) pledged to usher a new political and administrative style within the Virtue Party so that the latter can embrace the whole of Turkey. As Abdullah Gül declared; "In order to remove the bans imposed not only on esteemed Erbakan but on other colleagues of ours, we aim to increase the vote share of the Virtue Party from 15% to 25%, from 25% to 35%, and from 35% to 45 percent."

In a speech delivered at the party congress, Abdullah Gül (2000b) re-emphasized the necessity of transforming the Virtue Party into a mainstream "catch-all" party. After pointing out the party's failure to win any parliamentary seats in İzmir and Mersin, Gül specifically maintained that their exclusive electoral success in religiously conservative cities (such as Konya, Kayseri and Sivas) would not be sufficient to grant them governmental power. According to Gül (2000b), it was essential to expand the electoral base and appeal of the Virtue Party in those regions (e.g., İzmir and Mersin) where the majority of people identified with a "western-secular lifestyle" rather than a "religiously observant lifestyle".

At this point, it is crucial to realize how the Virtue Party's 2000 party congress had already marked the rise of the 'reformist' leadership as the new contender for Turkey's decaying centre-right tradition. Yet, in order to capture the historic electoral fortune of the previous traditional centre-right parties (e.g. Democrat Party headed by Adnan Menderes, Justice Party headed by Süleyman Demirel, and Motherland Party headed by Turgut Özal), the pro-Islamic 'reformist' leadership had to explicitly abandon the 'pro-Sharia' and 'jihadist' discourse of the formerly banned Welfare Party. After all, a credible survey study conducted in 1999 demonstrated that only 21% of Turkey's general population was in favour of a "Sharia-State" (Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2000; 2006).⁴⁹ In other words, although the significant majority of Turkey's populace was highly embracing of religiosity at the personal or societal level (and thus was in favour of a more prominent role for religion in public space), they were certainly not in favour of an Islamic-State.

⁴⁹ With regard to certain areas of Sharia law, such as polygamy, inheritance and divorce law, the rate of approval among the respondents was around 10 percent. In the case of the Sharia law punishment for adultery, the rate of approval would almost drop to zero. For details see: Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2006: 13, 33, 101.

5.1.B.3 Post-Islamist Turn: ‘Reformist’ Leadership reconsiders its stance on Secularism

Accordingly, the newly founded pro-Islamic Virtue Party has unambiguously abandoned the ‘pro-Sharia’ and ‘jihadist’ discourse of the formerly banned Welfare Party and keenly proclaimed its embrace of *secularism* in the first and the most basic meaning of the term (“secularism as negation of theocracy”). As one of the leading figures of the ‘reformist faction’ within the Virtue Party, Abdullah Gül explicitly renounced the ‘Islamist’ position of the previously banned Welfare Party by maintaining that:

There is no desire for a religious state...What this country’s *religious people* want is to demand their rights by means of lifting the restraints on *their lifestyles*. They want an end to discrimination shown against them and to gain their *individual rights*. In Turkey, freedom of religion is very constrained. (Quoted in White, 2001: 20)

Gül’s remarks are crucial as they encapsulate the progressive shift in the political grammar of Turkey’s pro-Islamic camp in the wake of the ‘28 February process’. Within the new political grammar of the pro-Islamic camp, it is important to emphasize how Sunni religious-identity inspired grievances in particular become increasingly infused with the Western/European notion of liberal individual rights and are cautiously constructed to contest only the ‘exclusionary’ and ‘restrictive’ characteristics of *Kemalist laicism* rather than the principle of *secularism per se* (particularly the first secularist criteria).

Despite the ongoing reciprocal ‘post-Islamization’ and ‘Europeanization’ of the pro-Islamic camp, the Constitutional Court would also ban the Virtue Party on 22 June 2001 due to the latter’s persistent campaign for the removal of the laicist headscarf ban in public institutions and university education. Once the ‘reformist faction’ within the Virtue Party charted its own political path by establishing the Justice and Development Party (AKP) on 14 August 2001, AKP’s action programme (2001: 5) made sure to declare those “attitudes and practices which disturb *pious people*, and which discriminate them due to their *religious lives, and preferences*, as anti-democratic and in contradiction to human rights and freedoms” (italics added). Yet, AKP’s action program also declared, at least in principle, its opposition to the

exploitation of religious values for political purposes and enforcement of non-religious people to conform to the religious norms.

While contesting the western-positivist thrust of Kemalist laicism which is premised on the state-induced exclusion of particular forms of an 'Islamic way of life' from the public sphere (e.g., Islamic headscarf, religious orders), the 'post-28 February' AKP leadership insisted that a truly secular state should adopt a '*neutral*' and '*equidistant*' position towards all religions or religiosity while guaranteeing the individual rights of believers and non-believers alike. Hence, AKP's party programme (2001: 5) re-defined and cherished the concept of "secularism" as an indispensably reconciliatory framework providing freedom to the lifestyles and convictions of both *religious* and *non-religious people* (third secularist criteria). However, it is worth emphasizing the fact that the AKP leadership's normative emphasis on *Sunni-Islamic socio-cultural sensitivities* in everyday public life and its frequent deployment of religiously-conservative populist discourse neither yield to the creation of a truly '*equidistant*' position towards religion nor to the foundation of a truly '*neutral*' reconciliatory framework for non-religious lifestyles (see Chapter VI).

Nevertheless, at this point, it is important to observe how the pro-Islamic camp has ceased to contest the first meaning of secularism (secularism as the negation of theocracy) and increasingly utilized a new libertarian political grammar as a discursive shield in reaction to the military-led laicist crackdown of the '28 February Process'. Since then, the ongoing contestation between pro-Islamic and pro-laic camp has transformed into (and so far remained limited to) a contestation over the expanding role and visibility of religion in the everyday public sphere (Yavuz, 2009: 160).

While focusing on domestic dynamics which lead to the rise of the formerly Islamist AKP leadership as the *main domestic* political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process, the first section particularly sought to highlight the way the 'reformist faction' of the Virtue Party (namely the Justice and Development Party) had progressively re-invented itself as the new contender of the traditional centre-right in response to the '28 February Process'. In addition to these ongoing transformative socio-economic and political dynamics within the domestic arena, however, one has to stress the two critical and historically contingent developments which provided a

window of opportunity for the newly founded AKP to sweep into power at the early general elections of November 2002.

Table 20 Steady Electoral Decline of the Traditional Centre Right (1991-2002)

Centre-Right Parties	1991 Elections	1995 Elections	1999 Elections	2002 Elections
Motherland Party	24.01%	19.65%	13.22%	5.12%
True Path Party	27.03%	19.18%	12.01%	9.55%

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008b

These two critical and historically contingent events were:

- a) Internal collapse of DSP due to Ecevit’s deteriorating health problems along with the financial economic crisis of February 2001 which led a sizeable amount of a resentful electorate to punish the incumbent DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government at the early general election of November 2002.
- b) Long-term steady electoral decline of the two main traditional centre-right parties throughout the 1990’s which eventually led to their ultimate demise at the early general elections of November 2002 [see **Table 20**].

Indeed, it was this very particular context of the November 2002 early general elections which enabled the newly founded ‘reformist’ AKP leadership to emerge as the new holder of the centre-right tradition by receiving 34.5 percent of the votes. With the single exception of Deniz Baykal’s CHP, all of the existing political parties remained outside of the parliament as they failed to pass the 10 percent nation-wide electoral threshold. As a result, despite receiving 34.5 percent of the general electoral vote at the ballot box, AKP managed to disproportionately capture 363 out of 550 parliamentary seats (four seats short of two-third majority). As the only opposition party in the parliament, CHP won 178 seats by receiving 19.39% of the general votes [see **Table 21**].

Table 21 Results of the November 2002 Early General Elections

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 550)
Justice and Development Party ("reformist" as new centre-right)	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	34.26%	363
Republican Peoples Party (centre-left)	Deniz Baykal	19.39%	178

True Path Party (traditional centre-right)	Tansu Çiller	9.55%	0
Nationalist Movement Party (ultra-nationalist right)	Devlet Bahçeli	8.33%	0
Young Party (party of controversial business tycoon)	Cem Uzan	7.24%	0
Democratic Peoples' Party (party of Kurdish national movement)	Ahmet Türk	6.21%	0
Motherland Party (traditional centre-right)	Mesut Yılmaz	5.12%	0
Felicity Party ("traditionalist" pro-Islamic)	Recai Kutan	2.48%	0
Democratic Left Party (centre-left)	Bülent Ecevit	1.22%	0
Independent		1%	9

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008b

5.2 AKP Establishes itself as the Party of the ‘Average Turk’

“Turkey has achieved what people said could never be achieved—a balance between Islam, democracy, secularism and modernity... In the West the AKP is always portrayed as being ‘rooted in religion.’ This is not true. The AKP is not a party just for religiously observant people—we are the party of the average Turk” (Quoted by Matthews, 2008).

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan

In the previous section, we have noted how the ‘28 February Process’ facilitated the ongoing intergenerational split of Erbakan’s Islamist political movement into ‘Reformist’ versus ‘Traditionalist’ factions. Once the Virtue Party was dissolved by the Constitutional Court on 22 June 2001, the ‘reformist’ faction within the Virtue Party (led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül, Bülent Arınç etc.) charted its own political path by forming the Justice and Development Party on 14 August 2001. The ‘traditionalist faction’ loyal to Erbakan, on the other hand, formed the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi - SP). While AKP swept into single-party government at the early general elections of 3 November 2002, the Felicity Party (headed by Erbakan’s caretaker chairman Recai Kutan) only received 2.48 percent of the votes [see **Table 21**].

During the post-2002 election period, the Felicity Party retreated to the original anti-EU discourse of the previously banned Welfare Party and keenly promoted itself as the sole and genuine representative of the ‘National Outlook’ tradition. In contrast, the AKP leadership conspicuously dissociated itself from the heritage of the ‘National Outlook’ and claimed to be the new political representative of the historic centre-right tradition personified with the legacy of Adnan Menderes and Turgut Özal. Furthermore, the AKP leadership sought to expound and elevate the concept of ‘*conservative democracy*’ to the status of its ideological manifesto. While consciously avoiding being labelled as ‘Muslim democrats’, the AKP leadership insisted on the usage of ‘conservative democrat’ as the most appropriate ideological label reflecting the defining characteristics of their political identity and outlook. In the next general elections of 22 July 2007, while AKP considerably expanded its electoral power and received 46.58 percent of the votes, Erbakan’s SP gathered 2.34 percent [see **Table 22**].

Table 22 Results of the 22 July 2007 General Elections

Political Parties	Party Leaders	Vote	Number of MP (out of 550)
Justice and Development Party (‘reformist’ as new centre-right)	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	46.58%	341
Republican Peoples Party (centre-left)	Deniz Baykal	20.88%	112
Nationalist Movement Party (ultra-nationalist right)	Devlet Bahçeli	14.27%	71
Democrat Party (revival of the traditional centre-right)	Mehmet Ağar	5.42%	0
Democratic Society Party (party of Kurdish national movement)	Ahmet Türk	5.32%	26
Young Party (populist party of a business tycoon)	Cem Uzan	3.04%	0
Felicity Party (‘traditionalist’ pro-Islamic)	Recai Kutan	2.34%	0

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu, 2008b

This section will aim to expound on the *discursive/cognitive* transformation (along with policy innovations) that the ‘reformist faction’ of the Virtue Party undertook while diverging from the fundamental tenets of Erbakan’s National Outlook and how the AKP managed to become in Erdoğan’s words “the party of the average Turk” [see **Table 23**]. After the decisive electoral victory of the November 2002 general elections, the ruling AKP government’s ability to fully transform into the “party of the average Turk” largely depended on adhering to two reform processes: 1- The EU-led democratization reform process, 2- the IMF led neo-liberal economic reform process. Section two will be divided into two subsections along these lines.

Table 23 Progressively Changing Agenda of the Islamic Political Movement

	Welfare Party	Virtue Party	Justice and Development Party
Economic Role of the State	Extremely significant. Strong redistributive role for the state. An active role for the state in subsidizing industrial development. Privatization deemphasized.	Some reference to the distributional role of the state. Much more emphasis on competition, the need to rely on market forces and privatization.	Strong emphasis on liberal economy and foreign direct investment. Favours privatization and properly regulated market economy. Some reference to social justice. Provision of social services within the budgetary limits of the IMF programme.
Democratization	No reference to individual or human rights. Major emphasis on social rights and freedom to practice religion.	Major emphasis on individual and human rights. Extension of democratic rights especially in the sphere of freedom to practice religion.	Major emphasis on democratic consolidation through continuing reforms in the realm of civil and human rights. Emphasis on the involvement of civil society. Only occasional references to religious freedoms.
Nationalism	Very strong nationalistic flavour. Conceives Turkey as the leader of the Muslim world.	Emphasis on nationalism less pronounced.	Highly cosmopolitan in outlook; nationalistic element somewhat subdued.
Religion and Moral Values	Very strong. Outlines specific recommendations with special reference to Islamic values and practices. A major distinguishing characteristic of the party programme.	Moral values and principles emphasized. However no explicit reference to Islam or Islamic values. Emphasis on religious freedoms as part of a broader agenda of individual rights and democratization.	Takes the secular order as its basic reference point. Moral values and principles are considered as broad social norms of Turkish society rather than specific emphasis on Islamic values. Religious freedom as part of a broader programme of democratization.
Centralization versus Local Government	Active role for the central government. Minor reference to local government.	Strong emphasis on decentralization and delegation of authority to local government.	Strong emphasis on decentralization and the policymaking capacities of local governments.
Foreign Policy Orientation	Strong anti-Western and anti- EU bias. Strong opposition to Israel. Favours close relations with the Muslim world.	Favours an active but balanced approach to foreign policy. Anti-western and anti-EU attitudes rejected. No explicit reference to Muslim countries.	Strong western orientation with full commitment to EU membership. Open to compromise solutions on key foreign policy issues such as the Cyprus. Follows a balanced approach towards Middle East.
Style of Politics	Aggressive, assertive and confident tone. Frequent use of populist rhetoric.	Defensive and subdued tone.	Emphasis on dialogue and consensus-building. Tends to characterize itself as 'Conservative Democrats' and defines itself increasingly as a party of the 'centre'.

Source: Öniş, 2006:122-140

5.2.A AKP Leadership's Embrace of the EU-led Democratization Reform Process

During its first term in office (2002-2007), the AKP government unambiguously established its top priority as getting an EU accession negotiation date for Turkey as soon as possible. The Prime Minister Abdullah Gül in an interview stated the political orientation and the strategy of his newly elected government in a nutshell when he declared:

We are a conservative democratic party. We want to implement EU standards; and we are pushing for EU membership. We want to demonstrate that a country with a Muslim majority can be comfortable with the modern world...Our link with religion is on an individual basis. It's an essential right, but only one among other rights. We don't want to impose religious rules. And now we're in government our sincerity can be measured...We want a truly secular system in Turkey, but would like to see it defined in the European sense, with a clear distinction between the religion and the state, preferably on the Anglo-Saxon model (Kristianasen, 2003).

In line with this objective, the AKP government (particularly between 2002 and 2004) has significantly accelerated and intensified the EU led democratization reform process. Indeed, the AKP government's determined commitment to comply with the political portion of the Copenhagen Criteria played a decisive role in the European Council's decision to start accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 (see Chapter VI).

During its early years in power, AKP's intense engagement with the EU-led democratization reform process carried significant and inter-related repercussions. Significantly, it enabled the 'reformist' AKP leadership to establish itself as a credible actor capable of delivering the "historical task" (à la Gramsci) necessitated by Turkey's EU membership. What's more, the fixed oppositional stance of the laicist military-bureaucratic circles on those EU conditionality reforms which touched upon 'nationally sensitive' issues enabled the AKP government to project itself as the principal agent of the EU-led reform process with no credible political alternative. Indeed, the ruling AKP government's initiation of bold policy innovations on 'nationally sensitive' issues (particularly Kurdish cultural rights, the Cyprus problem) played a vital role in pushing aside the traditional westernizing Kemalist state elites and promoting itself as "the new owner of the modernization-cum-Europeanization project" (Uğur and Yankaya, 2008: 592). Hence, by engaging with the EU reform process, the AKP government managed to gain political and moral legitimacy among

a large portion of mainstream media, liberal intellectuals, and pro-EU business sectors who had previously tended to side with the forces of the ‘28 February Process’ against the Islamist Welfare Party.

At better point, one might adopt some themes from Gramscian terminology in order to better comprehend the counter-hegemonic move that the AKP leadership forged through the EU platform. By appropriating the leadership of the EU-led reform process, AKP not only progressively weakened the previous system of civilian alliances which formed the basis of hegemony (consent and support) for the military-led 28 February Process (coercion) but also managed to forge a qualitatively new and complex system of civil alliances against the peculiarly laicist military-bureaucratic status quo of the 28 February Process.

As noted previously, AKP’s embrace of the EU process has been intimately linked with counterbalancing the expansive crackdown of 28 February Process on Islamic (read as dominant Sunni-Hanefi sect of Islam) socio-cultural and economic formations. Given this, the implementation of the EU standards simultaneously meant providing a protective environment particularly for religiously conservative sections of the society. As one of the AKP parliamentarians put it:

February 28 has shown us that there are some things that Turkey cannot achieve on its own. I am not talking about Turkey becoming a Shari’a state. What I am talking about is an environment where you can teach your child as much about religion as you want, where my wife can wear whatever she likes and where I will not be punished because of my religious beliefs. We realised that the prominence of individual rights within the EU can actually help us in decreasing the weight of the institutions in the Turkish political system and hence achieve the maximum in sustaining our *lifestyles* (Aydın and Çakır, 2007: 5).

These statements clearly reveal the particular *inter-subjective political meaning* that the bulk of the AKP leadership –along with religiously conservative societal segments– ascribe to Turkey’s Europeanization process (Diez *et al.*, 2005: 5-6).

According to Gramsci (2007: 180-182), any particular political group or economic class can become hegemonic “in the extent of which it transcends its corporate phase and succeeds in combining the interests of other classes and social forces with its own interests, and in becoming the universal representative of the main social forces which make up the nation” (Simon, 1991: 36). It is crucial to realize how the AKP leadership pursued the particular interests of its religiously conservative base (including Islamic

inspired economic actors, civil society associations, and religious orders etc.) while simultaneously establishing itself as the leading political agent capable of holding a *relatively* more receptive stance –but not a necessarily sufficient or equitable one– to the requirements of the EU-led reform process.

This kind of dual counter-hegemonic strategy also constitutes the underlying theme of the ruling AKP government’s discourse on EU membership. The AKP leadership simultaneously frames Turkey’s prospective membership in the European Union both as a necessary component to fulfill the Kemalist Republican ideal of “reaching the level of contemporary civilization” and as the most powerful antidote against the “*clash of civilizations*” prophecy put forward by Samuel Huntington (2002). For Kemalist Republican elites, however, the ideal of “reaching the level of contemporary civilization” entailed emulating the western cultural habitus and lifestyle. More importantly, it signified a radical civilizational shift from the perceived ‘retrograde’ elements of Ottoman-Islamic heritage to a new ‘progressive’ Republican ethos of laic-Turkish nationalism.

The AKP leadership’s discourse on EU membership, in contrast, is premised upon the quasi-liberal ideal of coexistence between Islamic and Christian civilizations. Within this discursive framework, Turkey’s EU membership is not construed as becoming a part of a “singular western civilization” but as forming an alliance between *two different civilizations* (Duran, 2008: 83-84). In other words, Turkey’s EU Accession process is not posited as gravitating towards a western civilizational centre but rather as constructing a bridge between the Christian and Islamic worlds. Through the constant utilization of the ‘*bridge metaphor*’, the AKP leadership not only frames Turkey as an organic representative of the Muslim world but also seeks to revitalize perceived authentic civilizational characteristics stemming from the Ottoman-Islamic past.⁵⁰

Yet, AKP’s discourse on EU membership also differs from the traditional Islamist discourse of Erbakan’s National View Movement. As stated previously, the latter constructed the ‘West’ as an irreconcilable ‘*Other*’ posing an existential threat to the ‘Islamist self’ (Diez, 2005: 628-629). After the split of the Islamist political

⁵⁰ For more on AKP’s discourse as “alliance of civilizations” and its repercussions for Turkey’s domestic and foreign policy see Dağı, 2009: 43-64; Boulaich and Dosenrode, 2009:65-83; Balci *et al.*, 2008: 387-406; Kosebalaban, 2007: 87-111.

movement, Necmetin Erbakan constantly criticized his former disciples (the ruling AKP leadership) for replacing the ‘National View’ shirt with a new ‘EU’ and ‘IMF’ shirt. Although AKP does not engage with such an antagonistic posture towards the ‘West’, its heavy emphasis on *religiously defined* civilizational difference between Turkey and the EU is neither unproblematic nor value free.

First of all, defining the concept of ‘*civilization*’ exclusively within the religious parameters and then promoting the ideal of co-existence between the two –supposedly monolithic Islamic and Christian civilizations– may entail predispositions of “essentialist multiculturalism” (Taşkın, 2008: 53-72). Second, the AKP leadership’s relatively more receptive stance on the Copenhagen Criteria (political and economic liberalism) should not overshadow its highlighted conservative stance on Islamic-cultural sensitivities and its problematic implications on ensuring the secularist principle of individual’s freedom *from* religion and the religious way of life.

Nevertheless, within the international context of post 9/11, the ruling AKP government’s receptive commitment to the EU Accession process accompanied by a conciliatory engagement with the Bush Administration’s ‘War on Terror’ played a fundamental role in empowering the AKP leadership’s political prestige and legitimacy both within the domestic and international arena. Without cognitively deconstructing National View’s essentialist identity logic which constructed ‘Islamist identity’ in direct opposition to the ‘Christian West’, it would be neither possible for the AKP leadership to actively uphold Turkey’s strategic partnership with the US (including NATO) nor to start the accession negotiations with the EU.

5.2.B AKP Leadership’s Embrace of the IMF-led Economic Reform Process

The ruling AKP government’s strict adherence to the IMF-led neo-liberal economic reform process constituted another major indication of a political rupture from the traditional political Islamism espoused by Erbakan’s National Outlook Movement. In the immediate aftermath of the Helsinki European Council’s decision to grant EU membership candidacy status to Turkey, Ecevit’s tripartite DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government had signed a three year Stand-By Programme with the IMF on 19 December 1999 (17th stand-by agreement). The IMF program envisaged major restructuring of the Turkish economic and financial system as it entailed extensive structural adjustment reforms in privatization, banking regulation, pension reform and

the reduction of the state-led agricultural price support system [see Table 24]. Besides prescribing tight fiscal policy, the program aimed to tackle the chronic problem of high inflation by ambitiously targeting to bring it down to 25 percent by the end of 2000, 12 percent by the end of 2001 and to 7 percent by the end of 2002 (Arpac and Bird, 2009: 140).

Table 24 Structural Reform Measures of the Letter of Intent signed in 1999 with the IMF

Agricultural policies	The medium-term objective was to phase out existing support policies such as support pricing and purchasing and credit subsidies that burden public finances, and replace them with a direct income support system targeting poor farmers. In the interim, existing support policies were to take into account the programme targets.
Pension reform	Social security reform was to be deepened by undertaking administrative reforms to improve coverage and compliance, and more importantly by creating the legal framework for private pension funds.
Fiscal management	A total of 61 extra budgetary funds were to be phased out progressively by June 2001.
Tax policy	Guaranteed to broaden the tax base, but no specific measures were given.
Privatization	Listed 16 publicly-owned enterprises to be privatized in 2000. A further list of public companies for the privatization programme in 2001 was to be prepared. Turk Telekom and energy sectors were to be subjected to the Turkish commercial code (prior actions) with a view to preparing them for privatization.
Banking regulations	The Banks Act was to be amended to strengthen prudential standards, to increase transparency and independence of the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency. Two major state-owned banks were to be commercialized, with an eventual privatization goal.

Source: Ekinici, 2002: 93-94.

Following the severe financial collapse of February 2001, Ecevit recruited the then vice-president of the World Bank Kemal Derviş as the new Minister of Economic Affairs. During his short term in ministerial office (March 2001-August 2002), Derviş pushed the neo-liberal agenda further by devising his ‘Strong Economy Program’ and succeeded in forging a new three year Stand-By agreement with the IMF in January 2002 (18th stand-by agreement). The new agreement sought to bring macro-economic stability and to deepen those structural adjustment reform measures which were already laid out in the previous IMF programme of 1999.

Yet, the untimely collapse of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government due to Ecevit’s deteriorating health problems not only contributed to the electoral fortune of the AKP in the early general elections of November 2002 but also enabled the new ruling government to reap the long-term benefits of the post-crisis adjustment policies

which had been originally formulated by Kemal Derviş. Between the years 2002 and 2006 – that is after a sharp decline by 9.5 percent in 2001– the Turkish economy bounced back with an annual average of 7.4 percent real GDP growth rate (World Bank, 2006).

Furthermore, the implementation of IMF-led fiscal austerity measures in tandem with contractionary monetary policy (pursued by a strengthened autonomous central bank) succeeded in bringing chronic high inflation under control. By the year of 2005, the annual inflation rate has drastically decreased from previously almost three-digit numbers to a record low of 7.7 percent, a level that had not been achieved for decades (Altunbaş, *et al.*, 2005: 29). During the years of 2002 and 2003, foreign direct investment in the Turkish economy respectively amounted to 1.14 and 1.75 billion (US \$). As Turkey started accession negotiations with the EU in 2005, this figure rose to 9.7 billion. The very next year, foreign direct investment doubled, reaching 20 billion (Öniş and Bayram 2008: 55-56).

By diligently implementing and completing the measures of the 2002 IMF agreement, the new ruling AKP government not only became the main political agent in consolidating Turkey's integration to the global financial markets but also took the main credit for bringing “stability and credibility” (twin catchwords of business friendly neo-liberal orthodoxy promoted by the Washington Consensus) to the Turkish economy. In January 2005, the AKP leadership gave further assurance to business and financial power centres in domestic and international arenas by signing a new stand-by agreement between Turkey and the IMF which would last until May 2008 (19th stand-by agreement).

From the perspective of Erbakan's National View Movement, the neo-liberal globalization process (under the auspices of Breton Woods Institutions) amounted to a mere oppression and exploitation of faithful Muslims by the imperialist plot of Zionist capitalism. Besides denouncing its adverse corporeal effects on socio-economic welfare and distributional justice, the Welfare Party categorically rejected the materialist west's neo-liberal economic order by regarding it as inherently detrimental to the development of the nation's Islamic spiritual and moral values (Patton, 2009: 442). In stark contrast, the former 'reformist' faction's cognitive embrace of the hegemonic principles promoted by neo-liberal orthodoxy is explicitly articulated in

the AKP action programme. According to the latter, AKP a) “favours market economy with all its institutions and rules, b) it recognizes that the state should remain, in principle, outside all types of economic activities, c) it regards privatization as an important vehicle for the formation of a more rational economic structure, d) it favours...the structural transformations brought about by globalization, and e) it believes that foreign capital plays an important role in the...development of the Turkish economy” (AKP action programme, 2001).

Various quantitative poll studies verify that the ruling AKP government’s noticeable economic achievements during its first term in office (2002-2007) constituted the primary determinant for the party’s astounding victory in the general elections of July 2007.⁵¹ Thus, the former reformists’ cognitive embrace and firm commitment to the ‘necessities’ of the IMF led neo-liberal reform process played an essential role in solidifying AKP’s position within the Turkish political spectrum as the new holder of the historic centre-right tradition.

5.2.C Conclusion

This section sought to explain the discursive/cognitive transformation along with policy innovations that the ‘reformist’ AKP leadership undertook under the banner of ‘Conservative Democracy’. Penned by the Prime Minister Erdoğan’s academic advisor Yalçın Akdoğan in 2003, AKP’s manifesto bulletin on “conservative democracy” stands as a conscious intellectual attempt to forge a synthesis between religious/conservative values and political-economic liberalism. Many academic scholars tend to highlight the similarities between ‘Christian Democrats’ and Turkey’s ruling AKP government since both of them carve out a more prominent role for religion in social issues and sanctify the role of family as the bedrock of traditional norms and societal solidarity while adhering to the precepts of neo-liberal economic order (Hale, 2005)⁵². In the party bulletin, however, Erdoğan’s academic advisor

⁵¹ In his recent study, Ersin Kalaycıoğlu (2010: 43) notes that “the performance of the AKP at the polls in 2007 depended mainly on its economic performance in government between 2002 and 2007. The findings clearly indicate that although party identification seemed to play a major role for voter preferences for the AKP, even party identification seemed to depend upon the economic performance of the AKP government.” Hence, as far as voter preferences are concerned, the author concludes that “the economy seemed to have played a more important direct role in the 2007 elections than cultural, primordial, and ideological factors.”

⁵² The AKP action programme (2001:27) underlines that “The family constitutes the foundation of society and an important institution playing a role in the formation of social solidarity. The way to social happiness, solidarity, peace, affection and respect passes through the family.”

Yalçın Akdoğan (2004: 145-147) contends that the ongoing transformation of the AKP under the emblem of “conservative democracy” is more akin to the transformation that the formerly class-based Marxist western leftist parties have undergone under the label of the ‘Third Way’ (e.g. Tony Blair, Gerhard Schröder, Bill Clinton, Massimo D’Alema).

Contrary to Akdoğan’s arguments, one should stress the obvious fact that AKP has no self-acclaimed progressive or taboo breaking stance on trade unionism, ecology, and gender or non-heterosexual related rights. The AKP leadership’s pious conservative outlook on these issues has no resemblance with the ‘Third Way’ path taken by the European centre-left and evidently parallels the conventional outlook held by western conservative right political parties (‘Christian Democrats’ in Europe or ‘Republicans’ in the US).

Yet, Akdoğan’s insistence to position AKP as a political variant of the ‘Third Way’ phenomenon (rather than positioning it as a Turkish equivalent to western ‘Christian Democrats’) is worth paying some attention due to the peculiar characteristics of the left versus right political cleavage in Turkey. In the western context, the ‘Third Way’ route taken by the centre-left parties involved a deliberate detachment from the Marxist inspired state-centred economic policies in order to revitalize their waning electoral strength and then to counterbalance the preponderance of the neo-liberal conservative right. Within the Turkish political context, the ‘reformist’ AKP leadership consciously abandoned the ‘anti-secularist’ (in the first and most basic meaning of the term, “secularism as the negation of theocracy”), anti-EU and anti-globalization stance of the Islamist National View Movement in order to capture the electoral ground of the former traditional centre-right parties (e.g. Democrat Party headed by Adnan Menderes, Justice Party headed by Süleyman Demirel, and Motherland Party headed by Turgut Özal). Perhaps more importantly, AKP’s ‘Third Way’ route⁵³ stood as the only possible way available to reverse the multi-dimensional laicist crackdown of the ‘28 February Process’ and then to reshape the internal

⁵³ While the western centre-left parties sought to synthesize the hegemonic principles of neo-liberal market economic reforms and financial globalization with the leftist communitarian ideal of social solidarity and fair income distribution, AKP’s ‘Third Way’ –led by Erdoğan– consisted of fusing the ‘necessary’ ideals of neo-liberal market reforms with the Islamic communitarian values of solidarity, justice, and philanthropy. Hence, AKP’s Islamic flavoured social conservative posture is simultaneously subsumed by the normative principles of economic neo-liberal orthodoxy.

balance of political power to the detriment of Turkey's laicist military-bureaucratic establishment.

5.3 Post-Islamist Challenge to 28 February-Laicism Continues Unabated

“While other nations are controlling their global hegemony from the space, we are unfortunately regressing to the previous century and struggling with the *Preachers and Prayers Schools, Islamic headscarf, religious orders and those dresses which belong to the culture of other countries*” (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 28 August 2003).

General Cumhur Asparuk (Commander of Air Forces 2001-2003)

In the first section of this chapter, we have emphasized how the military-led laicist crackdown of the ‘28 February Process’ have transformed the ongoing contestation between ‘pro-Islamic’ and ‘pro-laic’ camps into a contestation over the normative role of religion in public sphere, national identity and cultural-historical heritage. After the post-modern coup of 1997, the ‘pro-Islamic’ Virtue Party has embraced the first meaning of secularism and cautiously limited its challenge to the ‘laicism of the 28 February’ (or to the ‘18 Measures’ adopted by the National Security Council on 28 February 1997) which entailed restrictive regulations particularly on the Islamic headscarf and education. Since then, the main dispute between ‘pro-Islamic’ and ‘pro-laicist’ camps has been revolving around the headscarf ban, the status of İmam Hatip high schools, and the legal age limit for attending Quran courses.

Accordingly, this section will be divided into three sub-sections. The first subsection will cover the waning democratic legitimacy of the military-led laicism of the 28 February Process during the closure of the pro-Islamic Virtue Party. The remaining two subsections will focus on how the ongoing political tension between Turkey's AKP government and military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of so called ‘laicism’ continued to mainly revolve around the headscarf issue and the status of Prayer and Preacher High Schools during the post-2002 elections.

5.3.A Organic Crisis of Kemalist Laicism and the Closure of the Virtue Party

Turkey and France are usually cited as the two countries which tend to ban religious symbols from public institutions due to the principle of ‘laicism’ (Stepan, 2001). Yet,

when compared with all other European countries (including France), Kemalist laicism has evidently displayed the most restrictive state policies towards the Islamic headscarf. For instance, the French law of 2004 prohibits religious symbols or dresses in *public* primary, secondary, and high schools. In contrast, the practice of laicism in Turkey has sought to prohibit women with the headscarf from obtaining a university education and working in public institutions (or in some cases even to receive civil services) as well. Turkey's peculiarly laicist headscarf ban lay in Kemalist laicism of the one-party dictatorship which regarded the adaptation of western-looking dress code and life style as a pre-requisite of extracting the 'Islamic visibility' from the public sphere and thus of injecting the 'western', 'progressive' and 'contemporary' imagery and identity to the supposedly ethnically homogenous Turkish nation.

With the electoral rise of the pro-Islamic political parties in the mid 1990's, however, the headscarf ban has become one of the most inflammatory symbolic disputes between the so called 'Islamic' and 'Laicist' camps. In parallel with the communiqué of the military-led National Security Council Decisions of 28 February 1997 which stipulated laicism as "a guarantee not only for the *regime* but at the same time of democracy, societal peace and the *modern lifestyle*" (Cizre and Çınar, 2003: 314), military-bureaucratic circles tightened the already existing ban on the headscarf in universities and public institutions further. While most of the female students (who actively protested against the ban and insisted on obtaining education with the headscarf) regarded the distinctive Islamic veiling as an inviolable expression of their 'authentic religious' Muslim identity, the laicist camp perceived it as political symbol of an Islamist reactionary threat against the singular modernization project of Atatürk's Republic.

The headscarf controversy has fully transformed into a 'regime crisis' in the immediate aftermath of the 1999 elections when the Virtue Party parliamentarian Merve Kavakçı deliberately entered the Grand National Assembly with her headscarf for the swearing-in ceremony held on May 2, 1999. As soon as Kavakçı entered the parliament hall and seated herself, the then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's laicist DSP (which then occupied the largest number of seats in the parliament) started to protest her in a frenzy by banging on the tables and by chanting "Get out! Get Out!" In the midst of rising uproar, the then Prime Minister Ecevit demanded Merve Kavakçı to be taken out from the parliament by declaring:

In Turkey, no one interferes to the women's way of dressing and headscarf in their *private lives*. However, this place is *not the private space* of any person. This place is the most supreme institution of the State. Those who work here have to comply with *the rules and the traditions of the State*. *This is not a place to defy the State*. Please, put this lady into her place (Savaş, 1999a) (italics added).

Eventually, Kavakçı was not able to take an oath with her headscarf. The then President Süleyman Demirel (1993-2000) supported Ecevit's firm stance against the Virtue Party's pro-Islamic headscarf activism and accused Merve Kavakçı of being an "agent provocateur" (Savaş, 1999a).

Five days after the Kavakçı affair, the then Chief State Prosecutor Vural Savaş (1997-2000) filed a case in the Constitutional Court petitioning the closure of the Virtue Party for "becoming the centre of the activities contrary to the principle of laicism" and also for being the mere continuation of the previously banned Welfare Party. In his indictment, Savaş incriminated the members of the Virtue Party for exploiting the religious beliefs of citizens like vampires who live on blood and for provoking the people against the laic state order by actively defying the headscarf ban in public institutions and universities (Savaş, 1999a).

On 22 June 2001, the Constitutional Court banned the Virtue Party for "becoming the centre of the activities contrary to the principle of laicism" by an 8 to 3 majority vote. Out of eleven judges who presided over the case, only three members of the Constitutional Court (namely Haşım Kılıç, Sacit Adalı, and Samia Akbulut) dissented from the closure verdict [*Hürriyet*, 22 June 2001]. Hence, the practice of laicism in Turkey not only became uniquely authoritarian for trying to enforce the most restrictive headscarf regime but also for shutting down a political party *only because* the latter pro-actively demanded the removal of the headscarf ban in universities and in public institutions.

5.3.B Antagonism over the Headscarf Ban during AKP's first term in Office

The first confrontation over the headscarf arose as the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Bülent Arınç (2002-2007) attended a state protocol with his covered wife at the airport while seeing off President Necdet Sezer (who was accompanied by his uncovered wife) to the NATO Summit in Czech Republic (*Hürriyet*, 21 November 2002). While pro-Laic media criticized the intrusion of an Islamic headscarf (türban) to the top state protocol, the main opposition CHP's leader Deniz Baykal blamed AKP

for imposing the veil upon the state and thus for provoking a tension (*Hürriyet*, 22 November 2002). As an ardent and veteran member of Erbakan's National View Movement since 1970, Bülent Arınç was particularly detested by the laicist camp for his bluntness. During the 2002 election campaign, he had declared that it was a matter of honour for AKP to solve the turban problem (*Hürriyet*, 19 October 2002).

A couple of days after the veiled state protocol at the airport, the President Necdet Sezer explicitly cautioned the AKP government (*Hürriyet*, 24 November 2002). In his delivered speech, Sezer acknowledged that wearing a turban in the *private sphere* was undeniably a matter of freedom. Yet, the same rule could not be applicable to the *public sphere* since it would contradict with the previous decision given by the Constitutional Court on this specific issue. "According to these decisions," as President Sezer inflexibly asserted "it is no longer possible to make any legal amendments to allow the headscarf in the public sphere as it would be contrary to the Constitution" (Ünlü, 2007: 258).

In response to President Sezer's arguments, the then Prime Minister Abdullah Gül⁵⁴ highlighted that the headscarf was not an alien but a natural element of Turkey's social texture. Given that, the headscarf problem should be solved in consistency with Turkey's natural social texture (*Hürriyet*, 24 November 2002). In the same statement, Gül also pointed out that Great Atatürk's ideal of "*reaching to the level of contemporary civilizations*" had consisted of two fundamental components: economic welfare and high democratic standards. Since "freedom of religion and conscience" should be considered as an integral part of fundamental human rights and since wearing a headscarf in the public sphere should be considered as a personal preference (rather than being considered as an imposition of religious rules to state regulations), then Turkey would have to solve the headscarf problem according to the democratic standards set by civilized countries.

Nevertheless, the final say in this regard came from the then Chief of General Staff Hilmi Özkok (2002-2006) who had bolstered president Sezer's warning to the AKP

⁵⁴ Recep Tayyip Erdoğan could not run in the 2002 elections because of his convictions. Following the 2002 general elections, Deputy Chairman of the AKP Gül established the new government on 18 November 2002. The Constitutional amendment that was initiated by the AKP lifted Erdoğan's political ban. The amendment was also supported by Baykal's CHP. When the election result in Siirt province was nullified, Erdoğan ran in the new election conducted in that city and was elected as a parliamentarian. Gül resigned on March 11 2003, and Erdoğan formed a new government on 14 March 2003.

government by maintaining: “We are respectful of everyone’s religious beliefs and the way they express their beliefs in their private lives... However, no one should expect us to tolerate türban as a political imposition and *as a symbolic deed that erodes Republican traditions* contrary to the Constitutional Court’s and the Council of State’s rulings”. (*Hürriyet*, 09 January 2003; Ünlü, 2007: 262)

5.3.C Antagonism over the *İmam Hatip* Schools during AKP’s first term in Office

Another major confrontation between the AKP government and the peculiarly laicist military-bureaucratic status quo of the ‘28 February Process’ arose as the former persistently endeavoured to amend the legal status of vocational high schools which then would enable the graduates of the Prayer and Preacher High Schools (*İmam Hatip Okulları*) to compete on equal footing with the graduates of normal (non-vocational) high schools in the nation-wide held university entrance exams. Particularly after increasing its share of votes to 41% in the March 2004 local elections, the AKP government drafted a law to amend the Higher Education Council (*Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu -YÖK*).

AKP’s proposed amendments triggered a fiery reaction from the laicist camp since they entailed the removal of disadvantages for the graduates of *İmam Hatipler* (and of all other vocational high schools) in the university entrance exams (*Hürriyet*, 03 May 2003). This meant a reversal of one of the ‘eighteen measures’ embedded in ‘28 February Decisions’. Soon later, the head of the Higher Education Council Erdoğan Teziç (2003-2007) condemned the drafted law by arguing that it revealed the hidden political agenda of the AKP government (*Hürriyet*, 06 May 2004). The Chief of General Staff boosted the ‘28 February’ inspired laicist reaction from the high bureaucracy by issuing a statement which proclaimed that: “No one should expect those sections and institutions *whose loyalty to the foundational characteristics of the Republic is beyond any doubt* to embrace these proposal amendments” (*Hürriyet*, 06 May 2004 and 07 May 2004). The statement also made sure to express the Turkish Armed Forces’ firm belief in the great Turkish nation to display the necessary sensitivity to the AKP government’s proposal.

In parallel to the peculiarly laicist ‘military-bureaucratic status quo’ of the 28 February Process, the main opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal vigorously denounced the AKP government for repeating the previous mistakes committed by

Erbakan's Welfare-Path coalition government (*Hürriyet*, 10 May 2004). Eventually, the then president Necdet Sezer used his veto power and returned the İmam Hatip law to the parliament to be reconsidered on 28 May 2004 (*Hürriyet*, 28 May 2004). Although AKP could have sent the already vetoed İmam Hatip law to the president once again, it cautiously avoided to exaggerating the ongoing tension by choosing to shelve the controversial law for a period of time (*Hürriyet*, 01 June 2004).

5.3.D Conclusion

This section has aimed to demonstrate how the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of so called '*laicism*' primarily rested upon a fierce disagreement over the religious identity based demands of the dominant Turkish-Sunni majority (e.g., the headscarf and the status of İmam Hatip). It is worth emphasizing the fact that AKP's stance on the headscarf and İmam Hatip issues is espoused by the overwhelming majority of Turkish society. As the various survey analyses conducted between 1999 and 2008 persistently demonstrate, only 20 to 30 percent of the Turkish society upholds the peculiarly laicist headscarf ban in university and public institutions (Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2006: 26, 33, 76; Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, 2007: 125). In contrast, 70 to 75 percent of the society thinks that women wearing the headscarf should be allowed to have a university education and to work in public civil services. The similar ratio is valid in regard to the removal of the disadvantages for the graduates of İmam Hatips in university entrance exams.

This evidence is crucial mainly for three reasons. First of all, it highlights the apparent disproportionate power that the laicist segments have been able to exert through the leverage of military-bureaucratic mechanisms while decisively shaping the state's headscarf and İmam Hatip policy in opposition to the popular will of the dominant Sunni religious majority. This "electorally preponderant but silent Sunni-Muslim majority *versus* electorally weak but disproportionately powerful tutelary laic state elites" dichotomy, in return, has provided the main contextual terrain upon which AKP would effectively cultivate its conservative populist discourse while successfully appealing to the *religious sensitivities* of the dominantly Sunni electorate (Taşkın, 2008: 54-56). Last but not least, it indicates the waning legitimacy of the restrictive regulations that the military-led '28 February Process' inflicted on the Sunni religious

sectors. These three points are particularly crucial as they reveal the political context within which the 2007 presidential elections occurred.

5.4 AKP Gradually Overcomes the Laicist Hegemony of the ‘28 February Process’

5.4.A The Crisis over the Presidential Election Unfolds: the ‘E-Coup’ and the Verdict of 367

According to the 1982 Constitution (article 104), the President acts as the head of the state and is entitled to represent “the Republic of Turkey and the unity of the Turkish nation”. Yet, besides its symbolic importance, the presidential office holds highly critical appointment powers to the top judiciary institutions and state bureaucracy. As it has been mentioned in Chapter IV, the approval of the new Constitution in 1982 referendum automatically meant the approval of the General Kenan Evren to serve as Turkey’s seventh president (1982-1989). For that reason, the founding military fathers of the 1982 Constitution endowed the Presidential Office with exceptional powers to appoint judges or bureaucrats to the critically important state institutions (e.g. appointment of the members of the Constitutional Court, the Chief Public Prosecutor, the head of the Higher Education Council, and university rectors). These institutions, in return, would play a decisive role in providing legal or constitutional legitimacy to the headscarf ban and/or to the closure of pro-Islamic or pro-Kurdish political parties.

According to the original intention of the military-led 1982 Constitution then, the presidential office would function as a vital *civilian citadel* of Kemalist tutelary supervision over the elected governments and thus would ensure the insulation of the Kemalist state-bureaucracy from Islamist, Kurdish, and/or leftist infiltration. During his term in office, for instance, President Sezer (2000-2007) would make sure to choose and appoint only those bureaucrats (university reactors, judges etc) who possessed staunchly laic-ethnocratic credentials. Yet, because President Necdet Sezer’s term of office was scheduled to expire on 16 May 2007, the ongoing tension between the AKP government and laicist camp started to escalate as Turkey approached the year 2007.

Plausibly, Turkey entered the ‘presidential crisis’ process on 23 April 2006 when the Speaker of the Grand National Assembly Bülent Arınç delivered a long speech to the parliament while commemorating annually held “National Sovereignty and Children's Day”. In his historic speech, Arınç clearly articulated the necessity to reinterpret the principle of laicism in accordance with Turkey’s socio-cultural characteristics (e.g., headscarf) (*Hürriyet*, 24 April 2006). Furthermore, he asserted that this act of reinterpretation will not change the essence of laicism but rather will enable the society to coexist more harmoniously. As Bülent Arınç bluntly declared; “*There is no regime crisis in this country but a dispute over the ownership of the regime. There is an ongoing dispute between those who are enlarging their scopes of initiative while governing the country and those who are trying not to lose their previously held power*” (*Hürriyet*, 23 and 24 April 2006) (italics added).

In reaction to Arınç’s speech, the opposition CHP’s parliamentary group leader Ali Topuz argued that Bülent Arınç “would be content if Turkey resembled Iran.” As Topuz put it; “Just like Iran has Ahmedinejad, Turkey has Bülentnejad!” (*Hürriyet*, 24 April 2006). CHP leader Deniz Baykal also utilized the laicist camp’s “*sharia scare*” theme by pointing out how Arınç’s speech reminded him of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (or Pasdaran) (*Hürriyet*, 26 April 2006).

In the meantime, General Yaşar Büyükanıt had become the new Chief of General Staff (2006-2008) by succeeding General Hilmi Özkök (2002-2006). In contrast to the cool-headed and diplomatic style of his predecessor, Büyükanıt was not only renowned for his tougher stance against perceived Islamic fundamentalist and Kurdish separatist threats but also for his flashy temperament and assertive style. While succeeding General Özkök at the handover ceremony held on 28 August 2006, the newly appointed Chief of General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt set the tone of his speech by declaring that: “Since its foundation, the Republic of Turkey has never confronted with as many internal and external threats as today” (Büyükanıt, 2006a). Furthermore, Büyükanıt stressed the legal duty of the Turkish Armed Forces to protect the fundamental principles of the Republic against ever-increasing internal threats.

On 2 October 2006, the Chief of General Staff Büyükanıt delivered another speech at the opening ceremony of the War Academy’s new education semester. In his tour de force speech which was broadcast live on eleven national television channels, Yaşar

Büyükanıt directed harsh accusations against the popularly elected AKP government, the then European Commission Representative Hansjörg Kretschmer and liberal intellectuals (İkinci, 2006). Büyükanıt also openly challenged the popularly elected AKP government's stance on laicism without directly mentioning the name of parliamentary speaker Bülent Arınç. As General Büyükanıt threateningly remarked:

Aren't there those people who say "let us redefine laicism?" Don't these people occupy the most senior positions within the state? Aren't there those people who want to put our people into reactionary outlook and spoil our societal structure? (headscarf *B.A.*) If you cannot respond to these questions by saying "No, these do not exist in Turkey", then there is an Islamic reactionary threat in Turkey and *every kind of measure must be taken against this threat* (Büyükanıt, 2006b) (italics added).

By April 2007, the military-bureaucratic bloc of the '28 February Process' (President Sezer, Turkish Armed Forces and the main opposition CHP) had intensified its political pressure in order to prevent Prime Minister Erdoğan from becoming a candidate for presidential office. Two weeks prior to the declaration of the presidential nominees, General Staff called for a press conference to inform the public on critical issues. At the press conference which was broadcasted live on 13 television channels, the Chief of General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt emphasized that the new president must be "loyal to the fundamental principles of the Republic *not only in words but in deeds*" (*Hürriyet*, 13 April 2007) (italics added).

The very next day (on 13 April 2007), President Ahmet Necdet Sezer delivered one of his last speeches to the military officers at the War Colleges before stepping down as president. In his farewell speech, President Sezer highlighted that Turkey's political regime was faced with an unprecedented threat. "For the first time, the pillars of the laic republic are being openly questioned," Sezer said (*The Independent*, 14 April 2007). Furthermore, President Sezer asserted that certain internal and external actors were conspiring to convert Turkey's "*laic Republic*" into a "*moderately Islamic Republic*" under the cover of the democratization process (*Hürriyet*, 13 April 2007). Obviously, Sezer's critique was directed against the perceived conspiratorial alliance between the AKP government and the European Union along with the United States.

On the 14th of April, the Atatürkist Thought Association (Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği) –an influential Kemalist civil society organization headed by retired General Şener Eruygur– launched the first mass 'Republican Rally' under the slogan of "Claim Your

Republic!” Tens of thousands gathered at the Tandoğan Square in Ankara and marched to the Anıtkabir (Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk). Eventually, Prime Minister Erdoğan announced the nomination of the foreign minister Abdullah Gül for the presidential office on 24 April 2007. Since Gül’s political career was also rooted within Necmettin Erbakan’s National View Movement and since his wife wore an Islamic headscarf, his nomination for the presidential office did not soothe the concerns of the laicist camp at all. Accordingly, laicist circles had allergically reacted to the fact that a person whose wife wore distinctive Islamic headscarf was going to be the president for the first time in the Republic’s history and occupy the very lodgings where Atatürk used to live.

According to article 102 of the 1982 Constitution, a presidential candidate requires a two-thirds majority of the total number of members of the Grand National Assembly (367 votes out of 550) in order to be elected in the first and the second round of voting. If two-thirds of a majority vote cannot be reached in the first two rounds, then a presidential candidate only requires a simple majority (276 votes out of 550) to get elected in the third round. Interestingly enough, some Kemalist legal experts (particularly Sabih Kanadoğlu who served as the Chief Public Prosecutor between 2001 and 2003) have creatively argued that if the president is elected by a two-thirds majority out of the total number of members, then 367 parliamentarians have to be physically present as well in order to start the parliamentary session.

In opposition to this decision, many constitutional scholars pointed out the fact that article 102 only sets the decisional quorum as two-thirds of the full membership of the Assembly on the first two rounds (Özbudun and Gençkaya, 2009: 97-98). Since article 102 does not mention any specific quorum rule for the meeting of the Assembly during the presidential voting session, then the general rule stated in article 96 (which requires the quorum for the meeting of the Assembly to be one-third of the full membership) should automatically apply to the presidential voting procedure as well.

During the first round of presidential voting which was carried out on the 27th of April, Abdullah Gül secured 357 votes out of 361 parliamentarians who were present within the Assembly. The main opposition CHP, on the other hand, have boycotted the elections and then filed a case to the Constitutional Court to annul the presidential elections. Furthermore, CHP leader Deniz Baykal warned that Turkey will be dragged

into strife unless the Constitutional Court declares the presidential voting procedure as invalid (*Hürriyet*, 30 April 2007).

Towards midnight of the same day (27th of April), the General Staff issued a harshly threatening statement from its website in regard to the presidential elections (*Hürriyet*, 27 April 2007; *BBC News*, 28 April 2007). After observing how the presidential election process has become focused on contestation over the principle of laicism, General Staff declared that: “It should not be forgotten that the Turkish Armed Forces are a party in those arguments, and absolute defender of laicism... *It will display its attitude and action openly and clearly whenever it is necessary*” (*BBC News*, 28 April 2007) (Italics added). The issued statement also concluded by emphasizing the Turkish Armed Forces’ absolute loyalty and sound determination “to carry out their duties stemming from laws to protect the unchangeable characteristics of the Republic of Turkey” (*BBC News*, 28 April 2007).

The very next day, the AKP government spokesperson Cemil Çiçek confronted the General Staff’s coup threat by proclaiming that: “As an institution which is accountable to the Prime Minister, it is unthinkable for the General Staff to take a stance against the government in a democratic regime” (*Hürriyet*, 28 April 2007). AKP Minister Çiçek also criticized the General Staff’s statement as an attempt to influence the decision of the constitutional court’s decision in regard to the presidential voting procedure. Perhaps more importantly, the European Union also warned the Turkish Armed Forces not to interfere in politics. The EU Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn claimed that controversy over presidential elections was a test case for the military to respect “democratic secularization and democratic values” (*BBC News*, 28 April 2007). As he further pointed out; “It’s important that the military respects also the rules of the democratic game and its own role in that democratic game” (*BBC News*, 28 April 2007).

The main opposition CHP, on the other hand, have embraced the ‘E-Coup’ threat. “Evaluations made by the General Staff are not different from ours. No one should be estranged by the fact that Armed Forces are laying its claim to the values of this country” CHP Deputy Chairman Onur Öymen remarked (*Yeni Şafak*, 28 April 2007). Deputy Chairman Öymen also attacked AKP’s presidential nominee Abdullah Gül by harshly asserting that: “First you will insult *Laicim* and later you will try to become a

president by claiming that you have changed... *We will never allow Turkey to surrender to Atatürk's enemies.*" (*Yeni Şafak*, 28 April 2007).

Not surprisingly, the Constitutional Court ruled in favour of the laicist opposition CHP by 9 to 2 majority vote and declared the presidential voting of AKP's candidate Abdullah Gül as null and void (*Hürriyet*, 30 April 2007). In response, the Prime Minister Erdoğan called for early general elections while criticizing the Constitutional Court's decision as a "*bullet fired against democracy*" (*Hürriyet*, 2 May 2007). As a result, the 2007 general elections were rescheduled on the 22nd of July instead of November 2007.

5.4.B General Elections of 2007: Between New-Constitution Making and the 'Judicial Coup'

The Constitutional Court's politically motivated verdict provided a golden opportunity for the AKP government to galvanize its conservative populist appeal and to assert the moral supremacy of the '*national will*' against the laicist military-bureaucratic tutelage at the ballot box. Throughout the general election campaign of July 2007, AKP focused on the unjust discrimination and anti-democratic intervention that presidential candidate Gül suffered at the hands of the laicist military-bureaucratic status quo due to his wife's headscarf. Moreover, AKP successfully claimed the electoral legacy of the centre-right tradition by converting the Democrat Party's 1950 election slogan into "*Enough! It is the Nation's turn both to speak and to decide!*" AKP's election campaign also included an explicit promise to craft a new civil constitution in accordance with European liberal-democratic standards. Accordingly, on 8 June 2007, the Prime Minister Erdoğan officially requested from a well-respected constitutional law professor Ergun Özbudun to chair an independent academic committee and to prepare a draft constitution (Özbudun and Gençkaya, 2009: 103-106).⁵⁵

CHP, on the other hand, exclusively based its general election campaign on protecting the laic and unitary ethnocentric state principles of the Kemalist Republic against the supposedly imminent Islamic threat posed by the AKP. Yet, the results of an academically credible opinion poll conducted in 2006 had already demonstrated that

⁵⁵The committee was composed of prominent libertarian law professors: Ergun Özbudun (Chairman), Zühtü Arslan, Yavuz Atar, Fazıl Hüsnü Erdem, Levent Köker, and Serap Yazıcı.

only 22.6% of the public believed laicism to be under threat in Turkey while 72.6% said that no such threat exists⁵⁶ (Çarkoğlu and Toprak, 2006: 33). At the last ‘Republican Rally’ organized in Izmir, at least a million people have gathered to protest against AKP’s presidential candidate Abdullah Gül while chanting “Turkey is laic and will remain laic”.⁵⁷ In the demonstration, laicist civil society pleaded with Baykal’s CHP and the deceased Ecevit’s DSP to join their electoral forces against the common AKP threat. Finally, DSP candidates entered the July 2007 elections from the CHP’s list.

The election result was a huge disappointment for the laicist opposition in general since Baykal’s CHP could only gather 20.88% of the votes. Unlike the previous 2002 general elections, the conservative and ultra-nationalist MHP succeeded in entering the parliament by receiving 13.7 percent of the votes. Because of the unusually high ten percent threshold, the parliamentarian nominees from the pro-Kurdish national Democratic Society Party (DTP) entered the elections as independent candidates and managed to form a group within the parliament by winning 21 seats.⁵⁸ The explicit winner of the July 2007 elections was AKP which gathered 46.7% of the votes, delivering it a resounding victory [see **Table 22**].

After the 22nd July 2007 general elections, the presidential crisis was resolved in favour of AKP candidate Abdullah Gül when the ultra-nationalist MHP –headed by Devlet Bahçeli– decided not to boycott the presidential elections. In this way, parliament could open its session for the presidential election without violating the Constitutional Court’s controversial decision which required 367 parliamentarians to be present in the assembly for the presidential election to begin. On 28 August 2007, Abdullah Gül became the first president of the Republic of Turkey whose wife wore an Islamic headscarf by receiving 339 of the votes in the parliament (*Hürriyet*, 28 August 2007).

⁵⁶ According to the same poll, while 32.6% of the respondents agreed with the claim that religious fundamentalism was on rise in the last 10-15 years, 61.3% of the respondents did not. However, the social perception of rising religious fundamentalism (shared by 32.6% of the public opinion) contradicts the objective declining trend for Sharia-based State support in Turkey.

⁵⁷ For more detailed and critical analysis of the successive “Republican Rally” meetings see: Gürpınar, 2011: 231-324.

⁵⁸ In order to form an independent group in the parliament a minimum of 20 parliamentarians is required.

By September 2007, the liberal minded academic committee headed by Ergun Özbudun had completed the draft of the new civil-democratic constitution for the AKP government. According to its declared original intention, AKP would initiate a public debate on the draft constitution in order to get an input from civil and political society. After endeavouring to achieve the broadest consensus possible, AKP would eventually put the new constitution to a referendum. When compared with the existing 1982 Constitution, the proposed draft Constitution entailed fairly progressive features (*Radikal*, 12 September 2007). It envisioned a normal parliamentary system by diminishing the excessive powers of the presidency to a mere symbolic level. Besides broadening the civil rights and liberties regime in accordance with the European Convention of Human Rights, the proposed draft sought to enhance the democratic legitimacy of the Constitutional Court and Supreme Council of Judges by granting parliament the right to elect some of their members (Özbudun and Gençkaya, 2009: 103-105). This meant dismantlement of the laicist tutelary role of high judiciary institutions over the elected parliaments.

Nevertheless, Baykal's CHP and laicist civil society organizations fiercely denounced the proposed draft constitution as a devious political project of the ruling AKP government to redesign the Kemalist principles of laicism, nationalism, and republicanism in accordance with Islam (*Vatan*, 12 December 2007). Baykal also criticized the new constitution for weakening the ethnocentric unitary state concept of the Republic and thus implicitly encouraging the activities of PKK. While accusing AKP for harbouring a hidden Islamist agenda, Baykal declared that: "Either you wage a war of independence and then constitute a new state or you make a revolution by taking the risk of getting hanged. Only then you may devise an entirely new constitution" (*Radikal*, 07 February 2008). According to Baykal, the fundamental question which confronted the public arena was whether Turkey would continue to represent Atatürk's 'modern' and 'laic' State or whether it would deteriorate into a Humeyni style Islamic State in the Middle East.

Despite the fierce opposition from the laicist circles, AKP could have stuck to its original plan and pursued the actualization of the new constitution by putting it to a referendum. Instead of doing that, however, AKP hastily chose to take its first political step towards the removal of the headscarf ban in university education by arguing that there was no need to wait for the creation of the new constitution. On 14

January 2008, political momentum towards creation of a new democratic constitution was abruptly suspended by a ‘headscarf crisis’ as the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan reemphasized his party’s determination to solve the headscarf ban in university education while attending the “Alliance of Civilizations” meeting in Madrid. In the press conference, Erdoğan also stated that the headscarf ban should be lifted even if the person who covered herself regarded it as a *political symbol* (Milliyet, 14 January 2008). Erdoğan’s argument was directed against the laicist circles in Turkey who would frequently define and denounce the turban as a *political symbol of religious fundamentalism* while seeking to provide credible legitimacy for the headscarf ban in university education.

Two days later, Prime Minister Erdoğan reemphasized the existence of societal consensus for lifting the headscarf ban but he noted that the problem has persisted due to the lack of “institutional consensus” (*Hürriyet*, 16 January 2008). More importantly, Erdoğan argued that the headscarf ban could easily be resolved by amending one sentence in the existing constitution and that there was no need to wait for the adaptation of the new civil-democratic constitution. Surprisingly, Devlet Bahçeli’s MHP responded to Erdoğan’s call positively and proposed to lift the headscarf ban via constitutional amendments (*Hürriyet*, 18 January 2008). Eventually, AKP and MHP managed to agree on the specific constitutional amendments for the removal of the headscarf ban at university education and the proposed law was passed by 411 votes (out of 550) in the Grand National Assembly (*Hürriyet*, 09 February 2008).

While the daily *Hürriyet* (one of the most read newspapers of the laicist camp) protested the parliament’s decision by putting its headline as “411 Hands Rose to Chaos”, the main opposition CHP once again filed a case to the Constitutional Court to annul the legislative amendments undertaken by the parliament and the executive. Throughout the legislative process, CHP leader Deniz Baykal fiercely asserted that the problem was not a mere headscarf issue anymore since the removal of the headscarf ban was the first overt step towards the creation of a Sharia-based State in the long run (*CNN Türk*, 23 January 2008). According to Baykal, the AKP government –after obtaining the presidential office and 47 percent of the votes in the general elections– had finally revealed its hidden Islamist agenda.

The removal of the headscarf ban triggered a fierce reaction from the high judiciary circles as well (*Hürriyet*, 18 January 2008). Particularly, the Chief State Prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya –who was appointed by the previous president Necdet Sezer for a four year term in May 2007– harshly warned the AKP government in regard to the removal of the headscarf ban and started a legal investigation on this issue (*Hürriyet*, 17 January 2008). Two months later, on 14 March 2008, Yalçınkaya filed a case to the Constitutional Court petitioning the closure of the AKP for “becoming the centre of the activities contrary to the the principle of laicism.” In his indictment, the Chief State Prosecutor Yalçınkaya also demanded a five year political ban on 71 members of the AKP parliamentarians and administrators; including the President Gül, the Prime Minister Erdoğan and many other state ministers (*BBC News*, 14 March 2008).

The following day, Prime Minister Erdoğan defied the prosecutor Yalçınkaya’s proposal by declaring: “The action taken yesterday is not aimed at the Justice and Development Party but at the *national will*” (*BBC News*, 16 March 2008) Once again, Erdoğan was credibly boosting his conservative populist appeal and charisma by exclusively equating his party with that inviolable *national will*. Within the domestic media, the prosecutor Yalçınkaya’s proposal to ban the ruling AKP government was extensively criticized and dubbed as a *judiciary coup*.

The European Union also took an explicit stance against the proposed ban of the ruling AKP government. As the European Union Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn critically maintained: “In a normal European democracy, political issues are debated in the parliament and decided through the ballot box, not in the court rooms” (*BBC News*, 31 March 2008). Furthermore, Olli Rehn sent a warning message to the Turkish authorities by remarking that “I hope that judges in the Constitutional Court will consider Turkey's long-term goal of joining the EU and becoming a functioning European democracy” (*Today’s Zaman*, 31 March 2008).

On 5 June 2008, the Constitutional Court overruled the decisions of the executive and legislative branches in regard to the removal of the headscarf ban in university education by a 9 to 2 majority vote (*Hürriyet*, 06 June 2008). The Court’s decision was highly criticized within the Turkish media as being an example of ‘juristocracy’. Once again, Haşim Kılıç and Sacit Adalı were the two judges who had dissented from

the Court's verdict. Both of these judges had also dissented from the Constitutional Court's closure verdict on the Welfare Party and the Virtue Party as they were originally appointed to the Constitutional Court by the deceased religiously observant president Turgut Özal (1990-1993). Yet, since 8 out of the 11 judges who would decide on the closure of the AKP had been appointed by the previous president Necdet Sezer, the possibility of AKP's closure did not seem unlikely at all (*Hürriyet*, 01 April 2008).

Finally, the Constitutional Court announced its decision in regard to the closure of the AKP on 30 July 2008. The Court decided not to ban but to penalize the ruling AKP government by cutting its public financing in half (*Hürriyet*, 31 July 2008). While 6 members of the Constitutional Court voted in favour of a total ban, 4 members argued for inflicting a financial penalty instead of a total ban. According to these 4 judges, AKP's act of becoming "a focal point of anti-laicist activities" was not severe enough to necessitate a total ban. The Chair of the Constitutional Court Haşim Kılıç (whose wife wears headscarf), on the other hand, voted for the dismissal of the closure case as he initially disagreed on AKP becoming "a focal point of anti-laicist activities" (*The New York Times*, 31 July 2008). Since the party closure required the approval of at least 7 members of the Constitutional Court, the ruling AKP government narrowly managed to escape the political ban.

As a matter of fact, the Political Parties Law of 1982 originally required the approval of a simple majority (6 members out of 11) for the party closure. Yet, the previous DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government and the succeeding AKP government had amended the Political Parties Law in order to fulfil the EU political Copenhagen criteria. Under the second and fourth EU Harmonization Packages, these two successive governments had made the political party closure more difficult by introducing the necessity of a three-fifths majority (7 out of 11) for a party closure and by inserting an option of cutting public finances in half as a penalty (Ministry of FA, 2007: 7, 12). Once again, engagement with the EU reform process has proved to be a life-saving act for the AKP government and its decisive consolidation of power at the expense of the military-bureaucratic bloc of the '28 February Process'.

5.4.C Conclusion

While providing a selective narrative on the rise of the formerly Islamist AKP leadership as the main domestic political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process, Chapter V sought to test the third hypothesis of the thesis which contended that:

The granting of EU candidacy at the Helsinki European Council summit (December 1999) has reshaped the internal dynamics of Turkey's democratization trajectory as the EU accession conditionality significantly constrained the hegemonic scope of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites to preserve the key features of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm. As a result, the transition process in the post-Helsinki decade marks a critical moment from Turkey's previous trajectory of controlled transitions.

Accordingly, this chapter has sought to demonstrate how the AKP's engagement with the EU and the IMF-led reform process has increasingly shifted the internal balance of political power towards the ruling AKP government and how this process inexorably has been accompanied with the gradual loss of the Turkish Armed Forces' previous predominance in delineating the basic parameters of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy.

Observably, the outcome of 2007 Presidential crisis is probably the most symbolic event which illustrates the newly emerging balance of political power between civilian government and the military. Within the new political context of the post-Helsinki period, although the Turkish Armed Forces continues to be ideologically motivated by its self-ascribed sacred duty to protect the 'fundamental values' of the Kemalist Republic against perceived 'Islamic reactionary' and 'Kurdish separatist' internal threats, it can neither execute a *sustainable* coup d'état (of the style of 1960-1961, 1971-1973, and 1980-1983) nor orchestrate a 'post-modern coup' (of the 1997 style). This is something exceptionally significant as it signals a critical departure from Turkey's historical trajectory of controlled transitions where the military would seize power directly for a short period of time, set the rules for legal-political order by devising a new constitution, and then return to the barracks until another military intervention would be deemed as necessary (see Chapter IV).

In stark contrast to the controlled trajectory of previous ‘transitions’, the shifting balance of political power within the post-Helsinki domestic arena (accompanied with strong external incentives emanating from the European Union) has forged an unprecedented historical opportunity for Turkey to craft its first participatory and civilian-democratic constitution outside the hegemonic scope of Kemalist military-bureaucratic tutelage. Given this, one must underline how the ongoing political ‘transition process’ within the post-Helsinki era (2002-2008) qualitatively differs from all of the previous transitions which had been guided and forcefully controlled by the traditional Kemalist state elites (first: 1945-1950, second: 1960-1961, third: 1971-1973 and fourth: 1980-1983).

Yet, the construction of a democratic-civilian constitution does not only necessitate an extensive consensus between the political parties on the very principles of liberal-democracy but also requires a clear democratic vision and strong political will to cooperate towards the creation of a new inclusive social contract. Absence of both of these conditions in the post-Helsinki political landscape may explain the main reason why Turkey’s ongoing partial and piecemeal EU-led reform process has *not* so far amounted to substantial democratic transformation (see Chapter VI).

In his article titled as “*Turkey between Tutelary Democracy and Electoral Authoritarianism*”, Yunus Sözen (2009) contends that “since the presidential election of April 2007, Turkish politics has become an arena where two political visions have clashed, resulting in a clear movement from tutelary democracy to populist competitive authoritarianism” (Sözen, 2009: 80). Sözen narrowly bases his hybrid regime typology construction (tutelary democracy versus populist competitive authoritarianism) upon Dahl’s democratic procedural minimum when he observes that: “Turkey is clearly moving out of its tutelary democratic system, a form of defective democracy that aims to normalize certain level of non-elected supervision (by the military, the high courts, etc.) over the elected representatives” (Sözen, 2009: 78). Under the rule of the popularly elected AKP government, however, we are told that Turkey is moving towards an “electoral authoritarianism” which Sözen defines as a political system that “advocates democracy and competitive elections, but practices populist majoritarianism and treats elections as mere confirmations of the government’s rule” (Sözen, 2009: 78).

Certainly, Sözen's analysis has its merits. After all, one of the enduring features of Turkey's historic centre-right tradition since the ten year rule of the Democrat Party (1950-1960) has been its religious-conservative populist discourse which tends to prioritize the 'majoritarian logic of electoral politics' over the liberal democratic ideal of limited power for executive office. One can also detect similar illiberal and anti-pluralist overtones within AKP's post-Islamist populist discourse. Besides these problems stemming from AKP's religiously-conservative populist discourse, excessive appointment powers of the presidential office and the highly centralized institutional state structure of the 1982 Constitution remains intact.

Since the presidential elections of 2007, the AKP nominee Abdullah Gül has been enjoying the excessive appointment powers granted to the presidential office and has been replacing the previous Kemalist state elites with its own political elites. When the AKP's over-representation in the parliament (due to the extremely high 10 percent electoral threshold) is coupled with president Gül's decisive appointment powers to the high judiciary institutions, it amounts to an excessive and monopolistic concentration of power which contradicts with any basic standard set by the liberal democratic ideal of checks and balances. From this perspective, one can certainly utilize Guillermo O'Donnell's hybrid regime typology of "delegative democracy" in order to capture the problem of weakening horizontal accountability (e.g., an ineffective constitutional checks and balances system) over the popularly elected AKP government and Tayyip Erdoğan's highly personalistic and paternal style of leadership.

Yet, Sözen's analysis has two drawbacks. First, Sözen portrays Turkey's post-Helsinki transition process as being stuck between two equally but differently anti-democratic power blocs; that is between Kemalist military-bureaucratic tutelage (coded as tutelary democracy) and the popularly elected AKP government (coded as populist competitive authoritarianism). Sözen's 'equally but differently anti-democratic' analysis can be somewhat inappropriate as it fails to acknowledge how AKP's pursuit of the EU-led Kurdish cultural rights and a federal solution to the Cyprus problem against the wishes of the military-bureaucratic circles (tutelary democracy) has played a vital role in the European Council's decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 (see Chapter VI). Furthermore,

it fails to underline how the AKP's political vision (at least during the general elections of 2007) entailed the creation of a new liberal-democratic constitution.

Rationally speaking, Baykal's CHP should have demanded the creation of a new liberal-democratic constitution based on a parliamentary framework more than AKP. After all, it was not laicist Necdet Sezer but AKP candidate Abdullah Gül who would enjoy the excessive appointment powers as president. Yet, Baykal's CHP not only categorically rejected the idea of a new constitution but also vehemently criticized the new draft constitution for bringing all of the civilian tutelary institutions embodied in the 1982 Constitution (e.g., presidential office, Higher Education Council, and high judicial institutions) in line with a normal parliamentary framework (*Vatan*, 12 December 2007). By systematically dismantling all of the laicist tutelary power centres under the facade of a normal parliamentary framework, Baykal argued that the new liberal-democratic constitution would pave the way for the construction of an Islamic regime in Turkey (*Hürriyet*, 25 June 2008).

Indeed, the main opposition CHP's supportive stance to the coup threat posed by the military during the presidential elections, which then was followed by an accommodative discourse towards the closure of the AKP government by the Constitutional Court may reveal the extent of the CHP leadership's commitment to the very basic rules of the electoral parliamentary framework, let alone on the lofty principles associated with liberal-democracy. Perhaps, Joost Lagendijk –the then co-chairman of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Commission– provided the best political synopsis of a supposedly social democrat CHP when he referred it to as a “total disaster”. Besides mentioning how European social democrats were embarrassed by CHP's general stance towards the EU democratization reform process, Lagendijk critically remarked that: “You can't claim to be pro-European and vote against all the laws that are necessary to take you in” (*Today's Zaman*, 07 May 2008). These points make it somewhat difficult to fully agree with Sözen's ‘equally but differently anti-democratic’ analysis.

Second, and more importantly, Sözen bases his hybrid regime typology construction upon Dahl's democratic procedural minimum (tutelary democracy versus populist competitive authoritarianism). As stated previously in the theoretical chapter, while hybrid regime typology construction based on Dahlian procedural democratic

minimum enables us to point out the flawed functioning of specific institutional features of liberal democracy, it severely fails to expose and problematize the ‘longue durée’ patterns of dominations and exclusions perpetuated by that very political regime. This is the very reason why this thesis has insisted on contextualizing various Dahlian hybrid regime typologies within the broader theoretical framework provided by ‘laic-ethnocracy’.

In this respect, Chapter V demonstrated how the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of laicism primarily rested upon a fierce disagreement over the religious identity based demands of the dominant Sunni majority (e.g., headscarf ban, status of İmam Hatip high schools, and legal age limit for attending Quran courses). Within the new political grammar of the AKP’s post-Islamist discourse which has developed in parallel to the 28 February Process, these *Sunni religious-identity* based grievances have become noticeably infused with liberal individual or human rights discourse and has been cautiously framed to contest the ‘discriminatory’ and ‘restrictive’ characteristics of Kemalist laicism towards the religiously observant Sunni-Muslim majority rather than the principle of secularism per se.

Nevertheless, Deniz Baykal’s main opposition CHP, along with the “Kemalist” military-bureaucratic establishment, has vehemently and single-mindedly opposed considering these identity political demands of the *religious Turkish-Sunni majority* within the scope of individual rights and freedoms. As a result, the revolving contestation over the principle of laicism between the two power blocs reached a climax during the Presidential election of July 2007 and then re-surged again by a closure case opened against the ruling AKP government in 2008.

Yet, the exclusive attainment of religious identity based demands of the dominant Sunni majority cannot be the sole yardstick for democratization. For instance, although ultra-nationalist Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi supports and evaluates the political demands of *religious Turkish-Sunni majority* within the scope of individual rights and freedoms (e.g. veiling), it categorically opposes any sort of democratic improvement in regard to the individual rights and freedoms of ethnic and religious minorities (particularly the Kurdish ethnic minority and non-Muslim minorities).

Given that, and in line with the theoretical framework of this thesis, it is necessary to analyze and assess whether or not the post-Islamist AKP government is engaging with symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation of the ‘laic-ethnocratic’ paradigm which entails dual dimensions: a) democratic transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria [see **Table 7**], and b) democratic deconstruction of Turkey’s severe ethnocratic regime features in line with what Ilan Peleg characterized as “radical revision towards genuine democracy” [see **Table 4**].

Accordingly, Chapter VI will scrutinize how the EU conditionality’s democratic reform demands on the cultural rights of *ethnic* and belief-rights of *non-Sunni Muslim* minorities have been taken up by the Turkish authorities in the domestic arena.

CHAPTER VI

The limits of AKP-led reforms on minority rights: the cases of the Kurdish and Alevi-Muslim minorities.

Since the foundation of the Republic and until the inauguration of the EU candidacy process, the Republic of Turkey has officially recognized and granted minority right status to three *non-Muslim* minority groups⁵⁹ (namely the Greek, Armenian and Jewish minority communities). Yet, besides falling short of implementing the provisions of the Treaty of Lausanne properly and infringing on the rights of the officially recognized three *non-Muslim* minority groups, official state discourse has persistently declined to recognize or to extend any sort of minority rights protection towards various *ethnic* and *religious* minority groups. From the Helsinki European Council Summit of 1999 onwards, the EU has demanded that Turkish authorities raise the minority right standards of *ethnic* and *religious* minority groups to the international level by emphasizing that “there are other communities in Turkey which, in the light of the relevant international and European standards, could qualify as minorities” (EU Commission Report, 2006: 20).

Hence, and in addition to precipitating the unprecedented loss of the tutelary powers of the traditional military-bureaucratic elites, the post-Helsinki transition qualitatively differed from the previous controlled trajectory of transitions as the EU accession process has impelled Turkish authorities to engage with the protection of minority rights for the first time since the foundation of the Republic. Accordingly, the EU-led conditionality on the cultural rights of *ethnic minorities* induced the potential for democratizing the Kemalist ethnocentric ideal which has been preconditioned on the homogeneity and dominance of the Turkish language, ethnicity, and culture. In a similar vein, the EU-led conditionality on the religious rights of *non Sunni-Muslim minorities* offered the potential of ‘secularizing’ Turkey’s enduring institutional and normative mechanisms which have been exclusively partial to Sunni-Islam.

⁵⁹ Basing its legal framework on the Treaty of Lausanne (signed on 24 July 1924), the official state discourse has consistently but narrowly interpreted non-Muslim nationals of Turkey as being exclusively comprised of Greek, Armenian and Jewish communities and refused the sociological existence of other non Sunni-Muslim and non-Turkish minority groups such as the Syrian Orthodox Christian minority (Assyrians), Yezidi, Muslim-Alevi and Kurdish ethnic minority. For a detailed study on the Republic of Turkey’s official interpretation of the Treaty of Lausanne see: Oran, 2004.

While focusing on the challenges that the EU candidacy has posed to the Turkish State's traditional approach towards its ethnic and non-Sunni Muslim minority groups, Chapter VI will aim to test the fourth hypothesis of the thesis which contends that:

Despite the critical break in Turkey's historical trajectory of controlled transitions, Turkey's democratization during the post-Helsinki decade falls remarkably short of amounting to a symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation of the 'laic-ethnocratic' paradigm as the AKP government's keen sensitivity towards the democratic demands of the religious Turkish-Sunni majority does not necessarily or evenly extend towards the democratic demands of non-Turkish and non-Sunni-Muslim minority groups.

To this end, Chapter VI will particularly seek to analyze and assess the performance of the ruling AKP government towards EU conditionality's democratic reform demands on the cultural rights of ethnic and belief-rights of non-Sunni Muslim minorities in the domestic arena.

Chapter VI will deliberately opt to focus on Turkey's two biggest minority groups which are respectively the Kurdish *ethnic* minority and Alevi-Muslim *religious* minority. This is simply because although non-Muslim minorities continue to be regarded as 'non-conforming others' and face various human right abuses, they no longer pose a significant challenge to Turkey's laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm as they had diminished to a mere 1% of Turkey's general population (see Chapter III). In stark contrast, the Kurdish ethnic minority makes up approximately 15 to 20 percent of the general population and constitutes the majority of the population residing in Turkey's South East region. The Alevi-Muslim religious minority, on the other hand, accounts for approximately 12 to 15 percent of Turkey's general population.⁶⁰

Noticeably, the Kurdish ethnic minority's demands for linguistic rights directly challenges the Kemalist ethnocratic ideal of an overly centralized unitary nation-state building project which has been preconditioned on the imagined homogeneity and dominance of Turkish ethnicity, language and culture. More importantly, the so called 'Kurdish problem' is qualitatively different from all of the other minority rights

⁶⁰ Although there is no official census conducted on this issue, it is roughly estimated that while 80 percent of the Alevi-Muslim religious minority is comprised of ethnic Turks, 20 percent is comprised of Kurds.

related problems since the PKK-led Kurdish national political movement (quite unlike any other ethnic minority groups) has been contesting South Eastern Turkey as the historic national homeland of the Kurdish people (Kurdistan). Accordingly, the PKK-led Kurdish national movement and Turkish establishment have been engaged in a fierce struggle over the political and territorial control of Turkey's South East region for almost three decades (see Chapter IV).

To emphasize once again, this is also where Yiftachel's (2006:11) conceptualization of ethnocracy as a distinct hybrid regime typology which "facilitates the expansion, ethnicization and control of a dominant ethnic nation over contested territory and polity" in a multi-ethnic setting becomes particularly relevant. Without a doubt, the central political project of "ethnicizing contested territories and power structures" cannot be a mere unilateral process since there has to be a counter actor who contests that very particular geographical territory and power structure. After the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, the PKK-led Kurdish national political movement has publicly abandoned its political cause of creating an independent Kurdistan and confined its political demands to the establishment of regional political autonomy in the Kurdish majority South East where the Kurdish language would become the primary language next to Turkish.⁶¹ Since then, the main actors of the Kurdish national political movement have rather focused on contesting the overly centralized state power of Ankara by demanding 'democratic autonomy' (demokratik özerklik) based on a "regionally politicized ethno-nationalist Kurdish identity" (Casier *et al.*, 2011).

Alternatively, the Alevi-Muslim minority primarily demands the democratic transformation of Turkey's state-led institutional and normative mechanisms which have been exclusively partial to Sunni-Islam. It is important to emphasize that (unlike the officially recognized Greek, Armenian and Jewish non-Muslim religious minorities) Alevi-Muslims may not be categorized as an "*ethno-religious*" minority⁶²

⁶¹ For a superb analysis which critically assesses the extent of PKK's discursive change see: Jongerden and Akkaya, 2011b: 143-162.

⁶² It is important to categorize religious minorities into two major types: "*belief groups*" and "*ethno-religious groups*" (Little, 2002: 34). David Little concisely points out that: "*ethno-religious groups* consist of members bound together by loyalty to *common ethnic origins*, prominently including religious identity, but interwoven with language, physical (or 'racial') characteristics, etc...In whatever place such a 'people' may find itself, its identity and self-understanding continue to be decisively shaped by a conviction regarding 'common descent' that is related to a particular geographical location with a strong religious coloration."

but merely as a “*belief group*” minority⁶³ whose interpretation of Islamic precepts and worship rituals differs from the established precepts and rituals adhered to by the Hanafi-Muslim majority (which is one of the four branches of Sunni Islam) in Turkey. Given their ‘belief group’ minority character,⁶⁴ problems revolving around belief-right demands of the Alevi-Muslim minority are intimately interconnected with fulfilling the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria [see **Table 7**]. After all, (and just like the Kurdish national movement’s demands for linguistic rights challenge enduringly complex patterns of exclusion centered on the dominant Turkish ethnic majority) the belief-right demands of the Alevi minority challenge enduringly complex patterns of exclusion centered on the dominant Hanefi-Sunni majority.

Nevertheless, no issue in Turkish politics can be as fatal and acute as the ‘Kurdish problem’ since the PKK-led Kurdish national movement pledges to continue its self-acclaimed ‘guerrilla warfare’ or ‘terrorist activities’ as long as the call for regional autonomy and public school education in their mother tongue are not met by the Turkish establishment. The fulfillment of these concrete political demands, on the other hand, necessitates *substantial* (not cosmetic) re-structuring of Turkey’s ethnocratic regime paradigm in line with what Ilan Peleg classified as “Radical Revision towards Genuine Democracy” [see **Table 4**]. Hence, finding a civil and peaceful solution to the ‘Kurdish problem’ has constituted and will constitute the most crucial variable in determining Turkey’s trajectory of democratization or de-democratization process.

Accordingly, Chapter VI will be divided into three sections. The first section will focus and assess the extent of the legislative reform that successive Turkish governments undertook while trying to comply with EU conditionality on the cultural rights of non-Turkish but Muslim ethnic minorities. The chronological narrative of the first section will cover the inauguration of Turkey’s EU candidacy process at the Helsinki European Council Summit of December 1999 until the year 2004 when the European Council decided to start accession negotiations with Turkey in October

⁶³ In contrast to *ethno-religious* groups, *belief groups* simply “give special priority to embracing and adhering to a set of basic beliefs about the nature of reality and human destiny, together with the behaviour patterns thought to be consistent with those beliefs, which the group is established to nurture and propagate” (Little, 2002: 34)

⁶⁴ Certainly, some of the major Alevi organizations regard Alevism not as a branch within Islam but as a distinct religious philosophy and way of life. Regardless of ongoing ontological debates among the Alevi groups about the ‘true nature’ of Alevism, it is still important to emphasize their belief-groups’ minority character.

2005. Section two of the chapter will resume assessing the extent of the reformist performance and capacity of the AKP government on the EU-led Kurdish cultural rights during Turkey's post-EU accession period (from 2005 to 2010). Accordingly, the chronological narrative of the second section will cover until the AKP government's 'Kurdish Opening' initiative (2009-2010) which aimed for the selective and limited improvement of Kurdish cultural rights while reflecting the AKP government's efforts to solve the 'Kurdish problem' without conceding to the Kurdish national movement's calls for public education in its mother tongue and regional autonomy. The third section, on the other hand, will analyze the extent of the AKP government's reformist performance on EU-led Alevi belief-rights. Since problems revolving around belief-right demands of the Alevi-Muslim minority are intimately interconnected with fulfilling democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria, the third section will briefly explore the AKP government's inconsistent adherence on these secularist ideals.

6.1 Narrow Opening of the Ethnocratic Paradigm during the EU pre-Accession Process (1999-2004)

6.1.A DSP-MHP-ANAP Coalition Government's Reluctant Embrace of the EU-led Demands on Kurdish Cultural Rights (1999-2002)

When Turkey was accepted as an official candidate for EU membership at the Helsinki European Council of December 1999, the Turkish state authorities were hoping to get a starting date for EU accession negotiations at the Copenhagen Summit of December 2002. Yet, the prospect of achieving the necessary reforms set by the EU Accession Partnership Document in such a short period of time seemed rather dim as the two senior partners of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government (April 1999 to November 2002) roughly shared similar 'national sensitivities' with the Turkish Armed Forces with regard to the Kurdish and Cyprus problems.

Besides his staunch stance on the laicism of the military-led '28 February process' (see Chapter V), the then Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit's approach towards the 'Kurdish problem' also fully conformed to the premises of Kemalist official state ideology. Yet, the regular justification that Ecevit provided for the ethnocratic denial

of Kurdish ethnic identity was decorated with a ‘leftist’ flavour. According to Ecevit, the so called ‘Kurdish problem’ was a mere symptom of socio-economic backwardness and preservation of the feudal structures within the southeast region. Given this, the solution to the problem completely lay in the modernization of the region’s socio-economic structures (Ciddi, 2009: 101).

The Coalition Protocol of Ecevit’s DSP-MHP-ANAP government proclaimed that:

This government will work to ensure that the secular, democratic and lawful Turkish Republic established by Ataturk’s leadership will be protected both against *internal* and *external* dangers, that the Ataturk’s principles and reforms will be strengthened in every area, and[...] the use of religion for political purposes or personal gains will in no way be tolerated[...] Ataturkist understanding of *humane* and *peace-loving nationalism* that is based on *Turkish culture*, and the *rejection of ethnic and religious differences*, is the keystone of our *national unity* and *integrity* (Italics added) (Quoted in Özkeçeci-Taner, 2004: 335).

Without doubt, the phrasing of the document not only discloses the stern western-positivist overtones of the laicist crackdown of the ‘28 February Process’ against the internal ‘Islamic reactionary’ threat but also encapsulates the conventional ethnocentric logic of Turkey’s long standing official state ideology. Given the dominant ideological make up of the Turkish government and state authorities, delivering the EU’s demands for liberalization of Kurdish cultural rights (along with the federal solution of the Cyprus Problem) proved out to be the most challenging and disturbing task.

The first EU Commission Report written on Turkey critically remarked that “The Turkish authorities do not recognise the existence of a Kurdish minority, considering them to be simply Turks of Kurdish origin” (EU Commission Report, 1998: 20). Furthermore, it observed that “There are no legal barriers to ethnic Kurds’ participation in political and economic affairs but Kurds who publicly or politically assert their Kurdish ethnic identity risk harassment or prosecution” (EU Commission Report, 1998: 19). While making sure to define the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) as an organization “whose goal is to create an independent state of Kurdistan in south-eastern Turkey, and which employs terrorist methods”, the EU Commission Report emphasized the necessity to find a civil, non-military solution to the situation in the southeast (EU Commission Report, 1998: 20). As far as the EU Commission was concerned, a civil solution to the situation in the southeast “could include *recognition of certain forms of Kurdish cultural identity* and greater tolerance of the ways of

expressing that identity, *provided it does not advocate separatism or terrorism*” (EU Commission Report, 1998: 20).

The EU has specifically itemized its pre-accession requirements from Turkey by adopting the Accession Partnership Document (APD)⁶⁵ on 8 March 2001 [see **Table 25**]. While demanding the abolition of severe ethnocentric restrictions imposed on the Kurdish ethnic minority, the EU Accession Partnership Document listed the elimination of “any legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in *TV/radio broadcasting*” under its short-term priorities. Under the section of medium-term priorities, the EU demanded Turkey “ensure cultural diversity and guarantee cultural rights for all citizens irrespective of their origin” by stipulating that “any legal provisions preventing the enjoyment of these rights should be abolished, *including in the field of education*” [see **Table 26**]. The Accession Partnership Document of 2001 expected Turkey to comply with the short-term priorities by the end of 2001. Although the medium-term priorities were expected to take more than one year to complete, APD stated that “work should...also begin on them during 2001” (APD 2001, L85/16).

Table 25 EU Accession Partnership Document (2001)

Short-term Priorities	Medium-term Priorities
1-In accordance with the Helsinki conclusions, in the context of the political dialogue, strongly support the UN Secretary General's efforts to bring to a successful conclusion the process of finding a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem, as referred to in point 9(a) of the Helsinki conclusions.	1-In accordance with the Helsinki conclusions, in the context of the political dialogue, under the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the UN Charter, make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues, as referred to in point 4 of the Helsinki conclusions
2- Strengthen legal and constitutional guarantees for the right to freedom of expression in line with Article 10 of the European Convention of Human Rights. Address in that context the situation of those persons in prison sentenced for expressing non-violent opinions.	2- Guarantee full enjoyment by all individuals without any discrimination and irrespective of their language, race, color, sex, political opinion, philosophical belief or religion of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. Further develop conditions for the enjoyment of freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

⁶⁵ Until now, the Council of the European Union –acting on a proposal from the Commission– has adopted four individual Accession Partnerships with Turkey. The first APD was then followed by the APDs of 2003, 2006, and 2008.

3- Develop a comprehensive approach to reduce regional disparities, and in particular to improve the situation in the south-east, with a view to enhancing economic, social and cultural opportunities for all citizens.	3- Review of the Turkish Constitution and other relevant legislation with a view to guaranteeing rights and freedoms of all Turkish citizens as set forth in the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights; ensure the implementation of such legal reforms and conformity with practices in EU Member States
4-Strengthen legal provisions and undertake all necessary measures to reinforce the fight against torture practices, and ensure compliance with the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture.	4- Adjust detention conditions in prisons to bring them into line with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and other international norms.
5- Further align legal procedures concerning pre-trial detention with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights and with recommendations of the Committee for the Prevention of Torture.	5- Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional Protocol and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
6- Strengthen opportunities for legal redress against all violations of human rights.	6- Abolish the death penalty, sign and ratify Protocol 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights.
7- Intensify training on human rights issues for law enforcement officials in mutual cooperation with individual countries and international organizations.	7- Align the constitutional role of the National Security Council as an advisory body to the Government in accordance with the practice of EU Member States.
8-Improve the functioning and efficiency of the judiciary, including the State security court in line with inter-national standards. Strengthen in particular training of judges and prosecutors on European Union legislation, including in the field of human rights.	8- Ensure cultural diversity and guarantee cultural rights for all citizens irrespective of their origin. Any legal provisions preventing the enjoyment of these rights should be abolished, including in the field of education
9-Maintain the de facto moratorium on capital punishment	9- Lift the remaining state of emergency in the south-east.
10-Remove any legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in TV/radio broadcasting.	
11- Strengthen legal and constitutional guarantees of the right to freedom of association and peaceful assembly and encourage development of civil society.	

Source: Adopted from the EU Accession Partnership Document of 2001

In order to address the priorities set out in the Accession Partnership Document, Ecevit's DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government devised the National Programme for the Adoption of the *Acquis*⁶⁶ (NPAA) on 19 March 2001. In line with the NPAA, Turkey took the first step towards fulfilling the Copenhagen democratic conditionality by amending the 34 articles of the 1982 Constitution on 3 October 2001 (Özbudun and Gençkaya, 2009: 49-63; Ünlü, 2007: 350-355). The constitutional amendments undertaken by the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government, however, expanded the

⁶⁶ In response to various Accession Partnership Documents, successive Turkish governments have devised three different National Programmes for the Adoption of the *Acquis* (NPAA). The first NPAA of 2001 was followed by the NPAA of 2003 and 2008 (Ulusal Program, 2001; 2003; 2008).

scope of individual rights, freedoms of expression and organization only superficially (Levent, 2004: 89-109). Perhaps more importantly, they demoted the constitutional role of the National Security Council (NSC) into an advisory body, increased the number of civilians within the NSC from five to nine and complicated the closure of the political parties by the Constitutional Court (Özbudun, 2007; Gönenç, 2004; Hale, 2003).

Table 26 Specific Requirements of the APD on Kurdish Cultural Rights (2001)

Short-Term Priorities and Objectives	Medium-Term Priorities and Objectives
Maintain the de facto moratorium on capital punishment.	Abolish the death penalty, sign and ratify Protocol 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights.
Remove any legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in TV/radio broadcasting.	Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its optional Protocol and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
Develop a comprehensive approach to reduce regional disparities, and in particular to improve the situation in the south-east, with a view to enhancing economic, social and cultural opportunities for all citizens.	Ensure cultural diversity and guarantee cultural rights for all citizens irrespective of their origin. Any legal provisions preventing the enjoyment of these rights should be abolished, including in the field of education.
	Lift the remaining state of emergency in the south-east.

Source: Adopted from the 2001 EU Accession Partnership Document with Turkey

However, the 2001 constitutional reform package abolished the death penalty only partially⁶⁷ and failed to remove all of the legal restrictions imposed on Kurdish education and broadcasting rights. Indeed, accomplishing clear-cut reforms at desired pace on these issues was not an easy task for Ecevit's DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government particularly because Bahçeli's ultra-ethnocratic MHP proved to be unmovable towards the abolition of the death penalty and the slightest liberalization of Kurdish cultural rights (Yavuz, 2001: 16-21; 2002: 217-220). In the meantime, Turkish Armed Forces cautiously watched over the EU reform process while trying to make sure that the latter stays within the acceptable parameters. Renowned for his

⁶⁷ While amending article 38 of the 1982 constitution, Turkish authorities reserved the imposition of the death penalty not only in cases of "war or imminent threat of war" but also for the "crimes of terrorism". The latter was deliberately included in the amended article and primarily reflected the MHP's feverish insistence retaining the Parliament's right to execute the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan who had been sentenced to death in 1999 (Piccoli, 2004: 226). Yet, the imposition of the death penalty to the cases of "terrorist crimes" explicitly contradicted with Protocol 6 of the ECHR which was one of the medium-term priorities that Turkey had to fulfil if it realistically wanted to get a starting date for the accession negotiation at the Copenhagen Summit.

exceedingly stringent stance on laic-ethnocratic principles and Cyprus problem, the overall policy line of the TAF under the Chief of General Staff Hüseyin Kıvrıkoğlu (1998-2002) was to get an accession negotiation date for Turkey without making any major concessions to the EU requirements (Sarıbrahimoğlu, 2007: 70-71; Aydınli, 2009: 589-590).

For instance, while the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government was preparing the Turkish National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA), the military-wing of the National Security Council (NSC) had intervened to the process and pressured the Prime Minister's Office to remove any clauses related to "inclusive constitutional citizenship" and Kurdish cultural rights from the document (*Radikal*, 23 June 2000; Ünlü Bilgiç, 2009: 803-824). Furthermore, General Cumhur Asparuk –the then General Secretary of the NSC– had reaffirmed the strong reservations of the Turkish High Command towards the cultural rights issue when he declared to the media that allowing broadcasting and education in Kurdish language "could tear apart the mosaic of Turkish society" (*Financial Times*, 17 February 2000).

As a result, while welcoming the positive steps taken by the Turkish Government via the October 2001 constitutional reform package, the EU Commission Progress Report of 2001 criticized the NPAA (and the subsequent constitutional amendments) for falling significantly short of meeting various priorities set by the APD. As the EU Commission Report (2001: 103) critically remarked:

The present NPAA makes it insufficiently clear how Turkey will address a number of priorities in the Accession Partnership such as those on *cultural rights*. The NPAA falls considerably short of the Accession Partnership priority of guaranteeing cultural rights for all citizens irrespective of origin. Furthermore, the priority on the removal of all legal provisions forbidding the use by Turkish citizens of their mother tongue in TV/radio broadcasting is to be included. With respect to the death penalty, a commitment in the NPAA to sign Protocol 6 of the ECHR is lacking. *The document should specify how Turkey intends to guarantee freedom of religion, in particular with respect to minority religions not covered by the Lausanne Treaty (Muslim and non-Muslim communities).*

Then the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Günter Verheugen, also made it clear that Turkey would not be able to get a starting date for the accession negotiations at the Copenhagen Summit of December 2002 without achieving further reform in areas such as the death penalty and Kurdish cultural rights (*Hürriyet*, 25 July 2002).

Given the aspiration for getting a date from the EU, the Turkish state authorities sought to formulate a reform package on these three controversial issues. While sharing a similar outlook and reservations with the Turkish Armed Forces on the Kurdish and Cyprus problems, Ecevit's DSP was willing to remove the death penalty and take minor steps towards the extension of Kurdish cultural rights (*Hürriyet*, 30 May 2002). As the junior partner of the DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition, Mesut Yılmaz's ANAP also gave clear support to the EU reforms. Eventually, the Turkish authorities shaped the parameters of the new reform package at the National Security Council meeting of May 2002. The guidelines of the prospective reform package on the death penalty and Kurdish cultural rights were established as follows:

- a) Teaching in the Kurdish language would not be allowed in public schools but only at private courses.
- b) Broadcasting in the Kurdish language would not be allowed on private channels but only on state-owned TV channels (Turkish Radio and Television Institution) with a limited time-line.
- c) The death penalty would be removed but the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan (who was captured in 1999 and subsequently sentenced to death) would be unconditionally exempt from any sort of amnesty while serving life-time imprisonment (*Hürriyet*, 30 May 2002; Çölaşan, 2002).

Once the civilian authorities and the military officers settled on the parameters of the prospective reform package, the NSC Meeting Communiqué of May 2002 endorsed the imperative to speed up the EU reform process outlined by the NPAA (*Hürriyet*, 30 May; 31 May, 2002). Subsequently, the Turkish Parliament passed the new legal arrangements pertaining to the death penalty and Kurdish cultural rights under the title of "Third EU Harmonization Package"⁶⁸ rights on 3 August 2002. As far as the Turkish authorities were concerned, Turkey had fulfilled its duties in complying with the political portion of the Copenhagen criteria. In return, they called upon the EU to fulfil its duty by opening accession negotiations with Turkey in 2003 (*Hürriyet*, 09 September 2002).

Contrary to the expectations of the Turkish authorities, however, the EU Commission Report (2002: 46) stated that "Turkey does not fully meet the political criteria". While highlighting the significance of the reform package adopted by the Turkish parliament

⁶⁸ For the details of the legislative changes under the title of the "Third EU Harmonization Package", see Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007: 8-10; Prime Ministry Office, 2007: 17-26.

in August 2002, the EU Commission Report pointed out the limited nature of the legislative reform process in guaranteeing full enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms. Secondly, the report emphasized the need for effective implementation of the recent legislative changes at the national level. Given the assessment made by the EU Commission, the EU Copenhagen summit meeting held in December 2002 declined to give Turkey a date for accession negotiations.

Nevertheless, the EU pledged to consider opening accession negotiations at the European Council Summit of December 2004 “*without delay*” on the condition that Turkey fulfils the Copenhagen criteria. In the end, Turkey was provided with a clear timetable and strong incentive to expand and deepen its reform process. Furthermore, the EU’s conditional but firm commitment to reward Turkey by the opening of accession negotiations also offered a golden opportunity to the newly elected AKP government to prove its self-acclaimed reformist inclinations and establish its political legitimacy vis-a-vis Kemalist military bureaucratic elites in the domestic political arena.

6.1.B AKP Government Accelerates the EU-Led Reform Process on Kurdish Cultural Rights (2002-2004)

After sweeping to power at the early general elections of November 2002, the single-party AKP government had significantly accelerated the EU-led reform process in order to fulfil the political portion of the Copenhagen criteria and thus to pave the way for Turkey’s accession negotiations at the European Council Summit of December 2004. Between 2002 and 2004, the AKP government adopted five EU harmonization reform packages [see **Table 27**] and a major constitutional reform package. Eventually, at the European Council Summit of December 2004, the European Council decided to open the accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005.

Table 27 EU Harmonization Packages enacted by the Turkish Governments

EU Harmonization Packages	Date entered into Force	Governments in Power
1 st Harmonization Package	19 February 2002	DSP-MHP-ANAP Coalition Gov.
2 nd Harmonization Package	9 April 2002	DSP-MHP-ANAP Coalition Gov.
3 rd Harmonization Package	9 August 2002	DSP-MHP-ANAP Coalition Gov.
4 th Harmonization Package	11 January 2003	AKP Government

5 th Harmonization Package	4 February 2003	AKP Government
6 th Harmonization Package	19 July 2003	AKP Government
7 th Harmonization Package	7 August 2003	AKP Government
8 th Harmonization Package	21 July 2004	AKP Government

Source: Adopted from Prime Ministry Office, 2007: 7-57

Retrospectively, the AKP government succeeded in getting Turkey a date for accession negotiations mainly on three grounds:

- 1- Unlike the internally split DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government, the AKP government was cognitively willing to embrace the notion of *ethnic cultural diversity* (albeit at the liberal individual rights level) and thus was capable of pursuing EU-led cultural rights beyond the parameters cautiously delineated by the Kemalist military-bureaucratic elites.
- 2- Consequently, the AKP remarkably facilitated the internalization of the EU reform process at the domestic level by emphasizing the intrinsically beneficial values of the Copenhagen political criteria for Turkey.
- 3- Last but not least, AKP unprecedentedly shifted Turkey's traditional state policy towards the Cyprus Problem by genuinely supporting a federal solution under the UN aegis.

Indeed, without the AKP government's determined stance on these three measures, it would have been difficult to imagine Turkey fulfilling the political Copenhagen criteria and thus earning a date to start the EU accession negotiations.

Unlike the internally incongruous DSP-MHP-ANAP government, the single-party AKP government embraced the notion of *ethnic-cultural diversity* in the Kurdish South East not as an insidious threat but as richness. Accordingly, AKP's Action Program (2001: 13-15) maintained that all of the problems in the East and Southeast region could not be completely solved with mere economic developmental policies. In addition to economic developmental policies, the party programme emphasized the necessity for a political approach that would recognize cultural diversities within the democratic framework of rule of law. Hence, instead of resorting to the crude ethnocratic denial of Kurdish ethnic-cultural identity, the AKP Action Programme (2001: 15) specifically stated that: "*Cultural diversities* do not require that what we have in common with the region's population should be pushed to the background. On the contrary, *being a citizen of the Republic of Turkey is the cement of our society.*"

Indeed, these statements stood in stark contrast with the Coalition Protocol of Ecevit's DSP-MHP-ANAP government which declared "the rejection of ethnic and religious differences" as being "the keystone of our national unity and integrity" (Özkeçeci-Taner, 2004: 335). Given the overall cognitive difference between the previous DSP-MHP-ANAP government and the newly elected AKP government's approach towards the Kurdish problem, the latter was more willing to fulfil the EU's demands on cultural rights. After all, the AKP Action Programme (2001: 14-15) had proclaimed that:

On condition that Turkish remains the official and instruction language, our Party regards the cultural activities on languages other than Turkish, including broadcasting, as an asset which reinforces and supports the unity and integrity of our country, rather than weaken it.

Consequently, the AKP government had pushed the EU-led reform process beyond the acceptable parameters cautiously delineated by the Turkish Armed Forces by enacting the "Sixth EU Harmonization Package" on 19 July 2003. The sixth reform package contained various substantial amendments regarding "nationally sensitive" issues. Firstly, the sixth reform package broadened the sphere of cultural rights by extending the right to broadcast in "traditional languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens" (e.g. Kurdish, Arabic, Laz etc) to *private* radio and television stations, besides the state-owned and controlled TRT (EU Commission Report, 2003: 31). Secondly, it repealed the infamous article 8 of the "Law on the Fight against Terror" which imposed a prison sentence for any verbal or written propaganda and meeting intending to destroy the indivisible unity of the Turkish Republic with its territory and nation. The package also amended the article 1 of the "Law on the Fight against Terror" in order to render the "use of force" as the main criterion while determining what constituted an act of terrorism (Ministry of FA, 2007: 14; PM Office, 2007: 70).

During the legislative preparations for the Sixth EU Harmonization Package, the Turkish General Staff had put reservations both on private broadcasting in ethnic minority languages and on the amendment of the anti-terror law. Besides publicly objecting to these reform measures, NSC Secretary General Tuncer Kılınç wrote a letter to the office of Prime Ministry emphasizing the harmful implications of the sixth reform package to the national unity and integrity of the Republic of Turkey (Küçükşahin, 2003a; 2003b). Accordingly, the Turkish Armed Forces' objections to private broadcasting in the Kurdish language mainly rested on two grounds. First, it

would hamper the monopolistic predominance of the Turkish language. Furthermore, the Turkish General Staff maintained that dissemination of the Kurdish language through private broadcasting would promote Kurdish national consciousness and thus incite ethnic separatism (Heper, 2005: 38-40). Second, the Turkish High Command warned that it would be more difficult to control the content of private broadcasting than controlling the content of broadcasting by the state-owned TRT (*Hürriyet*, 30 May; 31 May 2003). As far as Turkish General Staff was concerned, this would provide fertile ground for further politicization of the PKK-led Kurdish national movement in the region.

At the National Security Council meeting held on 28 May 2003, the Turkish High Command re-emphasized their reservations on these reform measures. In response, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that the government's endeavours to fulfil the EU Copenhagen Criteria should not be regarded as making a concession or being submissive to the European Union (*Hürriyet*; 29 May 2003). Similarly, the then Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül expressed the AKP government's determination to carry out the necessary amendments in the sixth reform package (*Hürriyet*; 30 May 2003).

Having carried out the legislative reforms embodied in the sixth reform package, the AKP government proceeded to enact the 'Seventh EU Harmonization Package' on 7 August 2003 which entailed significant amendments in terms of raising the civil-military relations to EU standards.⁶⁹ The seventh reform package rescinded the expansive executive and supervisory powers of the General Secretariat Office of the National Security Council over the civilian governments (EU Commission Report, 2003: 19). Indeed, it was this very tutelary mechanism which had provided the legal basis for the General Secretariat Office of the National Security Council to pursue the implementation of the '18 Measures' during the military-led '28 February Process' (see Chapter IV and Chapter V).

Nevertheless, despite the relatively bold initiatives that the AKP government took against the wishes of traditional Kemalist military-bureaucratic circles during the pre-EU Accession period (2002-2004), it is important to stress the stringently limited character of the EU-led reforms which have been accomplished with regard to the

⁶⁹ For the legislative details of the 'Seventh EU Harmonization Package' see; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2007: 17-18; Prime Ministry Office, 2007: 72-73; Michaud-Emin, 2007: 25-42.

cultural rights issues. Indeed, when Turkey started accession negotiations with the EU on October 2005 and thus was considered to be in conformity with the political portion of Copenhagen Criteria, both education and broadcasting rights in *non-Turkish* ethnic minority languages were subject to highly restrictive regulations (Uçarlar, 2009: 127-164; Yıldız and Muller, 2008: 79-93).

As far as *cultural rights in the field of education* are concerned, millions of tax-paying Kurdish citizens are denied public education in their mother tongue and have to spend money to learn it in private courses. Furthermore, the regulation on “Teaching in Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in their Daily Lives” necessitates the attendants as having basic mandatory education which lasts for eight years. This basically means that those who are younger than 15 years of age cannot attend the non-Turkish minority language courses (EU Commission Report, 2004: 49). Through this way, Turkish authorities ensure that Kurdish citizens receive education in a mono-lingual Turkish school system until the age of 15 (Minority Rights Group International, 2007: 16).

Although private education institutions which provide non-official language courses do not receive any financial support from the state, the establishment and supervision of such courses are under the strict jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education which has to grant an approval to the course curriculum in order for the course to take place. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education monitors the criteria of enrolment, appointment of teachers, and time-schedules of the courses in order to make sure that employment of these rights does not contradict with the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation.

Enjoyment of *TV and radio broadcasting rights* in non-official languages were also subject to rigid bureaucratic control and restrictions. Following the ‘Sixth EU Harmonization Package’, the AKP government enacted a new regulation on “Private TV and Radio Broadcasting in Different Languages and Dialects used by Turkish Citizens” in January 2004. Not surprisingly, the new regulation also put severe restraints both on the duration and content of private broadcasting.⁷⁰ Respectively, TV

⁷⁰ The previous regulation was enacted on 18 December 2002 in parallel with the ‘Third EU Harmonization Package’. The latter had only certified the state-owned Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) to broadcast in non official languages while disallowing private enterprises the right to broadcast. Nevertheless, the previous regulation had put similar restrictions on TRT while broadcasting in non-official languages. As a matter of fact, it was slightly even more stringent on the

broadcasting in non-official languages could not exceed 45 minutes per day and a total of four hours per week. For radio channels, the time limit was set as one hour a day and a total of five hours a week (EU Commission Report, 2004: 40). In terms of limitations on the content, broadcasts could not contain any educational programmes in Kurdish (or any “different languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens”) or any children’s programmes.

The regulation also rendered the exercise of broadcasting rights technically difficult. While TV programs had to be simultaneously accompanied by Turkish subtitles, radio programs had to be followed by a Turkish translation (EU Commission Report, 2006: 22) As it is the case with the learning and teaching of non-official languages at private courses, enjoyment of broadcasting rights in different languages “cannot violate fundamental principles of the Republic stated in the Constitution and the state’s indivisibility with its territory and nation.” The Radio and Television Supreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurulu or popularly known by its acronym RTÜK) has the exclusive authority to provide a broadcasting licence to the private enterprises and to revoke it unless strict rules laid out by the regulation are met.

6.1.C Conclusion

This section sought to assess the extent of the legislative reform that successive Turkish governments undertook while trying to comply with EU conditionality on the *cultural rights of non-Turkish ethnic minorities* during the pre-EU accession period (1999-2004). The first subsection has aimed to expose the highly reluctant and limited reform measures that Ecevit’s coalition government (1999-2002) undertook on Kurdish cultural rights for the sake of EU membership. Furthermore, it sought to demonstrate that none of these highly limited legislative reforms were accompanied with a political discourse that would either acknowledge or accommodate the ethnic cultural diversity in Turkey. Overall, the internally split DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government’s reform performance on the extension of Kurdish cultural rights was

duration of broadcasting than the following regulation adopted by the AKP government on private broadcasting.

characterized with highly limited formal adoption, implementation and virtually no discursive shift.⁷¹

The second subsection, on the other hand, assessed the relatively more reformist stance of the AKP government on EU-led Kurdish cultural rights. Indeed, unlike the internally split DSP-MHP-ANAP coalition government, the AKP government was cognitively willing to embrace the notion of *ethnic cultural diversity* (albeit at the liberal individual rights level) and thus was capable of pursuing EU-led cultural rights beyond the parameters rigidly delineated by the Kemalist military-bureaucratic elites. Yet, the second subsection also emphasized how the AKP government proved itself to be more progressive on the EU-led cultural rights *only when* compared with the traditional Kemalist military-bureaucratic actors. After all, the AKP government's pursuit of EU-led Kurdish cultural rights was cautiously designed to engender cosmetic (not substantial) changes to Turkey's enduring ethnocratic regime paradigm.

⁷¹ For three different forms of rule adoption (namely formal, behavioural and discursive adoption) by the candidate countries to the requirements outlined by the EU democratic conditionality, see Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier, 2005: 8.

6.2 AKP Government's Pursuit of Cultural Rights and Persistence of the Kurdish Problem (2005-2010)

The second section will continue covering the extent of EU-led Kurdish cultural rights that the AKP government undertook during the post-EU accession period (2005-2010). More particularly, this section will seek to demonstrate how the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and conventional Kemalist actors on the 'Kurdish problem' mainly stems from disagreement over whether to engage with *selective* and *limited* improvement of Kurdish cultural rights (e.g., broadcasting rights, symbolic linguistic rights). Besides covering how AKP's pursuit of partial reform measures in accordance with its relatively more liberal political discourse on 'nationhood' triggered a fierce reaction from the traditional Kemalist actors, section two will also emphasize how these two apparently antagonistic actors (AKP government versus Kemalist military-bureaucratic circles) have simultaneously cooperated to maintain Turkey's core ethnocentric regime features while aggressively seeking to confine and marginalize the main political demands upheld by the Kurdish national political movement. Accordingly, section two will conclude by analyzing the AKP government's 'Kurdish Opening' initiative launched in 2009 which aimed at *selective* and *limited* improvement of Kurdish cultural rights and which reflected the AKP government's ineffective efforts to solve the 'Kurdish problem' without conceding to the Kurdish national movement's calls for public education in mother tongue and regional autonomy.

6.2.A AKP Government's New Discourse on Nationhood and its Discontents

The AKP government publicly initiated its new official discourse on 'nationhood' as the Prime Minister Erdoğan delivered a historic speech during his visit to Diyarbakır on 11 August 2005. Accordingly, Prime Minister Erdoğan clarified his party's approach to the diagnosis and solution of the 'Kurdish problem' by introducing the concepts of "*sub* versus *supra* identity". As the Prime Minister Erdoğan has repeatedly asserted:

Everyone has the right to feel proud about his or her own ethnic identity. This is one's most natural right. Turks can feel proud for being a Turk, Kurds for being a Kurd, Circassian for being a Circassian, and Laz for being a Laz. However, there is one *supra* identity which binds all of us together and this bond is the constitutional citizenship of the Republic of Turkey (*Hürriyet*, 11 December 2005).

Observably, the AKP government's new official discourse on nationhood has re-defined the notion of ethnicity (e.g., Turk, Kurd, Circassian, Laz, etc.) as a *sub-identity* while elevating the civic-liberal notion of constitutional citizenship to the category of *supra-identity*. Accordingly, the latter would serve as an overarching framework that would bind all of the existing sub-identities (ethnic elements) through the bond of constitutional citizenship. Indeed, the AKP's new official discourse provided relatively more cognitive space for the expression of different non-Turkish ethnic identities (Yavuz, 2009: 188-194). As the Prime Minister Erdoğan declared: "It is wrong to impose Turkishness to our Kurdish citizens by saying: 'You are not a Kurd! You are a Turk!' The same principle is valid for our Laz, Georgian, Circassian, Abkhasian, Bosnian, or Albanian citizens" (*Sabah*, 03 September 2005).

Not surprisingly, the traditional military-bureaucratic elites and the two opposition parties (namely Baykal's CHP and Bahçeli's MHP) furiously reacted against the Prime Minister Erdoğan's new discourse which they accused of ruining the unitary state structure of the Kemalist Republic. After all, the AKP government's new discourse on nationhood not only replaced the previously dominant and overarching 'Turkish nation' with the 'constitutional citizenship of the Republic of Turkey' but also sought to discursively de-ethnicize the very notions of 'citizenship' and 'national identity' by relegating 'Turkishness' into one of the various sub-identities residing in the country.

The main opposition CHP leader Baykal harshly criticized the Prime Minister Erdoğan for dragging the country into a dangerous process of "multi-nationalisation" which would eventually lead to disintegration or what he called the "Yugoslavization" of Turkey (*Hürriyet*, 26 November 2005; *Radikal*, 23 November 2005). Similarly, the MHP leader Bahçeli fiercely denounced Erdoğan for dividing the "Turkish nation" into 36 separate ethnic groups and thus for encouraging separatism. MHP Deputy Chairman Oktay Vural had even called upon the state prosecutors to indict the Prime Minister for inciting "ethnic separatism and racism" (*Hürriyet*, 08 December 2005). From the perspective of the conventional Kemalist actors, the AKP government's empowerment of sub-identities to the detriment of a single overarching Turkish

national identity would inevitably stir up non-Turkish ethnic groups (e.g., Kurds, Laz, Circassians etc) for independence.⁷²

In response to Baykal's 'Yugoslavization' warning, the Prime Minister Erdoğan emphasized how different ethnic groups in Turkey were tied together through a common factor of religion unlike in Yugoslavia. "In Turkey, there are approximately thirty different ethnic groups. In a country where 99 percent of the population is Muslim, religion serves the role of cement" Erdoğan noted and accentuated further: "Religion provides the most important unifying constituent in our country" (*Hürriyet*, 11 December 2005). Noticeably, the AKP government's new official discourse on nationhood is probably the most outward expression of its 'post-Islamist' condition where the *pseudo*-notion of 'constitutional patriotism'⁷³ is supplemented by Islamic-inspired communitarian solidarity.

Yet, Erdoğan's conceptualization of the 'Kurdish problem' significantly differs from the 'Kurdish problem' as expressed by the PKK-led Kurdish national political movement. To begin with, the AKP government's discourse on 'sub versus supra identity' is firmly sealed with its monist motto of "*single nation, single state, single homeland, and single flag*". The PKK-led Kurdish national political movement, in contrast, maintains that the Republic of Turkey should be based upon the co-equal partnership of Turks and Kurds as it is demographically constituted by two main ethnic groups (Turks and Kurds) along with various minority groups (e.g. Laz, Circassian). Accordingly, the Kurdish national movement contests the AKP government's "single nation, single state, single homeland, and single flag" principles by asserting the *bi-ethnic* character of the Republic of Turkey and by demanding regional autonomy under the slogan of 'democratic autonomy'.

In view of that, the AKP government has consistently denounced the Kurdish national movement's calls for regional autonomy and public school education in mother tongue as unacceptable demands posing a sinister separatist threat to the national unity and integrity of Turkey. Hence, while discursively celebrating the existence of different ethnic groups as cultural richness and adopting selective policies that would partially ameliorate the linguistic rights of the Kurdish minority, the AKP government

⁷² For a few examples expressing the same line of thought in the mainstream media see: Uluç, 2005; İnce, 2005.

⁷³ For more on the principles related to "constitutional patriotism", see Habermas 1988; 1992; 1998; 2001.

—along with the military bureaucratic circles— has unambiguously sought to confine and marginalize the main actors of the Kurdish national political movement (PKK and the then Democratic Society Party).

Since the capture of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, PKK had declared a unilateral cease fire which lasted from 1999 to 2004. From 2005 onwards, however, PKK had gradually escalated its attacks on Turkish security forces. In response, the AKP government (in tandem with the military bureaucratic circles) amended the *Law on the Fight against Terror* in June 2006 by enacting a series of draconian provisions (Aytar, 2006). Besides containing various problematic implications for human rights and liberties, the recently amended anti-terror law of June 2006 consciously sought to allow no room to differentiate between PKK armed combatants who engaged in violent terrorist activities and civil unarmed demonstrators who are perceived to be ideologically affiliated with the PKK-led Kurdish national movement (Human Rights Watch, 2010: 1-5). Accordingly, the new amendments dramatically reversed all of the previous democratic amendments which the AKP government had accomplished via the successive EU harmonization packages on the *Law on the Fight against Terror*.

For instance, Article 7 of the newly amended *Law on the Fight against Terror* inflicts one to five years prison sentence for those persons who make propaganda on behalf of a terrorist organization. More importantly, Article 7 defines engaging with propaganda⁷⁴ on behalf of the terrorist organization as “carrying the emblem or the signs of a terrorist organization, shouting slogans or broadcasting them through sound systems in a way to demonstrate that a person is a member or supporter of the organization” (Human Rights Watch, 2010: 74). According to this provision, all of the party officials of the current pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party⁷⁵—along with two million citizens who vote for it— can be considered as potential criminals who are engaging with propaganda on behalf of PKK. After all, the political officials of the Peace and Democracy Party make no secret of the fact that their party shares the same ideological platform and socio-political grassroots with PKK.

⁷⁴ If the propaganda crime is committed by press or media, the prison penalty is increased by half. Furthermore, it doubles the prison sentence if such offences take place within the premises of associations, foundations, political parties, trade unions and professional organizations, educational institutions and dormitories.

⁷⁵ The Peace and Democracy Party succeed the previous Democratic Society Party as the latter was outlawed by the Constitutional Court in December 2009.

Despite the obvious collaboration between the AKP government and conventional Kemalist military-bureaucratic circles to confine and marginalize the Kurdish national political movement through the extremely draconian *Law on the Fight against Terror*, the Turkish High Command's ongoing antagonistic approach towards the AKP government's 'sub versus supra identity' discourse on nationhood has resurfaced once again as Turkey entered the presidential and general election process of 2007. As described in Chapter V, the General Staff had intervened in the presidential election process of AKP nominee Abdullah Gül by issuing a harshly threatening statement from its website. Besides emphasizing the Turkish Armed Forces' absolute determination to protect the principle of laicism, the statement had declared that:

Those who are opposed to Great Leader Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's understanding "*How happy is the one who says I am a Turk*" are enemies of the Republic of Turkey and will remain so. The Turkish Armed Forces maintain their sound determination to carry out their duties stemming from laws to protect the unchangeable characteristics of the Republic of Turkey. Their loyalty to this determination is absolute (*BBC News*, 28 April 2007; *Hürriyet*, 27 April 2007).

Certainly, the General Staff's statements were not only directed against the PKK-led Kurdish national movement but also against Prime Minister Erdoğan who previously had asserted that: "People have the right to say 'I am a Laz, I am a Georgian'. You cannot prohibit a person to say 'I am Kurdish'. If you do that then it leads to an insurgency" (*Radikal*, 28 November 2005).

Yet, contrary to what Erdoğan would like to think, the Kurdish national political movement does not only wage insurgency against the crude denial of the existence of the Kurdish ethnic group but also for the attainment of concrete political demands. Accordingly, while delivering a speech at the meeting held by Democratic Society Party in Diyarbakir a couple days prior to the early general elections of July 2007, Leyla Zana called for the creation of a Kurdistan province along federalist lines (*Hürriyet*, 20 July 2007). Besides hailing the city of Diyarbakir as the "political Kaaba⁷⁶ of Kurds", Zana did not forget to applaud Abdullah Öcalan as "our leader" (*Hürriyet*, 20 July 2007). As is usually the case with the public demonstrations held by the Democratic Society Party, demonstrators opened the posters of Öcalan and waved the colours of the Kurdish flag.

⁷⁶ Kaaba is the most sacred shrine of the Muslims and particularly refers to a small cube-shaped building in the great mosque at Mecca toward which Muslims face when praying. Just like all Muslims face to Kaaba while performing daily prayers, Zana considers Diyarbakir as the political reference point of all Kurds.

Not surprisingly, the mainstream Turkish media furiously attacked Leyla Zana by calling her a “shameless provocateur” of the approaching 2007 general elections (*Hürriyet*; 20 July 2007). While condemning Zana along the same lines, Prime Minister Erdoğan had also called upon the state prosecutors to fulfil their legal duty against “promoters of separatism” (*Milliyet*, 21 July 2007; *Zaman*, 21 July 2007). The very next day, Diyarbakır State Prosecutor Office indicted Leyla Zana for engaging with propaganda on behalf of the terrorist organization (*Hürriyet*, 21 July 2007). Hence, despite the ongoing antagonism between conventional Kemalist actors and the AKP government on ‘sub versus supra identity’ discourse, none of the mainstream political actors had or has any disagreement on the necessity to confine and marginalize political figures like Zana who are ideologically affiliated with the PKK-led Kurdish national movement.

6.2.B AKP Government’s ‘Kurdish Opening’ Initiative under the Principles of ‘Single Nation, Flag, State, and Homeland’

At the early general elections of July 2007, AKP had become the largest party in the South East region and thus achieved extraordinary success by forcing the pro-Kurdish DTP into the second place. The rivalry between the consecutively elected AKP government and pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party intensified further when the former enacted the necessary bill in Parliament authorizing the Turkish Armed Forces to carry out a cross-border military operation to the PKK camps located in Northern Iraq. The AKP government’s legislative initiative came in response to the PKK’s ever increasing attacks on Turkish security forces. While MHP and CHP gave full support to a cross-border military operation, DTP strongly opposed it.

A week after the authorization of the military incursion into Northern Iraq, Prime Minister Erdoğan paid a visit to several cities in the Kurdish South East where he was confronted with unruly protests. Moreover, the PKK-led Kurdish national movement boycotted Erdoğan’s visit by closing down shops in cities. DTP organized a ‘sit down’ strike in front of the main military headquarters located in Diyarbakır while carrying banners such as “solution does not lie in the operation, but in dialogue!” and “AKP proved itself to be a war government!” (*Hürriyet*, 01 October 2008). In every city visited by Erdoğan, streets were transformed into a battlefield as the demonstrators broke the windows of the street shops and set the cars on fire while clashing with the police (*Hürriyet*, 02 October 2008). Similarly, children on the street threw stones at

the protocol convoy of Prime Minister Erdoğan and to police station buildings (*Milliyet*, 02 October 2008). Once again, Turkey's Kurdish South East was witnessing intifada-like images.

While delivering a speech in Hakkari, Prime Minister Erdoğan furiously scorned unruly protests organized by the Kurdish National Movement by declaring that: "We said single nation, single flag, single homeland, and single state. They stood against these principles. Anyone who stands against these principles has no place in Turkey. They may leave wherever they want" (*Milliyet*, 03 November 2008). The next day, the chairman of the Democratic Society Party Ahmet Türk vehemently condemned Erdoğan's statements as a manifestation of a "monist and fascist 'love it or leave it' mentality" (*Hürriyet*, 03 October 2008). Similarly, liberal and pro-Islamic democrats in the media criticized Erdoğan for increasingly adopting a nationalist and hawkish approach to the Kurdish problem.

Erdoğan responded to the mounting criticisms by arguing that the "terrorist organization and its supporters" had distorted his statements (*Hürriyet*, 11 October 2008). Furthermore, he pointed out that the patent of "love it or leave it" slogan had belonged to the MHP and that his party was unambiguously opposed to such expressions (*Hürriyet*, 11 October 2008). As the Prime Minister Erdoğan elaborated on this issue further:

In this country, we are all one and together as Turk, Kurd, Laz, Circassian, Georgian, Abbazhian, Bosnian. No ethnic group can or may strive to become superior to any other ethnic group. We have a supra-identity and this supra-identity is the citizenship of the Republic of Turkey. What did we say when we first hit the road? We said one nation, one flag, one homeland and one state. Does anyone oppose to these principles? Can anyone say "no, not one nation" or "we do not accept one flag"? If anyone does not like these principles, then he may leave wherever he likes to. This is what I said. They may criticize me for these statements but this is what I think and I fully stand behind it. Why? Because no one has the power to separate 70 million people and we will not allow this to happen (*Hürriyet*, 11 October 2008).

Observably, Erdoğan sought to rectify criticisms by merely asserting his previous points in more detail. This episode is highly important as it reveals explicit limits of the AKP government's reformist capacity on the 'Kurdish problem'. Indeed, there is a blatantly authoritarian thrust in Erdoğan's outlook in the way he equates the Kurdish national movement's demands for public education in mother tongue and regional

autonomy as an attempt at separatism and thus against the very principles of “single nation, single state, single homeland and single flag”.

Furthermore, this episode demonstrates the shallow nature of AKP’s self-acclaimed multi-cultural discourse on nationhood which discursively celebrates the existence of different ethnic groups as cultural richness while supplementing the *pseudo*-notion of ‘constitutional patriotism’ with Islamic-inspired communitarian solidarity. It is particularly interesting to observe how Erdoğan interprets and dismisses the political demands of the Kurdish national movement as the ambitious efforts of one ethnic group (Kurds) in search of dominating other ethnic groups (Turks, Laz, Circissian) while his government strictly enforces the mono-lingual public education system by cautiously confining non-Turkish languages to private courses.

The ongoing political rivalry between the AKP government and the pro-Kurdish DTP reached its zenith as Prime Minister Erdoğan proclaimed his determination to take over Diyarbakır municipality in the coming local elections of March 2009. In response, the DTP mayor Osman Baydemir declared the city as the ‘fortress’ of the Democratic Society Party. Consequently, the results of the March 2009 local elections pointed to a clear electoral victory of the pro-Kurdish DTP over the AKP as the former almost doubled the number of its municipalities in the southeast region (Çarkoğlu, 2009: 300-309). While the incumbent Diyarbakır mayor Osman Baydemir had increased his votes to 65.43%, the AKP remained a distant second, receiving 31.4% of the votes. DTP also regained key provinces such as Iğdır, Van and Siirt which had been won by AKP in the previous (2004) local elections. The then AKP government spokesman Cemil Çiçek scorned the electoral success of the Kurdish national movement by pointing out that the DTP has reached to the Armenian border.⁷⁷ The then co-joint leader of the Democrat Society Party, Emine Ayna, on the other hand, acclaimed that the local election results of March 2009 had drawn the boundaries of Kurdistan.

After receiving a significant electoral seatback in the Kurdish-majority South East region, the AKP government increasingly sought to initiate new reforms on Kurdish cultural rights. In May 2009, President Abdullah Gül declared the ‘Kurdish problem’ to be Turkey’s most serious problem and emphasized the necessity to grasp the

⁷⁷ The province of Iğdır in Turkey borders with Armenia. In this context, Çiçek insinuates the ongoing tacit alliance between the PKK-led Kurdish national movement and Armenia.

historic opportunity towards its solution (*Milliyet*, 09 May 2009). In July 2009, Prime Minister Erdoğan officially confirmed the AKP government's new reform initiative by announcing: "Whether you call it the 'Kurdish problem' or the 'Southeast problem' or you may even call it the 'Kurdish opening' as some people do. However you name it, our government has started working on this problem" (*Hürriyet*, 23 July 2009)

In order to promote AKP government's 'Democratic Opening' initiative, Prime Minister Erdoğan held numerous meetings with famous sportsmen, artists, poets, intellectuals and businessmen etc. The speeches which Erdoğan delivered on behalf of the 'Democratic Opening' were by and large a reiteration of the 'sub versus supra identity' discourse on nationhood. In his speeches, Erdoğan also emphasized the devastating human and economic cost of the PKK terror and frequently pleaded for the resolution of the 'Kurdish Problem' by declaring "let mothers not cry anymore" or "let our youth not be sacrificed to the terror anymore" (*Hürriyet*, 11 August 2009; 15 October 2009). While inviting the main opposition parties to join their efforts in support of AKP government's 'democratic opening' initiative, Prime Minister Erdoğan called upon the PKK 'terrorists' (or 'guerrillas') to lay down their arms and return home (*Hürriyet*, 21 October 2009).

Not surprisingly, CHP and MHP categorically opposed AKP's 'Democratic Opening' process from its very inception. While accusing Prime Minister Erdoğan for permissively negotiating with separatist terror rather than fighting against it, CHP leader Deniz Baykal condemned the 'Kurdish Opening' initiative as a co-joint project between AKP and the United States which aimed to accomplish national disintegration in Turkey by fabricating a new nation (Kurdish nation) out of the Turkish nation (*Hürriyet*, 14 October 2009). Similarly, MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli harshly warned the AKP government by declaring that: "If you want to have Turkey divided by those who have been wandering in the mountains for the last 25 years [PKK], be aware of MHP which is ready to wander in the mountains for 50 years in order to prevent Turkey from getting divided" (*Hürriyet*, 02 August 2009).

Yet, contrary to the constant hysterical accusations raised by the two opposition parties, AKP's 'democratic opening' initiative did not even consider addressing (either publicly or secretly) the main political demands upheld by the PKK-led Kurdish national movement. Overall, the so-called 'Kurdish opening' aimed for

selective and *limited* improvement of Kurdish cultural rights as it reflected the AKP government's efforts to solve the 'Kurdish problem' without conceding to the Kurdish national movement's calls for public education in mother tongue and regional autonomy. Besides aiming at weakening the inexorable electoral strength and ideological appeal of the PKK-linked Kurdish national movement in the South East region, the AKP government apparently aspired to convince the PKK guerrillas to disarm through a secret negotiation process in the long run.

Table 28 Specific Requirements of the EU-led APD on the Minority Rights (2008)

Non Sunni-Muslim Minorities	Non Turkish Ethnic Minorities	Kurdish Southeast
Take the necessary measures to establish an atmosphere of tolerance conducive to the full respect of <i>freedom of religion</i> in practice.	Ensure cultural diversity and promote respect for and protection of minorities in accordance with the ECHR and the principles laid down in the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and in line with best practice in Member States.	Develop a comprehensive approach to reducing regional disparities, and in particular to improving the situation in southeast Turkey, with a view to enhancing economic, social and cultural opportunities for all Turkish citizens, <i>including those of Kurdish origin</i> .
In line with the ECHR and the case law of the ECtHR: Revise and implement legislation on foundations. Interpret and apply current legislation pending the adoption and implementation of the new law on foundations.	Improve effective access to radio and TV broadcasting in <i>languages other than Turkish</i> , in particular by removing remaining legal restrictions.	Pursue measures to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons to their original settlements in line with the recommendations of the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Displaced Persons and continue implementation of the law on the compensation of losses due to terrorism and the fight against terrorism. Ensure fair and prompt compensation of victims.
Ensure that <i>non-Muslim</i> religious communities can acquire legal personality and exercise their rights.	Adopt appropriate measures to support the teaching of <i>languages other than Turkish</i> .	Abolish the village guard system in the south-east.
Ensure the possibility of religious education for <i>non-Muslim minorities</i> , including the training of their clergy.		Clear the area of landmines.
Ensure equal treatment of Turkish and foreign nationals as regards their ability to exercise the right to freedom of religion through participation in the life of organised religious communities.		

Source: Adopted from the most recent EU Accession Partnership Document (APD) signed with Turkey in 2008.

In line with the specific requirements raised by the EU Accession Partnership Document (2008) in regard to the cultural rights of ethnic minorities [see **Table 28**], the AKP government lifted the severe bureaucratic limitations both on the duration and content of private broadcasting by amending the previous Regulation on Broadcasting in the Languages and Dialects Traditionally used by Turkish Citizens (EU Commission Report, 2010: 33, 58). Although Turkey had supposedly fulfilled the political portion of the Copenhagen Criteria by 2005, citizens of Turkey could enjoy their cultural rights in private broadcasting only by 2009.⁷⁸

In terms of education rights, the AKP government directed YÖK (Council of Higher Education – Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu) to open Kurdish Institutes in public universities. At the beginning, Kurdish Institutes would only teach at post-graduate level and then would provide undergraduate education at a later stage. Yet, these institutes would be officially named as Institute of Living Languages rather than Institute of Kurdology or Department of Kurdish Language and Literature. As a result, teaching and learning in Kurdish language was completely excluded from pre-university public education. Hence, while fulfilling the EU's demand on providing “effective access to radio and TV broadcasting in *languages other than Turkish*, in particular by removing remaining legal restrictions”, the AKP government cautiously declined to “provide children whose mother tongue is not Turkish with the ability to learn in their mother tongue in public schools” [see **Table 29**].

As part of the “Democratic Opening” process, the AKP government also endorsed selective and limited use of Kurdish language in public communication and services. Consequently, the AKP government directed prison administrators to permit communication between prisoners and their visitors in Kurdish. Despite the legal ban embedded in the law,⁷⁹ political parties (including AKP) started to utilize the Kurdish language during election campaigns. In addition to this, the AKP government provided the option of restoring the original names of Kurdish villages⁸⁰ which had

⁷⁸ In parallel with the removal of the previous restrictions on private broadcasting, RTÜK has enhanced its monitoring capacity by employing new staff who can speak Kırmanji and Zaza (the two main dialects of Kurdish language spoken in Turkey). After all, RTÜK is responsible for ensuring that none of the programs in private broadcasting contradict the official policies.

⁷⁹ Article 81 of the Law on the Political Parties (1983) bans any use of non-Turkish language in all political activities.

⁸⁰ Indeed, one of the most memorable episodes of the ‘Kurdish Opening’ took place when the President Abdullah Gül visited the South East and addressed the residents of a village by proclaiming the original Kurdish name of the village (*Hürriyet*, 09 August 2009).

been increasingly Turkified since the Kemalist one-party dictatorship era onwards. Renaming the original names of villages depended on the consent of local residents of a given village and on the decision of the Council of Ministers. The process of restoring the original names of places, however, was only limited to villages and did not include counties, cities and provinces. Once again, AKP's so called 'Kurdish Opening' had its own cautious limits.

Table 29 Turkey's Balance Sheet in complying with the EU-led Cultural Rights

Specific Demands raised by the EU	Degree of Compliance by Turkey
Recognize all existing minorities by revising the restrictive interpretation of Lausanne Treaty.	Not fulfilled.
Sign the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.	<u>Not fulfilled or not signed.</u>
Lift the reservation regarding minority rights in the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights/Civil and Political Rights.	<u>Not fulfilled or not signed.</u>
Eliminate the ban on using languages other than Turkish in political life.	Not fulfilled (slight progress).
Provide children whose mother tongue is not Turkish with the ability to learn in their mother tongue in public schools.	Not fulfilled (no progress).
Remove the village guard system.	Not fulfilled (no progress).
Eliminate the 10% threshold in the election system.	Not fulfilled (no progress).
Eliminate the problem of Internally Displaced Persons.	Fulfilled partially (in progress).
Lift the emergency status in Southeast.	Fulfilled entirely.
Clear the area of landmines.	Fulfilled partially (in progress).
Eliminate restrictions on broadcasting in other languages than Turkish.	Fulfilled.
Eliminate restrictions on education in languages other than Turkish.	Not fulfilled.

Source: Adopted from the successive EU Accession Partnership Documents signed with Turkey and the EU Commission's Regular Progress Reports on Turkey.

While acknowledging partial progressive measures taken by the AKP government towards fulfilling the EU's demands on cultural rights, it is also important to highlight the fact that none of the reform measures adopted during the 'democratic opening' process had accomplished a clear-cut democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring ethnocratic regime features. Significantly, AKP's 'Kurdish opening' initiative did not consider addressing the Kurdish national movement's main political demands. Throughout the process, Erdoğan officially met with the DTP leader Ahmet Türk only

once⁸¹ (*Hürriyet*, 05 August 2009). Apart from that meeting which lasted for an hour, the pro-Kurdish DTP was not treated as a legitimate actor to be consulted with and thus was excluded from the process. Hence, while the MHP and CHP viciously attacked the AKP government for cooperating with the ‘separatist terror organization’, the Kurdish national political movement denounced the process as “*Kurdish opening without the Kurds*”.

Indeed, the AKP government’s ‘Kurdish Opening’ initiative did not fare well as it unfolded in parallel to the judicial crackdown on the actors of the Kurdish national political movement. On 14 April 2009, the Chief Prosecutor Office of Diyarbakır launched the case of KCK (*Koma Civaken Kurdistan*, Union of Communities in Kurdistan) by arresting fifty two people (*Hürriyet*, 14 April 2009). According to the allegations, the KCK was established as the civil urban organization wing of the PKK which aimed to guide the municipalities and the political activities of the then Democratic Society Party. The Chief Prosecutor Office of Diyarbakır proclaimed that KCK investigation was based on the evidence of two years of covered phone-tapping. Following the initial operation of April 2009, the Diyarbakır Chief Prosecutor’s Office conducted series of police operations in June, September, and December 2009 and in February 2010 (*Milliyet*, 18 September 2010). As a result of these successive operations, thousands of KCK suspects have been detained, including popularly elected mayors, municipal council members, and executive party officials of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party.

Besides the ongoing KCK operations, the Democratic Society Party was also confronted with a pending closure case as the Chief Public State Prosecutor Abdurahman Yalçınkaya had already petitioned its closure to the Constitutional Court in 2007. Accordingly, the Constitutional Court *unanimously* voted in favour of the closure of the Democratic Society Party in December 2009 (*Radikal* and *Hürriyet*, 11 December 2009). As discussed in Chapter V, the AKP government had narrowly escaped the political ban since only 6 (instead of 7) out of 11 members of Constitutional Court voted in favour of AKP’s closure. Observably, while the members of the Constitutional Court members had disagreed on the closure of the AKP in particular and how the principle of laicism should be interpreted in general,

⁸¹ Until then, Erdoğan had persistently refused to hold any official meeting with the DTP on the grounds that the latter would not publicly denounce PKK as a terrorist organization.

they had no disagreement whatsoever on the necessity to ban the pro-Kurdish Democrat Society Party. Whether Kemalist laicist or post-Islamist, the Turkish establishment would not grant legal legitimacy to any political party which applauded Abdullah Öcalan as the supreme leader of the Kurdish people and embraced the PKK as national liberation fighter instead of denouncing it as a terrorist organization.

Certainly, the AKP government did not initiate or coordinate the judicial crackdown on the Democrat Society Party since AKP itself was faced with a closure case. Yet, AKP government officials did support the cause behind the KCK operations while displaying a rather ambivalent attitude towards the closure of the Democrat Society Party. After the closure of the DTP, all of the pro-Kurdish independent parliamentarians were regrouped under the Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi – BDP) which continued to call for regional autonomy and public education in mother tongue as the pre-requisites for achieving a lasting and peaceful resolution of the Kurdish Problem.

The KCK case, on the other hand, continued to expand in 2011 at the time during which this dissertation was written. Although 152 people have been brought to trial so far, including 11 mayors from the pro-Kurdish BDP, the number is likely to increase much further (*Daily News*, 08 June 2010). As a matter of fact, the hearings of the ongoing KCK trial could not be carried out for months as the Diyarbakir Court repeatedly rejected the defendants' persistent requests to conduct their defence in Kurdish by defining it as "unknown language" (*Milliyet*, 08 October 2010). As a result, the KCK hearing itself had transformed into a new platform where pro-Kurdish political activists would contest for linguistic rights. Nevertheless, thanks to the AKP's 'Kurdish Opening', thousands of Peace and Democracy Party officials who have been arrested during the KCK operations are now free to communicate in Kurdish while inside prison.

6.2.B Conclusion

This section has analyzed the AKP government's overall democratic performance towards EU-led Kurdish cultural rights. Despite the relatively progressive reforms undertaken by the AKP government on the cultural rights of non-Turkish ethnic minorities, the 'Kurdish problem' continues to be the most fatal and pressing problem in Turkey as the AKP government —along with the military-bureaucratic circles—

seeks to confine and marginalize the main political demands upheld by the Kurdish national political movement. In accordance with the observation made by the first EU Commission Report written on Turkey and which continues to be valid today: “A civil, non-military solution must be found to the situation in south-eastern 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” (EU Commission Report, 1998: 53).

During the 1990’s, the Turkish establishment sought to confine and marginalize the PKK’s strong grass roots within the South East region by demolishing thousands of villages which resulted in the internal displacement of over a million people. During this period, the Turkish ‘deep state’ organizations also resorted to widespread extra-judicial killings by murdering thousands of civilians who were deemed as sympathetic to the political cause of the PKK (see Chapter IV). Instead of resorting to the violent counter-insurgency measures of the 1990’s, the post-Helsinki Turkish establishment rather strategically opted to engage with a persistent judicial crackdown on PKK-linked civil and political organizations. Meanwhile, the Turkish authorities have extensively utilized the amended draconian anti-terror law of 2006 to inflict harsh prison sentences on civilian protestors or activists who demonstrate ideological solidarity with the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan.

According to a world-wide study conducted by the Associated Press, Turkey is the world leader in detaining and convicting its citizens under anti-terror law. Since the attack of 11 September against the United States, a total of 35,248 people have been convicted as terrorists at worldwide. Based on the information that the Associated Press obtained under Turkey's right to information law, Turkey accounts for at least one third of all the terrorist convictions as it has convicted 12,897 of its citizens between 2001 and 2010 (Mendoza, 2011). The second country in the list is China which has convicted 7,000 people. Due to the draconian anti-terror law of 2006 and ensuing KCK operations, anti-terror convictions in Turkey dramatically rose from 273 in 2005 to 6,345 in 2009 (Mendoza, 2011).

Similarly, Turkey is also the country which has more journalists in prison than any other country in the world. While Iran and China shares the second position in the list by jailing 34 journalists each, Turkey enjoys the top position by imprisoning 57

journalists (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 04 August 2011; Griffen, 2011). Not surprisingly, a substantial portion of these journalists have been convicted under the anti-terror law of 2006 and indicted for spreading the propaganda of a terrorist organization. These findings may explain the reason why accomplishing a civil and democratic solution to the ‘Kurdish problem’ constitutes the most crucial variable in determining Turkey’s future trajectory of democratization.

The EU Commission Report (2010:36) underlines that “Restrictions on the exercise of fundamental freedoms, in particular freedom of expression, stemming from a wide definition of terrorism under the Anti-Terror Law continues to be a cause for concern.” As long as the current AKP government does not engage with substantial re-structuring of the features of Turkey’s ethnocratic regime, it is highly unlikely to find a lasting *civil solution* to the ongoing conflict in the South East region. Hence, Turkey will continue to exhibit the core features of open ethnocracy —a particular hybrid regime model that centres “on the mechanisms of the regime, which explain both the persistent patterns of ethnic dominance and its chronic instability” (Yiftachel, 2006) — into the foreseeable future.

6.3 AKP Government’s Reform Performance on Alevi Belief-Rights

So far, this chapter has covered how the Turkish authorities responded to the EU-led cultural rights (e.g. linguistic and broadcasting rights) of *ethnic* minority groups. The last section of the chapter will briefly cover the extent of the reform process that Turkish authorities have undertaken while trying to comply with the EU’s demands on the religious rights of *non-Sunni-Muslim* minorities. In this regard, the first EU Commission Report (1998: 19) written on Turkey challenges the dominance of the Sunni Hanefi majority by observing that “Religious minorities recognised by Turkey are free to exercise their religion, but the practice of religion other than (Sunni) Islam is subject to many practical bureaucratic restrictions affecting, for example, the ownership of premises and expansion of activities”.

As stated previously, Alevis are merely a “belief group minority” (Little: 2002, 34) whose interpretation of Islamic precepts and worship rituals differs from the established precepts and rituals adhered to by the Hanafi majority (which is one of the

four branches of Sunni Islam) in Turkey. For instance, the overwhelming majority of Alevi followers in Turkey do not exercise their worship rituals in the mosque but in cem houses. Contrary to the established precepts adhered by the Hanafi-Sunni School, worship rituals of the Alevi sect do not necessitate rigid spatial segregation between males and females. Moreover, Alevi Muslims (quite unlike religiously devout Sunni Muslims) do not tend to prescribe to the covering of females with a veil.

Since the one-party dictatorship era, a significant portion of Alevis have been staunch supporters of the Kemalist Republic's laicist project as the latter aggressively sought to diminish the dominance of Sunni-Islam from the public sphere while demanding its citizens adopt a 'secular' and 'western-looking' way of life. As Zürcher and Linden (2004: 127) put it: "they [the Alevis] were prepared to accept that the Republic did not recognize them as a religious community, as long as the same Republic would deny all forms of religion a place in the public sphere." From this perspective, Kemalist Republican laicism was perceived as providing a safe haven from the potential persecution and pressuring encirclement that may emanate from the fanatically religious Sunni-Muslim sectors.

Throughout the multi-party period, a significant portion of Alevis traditionally tended to side with the Republican Peoples Party as they regarded the successive conservative centre-right parties' enthusiastic appeal to the religious values and demands of the dominant Sunni majority with fear and suspicion. Indeed, while defending the Sunni-Islamic inspired conservative values of the 'nation' against the western-positivist thrust of Kemalist laicism through the principle of freedom of religion and conscience, successive political parties of the centre-right tradition have either disregarded or took a benign neglect approach to the long-standing grievances and discrimination that the Alevi minority has encountered.

First and foremost, the Alevi minority soundly claim that Turkey's laic state should treat all religions equally and should not exclusively favour and promote one particular sect of religion (Sunni-Islam) as it does through Diyanet (Çakır and Bozan, 2005: 265-294; Gözaydın, 2009: 288-300). Alevi groups point out how Diyanet is financed by taxes collected from all citizens of the Republic while it monopolistically

administers and provides worship services to Sunni Islam.⁸² In addition to this, Alevi groups oppose the ‘religious culture and moral education’ courses which were made compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary school systems with the military-led 1982 Constitution. In practice, these courses exclusively instruct the precepts and worship rituals of Sunni Islam (Kaya, 2009: 20-21). In the past, constructing mosques and appointing Sunni Imams to the Alevi villages —despite the fact that Alevis do not use the mosque as a worship place or do not regard Imam as a religious authority— have not been uncommon either. Not surprisingly, the Alevi minority decry these state-led policies as aggressive attempts to assimilate Alevis into Sunni-Islam.

By the time Turkey was considered to be in conformity with the political aspect of the Copenhagen Criteria, no *belief-right* reform measure had been taken towards the Alevi-Muslim minority. As the EU Commission Progress Report of 2004 remarked:

As far as the situation of non-Sunni Muslim minorities is concerned, there has been no change in their status. Alevis are not officially recognised as a religious community, they often experience difficulties in opening places of worship and compulsory religious instruction in schools fails to acknowledge non-Sunni identities (EU Commission Report, 2004: 44).

Without a doubt, the AKP government’s enthusiastic appeal for the belief-right demands of the religiously observant *Sunni-Muslim majority* and its resolute stance for the resolution of the Kemalist laicist headscarf ban were not accompanied with the same resolute stance for the resolution of long-standing grievances voiced by the Alevi-Muslim minority. As a matter of fact, when AKP came to power at the early elections of November 2002, none of the 363 AKP parliamentarians had an Alevi background (Taşkın, 2008: 67). Hence, the AKP government only started to engage with symbolic gestures towards the Alevi minority during its second term in office (2007-2011).

The AKP government has nominated Reha Çamuroğlu (a prominent intellectual figure on Alevi religion and history) to the parliament at the general elections of July 2007. After getting elected, Çamuroğlu became the personal consultant of the Prime

⁸² As the previous conservative centre-right parties in government, the AKP government has continued to allocate approximately 1% of the general state budget to the Diyanet (Gözaydın, 2009: 220-224; Çakır and Bozan, 2005:105). The budget allocated to Diyanet exceeds the budget of many state ministries including the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Hürriyet*, 24 October 2006).

Minister Erdoğan as the latter proclaimed the AKP government's determination to address the belief-right demands of the Alevi minority. In the media, the AKP government's new initiative came to be commonly referred to as the 'Alevi Opening'. As part of the 'Alevi opening' process, Prime Minister Erdoğan (along with nine AKP state ministers and fifty AKP parliamentarians) attended the Alevi fast-breaking ceremony in January 2008.⁸³ At the ceremony, Erdoğan delivered an empathetic speech as he declared to share the mourning of Alevis as the "our mourning"⁸⁴ (*Hürriyet*, 12 January 2008). On another occasion, the State Minister of Culture and Tourism Ertuğrul Günay personally apologized for the ill-treatment and massacres that the Alevi minority had to endure in the recent-past (*Radikal*, 23 December 2008). Similarly, the president Abdullah Gül visited a Cem House in Tunceli where he attended the Alevi ritual of Semah⁸⁵ (*Radikal*, 06 November 2009).

Yet, the Alevi minority's general mistrust towards the AKP government's self-acclaimed determination to resolve their long-standing grievances was reinforced when the opposition DSP parliamentarian Süleyman Yağız delivered a parliamentary question to Prime Minister Erdoğan while demanding the legal recognition of Cem Houses as places of worship (*Milliyet*, 09-04-2008). Interestingly enough, the response to the parliamentary question did not come from the AKP government officials as the latter referred the answer to the President of Religious Affairs Ali Bardakoğlu (2003-2010).

In his official capacity, Bardakoğlu emphasized that the mosque has been the sole traditional place of worship for all Muslims and granting official legal status of sanctuary to Cem Houses would amount to the establishment of an alternative sanctuary to the mosque.⁸⁶ In view of that, Bardakoğlu warned that official recognition of Cem Houses as places of worship will fuel the sectarian division among Muslims and will eventually cut off Alevis from Islam since it will depict Alevi belief not as sect within Islam but as a distinct religion on its own (*Milliyet*, 09 April 2008). Hence,

⁸³ Unlike Sunni Muslims who fast during the holy month of Ramadan, Alevis fast during the holy month of Muharrem. While Ramadan corresponds to the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, Muharrem corresponds to the first month.

⁸⁴ During the month of Muharrem, Alevis fast for twelve days in order to mourn and commemorate the infamous massacre of Huseyin (Prophet Muhammed's grandson, and Caliph Ali's son) along with his 72 followers in Kerbala, Iraq.

⁸⁵ Semah is the name of the Alevi's dance-like ritual which is accompanied with music.

⁸⁶ Later on, the Diyanet re-emphasized its traditional stance on Alevi faith and Cem Houses by publishing a press release on its official website.

Bardakoğlu decisively asserted that Cem Houses could only be considered as religious cultural centres but not as an official place of worship. Indeed, the similar disapproving opinion in regard to the status of Cem Houses was also voiced by AKP State Minister Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu⁸⁷ (*Vatan*, 07 February 2008).

Not surprisingly, many Alevi organizations decried Ali Bardakoglu and the Directorate of Religious Affairs for acting like the Sunni-Islam version of the Vatican. In a similar vein, AKP parliamentarian Reha Çamuroğlu protested against these remarks by declaring that; “If hundreds of thousands of Alevi citizens consider Cem Houses as their place of worship, then Cem Houses are indeed places of worship” (*Radikal*, 14 November 2008). The AKP government’s inconsistent and ambiguous approach towards the ‘Alevi Opening’ eventually led AKP parliamentarian Çamuroğlu to resign from his consultancy position in June 2008 (*Radikal* and *Milliyet*, 13 June 2008). Presumably, Prime Minister Erdoğan’s conspicuous unwillingness to take any supportive stance on this issue played the most vital role in Çamuroğlu’s resignation.⁸⁸ After all, Erdogan’s silence on this issue and his deferral of the problem to the Directorate of Religious Affairs meant nothing more than a tacit approval of the disagreeable statements made by the President of Religious Affairs Ali Bardakoglu and AKP state minister Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu in regard to the status of Cem Houses.

Certainly, this episode reveals the inconsistent approach of AKP towards the laicist principle of rendering the state equidistant from all religions and beliefs. While contesting the restrictive aspects of Kemalist laicism towards *belief rights demands* of Sunni religious sectors (e.g., the headscarf ban and status of Preachers and Prayers School), AKP officials would frequently assert the necessity of the state to remain neutral towards various religions and allow their visibility in the public sphere. Yet, when it came to the *belief-right demands* of the Alevi minority, the state could not afford to remain neutral. As part of the state machinery, Diyanet —on behalf of Prime Minister Erdoğan— would act as the authoritative institution to enlighten the public on the reasons why Cem Houses could not be granted legal status as places of worship

⁸⁷ Mustafa Sait Yazıcıoğlu had served as the former head of the Presidency of Religious Affairs between 1987 and 1992.

⁸⁸ Although resigning from his consultancy post to Prime Minister Erdogan on the ‘Alevi Opening’, Reha Çamuroğlu remained as the AKP parliamentarian until the next general elections of 2011.

despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of Alevi citizens do consider Cem Houses as their place of worship.

Eventually, the AKP government's ambivalent and tardy 'Alevi Opening' managed to go beyond abstract symbolic gestures when the state minister Faruk Çelik⁸⁹ launched the first Alevi workshop in June 2009. Accordingly, more than 40 representatives of various Alevi foundations and associations attended the first workshop and expressed their views on how to resolve the long-standing Alevi grievances. Indeed, there has been no consensus among the various Alevi organizations on how to remedy Turkey's enduring institutional and normative mechanisms which are blatantly partial to Sunni-Islam.

For instance, while the Alevi Bektaşî Federation favours the complete institutional separation between state and religion by calling for the abolishment of Diyanet, other Alevi foundations such as Cem Vakfi favour the institutional reorganization of Diyanet in order to become representative of the Alevi minority (Köse, 2010: 149-152; Soner and Toktaş, 2011: 423-424).

Nevertheless, at the end of the first Alevi workshop, various Alevi associations formulated a consensus on five points which they submitted to the AKP state minister Faruk Çelik. These five demands are:

- 1- Abolishing compulsory religious courses in primary and secondary school education
- 2- Granting legal status to Cem Houses as a place of worship
- 3- The return of the Hacı-Bektaş Dergahı and other Alevi Dervish lodges which had been confiscated during the Kemalist Republican reform era.⁹⁰
- 4- Transforming Madımak Hotel in the city of Sivas into a museum.⁹¹
- 5- Ending the policies of constructing mosques and appointing Sunni Imams to the Alevi villages (Bianet; 05 June 2009).

Although the demands of Alevi associations had been quite obvious since the first Alevi workshop, the state minister Faruk Çelik assembled additional six Alevi

⁸⁹ After the resignation of Reha Çamuroglu, Prime Minister Erdoğan directed the Minister of Work and Social Security Faruk Çelik to coordinate the 'Alevi Opening'.

⁹⁰ Closure of religious order and Dervish lodges (Tekke, Zaviye and Turbe) 1925.

⁹¹ In 1993, 37 Alevis were burned to death at Madımak Hotel.

workshops by inviting various and not necessarily Alevi societal actors (e.g., journalists, business associations, Diyanet representatives etc). According to AKP officials, successive workshops were necessary to promote public deliberation and empathy towards the Alevi issue.

In February 2010, Faruk Çelik finally delivered an official report to the Office of Prime Minister which listed policy suggestions gathered from the workshops (*Radikal*, 07 February 2010). The report has been widely criticized by various Alevi organizations for not fulfilling the five policy demands which the Alevi organisations had demanded in consensus at the end of the first Alevi workshop. Despite the shortcomings of the report, the AKP government has not even acted to fulfil the policy suggestions laid out by that very report.

The only concrete but partial reform measure that the AKP government has undertaken so far on the Alevi issue was to revise the content of compulsory “religious culture and moral education” textbooks by incorporating information about Alevi-Muslim precepts and rituals (Kaya and Harmanyeri, 2011). Yet, the AKP government acted to render the textbooks religiously more pluralistic only after and in response to the European Court of Human Rights’ verdict on Hasan and Eylem Zengin v. Turkey.⁹²

At this point, it is valuable to disclose further the reasons why the AKP government’s ‘Alevi Opening’ has proceeded at such a slow pace and unfolded with such ambivalence. In the immediate aftermath of the 2007 general elections, for instance, the AKP government had hastily and resolutely opted to lift the headscarf ban in university education by emphasizing the existence of societal consensus for such a move (see Chapter V). Indeed, as a society which is constituted by a religiously observant Sunni majority, 70 to 75 percent of the Turkish society thinks that women wearing a headscarf should be allowed to have a university education and to work in public civil services.

Given that, the AKP government did not find it necessary to assemble various workshops while trying to lift the headscarf ban. Yet, because Turkey’s religiously

⁹² [Appl. No. 1448/04; 2007] Accordingly, the ECHR ruled that Sunni-Islam led compulsory religious culture courses were infringing on Alevi adherer Zengin’s right to freedom of religion and her parents’ right to ensure her education in conformity with their religious convictions and thus respectively in violation with Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1.

observant Turkish-Sunni majority may not necessarily display the same sensitivity towards the democratic rights of non-Sunni minorities, the AKP government cautiously sought to consult the opinion of the Sunni sectors by assembling various Alevi workshops during the ‘Alevi Opening’.

Besides, one should also bear in mind that the core leadership cadres of AKP are predominantly constituted by the religiously observant Sunni-Muslims. Given the ‘post-Islamist’ cognitive background of its core leadership, the AKP government has proved to be relatively more pre-disposed to celebrating the notion of ethno-cultural diversity (albeit in a limited manner) than celebrating the notion of religious and sectarian diversity particularly within Islam. Accordingly, although Prime Minister Erdoğan’s discourse on ‘nationhood’ is quite fond of emphasizing how Islam serves as the common communitarian bond across various ethnic elements, it is less willing to cherish the sectarian diversity embodied within that Islamic bond.

As a matter of fact, the results of the most recent World Value Survey conducted in 2011 demonstrate that while 58% of the public in Turkey favours legal recognition of Cem Houses as place of worship, 42% opposes it (*Yeni Şafak* and *Milliyet*; 22 July 2011). Moreover, 73% of the public also agrees that the state should allocate some funding for the religious activities of the Alevi minority from the general state budget. Despite the reasonably favourable public opinion towards the belief-right demands of the Alevi minority on these issues, the AKP government has not yet carried out any concrete reform measure on these issues.

Since the problems revolving around belief-rights of Alevi-Muslim minority is intimately interconnected with the democratic-pluralist ideals of the *second and third secularist criteria*, it is necessary to briefly evaluate the extent of the AKP government’s adherence to these secularist ideals before concluding the last section of this chapter. After coming to power with the early general elections of November 2002, Prime Minister Erdoğan has repeatedly declared that laicism should not be a mandatory orientation for individuals but for the state (the third meaning of secular). While maintaining that he is not a laic but an observant Sunni-Muslim at the individual level, Prime Minister Erdoğan repeatedly assured that the state (Republic of Turkey) must be laic by harbouring a ‘*neutral*’ and ‘*equidistant*’ position towards all religions (second secularist criteria).

Yet, despite acclaiming the principles of the second secularist criteria, the AKP government's overall EU reform performance on the belief-rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority has been characterized with extremely limited formal adoption and implementation. Indeed, the AKP government's ambivalent, sluggish, and inconclusive reform performance on the 'Alevi Opening' does not only serve as a demonstrative case study of how the Republic of Turkey continues to fail miserably in fulfilling the second secularist criteria but also raises serious question marks on whether the AKP leadership has genuinely internalized the very democratic-pluralist principles associated with the second secularist criteria.

By the same token, the AKP leadership also repeatedly declared that a truly secular state should provide freedom for the lifestyles and convictions of both *religious* and *non-religious* way of life (third secularist criteria). Yet, the AKP leadership's normative emphasis on Sunni-Islamic socio-cultural sensitivities in everyday public life and its frequent deployment of religiously-conservative populist discourse does not yield a credible foundation of a truly '*neutral*' or '*pluralist*' framework for non-Sunni-religious lifestyles.

For instance, while addressing students who were preparing to study abroad, Prime Minister Erdoğan declared that: "We haven't been able to take the West's science and arts. Unfortunately, we have taken the immoralities of the West which are incompatible with our values" (*Milliyet, Radikal* and *Vatan*, 24 January 2008). Without a doubt, Erdoğan's remarks point to the established convictions upheld by pro-Islamic political ideology, ever-present since the Ottoman Tanzimat Era which calls for the selective adaptation of the superior technology and science from western civilization while emphasizing the imperative to hold on to indigenous Islamic values. Although Erdoğan did not elucidate which values of the West are immoral and hence incompatible with '*our values*', it is not difficult to infer that he was preaching Sunni-Islamic inspired conservative moral values for the nation.

Certainly, religiosity (or religiosity gaining more public visibility) per se does not necessarily carry adverse implications for democratic pluralism. Yet, as Giovanni Sartori emphasizes (1997), pluralism presupposes toleration. Accordingly, the difference between the two is that while tolerance *respects* values, pluralism *posits*

values. As Sartori (1997: 58) remarks, “For pluralism affirms the belief that diversity and dissent are values that enrich individuals as well as their polities and societies”.

The AKP leadership’s normative emphasis on the Sunni-Islam inspired conservative values as the dominant values of the nation and its populist discursive construction of the religiously-observant Sunni majority as the genuine owners of the nation, particularly against the Kemalist laicist circles, are hardly conducive for enriching democratic pluralist values. Although it is possible to cite many more examples which may illustrate further the illiberal and anti-pluralist overtones embodied within AKP’s ‘post-Islamist’ populist discourse, it is not difficult to comprehend how and why Erdoğan’s pro-Islamic religiously conservative impulses and populist discursive motifs may irk those societal segments which endorses a non-Sunni-religious western way of life.

At the concluding section of Chapter V, we have maintained that one of the perennial characteristics of Turkey’s historic centre-right tradition since the ten year rule of the Democrat Party (1950-1960) has been its religious-conservative populist discourse which not only tends to prioritize the ‘majoritarian logic of electoral politics’ over the liberal democratic ideal of limited power for executive office, but also tends to prioritize religious sensitivities of the dominant *Sunni majority* over the democratic-pluralist implications of the *second and third secularist criteria*.

As a political party which champions itself as the heir of Adnan Menderes’ DP and Turgut Ozal’s ANAP, the ‘post-Islamist’ AKP government displays similar problematic tendencies as well. The prospects of overcoming these chronic tendencies in the near future are not quite great since the democratic-pluralist deficit of the centre-right political tradition in fulfilling the second and third secularist criteria mirrors the illiberal moral codes and anti-pluralist tendencies embedded within Turkey’s dominantly religious-conservative social make-up.

A survey study conducted in 2009 under the title of ‘Radicalism and Extremism’, for instance, may provide further insight on this issue. In order to assess the levels of ‘liberal pluralist values’ among the general public, the “Radicalism and Extremism” survey asked the question of “which people you would *not* like to have as your

neighbours”.⁹³ According to the survey results, “*homosexuals*” were the most unwanted group to become a neighbour with 87%. While 75% of the respondents had considered “*atheists*” as undesired neighbours, 72% of the respondents did not want to have a neighbour “*who drinks alcohol*” (*Milliyet*, 31 May 2009).

Survey results also pointed to a high level of anti-pluralist outlook towards non-Muslims. Accordingly, 64% of the informants did not want to have a “*Jewish*” neighbour. Similarly, 52% designated “*Christians*” as undesired neighbours. On the other hand, 26% of the respondents did not want to have a neighbour from “*different race or colour*” (*NTV*, 12 June 2009). The fact that public opinion displays higher levels of intolerance towards “*Christians*” or “*Jews*” —rather than towards “*different race or colour*” — is not surprising since Sunni-Islam plays an integral component in the construction of national solidarity and thus serves as an important marker of Turkish national identity.

As far as intolerance towards western and non-religious lifestyles is concerned, 34% of the respondents did not want to have a neighbour “*whose daughter would go outside with a short skirt*”. Furthermore, while 32% of the respondents did not want to have neighbours “*who did not fast during the Ramadan*”, 35% desired all of the restaurants to remain closed until the evening during the month of Ramadan. In terms of the Kemalist laicist camp’s intolerance towards the headscarf, 14% of the informants did not want to have a neighbour “*who wore Islamic headscarves*”.

The survey results also reveal the deeply ingrained religiously conservative patriarchal disposition towards gender equality and the public role of women in Turkish society. Accordingly, while 62% of the respondents declared that a woman should wear a headscarf when going outside of the house, 58% of the informants denounced wearing swimsuit or bikini on the beach as a sin. Furthermore, while 61% of the respondents agreed that a woman should always obey her husband’s will, 84% agreed that a wife should get permission from her husband if she is going to work at any job.

The results of the prestigious World Value Survey (WVS)⁹⁴ conducted in five year intervals in Turkey since 1990 point to the similar results on these issues.

⁹³ The survey was headed by renowned scholar Yılmaz Esmer who is the project director of the World Value Survey in Turkey.

⁹⁴ Founded at the University of Michigan, the World Value Survey is regularly conducted every once in a five years all around the world and thus provides the most comprehensive comparative survey study.

Furthermore, WVS results firmly demonstrate the steady existence of high levels of religiosity in public culture. Based on the evidence derived from these survey results, one should also emphasize the fact that the level of religiosity has not increased during the reign of the AKP government but rather gained more public visibility. As a matter of fact, WVS results conducted in 2005 point to a slightly weaker correlation between religiosity and intolerance than in the previous two WVS conducted in 1995 and in 2000 (Yeşilada and Noordijk; 2010).

Nevertheless, while conservative-traditional and patriarchal values embodied within Turkey's public culture are far above the average standards observed in the European countries, Turkey's successively elected AKP government does not refrain from constructing Sunni-Islam inspired conservative values as the 'genuine' and 'dominant' values of the nation. Although Prime Minister Erdoğan is quite fond of declaring that "Turkey has achieved what people said could never be achieved—a balance between Islam, democracy, secularism and modernity" (see Chapter V), the balance between his "post-Islamist" populist discourse and the democratic-pluralist ideals associated with the second and third secularist criteria is not quite solid as he claims it to be.

6.4 Conclusion

While focusing on the challenges that EU candidacy has posed to the Turkish State's traditional approach towards its ethnic and non-Sunni Muslim minority groups, Chapter VI sought to test the fourth hypothesis of the thesis which contended that:

Despite the critical break in Turkey's historical trajectory of controlled transitions, Turkey's democratization during the post-Helsinki decade falls remarkably short of amounting to a symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation of the 'laic-ethnocratic' paradigm as the AKP government's keen sensitivity towards the democratic demands of religious Turkish-Sunni majority does not necessarily or evenly extend towards the democratic demands of non-Turkish and non-Sunni-Muslim minority groups.

To this end, Chapter VI has analyzed and assessed the performance of the ruling AKP government towards EU conditionality's democratic reform demands on the cultural

rights of ethnic and belief-rights of non-Sunni Muslim minorities (particularly the sizeable Kurdish ethnic and Muslim-Alevi religious minorities) in the domestic arena.

While establishing a relatively more reformist stance of the AKP government on EU-led Kurdish cultural rights (albeit only when compared with Baykal's CHP and Bahçeli's MHP), Chapter VI sought to demonstrate the limits of the AKP government on the EU Kurdish cultural rights. Furthermore, Chapter VI endeavoured to expose the AKP government's uneasy compliance with the democratic-pluralist implications of the second and third secularist criteria while analyzing its sluggish, ambivalent and inconclusive reform performance towards the belief rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority.

As far as the democratization trajectory of Turkey's ethnocratic regime features are concerned, Chapter VI sought to demonstrate how the AKP government's overall democratic reform performance towards EU conditionality's demands on the cultural rights of ethnic minorities (mainly Kurdish ethnic minority) have been characterized by what Ilan Peleg (2007: 70-71) codified as "cosmetic changes towards increased democratization" rather than "radical revision towards genuine democracy" [see **Table 4**]. Hence, and besides covering selective reform measures undertaken by the AKP government towards fulfilling certain Kurdish cultural rights as demanded by the EU, Chapter VI aimed to highlight the fact that none of these reform measures were intended to engender a clear-cut democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring ethnocratic regime features.

In this regard, the AKP government has so far declined the EU Commission's continual demands to align Turkey's minority right protection system with international standards.⁹⁵ Up until now, Turkey has retained its reservation to interpret and apply the provisions of Article 27 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights⁹⁶ in accordance with the stipulations set by the Treaty of Lausanne. Furthermore, Turkey has retained the same reservation in regard to Article 13 paragraph three and paragraph four of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and

⁹⁵ As stated in the introduction of the chapter, Turkish authorities has been restrictively interpreting the Treaty of Lausanne as granting official minority status to only three non-Muslim minority groups (namely Jews, Greeks, and Armenians) since the foundation of the Republic.

⁹⁶ Article 27 of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that: "In those States in which *ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist*, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language."

Cultural Rights.⁹⁷ In this way, Turkish authorities sought to evade the responsibility of providing a full minority rights protection system towards its ethnic and religious minorities.⁹⁸

As the EU Commission Report (2010: 33) points out:

Turkey is a party to the UN International Covenant on civil and political rights, but its reservations regarding the rights of minorities and the UN Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights regarding the right to education are causes for concern. Turkey has not signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the protection of national minorities... Overall, Turkey's approach on minorities remains restrictive. Full respect for and protection of language, culture and fundamental rights, in accordance with European standards, have yet to be fully achieved. Turkey needs to make further efforts to enhance tolerance or promote inclusiveness vis-à-vis minorities.

Observably, holding on to these reservations entitles the AKP government to enforce the mono-lingual public education system while cautiously confining the teaching and learning of ethnic minority languages (e.g., Kurdish, Laz, Circassian etc) to private courses. Hence, while selectively extending the scope of the EU-led Kurdish cultural rights beyond the acceptable parameters delineated by conventional Kemalist actors (e.g., private broadcasting in non-Turkish languages, opening Kurdish language and literature departments in some public universities) it is important to emphasize how the AKP government also has firmly delimited the extent of cultural rights by consistently refusing to allow any kind of public education in mother tongue.

Certainly, Turkey's full compliance with EU-led minority-right standards [see **Table 29**] is one of main requisites towards achieving *substantial* (not cosmetic) democratic transformation of its enduring ethnocratic regime paradigm. It may also provide a significant contribution towards the resolution of the 'Kurdish problem' as it would pave the way for the teaching and learning of non-Turkish languages in the public

⁹⁷ Article 13 paragraph three of the UN Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states that: "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to choose for their children schools, other than those established by the public authorities, which conform to such minimum educational standards as may be laid down or approved by the State and to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions." Similarly, Article 13 paragraph four states that, "No part of this article shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph I of this article and to the requirement that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

⁹⁸ Certainly, various non-Muslim religious minorities other than officially recognized Jewish, Armenian and Greek minorities also suffer from the same problem as they lack the legal personality of minority status.

school system. Yet, as we have stated previously, Turkey's 'Kurdish problem' goes beyond the simple minority right issue problem since the PKK-led Kurdish national political movement not only aspires for a regional political autonomy where Kurdish language would become the primary language next to Turkish, but also employs violent guerrilla warfare while trying to achieve these aims.

While the ruling AKP government persistently denounces the pro-Kurdish BDP's calls for regional autonomy and public school education in mother tongue as unacceptable demands posing a sinister separatist threat, the PKK pledges to continue its self-acclaimed 'guerrilla warfare' (or 'terrorist attacks') until these concrete demands are met by the Turkish authorities. As long as the current AKP government does not engage with substantial re-structuring of Turkey's ethnocratic regime features, it is highly unlikely to find a lasting *civil solution* to the ongoing conflict in the South East region. As a result, it is plausible to estimate that Turkey will continue to exhibit the core features of open ethnocracy (Yiftachel and Ghanem, 2004: 648) into the foreseeable future.

As far as the possible replacement of Kemalist laicism with the principles of democratic secularism is concerned, Chapter VI aimed to demonstrate that the AKP leadership's normative emphasis and construction of the Sunni-Islam inspired conservative mores as the dominant values of the nation is hardly conducive to the accomplishment of the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria.⁹⁹ Despite enthusiastically transforming Kemalist laicism's restrictive aspects towards the religiously observant Sunni-Muslim majority, Chapter VI aimed to emphasize the sluggishness of the AKP government in forging the concrete democratic transformation of Kemalist laicism's partial stance towards the sizeable Alevi-Muslim minority.

While considering the respective stance of the political parties in pursuing the EU-led reform process, Lagendijk (the former co-chairman of the Turkey-EU Joint Parliamentary Commission) observed that: "Ironically, AKP is the most democratic party in Turkey" (Yeni Şafak, 20 April 2009). Certainly, given the mere absence of a

⁹⁹ While the second secularist criteria specifically denotes the democratic ideal of rendering the state reasonably equidistant and impartial towards different religions and/or religious denominations, the third secularist criteria stipulates that democratically secular states and societies should guarantee not only the individual's freedom of religion and religious way of life but also the individual's freedom from religion and the religious way of life.

‘liberal democrat’ or ‘social democrat’ political party tradition among the main opposition parties, it is not difficult to observe how and why the Justice and Development Party has appeared to be the most reformist political party capable of pursuing Turkey's EU membership (albeit only when compared with Baykal’s CHP and Bahçeli’s MHP).

Yet, the fact that AKP is the most receptive political party to pursue the EU-led democratization reform process is not only ironic but something rather unfortunate for the future prospects of Turkey’s post-Helsinki transition process to culminate in clear cut democratic regime change. By observing the limited reform capacity of the ruling AKP government in reference to the three democratic secularist criteria and Peleg’s classification of ‘radical revision towards genuine democracy’, one can only conclude that the future prospects of achieving the symmetrical and substantial democratic transformation of Turkey’s ‘laic-ethnocratic’ regime paradigm is rather dim.

CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

Since all four hypotheses have been tested in respective chapters, the thesis will conclude by summing up its main arguments and contribution. Accordingly, the conclusion will be divided into three sections. The first section will briefly recapitulate the main empirical findings of this thesis by revisiting the four hypotheses which had been laid out in Chapter II. The second section will sum up the key contribution of the thesis both to the theoretical literature and our case study. The third section will briefly lay out the prospective future research topics that this thesis has stirred up.

7.1 Revisiting the Thesis' Hypotheses

Following the theoretical chapter of the thesis, Chapter III aimed to provide a historical narrative linked to the first hypothesis of this PhD thesis which contended that the core principles of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship were that of a 'laic-ethnocracy'. In line with the premises of our theoretical framework, the hyphenated term 'laic-ethnocracy' captured three interrelated points:

- 1- The term sought to broadly pinpoint the complex and persistent patterns of 'exclusion' and 'domination' that the Kemalist nation-state building project has forged by constructing itself upon the predominance and imagined homogeneity of the Turkish and Muslim majority.
- 2- More particularly, the hyphenated term sought to highlight the close link between the two constitutive elements embedded within the national identity construction of the Kemalist one-party dictatorship or, in other words, the fusion between monistic, ethno-nationalist Turkish identity and western-looking laic identity. Hence, the term signified the exclusive identity logic engendered and perpetuated by the Kemalist one-party dictatorship.

- 3- Lastly, the term laic-ethnocracy spoke to the peculiar and problematic characteristics of Kemalist laicism in conforming to the principles of democratic secularism.

While seeking to provide a selective historical background for the gradual emergence and settlement of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm during the Kemalist one-party dictatorship, Chapter III commenced its narrative from the Tanzimat Era which was characterized by the reform initiatives of Ottoman State officials as the latter sought to cope with two perennial and existential problems: a) how to reduce the widening balance of power between industrialized Western Powers and the ailing Ottoman Empire and b) how to avert the inexorable tide and flare of secessionist nationalism across the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire? Following the Balkan Wars (1912-13) which resulted in the territorial loss of the remaining Balkan provinces within the Empire, the Young Turk leadership decisively set the political trajectory of the crumbling Ottoman Empire towards what Peleg (2007: 70-71) categorized as “Radical Action toward Full Ethnicization”.¹⁰⁰

Accordingly, the Young Turk leadership targeted and administered the expulsion of two ethnic-religious minority groups (Armenian and Greek-Orthodox minorities) from Anatolia. Within the context of an ethnocratic paradigm, the devastation and calculated replacement of the Armenian population by the ‘loyal’ Muslim and Turkish groups meant securing the territorial and political integrity of the crumbling Ottoman Empire in key geographical areas. Indeed, providing empirical evidence for the pervasive ethnocratic logic behind the demographic engineering and settlement policies undertaken by the Young Turks was highly relevant to the theoretical framework of this thesis since Yiftachel’s Ethnocracy does not only refer to an abstract dominance of the ethno-national majority over minority groups, but also to a central political project of facilitating “the *expansion, ethnicization and control* of a dominant ethnic nation (often termed the charter of titular group) over contested territory and polity” (Yiftachel, 2006:11).

Furthermore, Chapter III highlighted the ideological continuity between the Young Turk era and the Kemalist Republic by narrating how the latter extended and bolstered

¹⁰⁰ As previously stated in Table 4, this sort of political trajectory unfolds when “The ethnic majority and its elite...adopt radical initiatives to transform the multiethnic state to a purely ethnic state using harsh measures such as apartheid, expulsion, ethnic cleansing (large-scale killings), or even full-fledged genocide” (Peleg, 2007: 70-71).

the Turkification and Laicization drive which had been initiated by the former. Within the particular context of the Kemalist ‘modernization’ or ‘westernization’ reform process, the ‘Turkification’ and ‘Laicization’ drive went hand in hand and became conterminous with each other. While the *laicist dimension* of the Kemalist Republic has subordinated the dominant Sunni Islam to an ethnocratic state paradigm and prohibited particular forms of the ‘Islamic way of life’ from the public sphere (e.g., headscarf, religious orders etc), the *ethnocratic dimension* of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship has predicated itself upon the “exclusion, marginalization, or assimilation” (Yiftachel, 2006:37) of ethnic and non Sunni-Muslim religious minority groups.

Chapter IV, on the other hand, aimed to test the second hypothesis (the hegemonic resilience of the laic-ethnocratic regime principles) by providing a selective historical narrative of Turkey’s trajectory of ‘controlled transitions’ from the opening of the multi-party period (1945-1950) until the ‘post-modern coup’ of 1997. While refuting the popular democratic transition followed by democratic consolidation sequence paradigm which was applied by Ergun Özbudun (2000) to Turkey, Chapter IV sought to emphasize how Turkey’s successive ‘controlled transitions’ consistently aimed at perpetuating ethnocratic hegemony and obstructing the transformation of incompatible aspects of the Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism by reference to the three secularist democratic criteria.

More particularly, Chapter IV covered how the successive military interventions into civilian politics (which were immediately followed by military-guided constitution-making in 1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983) have served as the most effective medium of maintaining and even recuperating the hegemony of the laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm within the electoral multi-party context. This enabled Turkey’s traditional military-bureaucratic state elites to effectively manipulate and confine not only the perceived ‘internal threats’ but also the perceived detrimental outcomes of the multi-party parliamentary framework on the laic-ethnocratic regime character of the Kemalist Republic.

Thus, while exposing the main contestations and polarizations which have revolved around both the laic and ethnocratic dimensions from the opening of the multi-party period until the ‘post-modern coup’ of 1997, Chapter IV demonstrated that the most

distinguishing feature of Turkey's trajectory of transition has been its remarkably prolonged ability to contain and to perpetuate Kemalist ethnocentric hegemony while institutionalizing Schumpeterian competitive elections. In a similar manner, and besides the longevity of the Kemalist ethnocentric paradigm, Chapter IV highlighted how the laic dimension of the Kemalist Republic consistently remained at odds with the democratic-pluralist ideals of the second and third secularist criteria.

The last two chapters of the thesis (Chapter V and VI) sought to scrutinize Turkey's democratization trajectory since the EU Helsinki Summit by focusing on the different aspects of transition during the post-Helsinki decade. Chapter V has mainly aimed to test the third hypothesis which highlighted the crucial impact of the EU candidacy in reshaping the internal dynamics of Turkey's democratization trajectory by significantly constraining the hegemonic scope of the traditional Kemalist state elites in preserving the key features of the laic-ethnocentric regime paradigm. In order to test this hypothesis, Chapter V traced the reciprocal interaction between the domestic (28 February Process) and external (the EU Candidacy) factors that led to the rise of the formerly Islamist AKP leadership as the main political agent of the EU-led democratic reform process.

After pinpointing the reciprocal 'post-Islamization' and 'Europeanization' process of Turkey's pro-Islamic political movement in parallel with the military-led laicist crackdown of the '28 February Process', Chapter V covered how the AKP government's engagement with the EU and IMF-led reform process engendered the gradual loss of the Turkish Armed Forces' previous predominance in delineating the basic parameters of Turkey's domestic and foreign policy. Moreover, Chapter V maintained that the resolution of the 'presidential crisis' and 'judicial coup' in favour of the ruling AKP government signalled a *critical break* in Turkey's historical trajectory of controlled transitions where the military would seize power directly for a short period of time, set the rules for legal-political order by devising a new constitution, and then return to the barracks until another military intervention would be deemed necessary.

From this point of view, Chapter V underlined that the ongoing political 'transition process' during the post-Helsinki decade (1999-2009) qualitatively differed from all of the previous transitions which had been guided and forcefully controlled by the

traditional Kemalist state elites (first: 1945-1950, second: 1960-1961, third: 1971-1973 and fourth: 1980-1983). Nevertheless, Chapter V has also revealed how the ongoing antagonism between the AKP government and the Kemalist military-bureaucratic establishment over the principle of so-called '*laicism*' primarily rested upon a fierce disagreement over the identity and societal demands of the dominant religious Turkish-Sunni majority (e.g., headscarf ban, status of İmam Hatip high schools).

Since attainment of the religious/identity-inspired grievances of the dominant Sunni-Turkish majority cannot be the sole yardstick for the democratic transformation of Turkey's laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm, the last chapter of the thesis sought to analyze and assesses how the EU-driven (based on EU enlargement conditionalities) reform over the cultural rights of ethnic and religious minorities (particularly the Kurdish ethnic minority and the Alevi-Muslim religious minority) have been taken up by the Turkish authorities in the domestic arena.

Accordingly, Chapter VI tested the fourth hypothesis of the thesis which contended that Turkey's uneasy and piecemeal democratization during the post-Helsinki decade falls remarkably short of amounting to a symmetrical and clear-cut democratic transformation of the 'laic-ethnocratic' paradigm as the AKP government's keen sensitivity towards the democratic demands of the religious Turkish-Sunni majority does not necessarily or evenly extend towards the democratic demands of ethnic and non-Sunni-Muslim religious minority groups.

As far as the ethnocratic dimension is concerned, (Chapter VI) sought to demonstrate how the AKP government's overall democratic reform performance towards EU conditionality demands on the cultural rights of *ethnic minorities* have been characterized as "cosmetic changes towards increased democratization" rather than "Radical Revision Towards Genuine Democracy" [see **Table 4**]. Hence, besides covering selective reform measures undertaken by the AKP government towards fulfilling certain Kurdish cultural rights as demanded by the EU, Chapter VI highlighted the fact that none of these reform measures were intended to engender a clear-cut democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring ethnocratic regime features.

As far as the democratic transformation of Kemalist laicism in accordance with the three democratic secularist criteria [see **Table 7**] is concerned, Chapter VI

demonstrated the AKP government's uneasy compliance with the democratic-pluralist implications of the second and third secularist criteria by covering its sluggish, ambivalent and inconclusive reform performance towards the belief rights of the Alevi-Muslim minority. Furthermore, Chapter VI revealed how the AKP government's populist discursive construction of the religiously-observant Sunni majority as the genuine owners of the nation does not yield to a credible foundation of a 'neutral' or 'pluralist' framework for non-Sunni-religious lifestyles.

Given the limited reformist capacity of the ruling AKP government in reference to the three democratic secularist criteria and Peleg's classification of "radical revision towards genuine democracy", Chapter VI concluded that the future prospects of achieving symmetrical and substantial democratic transformation of Turkey's 'laic-ethnocratic' regime paradigm is rather dim.

7.2 The Contribution of the Thesis

After revisiting the key empirical findings through the four hypotheses, it is necessary to sum up the main contribution of this PhD thesis both to the theoretical literature and to our case study. As stated in the Introduction, this thesis sought to deliver theoretically-informed propositions and empirically testable hypotheses by critically linking Turkey's democratization problems with the wider theoretical literature on democratization (e.g., democratic transition and consolidation, regime hybridity and radical democracy), secularism and post-Islamism. The research design of the thesis is based upon an in-depth analysis of a single case study (Turkey) in order to engage in a critical dialogue between empirical realities and abstract propositions provided by the existing theoretical literature.

To begin with, this PhD thesis has shared the same intellectual enterprise with the foundational scholars on the democratic transition literature whose main purpose was to scrutinize the "potentialities, dilemmas, and limitations involved in the complex process of the demise of authoritarian rule and its *possible replacement* by political democracy" (O'Donnell, *et al.*, 1986: 5) While achieving this objective, however, the thesis has argued against adopting the highly popular democratic consolidation sequence paradigm as exemplified in the work of Ergun Özbudun (2000) and insisted

on the utilization of hybrid regime typologies which necessitated the shift of attention “from the prospects and obstacles of democratic consolidation to the origins, conditions, trajectories, institutionalization, and consequences of democratic defects, opening a new line of research” (Bogaards, 2009: 415).

While engaging with the literature, the thesis aimed to make a contribution to the hybrid regime typology literature by exposing the common theoretical poverty displayed by those hybrid regime typologies which are exclusively limited to pinpointing the flawed functioning of the institutional features of Dahl’s polyarchy (e.g., “democracy with adjectives” by Collier and Levitsky, “defective democracies” by Merkel and “competitive authoritarianism” by Levitsky and Way). Besides pointing to the flawed functioning of the institutional features of Dahlian polyarchy, the thesis highlighted the intellectual imperative of challenging the complex but persistent patterns of ‘domination’ and ‘exclusion’ perpetuated by a given political regime.

Accordingly, the thesis sought to contribute to the hybrid regime typology literature by constructing a multi-dimensional hybrid regime typology (laic-ethnocracy) by adding the dimension of ‘Laicism’ to Yiftachel’s Ethnocracy. Besides focusing on multiple variables and regime dynamics (e.g., mode of state-building and interactive relations among religion, state, and society), the normative thrust of our theoretical framework conceptualized the notion of transition from ‘laic-ethnocracy’ to a ‘secular and democratic state’ as entailing dual dimensions.

While the first dimension projected a normative commitment to the democratic transformation of incompatible aspects of Kemalist one party-dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist democratic criteria [see **Table 7**], the second dimension projected a normative commitment to the democratic deconstruction and transformation of Turkey’s severe ethnocratic regime features in line with what Ilan Peleg characterized as “radical revision towards genuine democracy” [see **Table 4**]. Indeed, the establishment of a definite and assessable normative benchmark for democratization was essential in constructing a coherent theoretical framework as it equipped the thesis with a strong analytical medium to assess both the historical and prospective democratization trajectory of Turkey’s ‘laic-ethnocratic’ regime paradigm.

Although this study has focused on providing an in-depth empirical analysis of Turkey, the utilization of its theoretical framework for other case studies will engender an ambitious project for comparative politics. For instance, while narrowly focusing on the variable of electoral competitiveness versus non-competitiveness, Levitsky and Way (2006) tested their hybrid regime typology of competitive authoritarianism by applying it to 35 case studies. Since the theoretical framework of this PhD thesis demands the scrutiny of multiple variables, its application to multiple various case studies would inevitably require a collective academic endeavour with a great potential to yield comparative findings.

In this respect, formulating the three criteria for democratic secularism has been the most original contribution of the thesis both for comparative purposes and for the specific needs of our case study. The overwhelming majority of the literature which seeks to tackle the problems of secularism in Turkey suffers from pervasive semantic and conceptual confusion as they fail to spell out the highly polysemic character of the very term 'secularism'. This PhD thesis has sought to find a remedy to this chronic confusion by identifying *three different meanings of 'secularism'* along with its corresponding normative implications for pluralist liberal democracy which namely are: a) secularism as the negation of theocracy, b) secularism as the ideal of rendering the state reasonably equidistant and impartial towards different religions and/or religious denominations, c) secularism as the ideal of guaranteeing not only the individual's freedom *of* religion and religious way of life but also the individual's freedom *from* religion and the religious way of life. Contextualizing problematic aspects of Kemalist one-party dictatorship laicism in reference to the three secularist criteria has played an essential role in clarifying and discerning the multiple contestations and polarizations which have revolved around the principle of secularism in Turkish politics since the opening of the multi-party era.

While delineating and assessing Turkey's historical trajectory of transitions in accordance with the dual normative benchmarks of our theoretical framework, this PhD thesis sought to contribute directly to current political debates on the democratization process in post-Helsinki Turkey. During the post-Helsinki decade, liberal intellectuals within the Turkish media have unanimously categorized the traditional tutelary role of Kemalist military-bureaucratic elites as Turkey's principal obstacle in achieving the standards of plural and liberal democracy envisioned by the

EU. While observing the relatively reformist credentials of the AKP government during its first period in office (2002-2007), the majority of liberal intellectuals have also identified the AKP as a pioneering political actor which is committed to, and capable of forging, a democratic regime change to the Kemalist establishment. From this perspective, the post-Helsinki era was characterized by slow but continuous transition from bureaucratic-military tutelage to liberal democracy.

As an epitome of a liberal intellectual, Şahin Alpay exemplifies this perspective when he writes:

The Republic of Turkey is [...] engaged in the process of transition from a kind of electoral democracy where the reigns of power are held by the military and civilian bureaucracy committed to a highly authoritarian form of secular nationalism called Kemalism to a kind of liberal and pluralist democracy defined roughly by the Copenhagen political criteria of the European Union. It is hoped and expected that this process will culminate in the consolidation of democracy by the adoption of an entirely new constitution (*Sunday's Zaman*, 02 October 2011).

Alpay acknowledges that Turkey's transition to liberal and pluralist democracy is "proceeding in 'slow motion' and often takes two steps forward and one step back" (*Sunday's Zaman*, 02 October 2011). Yet, we are told that this is mainly due to the reactionary political resistance displayed by the defenders of the Kemalist establishment.

According to Alpay, the internal factors which account for the 'slow motion' transition are as follows:

- 1- The fierce opposition coming from state elites, the holders of power of the old regime, which has assumed the form of military and judicial coup attempts against the elected government.
- 2- The resistance to reforms by political parties committed to Kemalist secularism or nationalism.
- 3- The loyalty of an important part of civil society to the old regime or its distrust of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) leading the process of regime change.
- 4- The violent insurgency led by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).
- 5- The government's lack of a clear idea of what needs to be done, and thus its "muddling through" kind of leadership (*Sunday's Zaman*, 02 October 2011).

From this perspective, it is important to observe how the AKP is being projected as the leading actor of democratic regime change whose only democratic drawback is reduced to the "lack of a clear idea of what needs to be done". Şahin Alpay's analysis

simply overlooks both the limited reformist capacity and serious democratic drawbacks of the AKP government in forging a clear-cut and even democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring laic-ethnocratic regime paradigm.

Certainly, this PhD thesis has kept its critical distance from analyses which portrayed Turkey's post-Helsinki transition as being stuck between two different but equally anti-democratic power blocs; that is between Kemalist military-bureaucratic tutelage (tutelary democracy) and the popularly elected AKP government (populist competitive authoritarianism). In contrast to Yunus Sözen's (2009: 78-84) 'equally but differently anti-democratic' analysis (Chapter V), this thesis sought to demonstrate how AKP's pursuit of EU-led cultural rights and federal solution to the Cyprus problem against the wishes of the military-bureaucratic circles has played a vital role in the European Council's decision to open the accession negotiations with Turkey on 3 October 2005 (Chapter VI).

Nevertheless, while acknowledging the relatively more reformist stance of the AKP government in pursuing EU-inspired cultural rights (albeit only when compared with Baykal's CHP and Bahçeli's MHP), the thesis has also exposed the limits to the reformism of the AKP government both towards the Kurdish problem and the religious rights of the Alevi minority. Indeed, providing an empirical assessment of the limited reformist capacity of the ruling AKP government in reference to three democratic secularist criteria and Peleg's classification of "radical revision towards genuine democracy" has become an even more urgent intellectual task than ever before as the Şahin Alpay style of uncritical liberal-democratic intellectualism has acquired a hegemonic position within the mainstream media in parallel to the AKP government's attainment of excessive power within the political system.

In contrast to Şahin Alpay's liberal democratic perspective which projects Turkey's post-Helsinki decade as a case of 'slow but progressive' transition to liberal and plural democracy, this PhD thesis seeks to characterize Turkey's post-Helsinki decade as a case of *uneasy democratization*. In this context, the term '*uneasy democratization*' does not only signify the various democratic gaps among the main domestic political actors in forging a clear-cut democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring laic-ethnocracy regime paradigm, but also to a chronic failure of the main domestic

political actors in soothing the deeply-seated cleavages and antagonisms within the societal arena.

After all, it is important to realize how Turkey's central socio-political cleavages mainly revolve around various contestations over its laic-ethnocratic regime characteristics. While the ethnocratic dimension indicates the fatal antagonism between state-led Turkish nationalism and the PKK-led Kurdish national movement, the laic dimension corresponds to two-layered cleavages which are: a) a cleavage between the dominant Sunni-Muslim majority and disadvantaged heterodox Muslim Alevi minority, and b) a cleavage between the religiously devout Sunni-Muslim way of life and non-Sunni religious or secular-western ways of life. Hence, symmetrical and substantial democratic transformation of Turkey's enduring laic-ethnocracy regime paradigm is essential for reconciling the deeply-seated cleavages and antagonisms within the societal and political arena.

Overall, the empirical findings of this PhD thesis do partly concur with the liberal-democratic perspective in the sense that both regard the eradication of the military-bureaucratic tutelage as one of the pre-requisites for Turkey to achieve a democratic regime change. Yet, the same empirical findings also dispute the uncritical reading of recent events which tend to portray post-Helsinki Turkey as going through clear-cut democratic regime change under the leadership of the AKP government.

In his recently published book, for instance, veteran journalist Hasan Cemal (2010) critically exposed the General Staff's various political manoeuvres to exert influence both against the popularly elected AKP government and EU reform process during the post-Helsinki era. As a renowned journalist with a leftist-libertarian outlook, Hasan Cemal titled his book as "Turkey's Army Problem: Hey soldiers do not intervene in politics!" While sharing the same normative critical outlook with Hasan Cemal on Turkey's traditional, but recently waning '*military-bureaucratic tutelage problem*', this PhD thesis has also insisted on the intellectual imperative of challenging Turkey's enduring '*conservative centre-right problem*' in reference to three democratic secularist criteria and Peleg's classification of "radical revision towards genuine democracy".

7.3 The Prospective Research Topics of the Thesis

After enumerating the key contributions of the thesis, both to the theoretical literature and to the case study, it is necessary to proceed to the third section and briefly lay out the prospective research topics that the thesis has stirred.

This thesis has refuted the popular democratic transition followed by democratic consolidation paradigm which projects multiple meanings on the very concept of ‘democratic consolidation’, while categorizing the hybrid grey zone lying in between the continuum of democracy and non-democracy as ‘unconsolidated’ democracies (Mainwaring *et al.*, 1992; Linz and Stepan, 1996; Özbudun, 2000; McLaren, 2008). While studying the newly established democracies of the Latin American countries during the 1970s, scholars have pioneered the term ‘consolidated democracy’ to refer to those electoral democracies that are “likely to endure” (O’Donnell, 1996: 37). Hence, the original meaning and preoccupation of the ‘democratic consolidation’ was the avoidance of a military coup (O’Donnell 1985: 1).

By the 1990’s, the term ‘consolidated democracy’ has not only become the buzzword but also changed its original meaning. Many scholars have expanded the conceptual meaning of the term by rendering it equivalent to the attainment of a stable and full-blown liberal democracy (Linz and Stepan, 1996; Diamond, 1999). Accordingly, scholars started to define democratic consolidation as a political situation where democracy becomes “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan, 1996: 5).

Despite being one of the key originators of the term in the 1980’s, O’Donnell (1996:179) has become highly critical of this concept in the mid 1990’s by remarking that: “The terms ‘democracy’ and ‘consolidation’ are terms too polysemic to make a good pair”. The theoretical findings and implications of this PhD thesis do concur with O’Donnell on the futility of pursuing or adopting ‘democratic consolidation’ as a conceptual framework for empirical purposes. Yet, unlike O’Donnell, it claims to provide different and more fundamental reasons for disposing this concept (democratic consolidation) from academic jargon.

As far as the theoretical perspective of this thesis is concerned, the democratic consolidation literature has a tendency to disregard the “essentially contested” nature of the very term ‘democracy’ (Gallie, 1956: 167-169). For instance, Linz and Stepan (1996: 5) argue that in a consolidated democracy “democracy becomes routinized and deeply internalized in social, institutional, and even psychological life, as well as in calculations for achieving success”. In this context, it is important to observe how the

concept of ‘democracy’ is not only posited as a sealed package but also depleted from its normative dimension. As Olson (2004: 17-18) perceptively remarks:

But democracy is not just a solution; it is a political problem itself. The question is not just democracy for whom but what kind of democracy, not just who is to be made equal but what kind of equality, not just who is to be free but what kind of freedom. Democracy is not a refuge that exists above the fray of interminable political conflict. It is a rough-and-tumble product of such conflict.

In view of that, this thesis sought to equip its theoretical framework with the dual capacity to align not only with the procedural democratic minimum but also with the literature on radical democratic theory. Nevertheless, extensive and compelling research is needed to explicate the reasons for disposing of the concept of democratic consolidation from the academic discourse.

In addition to this, providing a detailed analysis on the AKP government’s reform capacity has gained further significance within the historical context of the “Arab Spring” where western power centres eagerly cast Turkey’s AKP phenomenon as an exemplary democratic model for the Muslim-majority nations of the Middle East. From the perspective of the western powers, it is not difficult to observe why Turkey’s AKP government (along with its generally supportive stance towards the NATO alliance and EU membership) provides a highly attractive alternative against the anti-Western and radical thrust of the Islamist movements in the Middle East. From this perspective, the ‘Turkish model’ (which is allegedly characterized by the successful synthesis between western liberal-democracy and Islam) should be looked upon as a source of inspiration by the Islamic movements in the Middle Eastern countries.

While seeking to solidify Turkey’s growing influence and popularity within the Middle East, the Turkish Prime Minister Erdoğan capitalized on the ‘Turkish model’ by visiting “post-revolutionary” Egypt, Tunisia and Libya between 12 and 15 September 2011. During his “Arab Spring” tour, Erdoğan urged the political actors to adopt secular constitutions. In Egypt, for instance, Erdoğan remarked that Muslims should not be wary of secularism. “This is not secularism in the Anglo-Saxon or Western sense; a person is not secular, the state is secular” Erdoğan noted and then declared: “A secular state takes equal distance to all religious groups, including Muslims, Christians, Jews and atheists” (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 15 September, 2011). Similarly, Erdoğan re-emphasized the “Turkish model” discourse in Tunisia by remarking that: “Tunisia will prove to the whole world that Islam and democracy can

co-exist. Turkey with its predominantly Muslim population has achieved it” (*Hurriyet Daily News*, 15 September, 2011).

In view of these recent developments, more focused research is needed to provide a thoroughly critical dialogue between the limited reformist capacity of the AKP government and the theoretical literature on post-Islamism, secularism, and democratization. Engaging with such a critical dialogue will enable one to provide insightful and decisive answers to the highly popular but misleading question on the compatibility between Islam and democracy.

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