

MUHİTTİN ATAMAN

JULY 15

COUP ATTEMPT IN TURKEY

CONTEXT, CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCES



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This book is dedicated to the Turkish people, especially to all the 249 martyrs of July 15 who resisted against the coup attempt to protect the national will and heroically sacrificed their lives for their country.

INTRODUCTION

Muhittin Ataman*

The Republican Turkey, declared in 1923 under one-party rule, opted to transform its political system into a multi-party one as a reaction to the emerging bilateral world in the wake of the Second World War. Since then, Turkey has experienced several direct and indirect military coups and ruptures in its democratization process. The military, which declared itself to be the principal protector of the secular republic, did not allow many popular politicians to rule the country, despite the support they had. Therefore, the military backed by other bureaucratic institutions created a tutelage by which they controlled almost every aspect of political life. Moreover, whenever the military came to power they pursued policies in line with those of the West and institutions such as NATO and the EU. As a consequence, it is widely believed that the West has been a crucial force behind the numerous forms of military coups that have taken place in Turkey.

The Turkish military intervened in politics on the pretext of a perceived deviation from the main principles of the secular Republic. Its first intervention into politics occurred in 1960; at that time, the coup plotters hanged the prime minister and two ministers after a fictitious judicial process. This military coup was followed by two others in 1971 and 1980, which curtailed political participation and the democratization process. Thousands of civilians lost their lives during political instability and the military campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s. In 1997,

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the military indirectly intervened in political life for the fourth time, forcing the conservative government of Necmettin Erbakan to resign.

When the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power in 2002, it promised to normalize the country by initiating a process of democratization, demilitarization and civilianization. The AK Party governments took significant steps in this regard which allowed the arena of civil society to expand and increased diversity in social and political life. Thus, it gradually inhibited the power of the military and other bureaucratic structures which in response tried to shut down the ruling party through various channels, in order to curtail the restructuring of the country. Starting in 2013, there have been several different attempts to overthrow the AK Party government. The Gezi Park protests in June 2013 were an attempt to change the government through social unrest; while the events on December 17 and 25 were overt judicial interventions to force the democratically elected government to halt its reform and development programs.

July 15, 2016, different in many aspects from previous coups, was the latest attempt to overthrow the legitimate government of Turkey and to reverse the changes it had implemented. When compared with previous coups, July 15 differentiates in terms of the rationale, agents, tools and results. First of all, the reason behind the above mentioned coups (i.e. 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997) was always related with the “protection of the secular principles” of the Turkish Republic. The military, a self-declared guardian of these principles, intervened in the political affairs of the state arguing that due to the Islamist perspectives of the politicians in power the secular principles were being violated. Nevertheless, this was not the rationale behind the July 15 coup attempt. While the coup plotters tried to use such a discourse –as can be seen in the coup statement broadcasted under duress on national television–

the real reason behind the coup attempt was to replace the AK Party with an alternative political grouping. Overthrowing the government would allow the coup plotters and the mastermind behind them to gain power and replace the democratically elected government.

Secondly, the agents that undertook the coup attempt of July 15 were different from those of previous coups. While only the military was openly responsible and active in these events, in the July 15 coup attempt the military was not the main agent. More specifically, the coup attempt was masterminded by Fetullah Gülen, the leader of the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), and it was brought to life by his supporters inside the military and a number of other governmental institutions. It can be argued that the civilian element of the coup plotters was a novelty in the history of Turkish coups. Moreover the tools used and the targets of the plotters were also divergent when compared with the earlier coups which only targeted the politicians. The coup plotters of July 15 not only targeted the politicians and the governmental institutions, they did not even spare the life of the innocent civilians who took to the streets to protect the democratically elected government.

Last but not least, unlike the other coups, the July 15 coup was not successful. As will be discussed below and through the chapters of this book, the reasons behind the failure of the July 15 coup attempt are twofold:

1. The strengthening of the Turkish democracy, especially the consolidation of the democratic institutions,
2. The democratic awareness and the unification of the Turkish citizens under the same flag, leaving aside their differences.

In brief, the coup attempt on July 15, 2016 was the most dramatic link in the chain of anti-democratic and illegitimate interventions that

Turkey has experienced. July 15 is a watershed in the history of democracy as well as in the history of Turkey. On the night of July 15, the world witnessed an exceptional and historic event. The Turkish people, who had been subjected to several military coups, heroically stood up against the brutal coup plotters. Thus, they became an example for other peoples on how to defend their nation and on what is the real meaning of national self-determination. At the same time, they gave a valuable lesson to the Western governments on how to support a democratically elected government. But more than anything, Turkish people proved to themselves that it is they who decide for themselves, for their future. After all, isn't that what democracy is all about?

On the night of July 15, the world saw the real face of FETÖ, a chimera hidden behind the façade of religious discourses. In the late hours of Friday night, the coup plotters started to block the main streets in İstanbul and Ankara. Afraid of a possible terrorist attack people began to go home and follow the situation through the media. Soon it became clear that this was a coup attempt to overthrow the legitimate government. As the people responded by pouring out in to the streets, especially after the call of President Erdoğan, the coup plotters realized that their plan was about to fail. Nevertheless, at this point, they started to bomb the governmental buildings such as the Grand National Assembly (TBMM), the Presidential Complex, the National Intelligence Organization (MİT), the Special Forces Headquarters, the Turkish National Police, the AK Party Headquarters and some television channels. Furthermore, the coup plotters shot at civilians in cold blood, killing more than 240 people and wounding more than 2000. The coup plotters betrayed their people and used the nation's own weapons against them. However, this did not stop the Turkish people, who with an admirable bravery stayed on the streets until the last unit

of coup plotters had surrendered. The coup attempt was then followed by a 25-day long “democracy watch” where people gathered every night in the city centers of every single province of Turkey to condemn the coup attempt and protect democracy.

The July 15 coup attempt is more than a failed coup, it is a process that is still going on and needs to be analyzed thoroughly. After one year, it is fair to ask what does “July 15” mean for Turkey. First and foremost, it was the struggle of the people and the national will against tanks. Turkish people from all ranks, ages, genders, classes, ethnicities and religions took to the streets on the night of July 15 to protect their democratically elected government. Many people who had no time to change their clothes were in pyjamas and wearing slippers. Those standing in front of tanks did not think twice about leaving their families at home and going out in to the streets to defend their nation. On the other hand armed soldiers, pointed their guns towards civilians, who had no armor but their Turkish flag to claim their rights and protect their lives.

July 15 was the triumph and consolidation of Turkish democracy. The coup plotters intended to kill the President of Turkey and overthrow the democratically elected government. However, it was the people –both supporters and detractors of the AK Party– who did not allow the coup plotters to achieve their aim. Moreover, the main political parties, leaving aside their political differences, united with each other and condemned the coup attempt. The mass demonstration of more than 4 million people on August 7 at Yenikapı, İstanbul was clear evidence of the national unity.

It was the victory of the world’s most non-violent resistances against one of the most brutal coup attempts. Turkey has suffered from many coups; however, none of them directly targeted the civilians. Ironically, the July 15 coup attempt became the bloodiest one in Turkish history

with more than 249 people being killed. Some of them were killed by tanks and with the heavy artillery however had the coup attempt been successful, the bloodshed would have been greater.

July 15 has demonstrated the democratic awareness and further increased the political consciousness of Turkish people. Now Turks are aware of their power and how they can make their will clear. On the night of the July 15 coup attempt the people chose democracy against a military regime, which would have symbolized the end of democracy for Turkey as it has done in other states of the region. It was not only the societal groups, but also the main body of the armed forces, the police forces, the judiciary, all political parties and media, who resisted against the coup attempt.

Furthermore, it shows that Turkey has become a success story in the face of military coups, and a symbol of peaceful democratic resistance. Turkey not only broke the cycle of coups internally but also, unlike the other states in the region, it showed that military regimes are no longer welcomed. After strengthening the Turkish society and democracy, a large-scale process of state reconstruction was initiated.

Most significantly for the Turkish people who upto now have looked to the West as an ally in their pursuit of democracy and human rights, the July 15 coup attempt has revealed that the West does not sincerely care about democratic developments in countries they wish to influence. Western states, which did not condemn the anti-democratic coup attempt, not only immediately started a campaign against the democratically elected government but also tried to protect the coup plotters. An example of this is the U.S., which continues to keep the mastermind of the July 15 coup attempt, Fetullah Gülen, under strict protection. Similarly some of the coup plotters who escaped to Greece have not been extradited to Turkey.

THE CONTENT OF THE VOLUME

This edited volume about the coup attempt, was intended to present different perspectives of the events focusing on political, economic, sociological and psychological aspects of July 15. At a time when the West has failed to present the coup attempt objectively, this volume aims to present accurately what July 15 was about. History and current events are analyzed through an academic perspective, creating a full picture to better understand the July 15 coup attempt.

This compilation brings together eight chapters, which were previously published in different journals. Seven of these articles were published in *Insight Turkey's* special issue (Vol. 18, No. 3, Summer 2016). The article authored by Ataman and Shkurti was published in *ADAM Akademi* journal (Vol. 6, No. 2, 2016, pp. 51-73) originally in Turkish.

Atilla Yayla's article offers a comprehensive analysis of the coup attempt. Yayla focuses mainly on FETÖ and its leader Fetullah Gülen and how this terrorist organization in several cases plotted against the democratic government and President Erdoğan. For Yayla what people did on the night of July 15 will never be forgotten and he calls this historical moment as a Glorious Resistance.

Şener Aktürk, remarkably postulates that after the "silent revolution" of the AK Party, which created an equal citizenship and ended the longtime segregation of the Kurds and religious conservatives in Turkey, terrorist organizations such as PKK and FETÖ lost their *raison d'être* and each encountered an existential crisis. These two organizations tried to change the political orientation of the country by exploiting domestic and regional conjuncture. In this case, violence becomes the main and sole strategy of these terrorist organizations. Aktürk also criticizes the Western media's deliberate Islamophobic representation and its ambiguous reaction to the coup attempt.

Another standpoint is presented by Nebi Miş in his article, which focuses on the social perception of the coup attempt. Based on semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted with 176 people throughout the democracy watch, Miş analyzes the social perception of Turkish people about the coup attempt. He argues that love for their nation, the call of President Erdoğan and the media had a high impact on the way in which the people reacted during the coup attempt and afterwards. Miş concludes that people view this coup attempt differently from previous ones, since during the latest attempt the coup plotters deliberately opened fire on the people. Increased self-confidence and political awareness of the people motivated them to take to the streets in order to thwart the coup attempt.

When analyzing coup attempts, economic factors are largely overlooked. Sadık Ünay and Şerif Dilek in their article present in detail FETÖ's colossal economic power amounting to billions of dollars and they conclude by stating that the 15 July coup attempt was perpetrated to maintain an uninterrupted flow of financial resources into a murky network of business enterprises around a messianic cult.

Farhan Mujahid Chak argues that the failed *coup d'état* is the result of a clash of social images, in which the Gülenist social image was vanquished by the AK Party's social imagery. Therefore, as it became clear that FETÖ was acting secretly with a general disdain for millions of Turkish citizens, it failed to establish dominion of its social image. On the other hand AK Party's inclusivity attracted people from all segments of Turkish society into its fold. According to Chak, this was the main reason behind the failure of the coup attempt in Turkey.

Muhittin Ataman and Gloria Shkurti criticize the Western perception of the July 15 coup attempt. First, they summarize the Western involvement in military coups in different continents at different times.

The global Western powers attempt to change regimes of any “native” and “nationalist” political leadership. Ataman and Shkurti analyze the statements of a number of Western politicians and the coverage of the mainstream Western media. They demonstrate that Western political elites and media do not criticize the coup plotters who attempted to illegally end the democratic structure in the country, but prefer to target the legitimate democratically elected government.

Lastly, Gamal Nassar analyzes the coup attempt in Turkey by presenting the coup in terms of Middle Eastern politics. Nassar compares the coup attempt in Turkey with the one in Egypt and analyses how different elements such as the political actors, religious actors, media and members of the public contributed to the promotion and success of the coup in Egypt while in Turkey, all these forces united against the coup attempt.

JULY 15: THE GLORIOUS RESISTANCE OF TURKISH DEMOCRACY

Atilla Yayla*

INTRODUCTION:

TURNING POINTS IN THE HISTORY OF TURKISH COUPS

The history of Turkish coups is a long one. Turkey experienced several military interventions in the Ottoman era, which either resulted in the elimination of colleagues close to the Sultan and meeting the demands of the rebels, or the dethroning of the Sultan. While some of the dethroned Sultans were put away to prison, others were killed. And even though the old military was replaced with a military of European standard during the reign of several sultans, this still did not prevent military interventions. Indeed, in 1876, at a time when it was said that a coup was not possible, Sultan Abdülaziz was dethroned by a military coup. According to some historians, this was the first coup of modern Turkey.¹

The dissolution period of the Ottoman Empire totally removed political authority from some areas and diffused it in others, placing the current lands of Turkey, namely Anatolia and Thrace, into a political authority vacuum. England, France, Italy and Greece invaded some parts of Turkey. However, with the War of Independence that started in 1919 on

¹ For a brief overview of the coups in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey see: Süleyman Kocabaş, "140 Yıllık Darbeder Tarihimiz," *Derin Tarih*, (August 2016), pp. 26-39; Sinan Çuluk, "Darbeli Osmanlı Tarihi: Padişah Ferman, Asker Ayar Verdi," *Bugünü Anlamak İçin Tarih*, (August 2016), No. 27, p. 3.

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its own accord and was later led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Turkey defeated the regional invasions. After the War of Independence, the Republic of Turkey was established on 29 October 1923. The establishment of the Republic meant a radical political transformation and a sharp separation from the past. The newly formed Republic started to break its historical and cultural connections with the Ottomans and adopted an introvert policy, which was the complete opposite of their former policy. The founding fathers not only made political reforms, they also sought to change Turkish social life with the aim of virtually re-creating individuals and thus Turkish society. However, since the essence of culture is not discontinuity and revolution but durability and reproduction of itself, the aim of crafting a new society was not completely successful. Thus, the political culture and tradition, including the vulnerability to coups, which had plagued the Ottomans, continued in the Turkish Republic.

In 1923, “modern” Turkey emerged as a partial pluralist political structure. Before long, in 1925, it inclined towards a one-party regime. During the one-party period between 1925 and 1945, there were no military coups. This situation has been analyzed in two ways. According to the first analysis, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his successor, İsmet İnönü, were experienced in the painful consequences of the military rebellions among the Ottomans and thus kept the military away from politics and under very strict political control. For this reason, the military did not or could not execute a coup. The second analysis posits that the soldiers were under the control of leaders who were from their profession and reflected their mentality, so they considered a direct intervention in politics unnecessary. We can consider the latter as an institutionalization of the pro-coup mindset, ironically preventing a coup. In my opinion, both factors were effective and explain why there were no military coups during the one-party period.

At the end of World War II, Turkey had to make a decision regarding its place in the world: either be part of the democratic western bloc or be a part of the eastern bloc lead by the Soviet Union, which at the time was an ally of the West against Germany. In terms of its official ideological imposition, witnessed in the pruning and suppression of civil society, and the state's control over the economy, Turkey bore more resemblance to the Soviet world rather than to the West. However, two factors influenced Turkey in deciding not to ally with the Soviets: the West seemed more powerful, and the Soviets had tried to bully Turkey into giving them land in eastern Turkey and a base in the Bosphorus.

At the time, Turkey seemed to be in a position where it could not resist the Soviets on its own, thus it was in a way forced to side with the West. Hence, Turkey's dictator İsmet İnönü initiated a transition period for Turkey's political system. The establishment of opposing political parties was permitted, control over media was loosened, and suppressions and limitations on religious freedom were eased. This process, which started in 1945-46, was completed in 1950. The first of the multi-party elections, which was conjured by judicial control, led by the liberals of the era, was held on 14 May 1950. In this election, the Republican People's Party (CHP) –which claimed to have built the state but was in fact formed by the state as a mechanism to control Turkish society, and had held power over the state since 1923– unexpectedly lost. The surprised CHP leaders had considered themselves as the benefactor of the society; thus, they believed that the people had a debt of gratitude toward them and in return would keep them in power. However, it was clear that the people were not going to return the so-called favor, since the one-party regime did not go beyond a dictatorship that extorted freedom, and also caused widespread poverty with its statist economic policy all over Turkey.

After 14 May 1950 elections, the Democrat Party (DP) took power, and the Kemalist military bureaucracy was not happy with the results. They laid plans to interfere and made İnönü an offer to eliminate the DP as soon as possible. However, İnönü prudentially refused the offer and transferred power to the DP. This moment was an important democratic victory, both for Turkey and the Islamic world at large.

Unfortunately, the conflict between pro-democracy forces and the Turkish military was far from over. After the victory of the DP in 1950, Turkey ushered in a wave of coups that has plagued almost all of the country's subsequent experience of democracy. Although some were complete coups, there were other military interventions of a smaller scale that demanded ruling constitution provisions or political changes. The traditional coups of 1960, 1971, 1980 and the post-modern coup of 1997 can be considered as the main military coups of Turkey's democratic period. There were also coup attempts during this time; Colonel Talat Aydemir, as an active officer in 1962 and as a retired officer in 1963, attempted twice to make a coup with the excuse that the 1960 coup d'état did not reach the goals it aimed for, and was inconsistent with Kemalist ideals. He gave up his first attempt under the condition that he would not be put on trial; however, his second attempt ended with his execution. We can list these two coups as the unsuccessful and prevented coups that occurred before 15 July 2016. An important factor in the failure of these earlier coups is the fact that these coups were attempted against İsmet İnönü, who was both a historical figure and a former military general. İnönü managed to prevent these coups, and catch and put the culprits to trial, with the help of his loyal troops.

The coups and coup attempts prior to 15 July 2016 were all seemingly based on Kemalist ideology. In every coup and coup attempt, the plotters stated their loyalty to the Kemalist notion and sought to legit-

imize their actions by attributing their work to Atatürk's principles and his aims. Many civilian groups also supported these interventions and claimed to act on behalf of Atatürk, or used his name along with the army. The Kemalist leaders considered military intervention a last resort against politicians that they did not like, and who did not share the same worldview with them, and could not be beaten in the political arena.

The military coups were sometimes carried out by juntas inside the army, as in the case of the 1960 coup d'état, or sometimes by the chain of command inside the whole army, as in the case of the 1980 coup. According to the statements of the coup plotters, the coups were carried out with such aims as, "protecting secularism, reaching to a level of a modern civilization, fighting against communism and reactionism; preventing commotion, disorder, anarchy, internal conflict; protecting and establishing democracy." However the coups were more about fighting against the center-right conservatives and in opposition to conservative liberal political power.

MILITARY TENSION IN THE AK PARTY ERA

The AK Party, led by the former mayor of İstanbul Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, was established in August of 2001, in a political system overshadowed by the military. Although the AK Party was founded by religious leaders and was based on a political tradition that gave importance to religion, it joined the race with more democratic values than its precursors. While it was only 2 years old, the party managed to win an unexpected election victory by gaining 36 percent of the votes in 3 November 2002 elections. Due to the 10 percent election threshold, the AK Party managed to win the right to form a government with the majority, since the rest of the parties, with the exception of the CHP,

were unable to win a single seat in parliament. Once imprisoned and deprived of his political rights by the Kemalist regime leaders for reciting a poem, Erdoğan was elected a member of parliament and took office as Turkey's Prime Minister in spring 2003. Since that time, except during a transitional government between 7 June 2015 and 1 November 2015, the AK Party has managed to remain in power as a single-party government. The AK Party is thus considered one of the most successful political parties in the history of Turkish democracy.

For much of its tenure, the AK Party endeavored to continue its power despite military oppression and threats. Turkish soldiers felt no need to hide their discontent and frustration with the AK Party: not only did military officers verbally bully AK Party politicians, they also hindered the political activities of the AK Party government. Military generals attacked the AK Party and its administrations, sometimes anonymously, through the media. According to these officers, the AK Party did not fit the image of a "modern, secular Turkey." The military generals constantly expressed skepticism toward the AK Party's activities and intentions, making it clear that they wanted it to lose power, and would prefer the party's complete elimination.

Ongoing tension and conflict, sometimes on screen and sometimes off, proliferated between the AK Party government and the military, with the biggest crisis erupting in 2007. At that time, Kemalist President and former president of the Constitutional Court Ahmet Necdet Sezer's presidential era had ended, and a new president had to be elected. According to the constitutional order based on Turkey's unusual parliamentary system, the president of the country was to be elected by Turkey's General Assembly. Since the AK Party held the majority in parliament, it was certain that AK Party would select its president in the fourth round.

The Kemalists and the military were on edge. The Çankaya Mansion, the residence of the President, was considered a valuable memory of Atatürk; thus, the Kemalists abhorred the idea that a religious and pious person who regularly prayed and was married to someone who wore a headscarf would be residing in the place that had once belonged to the secular Atatürk. Hence, operations stirred to prevent the AK Party from choosing the president. Instead of attempting a direct coup, the Kemalists tried more indirect and discreet methods. The laicist media began to pressure the AK party, through both requests and threats, to choose a candidate with secular tendencies. Along with the media's efforts, retired generals who were supported by active officers secretly organized "Republic demonstrations" in Ankara, İstanbul, and İzmir, with the aim of prompting the groups that strongly support secularism into action. Thousands of people who believed that protesting the AK Party was a way to protect the country's secularism took part in these demonstrations. On 27 April 2007, a manifesto that stated the requisition for a president who is "not nominally but essentially secularist," and assumed to be written by General Yaşar Büyükanıt, was published on the Turkish Armed Forces website. Most read this as a memorandum of the military for the AK Party and its administrators. The sound of combat boots and tank pallets began to rumble.

However, the AK Party did not stand down and thus, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, the government published a manifesto reminding the military that they are subordinate to the government and cannot interfere with politics. This was an important step to break the military dominance. Still, the AK Party could not choose their president despite having the majority in parliament. The party's opponents obstructed the election of the AK Party's candidate, Abdullah Gül, via a loophole in the law rather than an open military

intervention. Instead of opening the congress with an electoral quotient (276/550), as is stated in the bylaw, Kemalist lawyer and former Supreme Court of Appeals prosecutor Sabih Kanadoğlu alleged that the presidential election congress is opened with a qualified majority rather than the electoral quotient (367/550). The Supreme Court agreed with Kanadoğlu and the AK Party's chance to choose a president within the party was blocked. Although the former president Ahmet Necdet Sezer's term of office was over, he refused to vacate his office in order to support the operations aimed at stonewalling the AK Party.

Although short of a military coup, the civil and military partnership undoubtedly implemented an undemocratic political intervention against the AK Party. For its part, the AK party did not delay in responding to these interventions. Firstly, it changed the presidential election system in the constitution based on its majority in the parliament in which the citizens would directly elect the president. Thus, on 27 October 2007 the people voted yes to this change in the referendum. At the time, neither the AK Party nor its opponents realized that this change would bring about a radical transition in the Turkish political system. The AK Party decided to bring the date of the general elections four months forward in order to have the required majority in the parliament to choose the president from the AK Party members. Although it had won the general elections in July 2007, the AK Party still did not have the required number of 367 for the presidential vote. After the MHP, which had not been in the parliament in previous elections, decided to join the session of the Grand Assembly, the crises was over and AK Party candidate Abdullah Gül was elected as the new president.

Although the Kemalist military could not prevent the AK Party from winning the presidential election, they continued to give it a hard

time, in conjunction with their cooperating civil institutions and other groups. Not long after, in 2008, at the suggestions –or maybe the order– of the military, Supreme Court of Appeals prosecutor Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya took a case to the Constitution Court to close down the AK Party. After long debates the case was dropped in the Court on a vote of 6 to 5, although the AK Party could not escape a fine for being a “focal point for anti-secular activities.” Thus at the last minute and with a bit of luck, the AK Party, which had come to power with the majority, managed to rescue itself from the state establishment.

During the ongoing and highly publicized struggle between the military and the AK Party in Turkish political life, only a handful of people noticed that another power was quietly, patiently, deeply, and determinately trying to establish a state within a state that would eventually lead to a coup attempt. These few, including this writer, noticed the growing threat and warned against it.

THE 15 JULY 2016 COUP ATTEMPT

Around 10 pm on the night of 15 July 2016, while most people were slowly getting ready to go to bed, they witnessed an unpleasant surprise: “A coup attempt that lost track of time.” The Turkish people have experienced a coup almost every ten years; thus, they had become familiar with a pattern wherein coups were committed in the early morning hours of the day. This time it was different. This time, people were able to follow every step of the coup attempt live on television and social media.

From an outside perspective, the July 15 coup attempt may seem similar to prior coups, which was in fact supposed to be the case. The coup manifesto, which was announced live on Turkish national television (TRT) near midnight, with the signature the “Peace at Home

Council,” had Kemalist associations, as “Peace in the Homeland” is Atatürk’s quote.² This coup signature was thus specifically chosen to win the support of Kemalist groups, along with a special emphasis on secularism, to justify the coup in the international arena as well. The latter effort was clearly successful when one analyses the reaction of the outside world during and after the coup attempt.

However, the July 15 coup only resembled other Turkish coups in terms of its style. Those who plotted and carried out the coup were not secularists, but in fact soldiers who were members of a religious sect. Unlike the other coups, their motivation was not to protect secularism but to obey the orders they received from their “all-knowing” leader, Fetullah Gülen. Gülen was never a supporter of secularism and was literally hated by the Kemalist groups. In fact, he was always compared to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in this sense. He was the main agent behind the legal cases that, since 2008, have aimed at eliminating Kemalist soldiers from the military. In other words, although the coup was made to look like the work of the Kemalists, it was in reality the work of a radical Islamic group.

Why did the coup plotters organize the coup on July 15, and why late into the night and not after midnight as was the case of with other coups? Several answers to these questions have come to light. The National Intelligence Organization (*Millî İstihbarat Teşkilatı*, MIT) and the judiciary had been watching the machinations of the Gülenist group within the military. They had discovered that some of the Gülenist soldiers had played a part in the military spy case conspiracy that took place in three major cities. The MIT had requested the Chief

² For the full text of the July 15 coup declaration, see: Uludağ Sözlük, <http://www.uludagsozluk.com/k/15-temmuz-2016-trt-darbe-bildirisi-tam-metni/>. For the wording and content analysis of the coup declaration see Yıldray Oğur’s column that he wrote after the July 15 coup attempt in the daily *Türkiye*.

of Staff to take legal action against a list of soldiers several times. Similar requests also came from judicial offices. However, the authorities in the General Staff did not take these requests seriously. Finally, the İzmir Public Prosecution Office decided to take a large number of soldiers into custody on 18 July 2016. In addition, the government was preparing to give an early retirement to almost 2,000 Gülenist military officers during the Supreme Military Council that was going to take place in the beginning of August. This meant that Gülen's power in the military would soon be partially weakened. For this reason, these military officers took action pre-emptively, and perhaps prematurely, with the information, confirmation and order given by Gülen based on long years of preparations.

Several “accidents,” which were bad for the coup plotters, but good for Turkish society and democracy, help to explain why the coup time had changed. A military officer who was going to take part in the attack on MIT, informed MIT about the attack but not the coup, and this information was passed to the Chief of Staff by MIT. The coup plotters, who were carefully checking key offices, accelerated the coup that was supposed to take place on July 16 at 03:00 am to the night of July 15, due to concerns that the information had been leaked. Pieces of the coup began to be put in action within the military in the final hours of daylight. The public learned about the coup attempt at around 09:30 pm after a group of soldiers with tanks blocked the Bosphorus Bridge –now renamed the Martyr-Bridge.

The coup plotters tried to invade governor's offices and police headquarters in all the cities starting with Ankara and İstanbul, and attempted to take control of the civil airports in İstanbul and Ankara and to disconnect television publications and the Internet. They attacked Turkish National Television and forced the news speaker, at gunpoint,

to read a manifesto similar to ones read in the previous coups. The manifesto stated that the coup plotters had taken over the government to protect secularism and bring peace, that all parties would be closed down, that a curfew had been placed in effect, and that the agents of the coup would adhere to Turkey's international agreements.

The July 15 coup attempt stands out in history for its use of physical violence, unlike the coups preceding it, which had relied on psychological violence, the threat of using violence, and the display of violent tools instead. The July 15 Coup attempt witnessed violence never seen before against public individuals and the civilians who fought against the coup. In this sense, the violence not only reached a peak of terror, but also reflected the terrifying characteristics of the one who masterminded it.

The coup plotters tried to assassinate Turkey's President and Prime Minister. They tried to eliminate the police forces that stood against them. They bombarded the area around the presidential complex. They would have certainly bombed the building if they had known the president was inside. The coup plotters did not hesitate to attack the parliament when some MPs of the four parties came together to stand up against them. Police and security buildings in Ankara and İstanbul were attacked with helicopters and tanks. Gülenist soldiers opened fire on thousands of civilians and terrorized them with the exploding noises made by F-16 fighter jets flying low. In other cities, the coup plotters attacked certain strategic places with armored vehicles. As a result, the July 15 coup attempt ranks as the most violent coup in the history of Turkey.

Another monumental factor of this coup attempt is the role of the citizens. As mentioned above, in the failed coup attempts of 1962 and 1963, Talat Aydemir's attempts were prevented by military interven-

tion; the public was not involved. In the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, however, civilians were the main force that fought off the coup. Millions of people took to the streets to protest and fight against the coup without any regard for their safety, political ideas or lifestyles.

Characteristics of the July 15 Coup Attempt

In order to understand the identity of a coup, one must analyze these factors: the characteristics of the leader of the coup; the ideology of the coup plotters; their organizational structure and operations; the reasons behind the coup attempt; the principles and aims of the coup plotters' statements; the internal and external connections; the plotters' allies and enemies.

All of the available data –including intelligence data, historical records, courthouse confessions, social media confessions, cryptic communications, direct and indirect messages etc.– proves that the July 15 coup attempt is the work of a familiar and recognized organization.³ Until recently this group was popularly known as the Gülen Movement, although its members refer to themselves as the Service Movement (*Hizmet Hareketi*). After the 17/25 December operations, pejorative names such as the “Gülen gang” and the “Fetullahists” (*Fetullahçılar*) were used to describe them. While I liked to call it the “Autonomous Structure,” others call this organization the “Parallel” or the “Parallel State Structure.” The supporters of the movement and the Autonomous Structure they created within the State were called Disciples or Fetullahists.

³ There is no doubt that the 15 July 2016 coup was conducted by the Gülenists. There is plenty of evidence in this regard. One of the most important pieces of evidence is the declaration of an arrested colonel. He said that “they wanted to take head before their heads were taken.” The colonel admitted that they were ordered “to act before the last castle conquered.” *Hürriyet*, (August 21, 2016).

The name Fetullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETÖ) was given to the group after the failure of the 17/25 December incidents' so called "democracy trials" (*Ergenekon* and *Sledgehammer*), and military conspiracy cases (*kumpas davaları*). These cases were all conducted by Gülenist cadres within the state bureaucracy. Some people, like myself, were unsure about the appropriateness of the term terrorist organization, as the group had engaged in no visible acts of terror. However, Turkish judiciary bodies were persistent in using this term, and drew attention to the public officers (policemen and soldiers) who were members of this organization and used weapons in its name. This determination was confirmed after July 15. The Supreme Council of Judges and Public Prosecutors (*Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*, HSYK) resolved FETÖ's basic characteristics after thousands of Gülenist jurisdiction bureaucrats were removed from office.⁴

In order to analyze the FETÖ, one must study its leader Fetullah Gülen, the members' characteristics and their relations with the organizations leader. According to the literature, leaders such as Fetullah Gülen fall under the list of cult leaders or gurus, and the groups belonging to these leaders are variously referred to as cults, closed groups, sects, factions, heretic groups, charisma groups, and utopia groups. Although they have minor differences, they have a lot in common. For this reason, with the aim of simplifying the matter, we will refer to Gülen as a guru and the FETÖ as a sect, charisma group or cult.

⁴ It has been long discussed whether or not Gülen established a terrorist organization. As no known terrorist action of it existed many people, including this author, have been reluctant to name it as a terrorist group. I have preferred to call it as an organized criminal gang. However July 15 coup attempt proved that it is a terrorist gang. A good explanation for why it is a terrorist group see the report by HSYK for dismissing Gülen gang members from the judiciary: http://www.hsyk.gov.tr/Duyuru0ku/889_hakimler-ve-savcilar-yuksek-kurulu-genel-kurulunun-24082016-tarihli-ve-201642.asp.

Fetullah Gülen: A Guru

Fetullah Gülen is a retired clerical preacher, and his organization dates back almost 50 years. Gülen formed the sect as a small group in İzmir, and developed it into a network that has spread across many parts of the world. Although Gülen tries to portray himself as other-worldly he is very much dependent on this world. He loves being in power and enjoys using his worldly power. His knowledge and interest in Islam takes the role of being the means as well as the cover for his power. This fact is strongly proven by his determination to not only inform people about religion and morals, but also to create a network that operates under his command. Although this network has caused a lot of damage, Gülen is persistent in keeping it alive and managing it, which is also a strong proof of his love for power.

It is understood that Gülen considers himself the *Mahdi* (expected religious savior), and encourages his followers to believe this too. This designation helps him control his sect and obtain their full obedience. According to religious terminologies, the *Mahdi* is the savior of mankind. He is never mistaken, never wrong. Those who disobey the *Mahdi* disobey god, thereby putting their hereafter in jeopardy.⁵ This belief may help us understand why educated people such as professors, generals, and lawyers obediently follow the path of a man whose education ended after primary school.⁶ Gülen's beliefs and the position of these beliefs in Islam belong to a theological discussion and, as such, lie outside the interest and expertise of this writer. However, Gülen's leader-

⁵ Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, (Ankara: Vadi Yayınları, 1998), pp. 253-54.

⁶ For Gülen's character and acts see the book of Latif Erdoğan who spent 40 years in Gülen group: *Şeytanın Gülen Yüzü*, (İstanbul: Turkuvaz Kitap, 2016). The first person who discovered Gülen's intelligence activities was Necip Hablemitoğlu who probably was assassinated for his book *Köstebek*, (İstanbul: Pozitif Yayınları, 2016). The book was published for the first time in 2002.

ship style and the FETÖ's characteristics can be seen in non-religious structures as well as religious structures. Thus we can make use of scientific research regarding the organizational structures, leadership skills, and followers mentioned above.

After determining the characteristics of Gülen as a guru (or invincible leader), we can now move on to cults. According to Marc Galenter, a cult is a minor religious sect that follows its own rituals.⁷ He also refers to secular cults or "charismatic groups," which can include a wide range of participants. To him, some religious sects, high-level coherent self-help groups, political action groups and some terrorist groups can be considered cults.⁸

Galenter, who has carried out a large number of empirical and theoretical researches on cults, states that such groups have 4 psychological factors:

1. The group has a common belief system.
2. The group preserves a high social coherence.
3. The members of the group are highly affected by the behavioral norm of the group.
4. Members of the group attribute charismatic (and sometimes divine) power to the group leader.⁹

Cults are usually attributed to classic or new (modern) religions in western literature. However, it is important to emphasize once more that cults can be seen in secular societies as well. Cults can also be described socially as closed structures. A closed structure is also a sign of closed mindsets. In other words, the cult or charismatic group is usual-

⁷ Marc Galenter, *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion*, 2nd Edition, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. ix.

⁸ Galenter, *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion*, p. 2.

⁹ Galenter, *Cults: Faith, Healing, and Coercion*, p. 4.

ly closed to the outside world except at times when the outside world is necessary for their aims. The closed structure constitutes an inner world for the group's members and it is this world that members live in. Any time spent in the outside world is considered a journey carried out in the name, and on the behalf of the inner world. Those operating within these structures believe that everyone on the outside is in the wrong, and that only they are on the right path.

Within these structures, all members' individuality is eliminated and they are turned into mere robot-like creatures with mechanically programmed behaviors. There are only collective aims in a cult; individual aims are only allowed as mediators for collective aims. A person's life is completely controlled in all areas including financial, physical, ideational, and even emotional. Thus, when a person joins a cult his/her character changes in time.

The abovementioned information regarding cult structures and behavioral patterns can easily be applied to the FETÖ. It is a closed, totalitarian cult formed by Gülen, who has god-like prestige and authority within the group, in which his decisions are never questioned by his followers. From the size and characteristics of the organization it can be understood that Gülen enchains his followers by influencing them; he has the talent, power and authority to manipulate and mobilize them, from the most minor to the most major actions.¹⁰

FETÖ'S STATE WITHIN THE STATE

When analyzing FETÖ's history and sociology, it starts collecting members at the earliest possible age. They not only brainwash the children that they collect, but they also take control over their religious

¹⁰ For observations how FETÖ brings up its members see Ömer Çaha, "Gülen'in Mankurtları Nasıl Azgın Kurtlara Dönüştü?," *Karar*, (10 August 2016).

beliefs, careers and social life as well. They make their followers dependent on them in every way possible, and they take this as far as controlling their marriage, which is managed with the caste system so as to control the family. One example of FETÖ's social control that has recently emerged is the case of cheating on civil service exams, university entrance exams, and so on, or taking illegal measures with the aim of placing their members in high positions.

FETÖ members exist in every sector; however, they tend to cluster in certain sectors, which can be official as well as civil or partially civil. FETÖ takes measures not simply to place workers there, but to place them in monopolistic positions, sometimes by bringing their members to every area of the field to take complete and utter control. Thus they form a strong, unyielding power circle in every institution. To explain how they achieve this, I will give an example.

Let us presume that FETÖ will try to organize themselves in X ministry, which has 50,000 employees. Since it is not possible (or meaningful) for every employee to be an FETÖ member, the aim will be to take control of the important and high positions so as to exercise complete power over the institution. These positions include the adjutant general's office, the supervision office, the IT office, and the high-level administration, including the positions of private secretary, secretary and staff car drivers. After placing their members strategically, the FETÖ takes full control of that ministry. FETÖ can then easily provide jobs to their own members and place them in any position it wants. FETÖ people can prevent administrative inquiries through the supervision office; if these inquiries move to a law organ they can prevent them from going further by means of their members there. They can also use the supervision office to eliminate any employee that poses a threat to them.

If you find this hypothetical strategy alarming, it is important to point out that FETÖ placed as an even more sinister organization inside Turkey's security and jurisdiction departments. FETÖ had been staffing inside the police institution since the early 1980s, using the aforesaid method, and giving special importance to intelligence. It is known that by 2013, FETÖ had managed to seize control over the intelligence agencies and Turkish national police of every province. The Minister of the Interior, in a statement after the victory over the July 15 coup attempt, stated that FETÖ members, as of 17 December 2013, had administered 74 national police quarters out of Turkey's 81 provinces. A similar case was discovered in the judicial bureaucracy. FETÖ had managed to take complete control over the HSYK after the 2010 referendum that sought a change in the HSYK, by using their members in the judiciary to increase their numbers in the Supreme Court.

This circle of happiness started with FETÖ member police officers inside the security forces and the intelligence agency. They collected data and documents, or made up fake documents on persons and/or groups in response to an order given inside the hierarchy to build up a criminal case against certain people and send it to member prosecutors. Most of these cases were filled with criminal charges and were dispatched to courts where FETÖ member judges were in charge. However, it is important to note that FETÖ lawyers defended some of those who were charged, probably as a smokescreen. When the trial ended and a conviction was given the victim would apply to the Supreme Court of Appeal but his/her application would then be sent to a court member in the relevant office, who was also a FETÖ member. So the whole thing was in fact futile. Thus, the FETÖ was invincible and, worst of all, they managed to operate this powerful mechanism without anyone noticing it.

FETÖ managed to invade or to take control over many civil society organizations as well. It became an important power in all parts of the media, such as newspapers, starting with *Zaman* and following with *Bugün*, *Taraf*, *Millet*, *Meydan*, *Özgür Düşünce*, *Yarına Bakış* and *Yeni Hayat*; monthly magazines such as *Sızıntı*; the weekly news magazine *Aksiyon*; and finally television channels such as Samanyolu, Kanaltürk, Bugün, and Mehtap. Having a massive presence in the media was important both for the group's operations and its efforts to gain legitimacy. The media also served to protect FETÖ members. The media worked in coordination with FETÖ police and judiciary bureaucrats during the Sledgehammer, Ergenekon, and similar cases. As a result of functioning like an intelligence agency, FETÖ managed to manipulate and use media organs that were not under its control. For example, they used the secular *Milliyet* to leak the Oslo meetings between the Turkish state and the Kurdish movement, the leftist *Radikal* for the MIT lorry raids, and the republican-Kemalist *Cumhuriyet* newspaper to indict Turkey as a supporter of ISIS.

Not only did FETÖ found associations and foundations with its members, it also followed, tried to take part in, and manipulate other prominent civil society organizations. For example, the brain behind the radical *Türk Solu* (Turkish Left) magazine that threatened Erdoğan with execution, was a FETÖ member. FETÖ bribed many Democrat, sometimes Liberal writers with high wages to write for their press, and made them feed distorted information to the public to further their aims. They wanted to carry out an operation in Turkey's main liberal foundation, the Association for Liberal Thinking (*Liberal Düşünce Derneği*) as well. However, they were unsuccessful in manipulating this oldest and most influential liberal foundation; thus they tried other methods to prove that they were liberal or supported by liberals.

At the beginning of 2010, FETÖ, which by that time had an immense national and international power network, was becoming impatient to reach the ultimate power. However, the AK Party, which unknowingly sped up the formation of the network, began to get suspicious. Erdoğan was especially uncomfortable with FETÖ's monopoly in the bureaucracy, particularly its control over HSYK and the Supreme Court. FETÖ's request that the AK Party grant more than 100 MP positions to their members in the Grand assembly in the 2011 general elections was the final straw. If Erdoğan had acquiesced, Turkey's fate would have been left in FETÖ's hands.

Once it figured out that their power area within the bureaucracy would be limited, FETÖ started operations against Erdoğan.¹¹ It was almost impossible to realize the dimension of the operations planned and conducted by FETÖ, since it was a secret structure that could turn into any shape, and assume any ideology. FETÖ's operation against the government was mainly carried out in two ways. The first and long-term strategy was to use their international influence to paint a bad picture of Erdoğan so that he would be besieged from the outside. The second strategy was to purge Erdoğan with "open secret" operations.

The first attempt to "finish Erdoğan," as FETÖ put it, was managed by leaking the official reports of the meetings between Turkey and the PKK in Oslo through *Milliyet*, which is not a FETÖ media outlet as mentioned before. Immediately following this leak, they attacked the MIT on 7 February 2012 to arrest Hakan Fidan on charges of working with terrorists; Fidan had been designated chief of the agency instead of the person that the organization wanted. However, the real aim here

¹¹ Atilla Yayla, "Bir İstihbarat Örgütü Olarak FETÖ," retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/bir-istihbarat-orgutu-olarak-feto/>.

was Erdoğan. If Hakan Fidan had been arrested, Erdoğan would have been next in line to face arrest for associating with terrorists. After recognizing this plot, Erdoğan not only ordered Fidan to physically protect himself against the FETÖ police chiefs –with weapons if necessary– he also prompted parliament to pass a law that protected the chief of MIT against probable operations carried out by judicial bureaucrats. Thus, another important step was taken in solving the Kurdish problem and in preparing a legal base for the meetings carried out with the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan.

FETÖ made a second attempt to depose Erdoğan at the end of May 2013 with the Gezi revolts, which lasted until mid-July.¹² The Gezi park revolts were initially sparked after the debate regarding the future of a park located in Taksim; specifically, whether to keep Gezi as a park or rebuild the Ottoman-era Taksim Military Barracks there. The Left, as well as Kemalist groups opposing the government took advantage of the extreme force of the police against the protestors to begin a series of protests against the government and create mayhem. The revolt spread across the country, continued for more than a month, and resulted in the deaths of 8 people. It is clear that FETÖ played an important role in the Gezi Park unrest, but the dimension and the exact position of the group's involvement has yet to be confirmed. For example, the police officers who ordered the tents of the groups that had occupied the park to be burned down, which caused an outburst against the police and government, turned out to be a FETÖ member. The chief of the police force, police intelligence, and the governor of the city turned out to be FETÖ members as well. Thus it was impossible for FETÖ not to have interfered with the events.

¹² You can find my evaluations about the Gezi Revolts at Atilla Yayla, "Gezi Park Revolts: For or Against Democracy?," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 15, No. 4, pp. 7-18.

FETÖ wanted the Gezi protest to be the civil riot that dethroned Erdoğan, but was disappointed. Erdoğan succeeded and became even stronger after the revolts. The strong pressure from the Gezi events made Erdoğan aware that oncoming conflict between the government and FETÖ was inevitable. But he was not going to simply give up the legitimate political authority to an illegitimate bureaucratic power. Erdoğan considered FETÖ's machinations as an invasion of the state and viewed the impending conflict as a new war of independence.

By this time, signs that FETÖ was becoming a state within a state were growing. FETÖ had seized control of many of the state institutions and ruled the state's bureaucracy. Determined to take a firm and effective stance against FETÖ, Erdoğan decided to close down their chain of private teaching institutions, which was a decision that many, including myself, opposed. This step was untenable for FETÖ, which considered these institutions the main source for human and financial resources. Erdoğan's move galvanized FETÖ to put an end to his reign.

FETÖ's most violent blow against Erdoğan came on 17 and 25 December 2013, just 6 months after the Gezi revolts, and was executed with police-judiciary-media cooperation. Their move was presented as an operation against corruption. On 17 December, FETÖ indicted four ministers, and on 25 December they attacked Erdoğan and his family. The signals of this attack were given months previously, for example in the daily *Taraf*, which was FETÖ's operation newspaper. Gülenist newspapers began to claim that they had documents that would "finish the government," and they openly stated that they were going to personally handcuff Erdoğan in the İstanbul Police Force Headquarters.

During the 17/25 December operations, FETÖ police, prosecutors and judiciary members played an active role along with FETÖ member journalists. A huge media campaign against Erdoğan's alleged corrup-

tion had started. This was a very smart operation since corruption was not something to be taken lightly by anyone. Those who ordered the operation were lawyers who were respected and obeyed; disobeying them meant disobeying the law. There is a common saying in Turkey that the sword of justice has no scabbard. Thus an assassination attempt was carried out against the government where the law was the gun, the lawyer was the gunman and the corruption claims was the silencer: in other words, a police-judiciary coup was attempted.

Erdoğan, who was presented to the West as a dictator, just managed to escape from the hands of FETÖ Police. If Efkân Ala, who was the Prime Ministry Undersecretary at the time, had not undertaken a wide re-assignment of police personnel and changed their place of duties, FETÖ might have succeeded on 25 December, and Erdoğan would have been arrested. At that time, few people realized that almost half of the police force were FETÖ members, and almost no one knew of the situation in the judiciary, and it would not have helped if they did since it was impossible to interfere with the judiciary bureaucrats. The July 15 coup attempt was FETÖ's last chance to use its power in the military, after the failure of all of the above-mentioned attempts, such as 7 February 2012 MIT Operation, the 2013 Gezi Revolts, and the 17/25 December police-judiciary plot, which aimed to bring down the government.

It was known that FETÖ had been organizing in the military, as in all institutions, with the aim of having a monopoly over the state. However, no one knew the dimension of the organization within the military.¹³ The military's role in the MIT lorry incidents on 1 and 19 January 2014 and in presenting Erdoğan as an ISIS supporter who

¹³ Necdet Özçelik, "How did FETO Terrorists Infiltrate the Turkish Armed Forces?," retrieved from <http://thenewturkey.org>; Y. Hakan Erdem, "Askerlerin Vaizinden Vaizin Askerlerine I-II," *Karar*, (August 14, 21, 2016).

cooperates with terrorists was an indication of FETÖ's existence within the military. The government's intelligence data had identified several FETÖ members in the military; the failure of the espionage cases organized by FETÖ in three big cities, along with the efforts of the attorneys and aggrieved lawyers who had pursued the plotters, facilitated the identification of more FETÖ members in the army.

Despite MIT and the attorneys' information transcription to the General Staff, however, the appropriate officials neglected to take action against FETÖ members, either because of negligence, or to keep professional solidarity or due to the obstruction of FETÖ members in important positions. The military jurisdiction was already in FETÖ's power, so those who would have made inquiries against the persons indicted by MIT and the civil attorneys were also FETÖ members. Seeing that no measures were being taken against the FETÖ member soldiers, the İzmir Public Prosecution Office made plans to take the FETÖ officers into custody on the 18 July 2016. What is more, news quickly spread that the Supreme Military Council meeting, which would take place at the beginning of August, planned to order almost 2,000 FETÖ soldiers to be removed from the military. This meant that FETÖ's power in the military would soon be weakened. And so FETÖ began to prepare for a coup. The general plan was ready. The public was already aware of the former coup plans such as *Balyoz* (Sledgehammer), *Ayışığı* (Moonlight), *Yakamoz* (Sea Sparkle). FETÖ members in the military and the civil preachers knew these plans and some had even participated in the preparation. These plans, which went back a few years, were revised in July 2016 and the roles and positions of each officer during the coup was determined and set forth.

However, as mentioned before a surprise turn of events caused the coup time to be changed. If things had gone according to the original

plan the coup would have taken place on 16 July at 03:00 am while everyone was asleep, and the Turkish people would have woken up to a new Turkey reigned by FETÖ. However, after one of the officers, who was part of the group ordered to attack the MIT building, informed on it, MIT noted abnormal movement within the military. The General Office was warned. After realizing that their coup plan was no longer a secret, the coup plotters decided to act instantly and thus the attempt took place on 15 July at around 09:00 pm. At first no one understood exactly what was going on, but by around 11:00 pm everyone was aware that a coup attempt was taking place.

The coup plotters attacked police buildings, TRT, and the general staff office. They succeeded in having a coup manifesto read live on TRT. The manifesto was read on behalf of the “Peace at Home Council.” It tried to present the coup as an act against radical Islam in the name of secularism. Although no one in Turkey believed it, unfortunately the western world fell for it. The coup plotters were members of a totalitarian religious group that carried prayers in their pockets. They believed that it was religiously correct to attack innocent people with the state’s weapons, and plan to assassinate the president.

WHY WAS THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT UNSUCCESSFUL?

It seems that due to many successful past coups in Turkey, FETÖ leaders thought that their coup would be successful as well. This expectation was understandable, given their power in the military, their secrecy, and the devotion and determination of their followers. However, in analyzing this coup attempt, it becomes clear that FETÖ failed to take two important factors into account: the characteristics of a successful political leader, and the dimensions of Turkey’s social development.

The Resistance of Political Will against the Coup

After the 1960 military Coup, the Prime Minister of the time, Adnan Menderes, was tried in a sham court. He was sentenced to death on the basis of false accusations and was held in prison under horrendous conditions until his execution, which took place on a gloomy September day. This situation gave rise to a trauma, especially among conservative politicians, who constantly reminded themselves of Menderes' fate. They understood that being a politician meant walking around with a death wish. For this reason, they believed that they could not resist military interventions and they never did.

It can be assumed that the FETÖ coup plotters anticipated that Tayyip Erdoğan would not behave as his predecessors had, as his character was different from those who had surrendered to the coups in the past. An important sign of this difference was Erdoğan's resistance against the military memorandum on 27 April 2007. Because of his strength in this regard, the coup plotters wanted to eliminate Erdoğan straight away. They planned to assassinate Erdoğan and his family—including his wife, children and grandchildren—while he was on holiday. They sent trained military soldiers to the hotel in Marmaris where they were staying, to carry out this assassination. It was sheer luck that Erdoğan managed to escape this attempt.

On the night of July 15, after consultation with one another, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım decided to fight against the coup even if it was going to cost them their lives. This meant that they added something that was never seen before in any coup attempt: the resistance and retaliation of political leaders. Their decision was declared and spread across the nation via media and AK party organization, inspiring and calling out for public resistance, which became the most important factor in defeating the coup.

The political resistance against the July 15 coup attempt was not limited to Erdoğan and Yıldırım. The leaders of the opposing parties also fought against the attack, with MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli being the first leader to speak out against the attack in the clearest way. He also called the Prime Minister to show his party's support. This affected the main opposing party the CHP, which also stated that they were against the coup.

This was important as it showed that the two parties were not only protecting the chosen government, but standing up for democratic politics. Their statements refuted the coup plotters' manifesto that had been published on behalf of the "Peace at Home Council," which stated that all parties were shut down.

The courage of the AK Party leaders and the democratic stance of the CHP and MHP were commendable. By resisting the coup, the AK Party broke new ground. The resistance of the leaders prompted party alignments as well; the opposing parties helped society resist the coup attempt, and helped eliminate justification for the coup. Whereas in the past coups and interventions –such as the 27 May 1960 and 28 February 1997 coups– the opposing party tried to gain power by fighting alongside the plotters instead of supporting the political actors, the democratic stance of the opposition on July 15 contributed immensely to foiling the coup.

The *Saadet* Party, the *Hüda-Par* and the *Hak-Par*, who are not represented in the parliament, also claimed a part in this, with their firm stance against the coup.¹⁴

¹⁴ The weakest support came from the HDP, which bases its policies on hatred of Erdoğan. Not only did the HDP present a weak stance against the coup attempt, they also engaged in humiliating, slanderous and hurtful accusations against those who took to the streets to fight.

Society's Riot against the Coup

Former coups in Turkey have always had supporters, even if only a small group and these were usually CHP members. The majority of the population, who opposed the coup, would either stay quiet or show their anger through democratic voting by choosing the party they wanted. Just like the politicians, the citizens were also caught in a posture of learned helplessness. The notion that coups cannot be defeated had been rooted into their conscious and was internalized. However, the Turkish public was also sick and tired of this situation. Military domination had taken away the main power of democracy and used its elected officials as mere players.

Those who had witnessed the military's brutal treatment of Adnan Menderes had wept tears of despair for years. Demirel had also been humiliated and worn down by soldiers. Turgut Özal, a political leader who was close to the public, was also exposed to many accusations by the military, from corruption to dictatorship. For years the public had internalized the fact that the leaders they chose became the military's whipping boys. All of these incidents added up to a deep sense of anger and injustice that needed a trigger.

This trigger came on 15 July 2016. A political leadership which had risen triumphantly in every election was on the job. The relationship of this leadership with the people was deeper and wider than that of all the political leaders in the country's history. What is more important, the AK Party, a political movement that carried the periphery to the center, had made Turkish society considerably richer and freer than ever before.¹⁵ Many groups that had been considered second-class citi-

¹⁵ Ünsal Çetin, in his article published in *hurfikirler.com*, (<http://www.hurfikirler.com/liberal-vizyonun-zaferi-olarak-15-temmuz/>) claims that Turkey succeeded to prevent July 15 coup attempt due to liberalization in the last 15 years in Turkey.

zens became equal in status and regained their rights under the AK Party's governance. These groups knew that if the government were overthrown with the coup, they would lose all their rights and freedom. Hence, it was only natural that these groups would not stand passively by and allow the coup to be successful.

For this reason, many citizens who heard that a coup was taking place ran to the streets even before the call of the President. After the president's appeal, millions of people of all ages, status and political identity ran to the streets to fight against the coup and protect democracy shouting "enough is enough!" and "you can win no more!" with the Turkish flag in their hands. These unarmed people single-handedly fought against machine guns, tanks, helicopters, and even planes. They ran to police headquarters, government buildings, the building of the general staff, the bridges on the Bosphorus, and the airports in order to prevent the coup from taking over. Human walls assembled in front of military barracks. Ordinary and humble people in their daily lives turned out to be heroes. They lay down in front of tanks or climbed upon them with the hope of stopping them. They blocked bullets and bombs with their chests. They seized guns from the coup plotters stating "that is mine, give it!" They shouted at the soldiers to "go back to your barracks" and shot back with slogans like, "no space for coups." This resistance from the public surprised FETÖ members and severely demoralized them. The soldiers and cadets that FETÖ had deceived and used for its own purposes were made to see sense. The public's reaction to the coup spread across the country, and the public, as well as the police who supported them brought in many coup soldiers.

This unprecedented, unique public resistance revealed the Turkish people's determination and stability, courage and insight joined with sharp wit. These unarmed people managed to render the heavily armed

soldiers ineffective through practical methods. Blocking the pallets with stones and steel rods stopped the tanks. In some places, people plugged the exhaust pipes of the tanks with their clothes to shut them down. In instance, a tank's window was painted to block the soldiers' view. Another incident involved throwing an opened fire extinguisher into the tank. In Kazan, a town close to Ankara, villagers not only invaded the *Akıncı* Air base, they also set straw and old tires on fire to decrease the range visibility of the planes in Ankara. In Malatya, oil was poured onto the air base track and cars were deliberately parked on the runway. In many places, municipalities drove heavy construction vehicles in front of the barracks and parked them there.

The Turkish people risked their lives to fight against the coup plotters. More than 240 people were killed and thousands were injured. In the aftermath of the events, during interviews the injured people humbly stated that they did what they had to do and would do it again if needed. Thus during the July 15 coup attempt the people carried out a coup on the coup plotters.

The Judiciary's Stance against the Coup

Another factor that has not been emphasized enough was the judiciary's swift actions against the coup plotters. Historically, the judiciary, like many other parts of society, tended to take a passive stance against the coups, and to obey the coup management when the coup was successful. In fact, judiciary members would visit the coup plotters to show their respect and loyalty –as in the case of Constitutional Court after the 12 September 1980 coup.

During the July 15 coup attempt the opposite happened. Despite the large number of FETÖ members, ridding the HSYK of FETÖ paved the way for attorneys and judges with different ideologies to come

to the fore. The HSYK had been restricting and pacifying FETÖ member attorneys; the FETÖ member attorneys who had carried out the bogus spy cases had recently been identified and placed under scrutiny by other attorneys who had been following the cases. In short, the judiciary was already in the process of slowly eliminating FETÖ members. This process encouraged the attorneys to fight against FETÖ. Using the coup as an opportunity, attorneys in İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir ordered the police to capture the coup plotters. This order was announced via media organs and thus further demoralized the coup plotters.

The Police's Armed Intervention against the Coup Plotters

Although both the police and military are responsible for security, and although both work under the state, there are differences between them. Responsible only for the scope of internal security, the police do not have the right to arm, as do the military. They can only use simple weapons.

After the 1960 coup the police were purposely given a lower official status than the military in the hierarchy of Turkey's bureaucratic guardianship. The police force tends to be belittled in Turkish political culture as well. The police are taught that soldiers are higher in rank and thus they cannot, should not, and will not be resisted. Hence the police were left in a state of learned helplessness in relation to the military.

During its tenure, the AK Party government had systematically, if unintentionally, increased the status of the police against the military. The number of police and the quantity of their equipment had increased. Most importantly, the reasons for degrading police officers relative to soldiers diminished. Legislative regulations were undertaken to change the rule regarding compulsory military service for police

who have been on the task force for 10 years. All of these changes made the police stronger.

FETÖ had managed to organize a massive existence within the police force since 1980. Gülen used his control over the force actively during the Sledgehammer, Ergenekon and Espionage (*Casusluk*) cases. However, the FETÖ member police became most visible in the December 17/25 operations. After realizing the dire magnitude of FETÖ's presence in the police force, the government began putting up an administrative and judicial fight against them. If the December events had not occurred, the FETÖ bloc within the force would not have been discovered and thus these officers would have joined the military during the coup and increased the plotters' chance of victory. However, the opposite happened. Many police chiefs and police officers fought against the coup plotters with small weapons. The police did not have tanks, war helicopters or planes. However, they had moral supremacy. The police had a legitimate position in the democratic and constitutional regime; their moral legitimacy and loyalty to the constitutional order prevailed over the conspirators' weapons.

The coup plotters knew that the non-FETÖ police would resist them, which is why they viciously attacked the police headquarters. They sprayed the police with bullets and bombs from planes, helicopters, and tanks. In some places they openly massacred them. However, no matter how vicious they were, they could not break police's spirit, which was further raised by the public's support at police headquarters. Indeed, the police engaged in a legendary struggle against the coup plotters that night. The task force played an especially pivotal role, since they succeeded in either nullifying the coup plotters with guns or persuading them to lay down their arms. If it had not been for the police's bravery, the coup might have succeeded.

The Media's Support for Democracy

In former coups, the media had almost always sided with and supported the military coup plotters, the 28 February coup being the best example of this. Even if we leave aside the fact that the Turkish media has always taken an opposing stance against the democratically elected governments in favor of the secular state, their opposing policies during past coups were destructive and undemocratic. Since many of those in charge of Turkey's mainstream media were raised during the Kemalist brainwashing era that internalized the justification of the coup, it would not have been a surprise if the newspapers and televisions had supported the coup.

However, here again Turkey witnessed a surprise turn of events. The main media channels all stood strong against the coup. It was one thing for the government supporting media channels to take this stance, but Hande Fırat of CNN and Oğuz Haksever on NTV literally carried out a digital war against the coup plotters along with Habertürk. Those who support the AK party naturally stood firmly against the coup with A-Haber, TV-Net, TV24 and TGRT Haber being especially effective during this stage. Thus the coup plotters were faced with a media outlet that did not stop broadcasting. The media showed that they sided with democracy by spreading the president's and other high ranking officers' messages to the public, opening their screens to politicians, and informing the public of the vicious attacks of the coup soldiers. Social media also contributed to this spread of information. The variety and decentralization of the media were important contributions to the media's stance against the coup. Despite the cruel propaganda regarding Turkey's (lack of) freedom of the press, and accusing the government of taking control of all the media organs, over the last 10 years the variety of media has increased and become multi-centered. Members of almost

every major social stratum can find a media organ that appeals to them. And with this plethora of voices, the government is criticized more severely and in wider areas than the western media thinks.

In contrast to the past, the media of 15 July 2016 overcame its uniformity and became multi-dimensional and multi-centric, which helped any coup-supporting channels to be evaluated within the framework of democracy. Any media organ that had supported the coup would have stood out to be ridiculed by society for years to come. This awareness on the part of the Turkish public was what pushed the media organs, which in the past had openly supported coups, towards a more democratic approach.

Resistance within the Military

Several days after the coup attempt, the Turkish General Staff stated that only 1.5 percent of army personnel were involved in the coup attempt. This statement may have been made to protect the reputation of the army, but it was in vain. If we are to estimate how many soldiers took part in the coup attempt we must take into account the pro rata of the authority map rather than simple cadets or officers with no authority. According to this calculation, almost half of the soldiers were coup supporters. More than half of the general staff are under arrest or suspected criminals on the run. It is said that there is an even higher degree of FETÖ organization within the ranks of colonel and below. In order to understand the scope of FETÖ's presence within the military, one has to simply look at the Prime Minister's exclamation that almost all the military schools were in FETÖ's hands. In other words, the situation is more severe than the military office presents to the public.

Despite all this, we know that there was a group of people within the army who tried to resist and eliminate the coup attempt, by acting

individually or in small groups. For example, Ömer Halisdemir's shot at the general who had been ordered by the coup leaders to seize control over the Special Forces played a vital role. Also, First Army Commander General Ümit Dündar's initial statement on television, and his subsequent press release condemning the coup, was an immense blow for the coup plotters.

There are many examples like this. Many soldiers remained loyal to the constitution, their job and oath, and actively or passively resisted the coup. Even if they did not openly confront the coup plotters, they did in some instances prevent them from arming up. In some places, the storage batteries of tanks and helicopters were removed. Loyal soldiers within the military prevented the coup plotters from getting fuel. In other instances, anti-coup officials fought with the coup plotters and seized the barricades or prevented the personnel from coming outside. All these actions, without a doubt, helped foil the coup.

THE RESULTS OF THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

What position would Turkey be in now if the coup had been successful? Would Turkey be a better democracy, or would we have become a dictatorship that deprives us of all of our rights and freedoms? To reach a satisfactory answer, we must once again look at FETÖ's mentality and the organization style, and the type of people they raise.

Many people and groups were unsuccessful in correctly identifying FETÖ's characteristics, as the organization behaved pragmatically, using whatever helped them achieve their aims. FETÖ approached religious circles and inoculated its own people with religious discourse. However, in reality, FETÖ was run as an organization that worshipped power. Granted, it had to follow Islamic terminologies and use Islamic references as the majority of their members live in

Turkey and most of the people in Turkey are Muslims. But experts are aware that FETÖ was actually trying to develop a new religion that was a mixture of Christianity and Islam. And there were also some writers who pointed out FETÖ's immoral side. A necessity and result of a new religion requires a new prophet; within this framework, Gülen must have accepted himself as the new prophet and forced his members to believe that too. As such, some of his statements and behaviors, as well as his followers' attitudes towards him are signs of this. His devotees believe him to be perfect: "the awaited," "the honorable one," and even the "messiah."

If the coup had been successful, the actual ideas, belief system and structure that obtain within the organization would have been reflected in society. The result would have been a tyrannizing regime, devoid of rights and freedom. FETÖ's regime would have been similar to Iran's.¹⁶ Although from the outside Turkey might still have appeared to have a political majority that is elected to govern, as well as a parliament, the real power would have been in FETÖ's hands. Gülen, as the ruler of the organization, would have reigned over the country with other co-preachers.

FETÖ's regime, by nature, would not have allowed basic rights and freedom. There is no need for variety in ideas and practices in a world where the ruler is the imam of the universe. Thus in a Gülenist regime plurality would not be allowed. In this regime, FETÖ would put its most devoted followers in charge to develop and promote people who think and act like them. There would only be one type of life style in the society and Gülen would have turned our world into hell in the name of heaven. Turkey managed to save itself from this terrible fate on

¹⁶ For information about the political system of İran see Atilla Yayla, *Karşılaştırmalı Siyasal Sistemler*, (Ankara: Adres Yayınları, 2015).

15 July 2016. It managed to evade the most sinister, systematic and bloody coup in its history.

The Legend of Turkish Democracy

Many people, both inside Turkey and abroad, cannot grasp just how important this coup attempt was. The reason for this is that it is still warm and many details have not yet been disclosed. However, foiling the coup attempt marks an epic and a monumental moment in our history that will be passed on to many generations to come. Several modern, democratic countries have moments in history that are either the beginning of an era or a turning point. Such events include the Glorious Revolution of 1688 in England, the War of Independence in America in 1776, and the French Revolution. Turkey's resistance to the July 15 coup attempt is just as important as these events.

During the Glorious Revolution of England, there was an internal conflict between the parliament and the throne that ended with the victory of the parliament; from then on the king became a symbolic figure. The American war of independence took place against the English. After independence, a "representative republic" was established based on separation, control, and balance of power. The French Revolution erupted between ordinary civilians and the aristocracy supported by the king, and ended with the dethroning of the monarch. Turkey's glorious resistance of July 15 now takes its place alongside these historical events.

FETÖ burst onto the scene as an opponent to the democratic regime but with an illegitimate governing request. Bureaucracy considered the power based on the organization stronger than the elected power and tried to make that power reign in the country. In this sense, Turkey's Glorious Resistance is similar to the English Glorious Revolu-

tion in terms of power division and conflict. Americans formed democracy by fighting for independence against the English, who were of the same culture. Turkey's Glorious Resistance was not only resistance against a typical coup, but it was also resistance against a domestic colonizer that had powerful international connections. Targeting all the state buildings and especially the parliament along with the government offices was a sign that FETÖ was attempting an invasion. The Turkish people stopped this invasion attempt with its Glorious Resistance.

Turkish democracy now has a legendary revolution. The people of this country, without regard for any differences, chose democracy and showed the world that they deserved it. This event is as important to Turkey as the formation of the Turkish republic itself. From now on, any emphasis on the republic without reference to democracy would be incorrect and unfair.

Strengthening Turkish Society

Coup attempts are usually carried out against the government and the state. However, coups also attack civil society. Coups tend to humiliate the public and shatter their confidence. They also damage the society's reputation in the world. Hence, the coup attempt in Turkey was also an attack on Turkish society. As such, the coup plotters attacked unarmed civilians; Gülen's reference to the millions of people who were happy with the victory as "fools" can be taken as evidence of his attitude toward Turkish society.

Every open society includes people of different languages, races, lifestyles, beliefs, etc. Living together in harmony in these societies naturally brings about responsibilities, and simply having common laws is not enough, as naïve liberals would like to believe. Common values

and symbols are necessary, including the love of one's country, and the sense of sharing a common fate.

The Turkish people's Glorious Resistance against the July 15 coup attempt helped us remember this. Unarmed people ran out to the streets to fight the coup plotters with the aim of protecting the country. Millions of people on the street, regardless of identity or political agenda, simply waived a single flag: The Turkish Flag. Because of the coup attempt, the notion of patriotism strengthened. Many people stated on social media that this was the first time that they had waved a flag or sung the national anthem with all their heart and soul. Those who took part in the Glorious Resistance were all there for a single reason: If Turkey were invaded and divided, and if democracy were demolished, we would all share the same fate.

Strengthening Democracy

They say that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger. The July 15 coup attempt aimed to kill democracy, but under fire democracy only became stronger. It defeated a well-planned, vicious coup attempt supported by strong inner and outer factors and conducted by a heavily armed military group.

Turkey's success in overcoming the July 15 coup attempt will affect every participant and every aspect of Turkish democracy. Thus it is vain to think that Erdoğan and the government will devolve into a more authoritarian system. If this were to happen, then the military/bureaucracy would have won. The July 15 coup attempt was defeated with solidarity, uniting even AK Party opponents. The government is aware of this. As such, after the coup attempt, the government began to get together with the opposing parties, providing them with information and taking their advice into consideration. President Erdoğan

constantly repeated that no politician, including himself, will never be the same after July 15 and that a new style and tone must be embraced. Spokespeople for the ruling party underlined the fact that they consider this new era in politics a chance, and will do their best to protect it.

A softer approach to politics and an emphasis on common traits is also becoming visible amongst the opposing parties. The CHP, for example, had opposed the coup and its leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu openly stated this during the night of the coup. The CHP organized two major demonstrations in İstanbul and İzmir where other party members were invited and took part. Kılıçdaroğlu also participated in the demonstration that took place on 7 August in İstanbul with more than 5 million attendants, and gave a speech. An important point that must be noted is the softening of the CHP's statements. The CHP's habit of constantly referring to the president as a dictator in the past was not based on any legitimate reasons anyway, but after the July 15 coup attempt it was obvious that these accusations had no basis. The president, who they had described as a dictator, saved himself and his family from the coup plotters at the last minute and by sheer luck. It would be strange to call someone who struggled to save the police and judiciary from invasion rather than taking control, a dictator.

The MHP also contributed to the consolidation of Turkish democracy by adopting a more constructive policy after the coup attempt. Due to its own internal affairs, the MHP had recognized the existence of FETÖ and its games earlier than the CHP. And thus they were by the government's side the minute the coup attempt took place. I think this solidarity played a vital role in the defeat of the coup. The MHP is currently playing its part to eliminate FETÖ during the state of emergency in the country.

Opening the Path to State Reconstruction

It is obvious that Turkey is not a third world country, since it is capable of providing basic services for its people. However, the transparency, pluralism, and efficiency of the country are open to debate. FETÖ's existence in the state is a major problem of its own.

It is known that FETÖ has created a secret state within the state. This means that the organization formed a structure amongst the state officials that was composed of FETÖ members, who work for FETÖ instead of the legitimate political authority, and use the state authority and equipment for their own aims instead of serving the state. Since it is clear that a secret state structure like this can damage both democracy and the internal affairs of the country, it must be eliminated. This elimination means protecting and strengthening democracy, and reconstructing the state.

Currently the state is going through a reconstruction with the support of the opposing parties, who are continually informed of the changes. The military schools have been shut down. Cadet schools have been collected under the roof of The National Security University. Force Commanders have been put under the control of the Ministry of National Defense, and the general staff has been put under the control of the Prime Minister. It can be said that these are steps to make democracy stronger. Taking cadets at a young age not only prepares them to become victims of criminal organizations like FETÖ, it also inculcates them in a process of brain washing and imposes a certain career path upon them. Before choosing a uniformed occupation, a prospective cadet should spend time in civilian life so that he can be aware of different ideas and styles, and form his own idea and character through different sources.

The claim that putting the Force Commanders under the control of the Ministry of National Defense would break the chain of command

is unsubstantial. Since a junta, rather than a chain of command carried out the 1960 coup, the army tightened the chain of command themselves. But the 1980 coup occurred inside the chain of command. And although the 2016 coup attempt did not completely take place inside the chain of command, it was carried out by officers who controlled at least 50 percent of the authority in the army. In this case, increasing civil authority over the military is inevitable. Whether regular or retired, all soldiers must know and accept that their superiors are the politicians. Besides, being under the control of the Ministry of National Defense does not mean that the minister will constantly interfere with operations of the military. However the civilians must have this authority and opportunity.¹⁷

Some commentators believe that the failure to base assignment and employment within the state on qualification is one of the factors that sparked the coup. This evaluation and claim is partially correct, but it is not the main problem. Firstly, it is very difficult to define what qualification is. Secondly, requiring qualification would not prevent FETÖ members from getting jobs since it is possible that the FETÖ members in the state cadres had the right qualifications in order to carry out the work and tasks they were assigned correctly.

The problem is based more on political obedience. FETÖ is an organization that aims to gain power through secret methods instead of using the open and legitimate methods of the democratic process. The problem occurs when government officials pledge their loyalty to the organization instead of the political system.

¹⁷ About reforms that need to be done in the Turkish army, see the report by the retired Turkish officer Yusuf Alabarda, "TSK'nın Reformu: Sivil-Asker İlişkilerinin Dönüşümü İçin Bir Yol Haritası," *SETA Analiz*, No. 162, retrieved from <http://www.setav.org/tsknin-reformu-sivil-asker-iliskilerinin-donusumu-icin-bir-yol-haritasi/>.

The government had tried to decrease the number of Kemalists in the main public institutions by increasing qualified employment. Later, they used the same method against FETÖ. Now they aim to eliminate FETÖ completely from state institutions. Thus government officers are being employed to close the gaps. At this point it is important to be careful of two factors. The first one is increasing the personnel stock – and thus the state stock– with unnecessary employment of government officers. The second important factor is to focus on diversity, which means disregarding religious, ethnic and cultural differences while employing personnel. Within this framework, it is important to not leave Alawite citizens out of public offices.

Strengthening Democratic Political Culture

Defeating the July 15 coup attempt will no doubt contribute to strengthening Turkey's democratic political culture. Firstly, politicians and the public have broken the cycle of their learned helplessness against military coups, as this presumed state of helplessness was one of the main advantages of any potential coup plotters. The tables have now turned. From now on, politicians and the public will easily and courageously fend off any coup attempts. They also have more practical knowledge and experience on how to resist against a coup with or without weapons. This is no doubt a vital advantage for the Turkish public in any future coup attempts.

Secondly, after defeating FETÖ's coup attempt, the information that emerged and the actions taken place to clean out FETÖ carry important messages for any religious and/or secular groups that wish to intrigue with the state: the state belongs to everyone; no single person or group can claim monopoly over it. All state office positions are open to every citizen. No one can be alienated from a position due to his or

her language, religion, nationality, gender, socio-economic status, or group identity, etc. State officers are obliged to work within the unity of the administration, use the authority given by the constitution and law, and do the task given to them. Political loyalty must come above any group loyalty. An organization bureaucracy cannot overshadow democratic procedures. Those who do not like a politician can try to oust him or her through democratic means, and must enter politics through legitimate and open methods.

FETÖ's July 15 coup attempt helped democratic culture and behavior in society to revive. There is a difference between opposing the ruling party's government and opposing Turkey. FETÖ not only opposed the government, it opposed Turkey, and went as far as considering it the enemy. On the other hand, many parties inside and outside the parliament, along with millions of citizens, who are known for their opposition to the ruling party, stood up for democracy during the struggle. For example, Celal Şengör, an academic, and Nihat Genç, a writer, are opponents of both the AK Party government and Erdoğan, and yet they have stated that this coup attempt will not prevent them from partnering up with the government to protect the country's democracy.

After July 15 a large part of Turkish society stood watch in the streets in order to prevent any other attempt. Called as "democracy watch," this process continued for at least a month after the coup attempt in many cities and provinces and it can also be considered a source of lessons on democracy. These guard duties strengthened Turkey's democratic culture. Especially considering the fact that most of those who took part had never participated in such guard duties, it seems clear that sensitivity towards democracy among the populous is spreading.

CONCLUSION: TOWARD A CONSOLIDATED DEMOCRACY

Democracy, said Winston Churchill, is the worst form of government, except for all the others. Democracy is not putting the best in charge, or finding the best solution to every problem as it is usually touted. In other words, we cannot say that everything anti-democratic is bad and that everything democratic is good. Democracy does not need to cover every part of life, and it shouldn't. Democracy can only be evaluated within the political framework and in comparison with other political systems.

The only way to keep democracy alive and strong is through understanding it realistically instead of exaggerating it. If a common life means making public decisions, and common problems require public solutions, allowing those who will be affected by the results of the decisions and solutions to participate is more ethical than alternative methods, which is why we prefer democracy to anti-democratic systems.

If we are to approach the issue from a Popperian perspective, we will see that democracy is the best method to eliminate insufficient and unpopular administrators with minimum cost. Gaining and losing power in democracy occurs based on rules. These are called rules of procedure, and these rules are the most important aspect of a democracy in the long term. Eliminating bad administrators through polls instead of wars is not only low-cost, it is also civil. On the other hand, in order for democracy to thrive and to carry out what is expected of it, it has to be limited like all political governance systems. In other words, it should not invade all areas of life.

Democracy is a system that is arduous and costly; it requires social actors to be patient and rule-abiding. Democracy does not only have a roof, but it also has a foundation. If the roof is constitutional structure, then the foundation is political culture and behavior codes. Democracy

cannot be established anytime and anywhere. And it cannot develop if there is no suitable political culture. Thus, the outcome of democracy is not only based on suitable constitutional reforms, but also social experience and history.

We look up to stable democracies and we want that for our country too. However, as a result of our historical negligence, we tend to fall into the trap of believing that a stable democracy can be formed at no cost. In the wake of the July 15 coup, it can be seen that attaining a stable democracy is only possible by paying serious prices with revolutions, civil wars, chaos and inconsistencies.

As noted above, countries that are considered to have stable democracies, such as England, America, and France, all have revolutions in their history. These revolutions have penetrated both these countries' political systems and their culture at large. When looking from Turkey's perspective, we of course have monumental events in our history that we look up to. For example, the establishment of Turkey's first constitution in 1876 and the opening of its parliament, and the elimination of the one party dictatorship on 14 May 1950 can be considered proud moments. Our history now adds 15 July 2016 to these monumental dates. From now on we can call this historical moment the Glorious Resistance.¹⁸

Turkey's July 15 Glorious Resistance, in my view, is one of the most important events in the history of democracy. From now on the Turks have a legendary event which they will pass on from generation to generation for centuries. You can be sure that the July 15 Glorious Resistance will make an immense contribution to Turkey's path for a better democracy.

¹⁸ In another article of mine I explained in more detail why the July 15 event should be considered as a revolution: "Turkey's 15 July Revolution," retrieved from <http://the-newturkey.org/turkeys-july-15-revolution/>.

TURKEY'S CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND THE REACTIONARY COUP: SEGREGATION, EMANCIPATION, AND THE WESTERN REACTION

Şener Aktürk*

INTRODUCTION AND THE ARGUMENT

The failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016 in Turkey, poses a conceptual puzzle for political scientists and historians of democracy. When the Turkish people's massive civilian mobilization and resistance defeated the coup, very different explanatory frames and narratives began to compete in order to make sense of what had happened and why, both in the media and among the scholarly community.

In this article, I argue that Turkey went through a civil rights movement, or a "silent revolution,"¹⁹ under the AK Party governments between 2002 and 2013, in which the legally sanctioned segregationist measures and categorical inequalities that had structured the country's political and social order since the founding of the Re-

¹⁹ "Silent Revolution" is the title the AK Party itself uses to refer to the democratic reforms it has undertaken. See the party's publication with the same title, *Sessiz Devrim: Türkiye'nin Demokratik Değişim ve Dönüşüm Envanteri (2002-2012)*, (2013), retrieved from www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/sessiz_devrim.pdf

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public were gradually abolished. Most importantly, this silent revolution allowed for the public expression of religious observance and ethno-linguistic distinctiveness, thus elevating the status of previously denigrated religious conservatives and ethno-linguistic minorities to the level of equal citizenship. Removal of the headscarf ban in education, public service, and elected office, which affected roughly sixty percent of Turkish women,²⁰ and the beginning of publicly-funded broadcasting and education in Kurdish, Zaza, and other minority languages, are the most spectacular examples of this egalitarian movement.

The political capital that the AK Party accumulated as a result of these reforms cannot be overstated. Religious conservatives and ethno-linguistic minorities, which together make up a large majority of the electorate, were emancipated from their positions as second-class citizens.

The moral high ground that the AK Party gained as a result of these emancipatory reforms helps to explain its successive victories in eleven national electoral contests, including local, national, and presidential elections and referenda, indicating a level of popularity which is unprecedented in Turkish political history.

²⁰ According to a widely acclaimed study by Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, Turkish women who did not cover their heads were 27.3 percent in 1999 and 36.5 percent in 2006. Thus, women who covered their heads made up 72.7 percent in 1999, and 63.5 percent in 2006. Çarkoğlu and Toprak also subdivided those who covered their heads into variants of headscarf alone (*eşarp*, *başörtüsü*, *yemeni*, worn by 48.8 percent in 2006), full body veil (*çarşaf*, or chador in English, worn by only 1.1 percent in 2006), and turban (worn by 11.4 percent in 2006). These are the figures I have in mind throughout this article, whenever I refer to “roughly sixty percent” of Turkish women wearing headscarves. See Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, “Din, Toplum ve Siyaset,” *TESEV*, (November 16, 2006), retrieved from http://tese.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Degisen_Turkiyede_Din_Toplum_Ve_Siyaset.pdf, p. 24.

The AK Party's radical reforms initially elicited a visceral, negative reaction from some secularists and nationalists, but the necessities of electoral competition led to a gradual democratic coevolution of the main political parties, evidenced in the sporadic cooperation between AK Party, the MHP, the CHP, and the HDP on some key issues over the years. However, these reforms posed a far more existential challenge to two clandestine and illegal organizations that use violent means to terrorize society –namely, the Kurdish socialist PKK and the messianic religious cult of Fetullah Gülen.²¹ The AK Party's reforms, which allowed for public expressions of religious observance and ethno-linguistic expression deprived the Gülenists and the PKK of their *raison d'être*, respectively. The all-out offensive that the PKK launched against Turkey in July 2015, and the Gülenist attempt at a military coup in July 2016 can be interpreted as the most violent reactions²² to-date against the non-violent civil rights movement Turkey has been engaged in under the AK Party governments.

²¹ PKK was illegal all along, and the parallel hierarchy of the Gülenist cult, consisting of “older brothers/sisters” giving orders to public servants in defiance of their legal superiors, was likewise clandestine and illegal all along. Moreover, the Gülenist cult was considered a terrorist organization in Turkish courts starting in late 2015.

²² In a similar vein, Halil Berktaş refers to the PKK's offensive and the failed coup as counterrevolutionary attempts, a designation, which is in conformity with the AK Party's self-identification as the agent of a “silent revolution” (see the first endnote), an interpretation that I mostly agree with. Nonetheless, I think “civil rights movement” is a better label for the democratic, gradual, legal, and non-violent emancipation process in Turkey, compared to the concept of a revolution, which has been frequently used and abused to refer to violent, anti-democratic coups by ideological minorities, such as the Bolshevik “Revolution.” See Halil Berktaş, “Suruç'un Ardından (2) PKK'nın Yeni Karşı-devrimci İç Savaşı,” *Serbestiyet*, (July 24, 2015), retrieved from <http://serbestiyet.com/yazarlar/halil-berktay/surucun-ardindan-2-pkknin-yeni-karsi-devrimci-ic-savasi-157112>; Halil Berktaş, “İkinci Cumhuriyet'ten, Yeni Türkiye'ye,” *Serbestiyet*, (August 2, 2016), retrieved from <http://serbestiyet.com/yazarlar/halil-berktay/ikinci-cumhuriyetten-yeni-turkiye-708272>.

THE PRIMARY CONTRADICTION OF TURKISH POLITICS: SECULARIST²³ SEGREGATION AND THE EXCLUSION OF ETHNO-RELIGIOUS EXPRESSION

Most political communities are founded upon and defined by one or more key contradictions. For example, Anthony Marx analyzed Brazil, South Africa, and the United States on the basis of “race,” explaining why and how the white elites’ conflict and cooperation over the exclusion of blacks after slavery defined politics in South Africa under apartheid and segregationist southern states in the United States, and comparing these scenarios to the different dynamics underpinning the lack of segregation after emancipation in Brazil.²⁴ Michelle Alexander discussed American history in terms of three periods, corresponding to the slavery (until 1865), segregation (until the 1960s), and incarceration (present-day) of African-Americans citizens.²⁵ As such, the segregation and subordination of African-Americans, and the struggles to manage, soften, or overcome the racial fault line, indicate the primary contradiction of politics in the United States.

What has been the primary and defining contradiction of politics in modern Turkey? I previously argued that Turkey was “founded on the basis of an Islamic mobilization against non-Muslim opponents”

²³ I chose the term “secularist” to describe a particularly narrow interpretation of secularism, which defines it as a way of life that even encompasses individuals’ choices in their private affairs. This is markedly different than the meaning of “secular” as referring to the political condition of separation between religion and state. The overwhelming majority of Turks, including most religious conservatives, are “secular” in this conventional sense, as they support the separation of religion, state, and the legal system.

²⁴ Anthony W. Marx, *Race and Nation: A Comparison of the United States, South Africa, and Brazil*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

²⁵ Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color-blindness*, (New York: The New Press, 2012). Especially see the introduction where she discusses the eerie parallels in social control directed particularly against black males during slavery, segregation, and throughout the “Drug Wars,” which disproportionately targeted black males, presenting a historical parallel that the black inmates also noted.

during the “National²⁶ Struggle” (*Milli Mücadele*, 1919-1922), “but having successfully defeated these non-Muslim opponents, [the] political elites chose a secular and monolingual nation-state model,” which “led to recurrent challenges of increasing magnitude to the state in the form of Islamist and ethnic separatist movements,” providing the primary contradiction of Turkish politics.²⁷ What role, if any, Muslim identity and Islam as a religion should play in the public sphere and political order of the Republic is the primary question facing modern Turkey. I consider Algeria and Pakistan,²⁸ the latter as “the Muslim state,” and also Israel, “the Jewish State,” to be struggling with a similar challenge,²⁹ to which each country has devised its own particular “solution.”

Turkey’s approach to religious identity and religiosity in the public sphere was modeled on the French Third Republic; arguably, however, Turkey went beyond the French prototype in excluding and even criminalizing the religious observances and symbols of the majority religion, Islam, from official platforms including the legislature, the executive branch, the military, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy. (On the other hand, Turkey was certainly not Albania, where the Communist state went on an offensive to eradicate religion throughout society.) Thus, a bifurcated political and social structure emerged in Tur-

²⁶ “National” is a debatable translation for “Milli” but I used it for the sake of simplicity, abiding by the prevailing usage in almost all translations. “Milli” can also be translated as “religious” instead, since “millet” denoted religious community in 1919-1922. For a critical take on this translation, see my article and book cited in the following endnotes.

²⁷ Şener Aktürk, “Religion and Nationalism: Contradictions of Islamic Origins and Secular Nation-Building in Turkey, Algeria, and Pakistan,” *Social Science Quarterly*, Vol. 96, No. 3, (2015), pp. 778-806.

²⁸ Aktürk, “Religion and Nationalism.”

²⁹ Şener Aktürk and Adnan Naseemullah, “Carving Nation from Confession: Haven Nationalism and Religious Backlash in Turkey, Israel, and Pakistan,” *APSA 2009 Toronto Meeting Paper*, available at <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1449143>.

key with *de facto* segregation between religious and secular sectors, where the majority—the more religious conservative populations—remained and even thrived in the “periphery,” but the political, economic, and bureaucratic “center” was the preserve of the secular sector.³⁰ Upwardly mobile people from the religious conservative periphery regularly migrated, literally and figuratively, to the secular center, but in this process they either genuinely abandoned or carefully concealed any behavior that might be indicative of religiosity. In short, secularist representatives (elected) and bureaucrats (appointed), including, most importantly, the military elite and the judiciary, governed a country that remained significantly religious-conservative by most international standards.

There are many symbolic and substantive indicators of the exclusion of religious conservatives from the peaks of political, military, and judicial power. Roughly half of Turkish men attend weekly Friday prayers, and more than sixty percent of Turkish women wear some kind of headscarf.³¹ In stark contrast to this “conspicuously” religious demography, after Turkey adopted a secular form of government in the 1920s, none of the first seven presidents were known to attend the weekly Friday prayers, which can only be performed collectively in public, and cannot be performed individually.³² This did not prevent

³⁰ The formulation by Edward Shils, where he argued that every society has a center and a periphery, has been famously applied to the case of Turkey. See Edward Shils, “Centre and Periphery,” in *The Logic of Personal Knowledge: Essays Presented to Michael Polanyi*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), pp. 117-131. For the application of this framework to Turkey, see Şerif Mardin, “Center-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?,” *Daedalus* (1973), pp. 190-169.

³¹ See endnote 2 for Çarkoğlu and Toprak’s famous study on religion, society, and politics in Turkey, which is the source of my estimates for the prevalence of headscarves.

³² Mustafa Kemal Atatürk attended Friday prayers during the National Struggle, and in the early years of the Republic in the 1920s, when Islam was still the religion of state.

secularist news outlets to speculate, for example, that İsmet İnönü was deeply but secretly religious,³³ which supports my argument that one could only be “secretly” religious in the high echelons of elected office, be it military, judiciary, or bureaucratic. Similarly, as late as 1982, bureaucrats reportedly prevented military coup leader and seventh president Kenan Evren from participating in the Friday prayers that preceded his wife’s funeral.³⁴ After more than six decades, the eighth president Turgut Özal (1987-1993) was the first one known to attend Friday prayers, and known to be religiously observant in general.

A similar but much better known and politically controversial situation prevailed with the status of First Ladies. None of the spouses of the first ten presidents, including Özal’s, wore a headscarf. In fact, once the AK Party came to power in 2002, the tenth president and ardent secularist Ahmet Necdet Sezer (2000-2007) purposefully chose not to invite the spouses of the members of the AK Party government to official receptions, in order to prevent women wearing headscarves from entering the Presidential Palace and other public spaces of political significance. Eleventh president Abdullah Gül’s tenure (2007-2014) was the first time in more than eight decades that Turkey had a First Lady wearing a headscarf.

Not only were beards for men and headscarves for women strictly forbidden in the military; even female relatives of military personnel wearing headscarves could not participate in social gatherings such as weddings and graduations in the military zones. Six of the first seven presidents, who presided for 54 of the first 64 years of the Republic,

³³ “Din İstismarı Yapmayan Dindar: İsmet İnönü,” OdaTv, (May 13, 2011), retrieved from <http://odatv.com/din-istismari-yapmayan-dindar-ismet-inonu--1305111200.html>.

³⁴ “Devlet Başkanı Namaz Kılar Mı Hiç!,” AHaber, (October 30, 2011), retrieved from <http://www.ahaber.com.tr/gundem/2011/10/30/devlet-baskani-namaz-kilar-mi-hic>.

were former military officers.³⁵ The only civilian president during this long period was the one overthrown by a military coup, persecuted in a show trial, and dealt a death sentence, which was converted to a prison sentence due to his advanced age.³⁶

The headscarf has both symbolic and substantive significance, as it has prevented more than half of all Turkish women from access to education, public service, and even elected office, as the case of Merve Kavakçı demonstrated in 1999.³⁷ To a lesser degree, a similar situation was the case for some religiously observant men whose beards and attire prevented them from public service and education due to the official, secular dress codes. Since far fewer men disobey or deviate from the secularist dress codes than women in Turkey, such discrimination did not attract as much attention. In short, the laws and regulations against many forms of religious observance, including religiously inspired dress codes, had the effect of creating a nationwide segregation between religious and secular lifestyles at all levels of the state apparatus, and in the “public sphere” (*kamusal alan*) permeated by state functionaries, including university personnel, reaching a political fever pitch as one as-

³⁵ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, İsmet İnönü, Cemal Gürsel, Cevdet Sunay, Fahri Korutürk, and Kenan Evren were former military officers. The only exception among the first seven presidents was Celal Bayar (1950-1960).

³⁶ Celal Bayar, the only civilian president among the first seven presidents, was also known as a staunch secularist and an ardent follower of Atatürk who stated that, “loving Atatürk is a form of worship.” Although Bayar and the DP he led received the religious conservative vote, and had a more liberal understanding of secularism than their predecessor the CHP, Bayar was also known not to perform the Islamic daily prayers. “Said Nursi’nin Celal Bayar’a İlk Sorusu: Namaz Kılıyor Musun?,” *Risale Haber*, (March 20, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.risalehaber.com/said-nursinin-celal-bayara-ilk-sorusu-namaz-kiliyor-musun-205899h.htm>.

³⁷ The controversy surrounding Merve Kavakçı’s attempt to enter the parliament as an MP wearing the headscarf in 1999 is very well known. She was promptly forced to leave the parliament building, and soon officially expelled from parliament, even though she was an elected representative. See her book on this issue: Merve Kavakçı İslam, *Headscarf Politics in Turkey: A Postcolonial Reading*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

cended to the peaks of the executive branch, the legislature, the military, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy.

THE KURDISH QUESTION AS A DERIVATIVE OF THE SECULARIST-RELIGIOUS FAULT LINE

Most scholars, including experts and specialists on ethnic identity politics, often fail to appreciate, or overlook, the direct connection between the secularist-religious fault line in Turkish politics and the Kurdish question. Moreover, some even go as far as to identify the Kurdish question as Turkey's primary problem. On the contrary, I argue that the Kurdish question can be defined as a secondary problem that is a derivative of the primary problem of Turkey's secularist-religious fault line. As Senem Aslan demonstrated in her comparison of Berber and Kurdish dissent in Morocco and Turkey, respectively, the primary reason behind the Kurdish question has been the high level of state intrusion and the Kemalist social engineering project in Turkey that aimed to change the ordinary citizens' way of life, including their customs, dress codes, and gender relations.³⁸ Moreover, the Kurdish way of life under attack by the social engineering project of the state, correctly or incorrectly, was perceived as part of the Islamic tradition. Thus, it was not Kurdish ethnicity *per se*, but the Kurds' traditional way of life, which was strongly influenced by religious mores, that was seen as a threat to be eradicated. Zafer Toprak, the founding director of the Atatürk Institute at Boğaziçi University, explicitly argued that, "Atatürk had a religion problem, not a Kurdish problem."³⁹

³⁸ Senem Aslan, *Nation-Building in Turkey and Morocco: Governing Kurdish and Berber Dissent*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

³⁹ Zafer Toprak, "Atatürk'ün Kürt Sorunu Değil Din Sorunu Vardı," *Radikal*, (April 9, 2012), retrieved from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/yazarlar/ezgi-basaran/ataturkun-kurt-sorunu-degil-din-sorunu-vardi-1084339/>.

The Kurds identify themselves, and are perceived by others, as a particularly religious Islamic ethnic group.⁴⁰ Many Islamic religious orders (*tarikats*) in Turkey have been identified as having had Kurdish spiritual leadership in the past or even at present.⁴¹ Moreover, Kurds have been identified as the “backbone” of the political Islamist movement in Turkey.⁴² As Ümit Cizre⁴³ and Burhanettin Duran⁴⁴ have argued, Islamist intellectuals and politicians affiliated with the Welfare Party, the predecessor of the AK Party, were very open to reforming the nation-state in Turkey in order to accommodate the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic demands of the Kurdish minority. Despite the critical role of Islamic and Islamist thinking on the Kurdish question, Islamic perspectives on ethnicity, nationalism, and especially Muslim ethnic minorities in Muslim-majority societies are significantly understudied as Muhittin Ataman has emphasized.⁴⁵ Against this political historical background of the exclusion of Islamic and ethnic expression, the AK Party was founded in August 2001 and swiftly came to power in a landslide election victory in November 2002, which was soon followed by reforms that led to the elevation of religious conservatives and ethnic minorities from second-class citizenship to symbolic equality, which I discuss in the next section.

⁴⁰ Vahdettin İnce, *Kürdinsan*, (İstanbul: Beyan, 2016). Also see the next five footnotes.

⁴¹ Müfit Yüksel, *İslamsız Kürdistan Hayali ve Ortadoğu*, (İstanbul: Etkileşim, 2015).

⁴² Fehmi Çalmuk, *Erbakan'ın Kürtleri*, (İstanbul: Metis, 2001).

⁴³ Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, “Kurdish Nationalism from an Islamist Perspective: The Discourses of Turkish Islamist Writers,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (1998), pp. 73-89.

⁴⁴ Burhanettin Duran, “Approaching the Kurdish Question via *Adil Düzen*: An Islamist Formula of the Welfare Party for Ethnic Coexistence,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 18, No. 1, (1998), pp. 111-128.

⁴⁵ Muhittin Ataman, “Islamic Perspective on Ethnicity and Nationalism: Diversity or Uniformity?,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2003), pp. 89-102.

A “SILENT REVOLUTION”: THE END OF SEGREGATION FOR TURKEY’S RELIGIOUS CONSERVATIVE CITIZENS

The AK Party was founded in August 2001 and came to power in the general elections of November 2002 with a landslide, receiving 34 percent of the popular vote. More significantly, the AK Party would increase its vote share to approximately 50 percent over the following years, and went on to win four more general elections in 2007, 2011, and twice in 2015, as well as the local elections in 2004, 2009, and 2014, and the presidential election in 2014 (Table 1).

**TABLE 1. ELECTORAL HEGEMONY OF AK PARTY
(PERCENTAGE OF THE NATIONAL VOTE), 2002-2015**

	AK Party	CHP	MHP	DEHAP-BDP-HDP
2002 (general)	34.3	19.4	8.4	6.2
2004 (local)	41.7	18.2	10.5	5.2
2007 (general)	46.6	20.9	14.3	5.6
2009 (local)	41.7	18.2	16.0	5.7
2011 (general)	49.8	26.0	13.0	6.6
2014 (local)	38.4	23.1	16.0	6.2
2014 (presidential)	51.8	38.4*	38.4*	9.8
2015 (general)	40.9	25.0	16.3	13.1
2015 (general)	49.5	25.3	11.9	10.8

(*) The CHP and the MHP had a joint candidate in the 2014 presidential elections.

The AK Party’s electoral record of uninterrupted victories over nine national elections is unprecedented. Equally significant, Turkey’s second largest party, the CHP, usually received only about half as many votes as the AK Party. Finally, and most significantly, the AK Party’s voter base is far more dispersed across all the provinces and regions of Turkey, unlike

the CHP, the MHP, and the BDP-HDP, which are concentrated in particular regions. For example, in the 2011 general elections, the AK Party surpassed 10 percent in all 81 provinces, including more than a dozen Kurdish-majority provinces. In contrast, the CHP failed to garner 10 percent of the vote in 15 provinces, and the MHP failed to garner 10 percent of the vote in 22 provinces. Finally, the Kurdish socialist BDP-affiliated independents failed to garner 10 percent of the vote in 66 provinces. In short, the AK Party has built and maintained an electoral hegemony in Turkish politics, at least since 2007. Why and how the AK Party amassed such unprecedented popular support cannot be explained without reference to the historic reforms that the party implemented, which emancipated religious conservatives⁴⁶ and ethnic Kurdish citizens from second-class citizen status. Non-Muslims, who are electorally marginal (approximately 0.2 percent), and who were also treated as second-class citizens as I have discussed at length elsewhere,⁴⁷ also benefited from the AK Party's historic reforms in the laws regarding non-Muslim foundations – reforms which facilitated the restitution of some non-Muslim properties seized by the state decades ago.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ The largest Turkish nationalist opposition party, the MHP, also has an identity story and self-perception as being comprised of second-class citizens in the “Turkish” state. The party’s founder and leader for almost three decades, retired colonel Alparslan Türkeş, was tried and imprisoned in 1944-1945 in the “racism-Turanism” trials, and was also imprisoned for over four years after the 1980 military coup. Many MHP members were executed after the 1980 coup. Intriguingly, these and other similar episodes breed the sense of being “second-class” citizens among Turkish ultranationalists. The MHP’s electoral base can be considered conservative, and the party supported the removal of the headscarf ban and other similar initiatives to end the segregation of religious conservatives.

⁴⁷ Şener Aktürk, “Persistence of the Islamic Millet as an Ottoman legacy: Mono-religious and Anti-ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood,” *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 6, (2009), pp. 893-909.

⁴⁸ More symbolically, an Armenian columnist was appointed chief advisor to the Prime Minister, and another Armenian journalist was nominated and elected (twice) as a member of parliament from the AK Party.

Both demographically and symbolically, the most consequential and significant reforms that the AK Party undertook were the removal of discriminatory and segregationist measures against religious conservatives, especially women wearing headscarves. In 2007, the vehement criticism of the opposition against the AK Party's candidate for presidency, Abdullah Gül, was in part based on his wife, Hayrünnisa Gül, wearing the headscarf, and Gül's opponents and supporters alike were acutely aware of this fact. Thus, the AK Party's resounding victory in the 2007 elections, which was immediately followed by Gül's election to the presidency in the parliament, was also a popular mandate for the removal of the headscarf ban, which was certainly in place in Turkey's educational institutions, judiciary, military, police, the public sector at large, and even in most of the private sector.⁴⁹

It is an unforgettable stain on the European Union's (EU) record that it did not pressure Turkey, in any consequential or substantial way, to remove the segregationist laws that prevented more than half of Turkish women from getting education or employment, or seeking elected office. Even worse, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), in a nearly unanimous ruling (16 in favor, one against) in the case of Leyla Şahin versus Turkey (2004), upheld the headscarf ban. Thus, not only did they do nothing in favor of emancipation, but the EU and the ECHR arguably contributed to justifying and prolonging the segregationist laws against religious conservatives in Turkey.

The first attempt to remove the headscarf ban brought the AK Party to the brink of closure in 2008. The constitutional amendment

⁴⁹ Dilek Cindoğlu, "Headscarf Ban and Discrimination: Professional Headscarved Women in the Labor Market," *TESEV*, (2011), p. 5: "The headscarf ban applied in institutions of higher education, in the public sector, and as this research has shown, in the private sector...", retrieved from http://teseov.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Headscarf_Ban_And_Discrimination.pdf.

to remove the headscarf ban in education was proposed by the AK Party and the MHP, and approved by a super majority in the parliament in February 2008, with 411 voting for (presumably AK Party and MHP members, and a few more) and 103 members voting against (presumably all the CHP and DSP members, and a few more).⁵⁰ The CHP members derided the legislation to remove the headscarf ban as Turkey's "dark/black revolution" (*kara devrim*), explicitly comparing it to the Orange Revolution in Ukraine, and depicted the headscarf as "a political symbol and uniform that became the flag of imperialism."⁵¹ Moreover, MPs of the CHP and the DSP appealed to the Constitutional Court in order to annul the constitutional amendment, and the court indeed did annul it in June 2008, with nine judges voting in favor and two judges voting against the annulment. Furthermore, the month after the passage of the constitutional amendment, in March 2008, the Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals opened a case to close down the AK Party for being "the focal point of anti-secular activities." In July 2008, six judges voted in favor and five judges voted against the closure of AK Party, but since such a decision requires a qualified majority, the party narrowly escaped being shut down.

This episode of intense political and judicial drama around the headscarf ban, which affected the civil and political rights of roughly sixty percent of Turkish women, was very instructive. It demonstrated that the main opposition party, the CHP, with only one-fifth of the popular vote and about one-fifth of the parliament, could effectively

⁵⁰ "Türban Meclis'ten Geçti," *Milliyet*, retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/Siyaset/HaberDetay.aspx?aType=HaberDetayArsiv&KategoriID=4&ArticleID=238997&PAGE=1>; and "411 El Kaosa Kalktı" (headline), *Hürriyet*, (February 10, 2008), retrieved from https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/tr/8/83/H%C3%BCrriyet_Gazetesi_10_%C5%9Eubat_2008.jpg.

⁵¹ "Türban Meclis'ten Geçti," *Milliyet*.

block the removal of the headscarf ban, despite a four-fifths majority in the parliament voting in favor of removal, and a popular opinion that was around seventy percent against and only around twenty percent in favor of the ban.⁵² This was in great part due to the “Republican” secularist hegemony in the judiciary, which had a decades-long history.⁵³ As Ceren Belge argued, “far from leading a rights-revolution, the Constitutional Court of Turkey became renowned for its restrictive take on civil liberties”⁵⁴ over many decades.

After the constitutional referendum that took place on 12 September 2010, the legislature and the executive branch acquired greater influence on the selection of high ranking judges, including those of the Constitutional Court, and this change gradually broke the secularist hegemony in the judiciary. Similarly, the AK Party’s third and most impressive landslide victory in 2011 (Table 1) consolidated its status as the dominant party in Turkish politics. Thus, in October 2013, the AK Party was sufficiently emboldened to abolish the headscarf ban in the public sector, except for the military, judiciary, and the police, which are governed by their own organizational statutes. As a result, four AK Party MPs entered the parliament wearing their headscarves following their return from pilgrimage to Mecca. This watershed in political history was met with great enthusiasm among the ranks of the AK Party, but had a lukewarm if not critical reception by the CHP.

⁵² Çarkoğlu and Toprak, “Din, Toplum ve Siyaset,” p. 71. As of 2006, only 19.4 percent supported the headscarf ban in the universities, whereas 71.1 percent opposed it. Likewise, only 22.3 percent supported the headscarf ban for public servants, whereas 67.9 opposed it.

⁵³ Ceren Belge, “Friends of the Court: The Republican Alliance and Selective Activism of the Constitutional Court of Turkey,” *Law & Society Review*, Vol. 40, No. 3, (2006), pp. 653-692.

⁵⁴ Belge, “Friends of the Court,” p. 653.

In the following years, the AK Party implemented other reforms that opened up the ranks of the judiciary⁵⁵ (2015) and the police⁵⁶ (2016) to women wearing headscarves. I would argue that these reforms, which opened up political office and employment opportunities for the majority of the Turkish women for the first time, are comparable to the Civil Rights Movement and the Voting Rights Act (1965) in the United States, which had both symbolic and substantive significance for the advancement of African Americans. Curiously, Freedom House did not increase Turkey's democracy score in light of these historic reforms, as one would expect, and instead, it assigned a "downward trend arrow" for Turkey's democratization in 2014.⁵⁷ More strikingly, Polity IV dramatically lowered Turkey's democracy score from 9 in 2013 to 3 in 2014, although more than half of the women gained the right to run for public office in late 2013.⁵⁸

THE EMANCIPATION OF KURDISH CITIZENS

The AK Party's reforms allowing for the expression of Turkey's long-suppressed ethno-linguistic diversity, which later became known as the "Kurdish Opening" or the "Democratic Opening," included the inauguration of publicly-funded Kurdish language broadcasting on state television, followed by the introduction of Kurdish and five other

⁵⁵ "Hakim ve Savcıya Başörtüsü İzni Çıktı," *Milliyet*, (June 1, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/hakim-ve-savciya-basortusu-izni-gundem-2067366/>.

⁵⁶ "Artık Polislerde de Başörtüsü Serbest," *Sabah*, (August 27, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/08/27/artik-polislerde-de-basortusu-serbest>.

⁵⁷ "Turkey - Country Report," *Freedom in the World 2014*, retrieved from <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2014/turkey>.

⁵⁸ For purposes of comparison, note that Turkey's polity2 score was 7 in 1984 and 1997, two years of extraordinary military tutelage. "Polity IV: Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets," Annual Time-Series, 1800-2015, Excel Series, column K ("polity2"), retrieved from <http://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html>.

minority languages as elective courses in public schools. These reforms were truly revolutionary in the Turkish context, since merely claiming that “Kurds” exist could lead to a prison sentence, as happened even to a former minister in the government in the 1980s.⁵⁹ AK Party’s reforms were implemented against such a political historical background.

In June 2004, state television TRT 3 began broadcasting in Arabic, Bosniak, Circassian, Kurdish, and Zaza for a limited time, and in January 2009, TRT inaugurated an entire new TV channel, TRT 6 (later renamed TRT Kurdi), broadcasting full time in Kurdish seven days a week. Starting in the 2012-2013 academic year, a new elective course entitled, “Living Languages and Dialects” was instituted in public schools in order to facilitate the teaching of indigenous minority languages on demand, and as of 2015, the Abkhaz, Adyghe, Georgian, Kurdish, Laz, and Zaza languages were being offered. I previously discussed these reforms in detail and argued that the concatenation of three critical factors in the AK Party motivated and propelled the implementation of these reforms: Kurdish electoral support for the AK Party, combined with an Islamic multiculturalist discourse as the primary justification that convinced the non-Kurdish majority of the need for the reforms, armed with a hegemonic majority in the parliament that could overcome opposition by other political parties and unelected components of government (the military, the judiciary, and the bureaucracy).⁶⁰

I disagree with those who argue that the EU played the critical democratizing role in this area, by emphasizing that the Turkish govern-

⁵⁹ Şener Aktürk, “Regimes of Ethnicity: Comparative Analysis of Germany, the Soviet Union/Post-Soviet Russia, and Turkey,” *World Politics*, Vol. 63, No. 1, (2011), pp. 115-164.

⁶⁰ Şener Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

ment undertook the most momentous reforms allowing for the expression and support of Kurdish identity (TRT Kurdi, elective Kurdish courses in public schools, removal of the Turkish pledge of allegiance) in the 2009-2013 period, many years after Turkey's membership negotiations with the EU were frozen (in 2005), and when EU membership no longer ranked among the top concerns or priorities of the government, the popular media, or the broader public. Conversely, the EU did nothing to restart or expedite Turkey's membership process, despite the Turkish government's historic reforms during the 2009-2013 period.

In October 2013, the Turkish pledge of allegiance (*Andımız*), which began with "I'm a Turk" and ended with "how happy is the one who says, 'I'm a Turk'" (a famous saying of Atatürk), was abolished as part of the AK Party's democratization package, which also included the removal of the headscarf ban as discussed earlier. Prior to the reform, all elementary school students in Turkey were obligated to recite the pledge of allegiance every morning, a source of long-standing grievance held by many anti-Kemalists of various stripes, including ethnically assertive Kurds. The pledge of allegiance reform, along with others such as the restitution of the original Kurdish names of villages, allowing Kurdish names for newborns, and the like, which addressed specifically Kurdish grievances, provided the most momentous, positive change in state policies toward ethnic diversity in Turkey's history.

More significantly, these reforms turned the PKK into "terrorists without a cause," since all the major state policies criminalizing the Kurdish language and culture were annulled, and the state even began to actively support the revival of the Kurdish language and identity through public resources, a move similar to the ethnically-specific affirmative action policies found in some other countries. The AK Party's reforms were motivated by an Islamic multiculturalist discourse and

implemented by an Islamic inspired political party, which included many religious conservative Kurdish MPs. This makes the AK Party leaders comparable to leaders of the civil rights struggle in the United States such as Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X, who used religious discourse (Christian and Islamic, respectively) for the advancement of African American rights.

SECULARIST AND NATIONALIST RESENTMENT IN OPPOSITION: BETWEEN REACTION AND RECONCILIATION

By being the only party that staked its existence on lifting the headscarf ban, the AK Party captured the moral high ground in what was arguably the most pivotal issue of Turkish politics. The AK Party took this chance in response to its electorate, which had been actively demanding the removal of segregationist measures against religious conservatives for decades. As long ago as the 1950s, several political parties became the conduit of similar demands for ending segregation, the Democratic Party (DP) holding a place of prominence among them. However, the major opposition parties that currently dominate Turkish politics, including the Kemalist CHP, the nationalist MHP, and the Kurdish socialist BDP (later renamed as HDP), never prioritized the removal of the headscarf ban as one of their top goals.

From an electoral demographic standpoint, such a stance is somewhat inexplicable, since at least half of the women who vote for the MHP and the Kurdish socialists wear a headscarf, and about thirty percent of the women who vote for the CHP also do so. The explanation of the CHP's visceral stance in favor of the headscarf ban and its effective opposition to its removal is based on their understanding of secularism, or *laïcité*. In the case of the BDP (the HDP's predecessor), the party's Kurdish socialist ideology, originally inspired by the Soviet

experience, and its identification with the Bolshevik Revolution, may have suppressed any pressures that the party may have felt from its female electorate. Unlike the CHP, which supported the ban, and the MHP, which voted with AK Party for its removal, the Kurdish socialists remained bystanders on the sidelines during the dramatic showdowns over the headscarf ban.

Once the headscarf ban was finally removed in October 2013, all the major parties maintained that they had been against the ban all along. However, in the next general elections in June 2015, the CHP nominated 103 women candidates,⁶¹ but not a single one of them was wearing a headscarf. In the following November 2015 general elections, the CHP nominated 125 female candidates, none of whom wore the headscarf. In a country where roughly sixty percent of women wear the headscarf, the CHP's failure to nominate a single woman with a headscarf among its more than one hundred candidates in the two elections following the removal of the headscarf ban is stunning, and also reveals the party's continuing exclusionary attitude. In contrast, the AK Party nominated dozens of women wearing headscarves, and 19 of them were elected into the parliament in the very first elections after the ban was lifted in June 2015.⁶²

The opposition parties nonetheless made limited overtures at reconciliation by tacitly accepting most aspects of these reforms. For example, the MHP did not engage in a sustained effort, either through popular mobilization or judicial channels, to reverse the "Kurdish Opening"

⁶¹ "Partilerin Kadın Milletvekili Adayı Sayıları," *Birgün*, (September 19, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/partilerin-kadin-milletvekili-adayi-sayilari-89969.html>.

⁶² At the time this article was being written in September 2016, the AK Party had 34 women elected in its parliamentary caucus, including 20 who wore a headscarf, and 14 who did not. See: <<https://www.akparti.org.tr/kadinkollari/milletvekilleri>>.

or to deprive Kurdish, Zaza, Arabic and other minority languages of public support. In contrast, the CHP appealed to the judiciary at multiple critical junctures to annul and reverse the AK Party's attempts to lift the headscarf ban in different sectors. However, the CHP took a seemingly reconciliatory turn in early 2014, when it nominated some religious conservatives as its candidates in the local elections, including Mansur Yavaş (candidate for the mayor of Ankara) and İhsan Özkes (candidate for the mayor of Üsküdar); these candidates performed far better than CHP candidates in previous elections.

Most prominently, the CHP and the MHP jointly nominated a religious conservative, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, former Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as their presidential candidate in 2014. İhsanoğlu received 38.4 percent of the vote, an unprecedented electoral peak for a non-AK Party politician, but still insufficient to force a second round against Tayyip Erdoğan, who was elected president by receiving 51.8 percent of the vote in the first round. Despite the moderate successes of the reconciliation with religious conservatives in 2014, the CHP abandoned this path in 2015, and instead sought a rapprochement with the Kurdish socialist HDP. Prominent religious conservative CHP candidates such as İhsanoğlu and Özkes severed their affiliation with the party; Özkes resigned from the CHP in protest, whereas İhsanoğlu joined the MHP and was twice elected as its MP from İstanbul in 2015. The HDP's reaction to the AK Party's reforms was more convoluted because of this party's relationship with the PKK, and the existential crisis of the latter due to these reforms, which will be discussed in the next section.

Other reforms are necessary to secure the remaining rights of religious conservatives and ethno-linguistic minorities such as the Kurds. However, the reforms that have been implemented so far are most like-

ly irreversible. Once the Democrats allowed the call to the prayer to be read out in Arabic in 1950 (as it is in all other Muslim countries), no other government or military dictatorship in later decades could ban the Arabic call to prayer again. Thus, it is unlikely that future governments will be able to ban Kurdish or exclude women wearing headscarves from Turkey's public institutions.

Some reformist Turkish governments in the past, including the AK Party, had tactically cooperated with the Gülenists and even negotiated with the PKK, thinking that these groups could be allies in the emancipation of ethnic and religious expression in Turkey. However, these tactical alliances were paradoxical in nature, because a comprehensive solution that emancipated ethnic and religious expression through legal and peaceful channels would eradicate the grievances that the Gülenists and the PKK had exploited in their recruitment, and would pose an existential threat to the survival of the Gülenists and the PKK as such.

THE EXISTENTIAL CRISIS OF THE PKK AND ITS REACTIONARY OFFENSIVE, JULY 2015

Every terrorist organization, and organized crime in general, starts out by exploiting a real grievance. Prohibition in the United States (1920-1933) created an opportunity space for the mafia to flourish in order to organize the illegal production, transportation, and sale of alcohol. In post-Soviet Russia, the state's failure to enforce contracts and protect property rights created an environment conducive for the meteoric rise of the Russian mafia in the early 1990s, which led Vadim Volkov to describe the mafia as "violent entrepreneurs."⁶³

⁶³ Vadim Volkov, *Violent Entrepreneurs: The Use of Force in the Making of Russian Capitalism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

Republican policies that criminalized the public expression of religiosity and ethnic identity in Turkey created an environment conducive for the growth of criminal and violent organizations such as the PKK and the Gülenist cult. It is not coincidental that the PKK and the Gülenists experienced meteoric growth under the 1980 military dictatorship and in the 1990s, two periods when the expression of ethnic and religious expression was particularly suppressed. The PKK relied on the denial of Kurdish identity by the state in its recruitment of young Kurds as terrorists. Thus, the AK Party's recognition of Kurdish identity, followed by explicit state support for Kurdish language and culture, posed an existential threat to the PKK. With Kurdish and Zaza being offered in public schools and broadcast with public funding, the PKK could no longer make a credible argument that the state is aiming to eradicate Kurdish identity. On the contrary, *TRT Kurdi* and the religious conservative Kurdish MPs and members of the AK Party arguably represented a more authentic, indigenous, and deeply rooted Kurdishness than the Bolshevik-inspired, socialist, and avowedly secularist if not atheist version of Kurdishness propagated by the PKK. The militarized one-party regime that the PKK and the PYD sought to establish in southeastern Turkey and northeastern Syria, respectively, can be described as a "belated Kurdish Soviet experiment."⁶⁴ Thus, hundreds of thousands of Kurdish dissidents escaped from the territories that came under PYD control in Syria, and sought refuge in Turkey and the Kurdish Regional Government in Iraq.

Starting in October 2014, the PKK began to experiment with creating a similarly militarized one-party regime within Turkey. In 6 Oc-

⁶⁴ Şener Aktürk, "The PKK and the PYD's Kurdish Soviet Experiment in Syria and Turkey," *Daily Sabah*, (January 27, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2016/01/27/the-pkk-and-pyds-kurdish-soviet-experiment-in-syria-and-turkey>.

tober 2014, the HDP Central Committee called on “our peoples to protest ISIS and the AK Party government” regarding the siege in Kobani.⁶⁵ HDP and PKK sympathizers terrorized the cities and towns of southeast Turkey, publicly lynching dozens of their political opponents, mostly religious conservative Kurds.⁶⁶ The case of Yasin Börü, a 16 year-old who was chased while distributing free meat to the poor as part of an Islamic charity, and was tortured to death by PKK sympathizers, gained some national recognition. A psychologist found the nature of these collective lynchings against PKK opponents to be comparable to the genocide in Rwanda on a micro scale.⁶⁷ However, the international media not only failed to acknowledge these incidents as an ideological pogrom by PKK sympathizers against their opponents, they even distorted the facts in order to depict it as a conflict between the Turkish police and the Kurdish minority.⁶⁸ The lynchings of those who opposed the Kurdish socialist project of the PKK are similar to the Ku Klux Klan’s lynchings of blacks in the American South in order to reproduce the Jim Crow regime.

The AK Party’s expansion of Kurdish rights had been met with increased PKK violence in the past as well, especially after the AK Party gained the electoral support of a clear majority among Kurdish voters in 2007, which posed an existential challenge to the PKK’s

⁶⁵ See the direct tweet from the HDP central committee, which is the source for the quotation: <https://twitter.com/hdpgenelmerkezi/status/519175390443474944>.

⁶⁶ Yıldray Oğur, “PKK’nın Cadı Avı,” *Türkiye*, (October 10, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/yildiray-ogur/582643.aspx>.

⁶⁷ Medaim Yanık, “6-7 Ekim Olaylarının Sosyal Psikolojisi,” *Sabah*, (October 18, 2014), retrieved from <http://setav.org/tr/6-7-ekim-olaylarinin-sosyal-psikolojisi/yorum/17631>.

⁶⁸ “Riots in Turkey Kill 19 over Failure to Aid Besieged Syrian Kurds,” *Newsweek*, (October 8, 2014), retrieved from <http://europe.newsweek.com/riots-turkey-kill-19-over-failure-aid-besieged-syrian-kurds-276115?rm=eu>.

claim of being the sole representative of the Kurds.⁶⁹ As Güneş Murat Tezcür argued, “democratization will not necessarily facilitate the end of violent conflict as long as it introduces competition that challenges the political hegemony of the insurgent organization over its ethnic constituency.”⁷⁰ Thus, it is not surprising that PKK attacks increased after the AK Party introduced major reforms to expand ethnic Kurdish expression.

The PKK initiated its most recent and violent offensive on July 11, 2015, with the KCK (an umbrella organization of the PKK) declaring that it is unilaterally ending the ceasefire because of the hydroelectric “dams with a military purpose” that the government was allegedly building.⁷¹ This was followed by the editorial of Bese Hozat, the chairwoman of the KCK, who declared that “the new process is a Revolutionary People’s War” in the leading newspaper affiliated with the PKK.⁷² As historian Halil Berktaş argued, it would be more appropriate to term the PKK’s offensive a “counterrevolutionary war,” as it sought to overthrow a government that had granted the most substantial rights for Kurds in Turkish history.⁷³ Although the long term, structural cause of the PKK’s attacks were the AK Party’s reforms that sought to eradicate the ethnic grievances that the PKK exploited, the short term cause may have been to protect the one-party dictatorship that

⁶⁹ Güneş Murat Tezcür, “When Democratization Radicalizes? The Kurdish Nationalist Movement in Turkey,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 47, No. 6, (2010), pp. 775-89.

⁷⁰ Tezcür, “When Democratization Radicalizes?,” p. 775.

⁷¹ “KCK Ateşkesin Bittiğini Açıkladı: Bundan Sonra Tüm Barajlar Gerillanın Hedefinde Olacaktır,” *T24*, (July 11, 2015), retrieved from <http://t24.com.tr/haber/kck-ateskesin-bittigini-acikladi-bundan-sonra-tum-barajlar-gerillanin-hedefinde-olacaktır,302608>.

⁷² Bese Hozat, “Yeni Süreç, Devrimci Halk Savaşı Sürecidir,” *Özgür Gündem*, (July 14, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.ozgur-gundem.com/yazi/133642/yeni-surec-devrimci-halk-savasi-surecidir>.

⁷³ See footnote 3.

the PYD had established in northeastern Syria. Between the June and November 2015 elections, the HDP lost more than one million votes, corresponding to 2.3 percent of the national electorate (Table 1), a loss which most observers attributed to the unpopularity of the PKK's offensive.

Nonetheless, after the elections, the PKK intensified its attacks and turned to urban warfare by digging trenches around several Kurdish towns, which led to the mass flight of hundreds of thousands of Kurdish civilians from these urban centers. Kurdish masses demonstrated their resistance to and disapproval of the PKK's offensive by not following the PKK's call for a popular uprising. They simply did not participate in the PKK's activities, showing their disapproval by non-violent, civil disobedience to the PKK's demands. The Turkish army inflicted very heavy losses on the PKK in this struggle, and the PKK increasingly resorted to suicide bombings in urban centers that killed 285 civilians, including eleven children, as of March 2016.⁷⁴ In sum, by early 2016, the PKK's reactionary offensive against Turkey and their effort to create a militarized, one-party regime in southeast Turkey had utterly failed.

THE EXISTENTIAL CRISIS OF THE GÜLENIST CULT AND ITS REACTIONARY COUP, JULY 2016

The removal of the discriminatory measures against religious conservative citizens posed an existential threat to the Gülenist cult as their clandestine hierarchy (based on "older brothers/sisters," explained further below) and criminal activities were previously justified as a neces-

⁷⁴ "Kaç PKK'lı Öldürüldü, Kaç Şehit Verdik? 265 Günlük Bilanço!," *Internet Haber*, (March 28, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.internethaber.com/kac-pkkli-olduruldu-kac-sehit-verdik-265-gunluk-bilanco-1579254h.htm>.

sity in order to survive under an illiberal secularist regime persecuting public expressions of religious piety. Members of the Gülenist cult were instructed to practice an extreme form of public dissimulation to pass as non-religious, irreligious, or even anti-religious people, in order not to attract the ire of the secularist regime. According to one high-ranking defector from the Gülenist cult, these practices of public dissimulation (*takiyye*) included drinking alcohol and swimming in a bikini (for women),⁷⁵ and avoiding any outward expressions of Islamic religiosity such as keeping a beard for men or wearing a headscarf for women.

Who are the members of the Gülenist cult? One can be considered a member if one is taking orders from a Gülenist “older brother/sister” (akin to a spiritual commissar) assigned to him/her, instead of following the orders of his/her superior in the legal hierarchy, such as the military chain of command, as he/she should. This is what is meant by a “parallel state,” with its own illegal hierarchy, which is now implicated in major criminal activities within the military, judiciary, police, and other state institutions.

The Gülenists are implicated in several different kinds of criminal activities currently under investigation. Arresting and prosecuting their opponents in show trials constitute the most publicly known crime in which the Gülenists are implicated.⁷⁶ Mass cheating through

⁷⁵ Hüseyin Gülerce, “FETÖ’cüler TSK İçinde Kendilerini Nasıl Gizledi?,” *Star*, (July 19, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.star.com.tr/yazar/fetoculer-tsk-icinde-kendilerini-nasil-gizledi-yazi-1126597/>.

⁷⁶ The best English language exposé of the Fetullah Gülen cult and its role in the coup in Turkey was published as this article was going into production: Dexter Filkins, “Turkey’s Thirty-Year Coup,” *The New Yorker*, (October 17, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/10/17/turkeys-thirty-year-coup>. For a detailed criticism of a stereotypical show trial and the central role of the Gülenists who orchestrated it, see Dani Rodrik, “The Plot against the Generals,” (2014), retrieved from www.sss.ias.edu/files/pdfs/Rodrik/Commentary/Plot-Against-the-Generals.pdf.

the distribution of the answer keys of national entrance examinations⁷⁷ for universities, military academies, and employment in public service constitute another type of crime, which resulted in perfect or near perfect test scores for many Gülenists, and disadvantaged millions of ordinary citizens who took these examinations over many years and even decades, in the case of the military academies.⁷⁸ The wiretapping and videotaping of the private conversations and affairs of thousands of people in order to blackmail them constitutes yet another kind of crime in which the Gülenists are implicated.⁷⁹

The Gülenists are also implicated in the assassinations of anti-Gülenist scholar Necip Hablemitoğlu,⁸⁰ and the famous Turkish-Armenian intellectual and journalist Hrant Dink. Nedim Şener, a prominent journalist who wrote books and articles about the role of the Gülenists in the murder of Hrant Dink, was put in prison as a result of a show trial, which, he argues, was orchestrated by the Gülenists.⁸¹

The leading role of the Gülenists in the coup attempt of July 15 is corroborated by numerous testimonies of leading officers in the Turkish army, both those who participated in the coup, and those who re-

⁷⁷ Yıldırım Oğur, "279,889 Kişinin Hakkına Girmek," *Türkiye*, (February 3, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/yildirim-ogur/578046.aspx>.

⁷⁸ Yıldırım Oğur, "803 bin 875 Kişinin Hakkına Girmek," *Türkiye*, (March 27, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/yazarlar/yildirim-ogur/585464.aspx>.

⁷⁹ Saygı Öztürk, "Telekulaklar Hep Fethullah'a Çalıştı," *Sözcü*, (August 10, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2016/yazarlar/saygi-ozturk/telekulaklar-hep-fethullaha-calisti-1346442/>.

⁸⁰ Soner Yalçın, "Basılmamış Kitabın Yazarını Öldürdüler," *Sözcü*, (December 18, 2002), retrieved from <http://www.sozcu.com.tr/2014/yazarlar/soner-yalcin/basilmamis-kitabin-yazarini-oldurduler-682160/>.

⁸¹ "Dink Cinayetinde Gülen Parmağı," *Sabah*, (April 5, 2014), retrieved from <http://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2014/04/05/dink-cinayetinde-gulen-parmagi>.

sisted it.⁸² Dani Rodrik argued that the testimony of Hulusi Akar, the chief of staff of the Turkish military, may itself be sufficient for the extradition of Fetullah Gülen from the United States,⁸³ since Akar explicitly stated that the coup plotters offered to put him on the phone with Gülen, “our opinion leader.”⁸⁴ Testimonies pointing to the Gülenist takeover of the military through purges of leading anti-Gülenist officers *predate* the coup attempt, and these criticisms were usually made by staunch *opponents* of the AK Party government, two critical facts that lend additional credence to these claims. Colonel Judge Ahmet Zeki Üçok had already prepared a list of Gülenist officers back in 2009, but was imprisoned for 4 years and 9 months by Gülenist judges.⁸⁵ Both Colonel Üçok, and the Gülenist Lieutenant Colonel Levent Türkkan, who took the Chief of Staff hostage during the coup attempt, concur that the Gülenists were already stealing and distributing the answer key of the military schools’ entrance examinations as far back as 1986, thirty years before the coup attempt.⁸⁶

Since their societal support is marginal, Gülenist coup plotters tried to woo the secularists to their side by emphasizing secularism and the

⁸² “Yaver Levent Türkkan İtiraf Etti,” *Hürriyet*, (July 22, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ve-orgeneral-akarin-yaveri-40155810>.

⁸³ Dani Rodrik, “Is the U.S. behind Fethullah Gülen?,” (July 30, 2016), retrieved from http://rodrik.typepad.com/dani_rodriks_weblog/2016/07/is-the-us-behind-fethullah-gulen.html.

⁸⁴ “Hulusi Akar’ı, Fethullah Gülen’le Görüştürmek İstedi,” *Habertürk*, (July 24, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1271015-hulusi-akar-fethullah-gulenle-gorusturmek-istedi>.

⁸⁵ Ahmet Zeki Üçok, “O Dönem Hazırladığım Liste Maalesef Bugün Tulum Çıkardı,” *Habertürk*, (July 25, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1271387-ahmet-zeki-ucok-o-donem-hazirladigim-liste-maalesef-bugun-tulum-cikardi>.

⁸⁶ See “Yaver Levent Türkkan İtiraf Etti” and Ahmet Zeki Üçok, “O Dönem Hazırladığım Liste Maalesef Bugün Tulum Çıkardı” in previous footnotes.

principles of Atatürk in the coup manifesto they broadcasted from TRT during the coup attempt. Yet they utterly failed in this effort, as there was absolutely no popular mobilization in favor of the coup. The assassination attempt against president Erdoğan, which occurred on the night of the coup, was planned in minute detail, since the assassins even knew the exact rooms of the vacation resort where the police protecting Erdoğan were staying, and they indeed stormed those rooms, killing one policeman and torturing the rest, who remained in critical condition.⁸⁷ Erdoğan barely survived by leaving the resort slightly prior to the attack. He then connected to a national TV station through Facetime, where he urged the nation to resist the coup attempt. Masses of citizens rushed to the main avenues, and secured critical locations such as the main airport and TV stations, blocking the coup plotters' advance. 240 people were killed that night while fighting against the coup plotters.

THE WESTERN MEDIA'S ISLAMOPHOBIC MISPERCEPTIONS AND AMBIGUOUS REACTIONS TO THE COUP

The reporting of the Western media regarding the coup attempt and the heroic civilian resistance that defeated it in Turkey was disappointing at best. One Turkish website critical of the Western media coverage already has a "Wall of Shame" that brings together some of the anti-democratic "news" stories and opinion columns regarding the failed coup in Turkey.⁸⁸

The primary cause of the Western media outlets' misleading coverage of the failed coup was their inability or unwillingness to accept the

⁸⁷ "Metin Yılmaz'dan Şaşırtan Marmaris Detayı," *Türkiye*, (August 5, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.turkiyegazetesi.com.tr/gundem/392105.aspx>.

⁸⁸ "Coups Facts: Wall of Shame," retrieved from <https://coupfacts.com/wall-of-shame/>.

fact that mostly religious, conservative masses in a predominantly Muslim country *saved democracy* by fighting against an emergent military dictatorship. This inability or unwillingness is based on the Islamophobic assumption that religiously-inspired masses in Muslim countries, unlike religiously-inspired African American Protestants or Mexican Catholics, for example, are inherently anti-democratic. On the contrary, there have been many religiously-inspired movements, Christian and Muslim alike that have fought historically against totalitarian communism, racial segregation, and secular military dictatorships. Just as the activists of the Civil Rights Movement often sang an originally religious hymn, “We Shall Overcome,” in their struggle for equality, some Turks were also yelling religious slogans in their struggle for equality in resisting the coup attempt.

The misrepresentation of Turkish politics by the standard bearers of the Western media such as the *New York Times* (US), the *Economist* (UK), and *Der Spiegel* (Germany), hit an all-time low in their coverage of the coup attempt, failing to recognize that an existential threat against democracy had been thwarted. 249 people, including 173 civilians, 62 policeman, and 5 soldiers, sacrificed their lives while defending democracy against the coup plotters.⁸⁹ All of the political parties in the Turkish parliament condemned the coup attempt, and the leaders of the AK Party, the CHP, and the MHP spoke out against the coup on the night of July 15-16. Putschist pilots bombed the parliament. At a minimum, one would expect democratic media outlets to publish a principled and unconditional condemnation of the coup plot and a celebration of the Turkish people who defeated it, including President Erdoğan, who mobilized the nation against the coup attempt.

⁸⁹ “FETÖ Darbe Girişiminin Acı Tablosu: 240 Şehit,” Anadolu Ajansı, (July 20, 2016), retrieved from <http://aa.com.tr/tr/info/infografik/1456>.

Instead of celebrating the heroism of the citizens, who took to the streets in order to defend their democratically elected government, however, the *New York Times* chose to belittle if not smear them by tweeting that, “those who took to streets in Turkey were mostly yelling religious slogans in support of Erdogan not democracy itself.”⁹⁰ What the *New York Times* failed to understand or deliberately obscured is that ordinary people shouting any slogans –religious or secular– in support of a democratically-elected leader against an ongoing military coup, and risking their lives by doing so, should be considered a courageous democratic stance in and of itself.

President Erdoğan was the key leader who first called on the nation to resist the coup plot. This did not have to be the case. For example, it was Boris Yeltsin who assumed the leadership of the movement that defeated the coup against his incumbent political rival, Mikhail Gorbachev, in August 1991, effectively enabling him to definitively eclipse Gorbachev in the waning years of the Soviet Union.⁹¹ Thus, counterfactually, one of Turkey's opposition party leaders could have taken to the streets and led the popular mobilization against the coup, but, significantly enough, this did not happen. Moreover, a large majority of the people who actively mobilized against the coup plotters were AK Party voters;⁹² further, “mosques, in addition to digital media, played a

⁹⁰ *The New York Times*, (July 17, 2016), retrieved from <https://twitter.com/ny-timesworld/status/754776778204389376>.

⁹¹ On the struggle between Gorbachev and Yeltsin, see George W. Breslauer, *Gorbachev and Yeltsin as Leaders*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁹² KONDA found that 84 percent of those who participated in the “democracy watch” rallies that were held on a daily basis following the coup attempt in July were likely AK Party voters, and 79.5 percent actually voted for AK Party in the November 2015 elections, whereas 6 percent were too young to vote in 2015. “Demokrasi Nöbeti Araştırması: Meydanların Profili,” *KONDA*, (July 26, 2016), retrieved from <http://konda.com.tr/demokrasinobeti/>.

significant role in mobilizing Turks who were against the coup.”⁹³ More dramatically, President Erdoğan’s long-time campaign manager and his son were among those who lost their lives while resisting the coup plotters, as did a professor who was the elder brother of a presidential advisor. However, the *Economist* inverted this reality by headlining its story as follows: “Erdoğan’s revenge: Turkey’s president is destroying the democracy that Turks risked their lives to defend.”⁹⁴ This is not only terrible journalism that contradicts the factual details of the coup attempt and how it was defeated, it is also insulting to the political sentiments of the masses who mobilized, and those who died, fighting against the military coup.

The influential German weekly, *Der Spiegel*, published a cover story about the coup in Turkey, provocatively embellished with a Turkish flag behind barbed wire, and entitled “It was once a democracy: Dictator Erdogan and the helpless West.”⁹⁵ Looking at the cover of *Der Spiegel*, one would think that the coup had succeeded in installing a military dictatorship, which then promptly began executing dissidents. In reality, the three largest parties banded together to hold a spectacular rally attended by millions of citizens in İstanbul on 7 August 2016, to mark the finale of three weeks of nationwide rallies to commemorate the popular victory against the coup plotters.

The western media’s incomprehension and misrepresentation of the role that the AK Party and Erdoğan play in Turkish politics is not limit-

⁹³ H. Akin Ünver and Hassan Alassaad, “How Turks Mobilized against the Coup: The Power of the Mosque and the Hashtag,” *Foreign Affairs*, (September 14, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2016-09-14/how-turks-mobilized-against-coup>.

⁹⁴ “Erdogan’s Revenge,” *The Economist*, (July 23, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21702465-turkeys-president-destroying-democracy-turks-risked-their-lives>.

⁹⁵ “Es War Einmal Eine Demokratie,” *Der Spiegel*, (July 27, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.amazon.de/SPIEGEL-30-2016-einmal-Demokratie/dp/B01E7F81NO>.

ed to the coverage of the recent coup attempt. As I argued in detail above, the AK Party had occupied the moral high ground in Turkish politics for a long time before the coup, although one would not know it from reading the Western media. If Erdoğan and the AK Party were as oppressive as the *Economist* and *Der Spiegel* make them seem, why do they remain by far the most popular leader and the most popular political party in Turkey, having won nine national elections (five parliamentary, three local/municipal, one presidential) and two national referenda since 2002? Turkish elections are free, fair and very competitive by all international standards. The competitiveness of the elections is also proven by the fact that many opposition parties win resounding victories at the local and regional levels, and their national support also rises and falls significantly, as we most recently witnessed between June and November 2015. Is there any “dictator” in modern history that has won eleven genuinely competitive multiparty contests spread across a decade-and-a-half?⁹⁶ This is a key question to motivate some critical thinking about the Western media coverage of Erdoğan and the AK Party.

The answer should be obvious for anyone who lived through the legal discrimination and institutional segregation that religious conservatives and ethnic minorities had to endure before the AK Party came to power. As previously noted, the headscarf ban alone affected roughly sixty percent of Turkish women. Moreover, the popular mandate that a political party or a leader earns due to their democratizing role at a critical juncture may last for a generation, or even several generations,

⁹⁶ An increasingly common, disturbing and unfair trend in the West, even among academics, is to discuss Turkey under Erdoğan's AK Party and Putin's Russia as being comparably anti-democratic regimes. The last somewhat free, fair, and competitive election Russia had, was arguably the presidential election of March 2000 when Putin was elected for the first time, whereas Turkey has had eleven fiercely competitive national electoral contests since the AK Party came to power in 2002.

as one observes in the United States and South Africa.⁹⁷ Any analysis or criticism of Erdoğan and the AK Party that overlooks the massive political capital they gained as a result of their leading role in the democratic emancipation of historically disadvantaged groups in Turkey is likely to be incomplete and therefore misleading.

THE FAILED COUP IN TURKEY AS A WORLD HISTORICAL EVENT

The successful mobilization against the coup attempt in Turkey has a world historical significance for several reasons. First, it is very rare for a military coup with such extensive domestic and international connections to be defeated by a popular mobilization. The failure of the coup attempt against Hugo Chavez in Venezuela in 2002 is a similar rare case, but there are not many others. Mohammad Mosaddegh of Iran and Salvador Allende of Chile are prime examples of popular and democratically elected leaders who were overthrown in military coups that were supported by the United States in 1953 and 1973, respectively.⁹⁸ Second, the failure of the coup in Turkey went against the previous trend of counterrevolutionary coups and recent repression in the Middle East, most notably observed in the successful coup against Mohamed Morsi's democratically elected civilian government in Egypt in July 2013.

⁹⁷ In this context, consider the Democratic Party's near monopoly over the African American vote, which continues more than fifty years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964. More dramatically, consider the continuing electoral hegemony of the African National Congress (ANC) in South Africa, more than twenty years after the end of Apartheid.

⁹⁸ For my analysis of the coup in Iran, see Şener Aktürk, "Why did the United States Overthrow the Prime Minister of Iran in 1953? A Review Essay on the Historiography of the Archetypal Intervention in the Third World During the Cold War," *The Journal of the Associated Graduates in Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (2008), pp. 24-44.

Hopefully, the failure of the coup in Turkey will have felicitous effects in emboldening democratic movements across Muslim-majority polities around the world. It is also noteworthy and significant that Turkey has been the most vocal (and almost only) country to openly denounce the coup in Egypt, and has sided with the democratically elected government of Mohamed Morsi for the last three years, whereas the United States, Russia, France, Saudi Arabia, and Germany, among others, were quick to embrace and endorse the military dictatorship of Sisi. Third, the massive civilian resistance against the coup enshrined “democracy” as a precious national ideal to fight and die for in Turkey, as public commemorations for the “martyrs of democracy” attest, which is an enormous step for the consolidation of democracy as a political system.

The coup attempt threatened to undo the hard-won equality and democratic progress of previous decades, and should be considered reactionary and regressive as such. In this article, I have highlighted the historic reforms that emancipated religious conservatives and ethnic minorities such as the Kurds from their status as second-class citizens. The popular resistance against the coup attempt, led by Erdoğan and the AK Party, but which also included all of the major political parties in Turkey, consolidated the moral high ground of democracy in Turkish politics. The western media outlets’ hostile and distorted coverage of Erdoğan’s key role in defeating the coup attempt, and their suspiciously equivocal attitude vis-à-vis the coup plotters, has antagonized and alienated the Turkish public, even provoking Turkish elites and ordinary citizens alike to question Turkey’s place in the Western alliance.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Şener Aktürk, “The End of the Turkish-American ‘Alliance’ after the Failed Coup?,” *TheNewTurkey*, (August 8, 2016), retrieved from <http://thenewturkey.org//the-end-of-the-turkish-american-alliance-after-the-failed-coup/>.

MEASURING SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

Nebi Miş*

INTRODUCTION

Following the advent of democratic politics (in 1946) and in the current Republican era of Turkey, the military intervened in politics five times –roughly once every ten years (1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and 2007). Considering the level of political and economic development and the degree of democratization efforts in Turkey, the struggle against the pro-coup mentality and structures have made a late start in Turkey when compared to countries with a similar geo-politic profile.

The showdown with and the fight against the system of military tutelage began immediately after the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) came to power. Although instruments of tutelage were eliminated considerably, the pro-junta affiliated with FETÖ (the Fetullah Gülen Terror Organization), the disciples of which have been permeating into the military over 40 years, made a bloody coup attempt on July 15, 2016. The coup was orchestrated by a group, the junta structure and the organization ideology of which differ from those of the military coups in the past in that it was planned as an armed revolt. In order to achieve their aims, the perpetrators were willing to use terrorising methods such as helicopters and tanks with heavy weapons and F-16s dropping bombs to kill civilians. In addition, the pro-junta not only bombed some strategic institutions of the state, such as the

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Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM), the Presidential Complex, the National Intelligence Organization (MİT) compounds and security buildings, but also tried to assassinate President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan using specially trained teams. The plotters behind the coup attempt, executed outside of the military chain of command, are part of a structure based on a sect of Muslims who follow a particular understanding of Islam dictated to them by their leader Fetullah Gülen. In this respect, the motivation, the planning, the implementation, and the aim of the attempted coup differ from those of previous coup d'états as the culprits had allegiances to an external organization.

During the junta's coup attempt, first President Erdoğan and then the chairmen of both the ruling and the opposition parties called on the people to resist. Consequently the coup failed because of the popular resistance and the determination of the political parties, the media and NGOs against the coup plotters. Regrettably, a total of 249 people were martyred and 2,195 were wounded in this insurgence –the bloodiest attempt in Turkey's history of coups. On the night of July 15, the society showed an exemplary resistance to the coup, and in the following days the resistance turned into "democracy watch." Thousands of people poured into the streets and the squares every night to express their rejection of the perpetrators and the democracy watch lasted 27 days, until August 10, 2016.

The civilian initiative that emerged on the night of July 15 stayed on guard for democracy watch in hundreds of squares across Turkey. The revelation of views and perceptions of the civilian initiative on the attempted coup is of importance. Without doubt, the emerging social picture, during and after July 15, deserves careful sociological attention beyond civilian-military relations. In this context, new definitions and conceptualizations are needed. For this research, a total of 176 individ-

uals in 9 cities and 12 squares were interviewed between July 18 and August 10, 2016, for a sound assessment, together with the support of primary data directly collected in the field on the social uprising against the coup. The main theme and focus of the research was to capture the social consciousness that thwarted the coup attempt.

Undoubtedly, the democracy watch became the most concrete reflection of this social consciousness. Based on the interviews with the participants of the democracy watch, the study aims to analyze the social consciousness that rose against the coup attempt and how people perceived the events of that night.

METHOD, FRAME, AND CONSTRAINTS OF THE FIELD RESEARCH

The research was conducted in the cities of Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Diyarbakır, Trabzon, Adana, Van, Sakarya, and Eskişehir which are considered to be representative of the whole country. The sample cities were chosen both because they experienced the most violence committed by the putschists during the coup attempt on the night of July 15 because their residents took to the streets in larger numbers than other cities and also for the purpose of geographical representation.

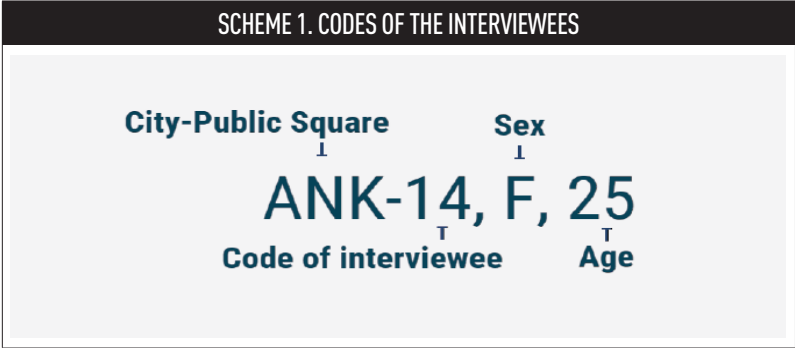
The method of qualitative data gathering was used in the research. Therefore, direct and observable data were collected postulating that the relation between the collected data and their social context would be displayed clearly.¹⁰⁰ Interviews were conducted with a total of 176 individuals from different age groups. However, the age group of over 18 was particularly concentrated on since the content of the research

¹⁰⁰ For further information on the subject, see. Bruce L. Berg, *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, Fourth Edition, (Boston: Ally & Bacon, 2000).

was weighed more by political issues. Yet, the age group of 15-18 –although limited in number– was also interviewed in order to include their viewpoints. Personal information of the participants was not requested nor were the names of the interviewees mentioned in the research. Excerpts from the interviews are included in this paper. The participants and the cities in which the interviews were conducted are coded and abbreviated as shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1. ABBREVIATIONS OF THE CITIES AND THE SQUARES FOR THE INTERVIEWS HELD			
ABBRV.	CITY	ABBRV.	CITY
ANK	ANKARA	SRC	SARAÇHANE
ADN	ADANA	TRB	TRABZON
İZM	İZMİR	TKS	TAKSİM
KSK	KISIKLI	VAN	VAN
ESK	ESKİŞEHİR	DYB	DİYARBAKIR
SAK	SAKARYA	YNKP	YENİKAPI

As the excerpts from the interviews are included in this study, each is given a number together with the abbreviation of the city. The coding of the interviews is depicted in Scheme 1.



Source: Sectoral Report on Radio and TV Broadcasting (2014)

On the whole semi-structured interviews were conducted for the research with a limited number of focus group interviews. Face-to-face interviews with the participants lasted on average 25-30 minutes. Quota sampling was applied to reflect similar distributions of the age groups and genders of the participants, again, for the sake of obtaining sound results. The research paid as much attention as possible to social diversity, identity groups and differing political views of the participants.

A total of 19 basic questions were asked to measure the viewpoints of the participants under the following headings: “motivations to take to the streets on the night of July 15,” “experiences in the streets,” “duration of stay in the street,” “the failure of the coup attempt,” “the FETÖ-external powers relation,” “the struggle of the ruling power in the post-coup attempt period,” “the attitude of the opposition parties in the face of the coup attempt,” “FETÖ’s role in the coup attempt,” “the view on FETÖ prior to the coup attempt,” “the view on Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) and security forces,” “comparison with the past *coup d’états*,” “in the period of the post-coup attempt, the fight against FETÖ and other elements involved,” and “what would have happened if the attempt had been successful.”

Some of the participants hesitated to be interviewed because of the on-going discussions over the danger of a possible renewed coup attempt and the trauma they were suffering from was quite fresh to them. Women, in particular, seemed to approach the request for an interview with reservations, but men seemed more comfortable. Another constraint was that although a balanced distribution of participant profiles were intended for the sake of social diversification, individuals who would satisfy a well-balanced distribution in terms of political views could not be reached easily. The reason was that generally conservative and nationalist identity groups were attending the democracy watch.

To compensate for this imbalance, as many individuals as possible were interviewed at the Taksim rally of the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). Since other opposition leaders also attended the Yenikapı Democracy Meeting in İstanbul, interviews were conducted with more people with the thought that they were the voters of the opposition parties. On the other hand, interviews were made with people at the cafés and streets other than those who joined democracy watch in the eastern and southeastern provinces of Van and Diyarbakır.

MOTIVATION FOR RESISTANCE TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

The failure of the July 15 coup attempt was the result of strong and hard popular resistance to the putschists. Thus, the question “What was the main motivation behind the emergence of such resistance?” is critical. Many people were confused initially with the low altitude flights of F-16 fighter jets over the capital of Ankara being the first sign that something unusual was taking place. People in İstanbul, considered the possibility of a terror attack when the entrances to the Bosphorus Bridge [newly renamed as the July 15 Democracy Martyrs Bridge] were closed by the pro-coup soldiers. Many others were concerned that the country was under attack by foreign forces, but only a few people realised that it was a *coup d'état*. In fact, the views of the participants confirm this initial confusion and disbelief.

A cab driver in Kızılay, Ankara, who witnessed the coup attempt from the first moment said:

After the initial period of uncertainty, people started to learn about the coup attempt through the news pouring from the media and social media at which point many of them took to the streets. Seemingly, their states of mind were driven mainly by rage, fear, enthusiasm, self-reliance and anxiety. Later in the night, people were relatively relaxed and as they succeeded in the struggle against the pro-coup soldiers, so they gained more self-confidence.

About three quarters of the interviewees took to the streets on the night of July 15 to react against the attempted coup. Among the most commonly mentioned concepts by the participants for why they took to the streets were “homeland, country, nation and freedom,” “the feeling of unity-solidarity,” “to protect the elected government” and “to protect Erdoğan.” The findings reveal that four major criteria played a key role for people to take to the streets on that night:

1. Love of country and nation,
2. Erdoğan’s invitation on Facetime to the people to take to the streets,
3. Sala prayer announced from the mosques [during the Ottoman period, sala prayers were called to gather for a special occasion, especially to announce difficult times during wars], and
4. Reaction against the coup communique read out on TRT, the anti-coup stance and collective/social memory of the coups.

Later on that night, more people poured into the streets after it became certain that this was a coup attempt, so they were highly motivated and the thought of resisting the coup sank in heavily.

As we saw on TV that the Bosphorus Bridge was blocked, we thought it was not a terrorist incident. We left home in Bahçelievler, marched to the Kocasinan Police Station, but the area was calm, then upon the incoming news hastily moved over to the Atatürk International Airport. We came face-to-face with tanks. What was done to [the late Prime Minister Adnan] Menderes and [the late President Turgut] Özal are well known. So, we stood by Reis [(The Chief, Erdoğan’s nickname)]. I witnessed the outburst of popular resistance. All segments of the society were there (SRC-01, M, 26).

The feeling of being victimized, anxiety for the future, bitter memories of the 1980 military coup d’état, and the anti-coup stance... Way before these incidents took place, I and my spouse talked and promised each other to resist together in case of a coup. During the coup

attempt, we took to the streets with no hesitation before Erdoğan's call (KSK-01, M, 56).

I came here at the cost of my life. So, this is not about parties, this is about me. As soon as I heard the news, I left the house around 22.00 p.m., I did not hear Erdoğan's call. I learned about the coup from the news. I heard that my brother was heading to the square, so did I, after I heard the news from my friends; I grabbed my flag and went out (TRB-01, F, 29).

I took to the street around 24.00 p.m. I simply say, it was for "love of country." Please, do stress this especially (ANK-02, F, 31).

Some of the participants who took to the streets on the first night said that they were out with the motivation of the anti-coup stance because imprints of political and social collapses caused by the past coups are still fresh in the collective memory, so much so that another coup could not be tolerated. A 50-year-old female participant said the following on the matter:

I am the granddaughter of a man who was a [Democrat Party] DP supporter. He was the DP Province Chair in İzmir. He told me that Menderes had said, "I trust my people," but his people could not do anything [to protect him]. I remember the tortures he went through. I remember my grandfather, so I hit the street. My 16-year-old daughter said "don't go," but I said to her that I am going out because I do not want to regret it in the future. I was anxious, but I left (home) right away upon hearing the President's speech (ANK-12, F, 50).

Although a considerably important segment of the society hit the streets and the squares on the night of the coup attempt, some of the interviewees said that they remained at home. Two main factors that kept them at home were "fear" and "confusion." However, they joined the democracy watch in the following days as the phenomenon became more evident. A 20-year-old woman in İstanbul, who described herself as a CHP supporter, explained the reason for not going out to the streets on the first night:

We didn't take to the streets on that night, but out in the streets there were our friends who are not pro-government and there were our friends who are pro-government. I do have many pro and anti-government friends, but this has nothing to do with parties or politics. People were out for their country and their flag (TKS-01).

In brief, it was found that motivations vary amongst the people who were in the streets on the night of the coup. However, almost all of the participants were driven by the love of country; they had an urge to protect democracy and resisted the attempted coup. One of the most critical reasons for those who acted to fight against the coup is that the memories of the past coups are still fresh in the collective memory. The majority of them were 40 plus years old; therefore, presumably they experienced, the September 12, 1980 military *coup d'état*.

Some of the participants, on the other hand, were motivated by knowledge of the previous coups which they had received from the older generations in their families. A great many participants said that they went out after seeing President Erdoğan inviting people to the streets on a live TV broadcast using his video phone call to the anchorwoman of CNN Turk. Undoubtedly the majority of the participants who came out on to the streets following Erdoğan's call are religious conservatives. However, it should be noted that, although limited in number, there were left-wing participants out there, too. Finally, the call to *sala* announced from the minarets of mosques were another important reason for people heading to the streets.

A group of participants confirmed that they remained inside on the first night because of fear, anxiety, or uncertainty. However, a significant number also explained that they were not in a situation to go out onto the streets. People vacationing at various holiday destinations while the coup attempt took place were not out because nobody was on the streets and there was not any abnormality or activity in their location.

SOCIAL PERCEPTION OF THE PERPETRATORS OF THE COUP ATTEMPT

Another critical question posed to the participants during the interviews was: who is, or are, the perpetrator(s) behind the attempted coup? The answers reflect that almost all of the interviewees, with no hesitation, see FETÖ as the perpetrator of the coup. Again, a great majority of the participants believe that external powers assisted FETÖ in the coup attempt and that it is difficult to plot a coup without assistance from outside.

The participants who regard FETÖ as the perpetrator of the coup attempt have different views on FETÖ's role in the venture. Those who believe that FETÖ is the principal culprit justified their belief with the knowledge that FETÖ has structured itself within the state for almost half a century. An interviewee from Sakarya emphasizing that the coup was certainly plotted by the FETÖ members nested in the military, said,

I believe FETÖ, as an organization brooded in the military for many years, is the mastermind of these incidents (SAK-09, M, 25).

A 26-year-old man from İzmir stressed that FETÖ not only infiltrated TAF but also all state institutions, and that education facilities owned by FETÖ played a key role in this process over time. He said,

Gülen selected students to educate them both for TAF and official institutions. He was able to execute the coup attempt in this way, and still continues to educate students (İZM-04).

A 33-year-old female computer engineer did not believe that FETÖ had such power, until the night of July 15. She said, "We had our suspicions before the coup, but after the coup, I definitely believe FETÖ did it." The interviewee only believed that they had the power to do this after the event. FETÖ is the main contractor of the coup

plot, according to some of the participants, but it is possible that FETÖ had the assistance of different actors. A 62-year-old retired interviewee from the district of Sarıhan in İstanbul, believing that FETÖ was the leading actor but was helped by other actors, said, “Certainly, there are other actors involved. [But] The pro-FETÖ played the leading role, others provided logistic support, I think. The parallels¹⁰¹ undertook the operations.”

It is significant that more than half of the participants consider that external powers played an active role in planning or organizing the coup attempt. There were others who said that although foreign power centers were not evident, they likely provided support indirectly. According to a substantial number of participants, the indicators of the involvement of foreign powers are that: Gülen lives in the U.S., the language used about the coup in the foreign press and the attitude of other countries towards Turkey. Arguments that external powers backed the coup attempt in Turkey are associated with the geographical position of Turkey, and it was suggested that such powers were disturbed by Turkey’s newly active foreign policy and strong economic growth.

According to more than half of the participants, external powers were behind the coup plot, the U.S. took the lead, and the European countries followed close behind. A limited number of the interviewees considered that Israel, Russia and Iran might have been involved in the attempted coup. The number one reason for believing in the U.S. involvement is that FETÖ’s leader Fetullah Gülen resides in the U.S., so he is safeguarded by the U.S., according to the interviewees.

¹⁰¹ After December 17-25, 2013 the Parallel State Structure (PDY) has been identified by the state in the official statements as a national threat and designated as a terror organization under the name of the Fetullah Gülen Terror Organization (FETÖ) (*Fetullahçı Terrör Örgütü*, in Turkish)

For a 58-year-old retired man in Van, the fact that Gülen lives in the U.S. is proof enough that the U.S. is one of the actors behind the coup attempt. The same participant thinks external power centers back the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), as well. He says:

Until the 15th of July, I thought it was an exaggeration when it was said "FETÖ is a terror organization." I don't believe in conspiracy theories. I used to believe in them when I was young, but now [Fetullah Gülen's] residing in the U.S. tells me that the U.S. is behind this. That also confirms how accurate the remarks of our President are. He says, "the lowest [level of the group] is engaged in religious practices, the middle is in business and the top is in treason." I thought it was an exaggeration. They don't have the power for such a treachery, but definitely there is the influence of external powers. As with the PKK, which claims to be a Kurdish movement, foreign powers are 90 percent active here too (VAN-09).

Some participants accusing the U.S. of being behind the coup attempt justify their claim by the fact that the tanker aircrafts, which fueled the fighter jets that bombed people on the night of the coup, took off from the İncirlik U.S. Base in Adana, in South East Turkey the same night. According to many participants tanker aircrafts at the İncirlik Base, could not have taken off without the U.S. knowing about it. For a 26-year-old man in Saraçhane, İstanbul, FETÖ was the Turkey-leg of the coup and the U.S. was the external-leg of it. He said:

Most likely, the U.S. was behind the coup attempt. It is a ring of the chain. FETÖ is the kernel. They acted together with the traitors inside Turkey. The U.S. overtly provided support from the İncirlik base (SRC-05).

Another claim involving the U.S. voiced by the participants is that Washington backed the coup via NATO and its military-wing. The participants emphasized that the above argument caused a rift in the Turkish military between "the pro-NATO and the others;" FETÖ worked upon this division and benefited from it during the coup attempt.

I think the U.S. and NATO provided a good deal of support. Tanker aircraft took off from İncirlik to re-fuel F-16s in the air. To me, that's the U.S. and NATO involvement (ANK-18).

According to a 29-year-old female artisan in İzmir, the argument that the U.S. was behind the coup attempt was reinforced by a frequently circulated claim in social media that “Gülen and the PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan were exchanged”:

The extradition of [Abdullah Öcalan] to us and the sending off of Gülen to the U.S. coincided in time. I think there is nothing more to say. The U.S. is using Gülen; in fact, has used and dumped everyone in the Middle East anyway. It will eliminate Gülen, too, once they are through with him (İZM-13).

The attitude¹⁰² of the international media—both before and after the coup attempt—was also frequently referred to by the participants. For a group of interviewees, this is indicative of the support of the Western public opinion and governments to the coup. Some others believed that defamatory articles on Turkey and the AK Party government published by the Western media were a tactic to prepare the Western public opinion for a coup. A 25-year-old female graduate student in describing herself as “a pro-Peoples” Democracy Party (HDP) with leftist inclinations shared her views as follows:

I think the U.S. and Europe have a finger in the pie. I mean, although I am an AK Party opponent, I was angry at the discourses of Western newspapers such as that there is a dictatorship in Turkey. Actually, I couldn't get it. Why? I mean, Turkey cannot be their only problem after all. But it dawned upon me that these were to accustom the West and its public opinion to the coup. I mean, for instance, they were to say that “look, Turkey is an authoritarian country anyway, so a coup cannot be bad.” Turkey is an EU candidate and a NATO member after all. They were supposed to disapprove the coup, but still would agree with it and say, “it was an authoritarian country anyway” (ANK-14).

¹⁰² Kemal İnat, “Batı'daki Darbe Sevicilerin Çarpık Demokrasi Anlayışı!,” *Türkiye*, July 20, 2016.

One of the arguments for the influence of external powers in the coup, suggested by the interviewees, is ever changing international balances and the claim of Turkey's turning into a target for the international powers due to the latest developments in the Middle East. According to them, Turkey was trying to make a critical leap forward to meet her 2023 goals, but was being blocked. Turkey will overcome some of the existing problems after 2023. Therefore, anti-Turkey groups are trying to maintain the obstacles facing the country and to this end, they are trying to stop Turkey.

In this context, a 22-year-old female participant in İzmir said:

The U.S. nurtures [FETÖ] and doesn't want Turkey to grow. The Treaty of Lausanne will expire in 2023 and Turkey will be free of constraints. Right now, Turkey cannot use her real power. So, they want to finish up Turkey by 2023. The U.S. is also the reason for the years-long PKK [terror] (İZM-07).

FACTORS CAUSING THE FAILURE OF THE COUP ATTEMPT

Until the changes made after the year 2000 in the context of fighting the tutelage and settling the scores with the culture of coups, conditions that enabled coups determined the boundaries of political and social spheres.¹⁰³ The first factor that has allowed military interventions

¹⁰³ For further reading criticizing military-civilian relations and military tutelage on politics in Turkey, see. Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu (Der.) *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu*, Fourth Edition, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2009); Ümit Cizre Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 29, No. 2, (1997), pp. 151-166; Kemal Karpat, "Military Interventions: Army Civilian Relations in Turkey Before and After 1980," in M. Heper and A. Evin (eds.), *State, Democracy and Military: Turkey in the 1980s*, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1998); Kurtuluş Kayalı, *Ordu ve Siyaset- 27 Mayıs- 12 Mart*, Fourth Edition, (İstanbul, İletişim Yayınları, 2005); Ali Balcı, *Türkiye'de Militarist Devlet Söylemi*, (Ankara: Kadim Yayınları, 2011); Ümit Cizre, "İdeoloji, Menfaat, Bağlam: Türk Ordusu," in Reşat Kasaba (ed.) *Türkiye Tarihi 1839-2010*, (İstanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2011); Ergun Özbudun, *Çağdaş Türk Politikası: Demokratik Pekişmenin Önündeki Engeller*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2003), Murat Yeşiltaş, *Türkiye'de Ordu ve Jeopolitik Zihniyet*, (Ankara: Kadim Yayınları, 2016).

in politics is the suspension of the Constitution after each coup; thus, providing sustainability of states of emergency. The second factor is that the juntas behind the coups were under the protection of the (self-made) Constitution, so they were immune from standing trial at the outset. The third factor is that criticism of both coup plotters and the implementations carried out in the ensuing periods were banned by legal and institutional guarantees endowed after coups. The fourth factor is that some political parties and politicians co-operated with and facilitated exercises, activities and discourses of military coup plotters for their own circumstantial and pragmatic reasons. The fifth and the last factor is that much of the media and many intellectuals subscribed to narratives empowering the military's dominance over the political sphere, therefore legitimizing the cycle of mistrust that always followed military coups.¹⁰⁴

In contrast, the policies of the AK Party period substantially impeded the mechanisms of tutelage that the military had traditionally used on politicians, and reconstructed the collective memory.¹⁰⁵ In this respect, one of the most critical reasons behind the failure of the coup attempt on July 15 is the negative perception and attitudes emanating from the collective memory towards coups. Each military coup since the 1960s has directly and negatively affected different segments of society and that has paved the way for social unity against coups.

During the AK Party period, politics was forced to make a complete change, and the social consciousness that has built up at every level of the society against military tutelages necessitated all political parties to

¹⁰⁴ See Nebi Miş, "Türkiye'de Güvenlikleştirme Siyaseti 1923-2000," Unpublished PhD Thesis, Sakarya University Social Sciences Institute, (May 2012).

¹⁰⁵ Tanel Demirel, "2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset," *SETA Analiz*, No. 18, (February 2010).

stand together against the coup attempt on July 15. The levels of popular consciousness and collective memory against coups is illustrated with the similarity of views expressed between a 70-year-old participant in Ankara and a 29-year-old AK Party supporter interviewed at the Yenikapı Democracy and Martyrs Meeting in İstanbul:

We know these because we have developed awareness through our experiences during the Menderes period and because of our President's call for the people to take to the streets. That's why the coup attempt turned into a failure. We have learned how to defend our rights thanks to our President, his standing up straight reassured us, instilled confidence in us (YNKP-06, M, 29).

On the other hand, the media's transformation and pluralism, and the development of the IT sector made everything difficult for the pro-coup planners. In addition, the transformation and the diversification of bureaucracy, and the increasing influence of different social segments over public domain deprived the perpetrators from their traditional support mechanisms.¹⁰⁶ Undoubtedly, the strengthening middle class and the conservatives' increasing self-confidence with the onset of the AK Party periods have given birth to masses willing to stand up and fight against tanks in the public squares. It is important to recognize that the AK Party has been quite successful in dealing with political crises –most notably with the April 27 military e-memorandum and the December 17-25 coup attempt by the FETÖ/Parallel State Structure (PDY, in Turkish); these experiences were vital for fending off the July 15 coup attempt. The rationale is that the political actors have gained in competence and strength in each and every crisis.

On the other hand, the timing of the coup attempt, the failure to conduct the operation under the chain of command, and the balancing

¹⁰⁶ Ali Balcı, "Darbenin Önlenmesinden En Önemli Engel Milletin Hafızasıydı," *Derin Tarih*, No. 53, (August 2016).

power of the security establishment are among other factors that repelled the attack. The political will's impact on the prevention of the coup was also critical and that should be discussed in detail separately.

The 52-year-old housewife living in Adana, who has experienced previous coups, said the following to explain the abovementioned factors which effectively prevented the success of the coup:

I believe people have changed. They got out right away. Because we are a country which paid a heavy price for not taking to the streets [in the past]... I think, people of this country are getting mature enough to express themselves... I voted, expressed my thoughts. How dare you to send my will to the garbage bin? How dare you?... The perpetrators deserve a one big slap in the face, but only people can do this (ADN-09, F, 52).

ERDOĞAN'S INFLUENCE OVER SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AND THE PREVENTION OF THE COUP

President Erdoğan's political leadership played a tremendous role in averting the coup attempt by FETÖ. Up to now Turkish society, the political establishment and leadership have gone through a myriad of tests. Erdoğan's success in dealing with the many crises during his political career has given birth to a political learning process for all. People took to the streets and showed their resistance to the attempted coup and putschists, and remained in the streets for democracy watch. If analyzed through Erdoğan's leadership, we see two dimensions of the issue: The first is Erdoğan's inviting people to the streets, airports and squares after the news about the coup attempt on July 15 spread rapidly. People poured into the streets to start the resistance following Erdoğan's call; therefore, they gained a psychological advantage over the coup plotters. Such a critical move also nurtured popular self-reliance among the anti-coup groups and caused the putschists to lose confidence.

Erdoğan's determination, unfaltering stance, and arrival at Atatürk International Airport boosted up the popular self-confidence. Importantly with the tactical moves, such as *sala* prayers and calls for prayers (*azans*) at mosques all night long, people perceived the issue as a struggle for liberation. Some of the participants having different political stances at different squares said:

In my opinion, people love Erdoğan dearly. I mean, they love him to death, we have seen this. So, if Erdoğan were captured by the coup plotters, more people would have come out and never gone back home. They would have died if necessary but surely would have reacted to the coup (ANK-16, F, 33).

I think, the one and only reason is that our leader and President called for us to take to the streets. Because, people were ready to die. Everyone was pouring out onto the streets, but no one thought that they would be killed. Everyone is saying, we had so many coups, but none of the past putschists opened fire on their own fellow citizens. No one ever thought that the coup plotters might open fire on people. People were out for their country. Of course, the biggest motivation was our President's call (YNKP-07, F, 48).

The remarks of the participants who took to the streets, either supporters or opponents of Erdoğan, reveal that his speech instilled self-confidence in the society from the moment (it was understood) that the incident was certainly a coup attempt. The majority of people poured into the streets upon Erdoğan's speech. Again, remarks of some participants reveal that these people did not simply go out to protest but also entered potential conflict areas to fight against the perpetrators of the coup.

A 52-year-old artisan in Adana, who describes himself as an AK Party supporter, said the following on President Erdoğan's speech:

When President Erdoğan spoke, I realized that the coup had failed. So, I rushed into the streets and then figured out that they cannot pull it off anymore.

A 47-year-old Saadet Party supporter, retired from the military, who joined democracy watch at the Taksim Square in İstanbul, said the following on political leadership and trust:

The political leadership prevented mistrust. Only Erdoğan's leadership could have saved us (TKS-03).

A 38-year-old female visual arts teacher and a CHP supporter who joined the CHP rally at Taksim emphasized that Erdoğan's leadership and the bond he has with the society played a vital role in the prevention of the coup. Besides, she said that she felt closer to Erdoğan in this period.

For the first time, I felt closer to Erdoğan. I can even say that I am beginning to like him. On that day, during the live broadcast, I was just waiting for a step to claim that he is "our president." I've decided that he is alone right now just like [the founder of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal] Atatürk. That's why, I will never leave him alone (TKS-10).

In the past, intellectuals decided whether or not a coup was legitimate as some political parties advocated the legitimacy of coups and media explained this legitimacy to the society. Civilian bureaucratic entities, the judicial bureaucracy in particular, were cooperating with military juntas and accommodating post-coup periods in favor of juntas; therefore, normalizing military coups and then narrowing the sphere of politics. In such an environment, the society was silenced and masses were deprived of self-confidence in order to prevent them raising their voice against military coups.¹⁰⁷

Political parties of the present stood against the July 15 coup attempt with "no ifs or buts." Owing to the pluralism in the media in the last decade, the takeover of the state did not support the coup attempt. For instance, in the initial stage of the attempt, the Constitutional

¹⁰⁷ Nebi Miş, "Darbenin Önlenmesinde Erdoğan Liderliğinin Rolü," *Kriter*, No. 4, (August 2016), p. 32-33.

Court issued a communique claiming to support the democracy¹⁰⁸ and local city council administrations used their heavy equipment against the coup plotters.

Erdoğan's political leadership, which he also exhibited in the course of the April 27 e-memorandum, is directly related to the failure of the coup attempt on July 15, 2016. The e-memorandum [issued by the Chief of Staff on April 27, 2007] was adamantly reacted to and destined to fail; that became a breaking point as far as Turkey's history of coups is considered. When the process is interpreted together with other challenges the AK Party has faced, it is seen that the AK Party has gained "political learning" experience to overcome this and similar crises, and its independence has grown stronger through gaining new experience with every crisis.

After the December 17-25, 2013 coup attempt, Erdoğan has begun to see the fight against FETÖ as a matter of life-and-death for the future of the country and the state. President Erdoğan, himself, clearly explained the PDY to the people, the danger of the Gülenist Organization, i.e. FETÖ, and Gülen's deviant understanding of religion. Owing to Erdoğan, broader segments of the society believes that Turkey must actively fight against FETÖ. Although the opposition parties did not support him and even some of his fellow partisans did not understand how big the danger was, Erdoğan continued the fight alone. The eviction of, at least, some of the leading FETÖ cadres –particularly in the Judiciary and the Security Department– played a vital role in forestalling the coup attempt.

In addition, Erdoğan reduced the support provided to FETÖ by campaigning against the cohorts of the group in the media. He has

¹⁰⁸ "FETÖ'nün Darbe Girişimine Tepkiler," *Habertürk*, (July 16, 2016).

taken a series of preventive measures to cut off its economic resources, and that has weakened FETÖ. It has become evident that if such preventive measures had not been taken, the consequences of the coup attempt would have caused much deeper crises.¹⁰⁹ Many segments of Turkish society have come to the opinion that the threatening face of FETÖ has been exposed after December 17-25, 2013. A substantial number of the participants agreed that only Erdoğan has the capacity to fight against this organization but they also believe that most of the time Erdoğan is working alone in this fight.

In other respects, some of the participants criticized Erdoğan saying that AK Party supported this organization prior to December 17-25, 2013. However, they acknowledged that the group possibly deceived Erdoğan, too. A 28-year-old participant in Adana said:

In fact, when our President said, “we will get into their den,” we have known all these since then. We already knew these anyway.

A 38-year-old female designer in Eskişehir said on the issue:

President named them the Parallel State, he had evidence in hand. But, let me tell you this: They were together at first. Since they were together, then it means, they deceived him, too.

PERCEPTION ABOUT TURKISH ARMED FORCES AFTER JULY 15

A significant majority of the participants made a distinction between FETÖ affiliated putschists embedded in TAF and the TAF, itself. They generally embrace and have a positive attitude about the rest of the TAF. In most of the interviews, the participants pointed out that FETÖ has infiltrated TAF, this is a problem; however, TAF should be considered separately from the FETÖ members nested in TAF. When

¹⁰⁹ Nebi Miş, “Millet FETÖ’yü Bitirdi,” *Star Açık Görüş*, (July 23, 2016).

taking into account the ages of interviewees, who said that their opinion about TAF did not change in a negative way, it can be seen that there is no significant difference between the different age groups.

I will go on to my military service duty in August. I don't know what I will go through. I definitely stand by TAF. I never react against TAF. Those who opened fire on people were of course FETÖ members (TRB-08, M, 25).

There were henchmen, they were soldiers deceived by FETÖ. They were ready to hit the country rock bottom for sixpenny, but couldn't succeed. My opinion about TAF did not change just because of (some) FETÖ members (VAN-10, M, 19).

The interviewees generally made positive remarks about the TAF high command who vowed for commitment to the civilian will. The high command of the military played a key role on the night of, and after, the coup attempt, adopting a position in favor of the civilian will and acting together with the President. The overall attitude of the TAF's high command helped their positive image in the public eye. It may be seen in the following statements:

After the President, TAF announced, "we do not stand by the coup". Our attitude towards TAF did not change. Soldiers of the Turkish nation are our soldiers, the perpetrators were FETÖ members (ADN-02, M, 22).

An interesting differentiation is observed between the leftist youth and the leftist voters who lived through the 1980 military *coup d'état*. In this context, the July 15 coup attempt did not seem to have caused any negative impact on a young CHP voters' tendency to "embrace the military" and they make a distinction between the TAF and FETÖ. Some of the older leftist participants, on the other hand, said they do not trust TAF since the pre-1980 times. Their justification is based on the view of anti-militarism.

I don't trust the military now and did not trust them before 1980 either (TKS-08, F, 60).

I am not surprised by the events. I don't think any army in the world has any use. I trust no armies (TKS-01, M, 36).

Remarkably, in some of the interviews, TAF was sternly criticized with reference to the bad memories of the February 28, 1997 post-modern coup. In this regard, two different identity groups voiced similar criticisms. It is seen that the hanging of Menderes (in 1960) and the ill-treatment of conservatives during the February 28 post-modern coup have created a lack of trust towards TAF in this group, some of whom said:

TAF seems modern on the surface but its mentality is extremely nationalist and officers seeing the military as the utmost powerful group still weigh in favour of the military. I always did, and will even from now on, think that TAF would pose a threat (ANK-08, M, 29).

In general, positive views prevail about TAF and it is referred to as the society's "apple of the eye." Emotional and religious descriptions of the military, such as "the Prophet's Hearth" are often visited; and that is not a sporadic tendency unique to only one province or region. Similar approaches are observed in different cities:

The change is this: Those traitors in the military must be definitely purged. You will have to make background checks very well. My view has never changed, the military is the Prophet's Hearth. You will put the military in order. You will abolish Kuleli [Military High School] and Harp Okulu [Military Academy]; you will become civilianized. You will train university graduates for one or two years, just like you do with policemen. They are mentally poisoned at Kuleli, at Harp Okulu. They are all raised with a mindset for taking-over control (ADN-06, M, 60).

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT FETÖ

To witness attitude changes, the participants were asked whether their views had changed on FETÖ before and after the coup attempt. All of the participants, over a range of different political ideologies and identities, believe in the existence of the FETÖ structure and perceive it as a major threat to Turkey. However, three different groups of inter-

viewees have emerged in regards to acquiring knowledge about FETÖ. The first category is those participants whose views on FETÖ have always been negative from the beginning. In the second category, are the participants who approached (the group) with optimism, but their views have changed after the Gezi Park Protests and the December 17-25 coup attempt by FETÖ. In the third category, the interviewees did not have a clear picture about FETÖ until July 15, 2016.

The point worth paying attention to here is that the first group, those who have always had negative thoughts on FETÖ, is less in number compared to the other two groups. Most of them justified their negative thoughts on FETÖ because of its deviant religious teachings and discrepancies in the organization's religious approach. Some decided to stay away from the organization based on their personal experiences with FETÖ. Some have negative views on religious groups in general, believing that religious practices and devotion to Allah are subjective matters and must remain private. Some others with negative impressions about FETÖ shared their views in the following way:

[My views on them] had been negative anyway. They were religiously problematic. It was a selfish, unreliable/untrustworthy and introvert structure. That kept me away from them (KSK-01, M, 56).

I am of the opinion that Fetullah Gülen exploited Islam and used sincere Muslims for his own advantages, for this purpose... If these people have a brain and if their minds are not for rent, there is a clear-cut political picture showing what is what in reality (ADN-05, M, 26).

Many of the participants believe FETÖ has always been a misguided movement since its structuring began in the 1970s; and their opinion is based on their personal experiences with FETÖ. For instance, it was a turning point for a 46-year-old female when the Religious High School she attended in Isparta was closed during the 1980 military coup and ceded to a Gülen foundation:

I have never been naïve about the Gülen group. I studied at Isparta Religious High School. My school was located on a vast piece of land. The ownership of our school was transferred to the Akyazılı Foundation during the September 12 military operation. The foundation belonged to Gülen. So, the title deed was consigned to them. Then, they built two schools in the school yard. We objected. It was explained to Gülen, but he did not accept, and two schools were built. They left us without a school (ANK-20, F, 46).

I have always had my reservations towards Fetullah. He was always cynical and self-interested. I have never sympathized with him. They have never assured us (ANK-07, F, 45).

A great majority of the participants fall into the second category. They had positive views on the Gülen movement prior to the Gezi Park Protests and the December 17-25 coup attempt, but then totally changed their minds against the organization recognizing the presence of the more sinister FETÖ:

I even attended their prep schools and read his works. I changed my mind after December 17 [2013] (KSK-06, M, 33).

These people are like a huge flock. This dishonorable [Fetullah Gülen] went to the U.S., before that he was our master –I am from Erzurum– we used to listen to him, and have respect for him (İZM-15, M, 61).

The participants may be considered in two categories: Conservative-right liners who did not see the Gülen organization as a terror group until the coup attempt and those who recognized the presence of FETÖ before July 15 but have had their opinions hardened by information released about the organization since the event.

COLLECTIVE MEMORY ON COUPS AND THE REACTION TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

The July 15 coup attempt differs from the previous military coups in Turkey. The events of July 15 were committed by actors nourished by a system of Messianic belief rather than from a shared ideological

background. The perpetrators of the July 15 attempt, in contrast to the previous coups, failed to present an ideological framework for the coup to gain popular support.

Again, differing from the coup plotters of the past, the perpetrators of the July 15 attempt used heavy weaponry and terror methods, thereby causing the deaths of many people and the injury of many more. Despite such differences, people compare the July 15 coup attempt with the coups in the past, particularly those aged 40 and above. In general, all of the participants who were interviewed about the July 15 attempted coup stated that the attempt was not similar to any other coup or coup attempts, and that none of the coups or the coup attempts in the past were as brutal as the July 15 endeavour.

One of the most critical matters stressed by the interviewees during the comparison between the July 15 coup attempt and the previous coups is the state of affairs in the country. The participants particularly emphasized that no climate of conflict existed to justify the events of July 15 in Turkey. The hanging of the late Prime Minister and the Democratic Party leader Menderes as a result of a military coup in 1960 has helped the formation of a strong enough sense of reaction in the collective memory against the implications of coups. In the period post-1960, each military coup affected different identity groups and that gave birth to the sense of a common reaction in the collective memory against coups.¹¹⁰

In Ankara, a 62-year-old veteran [of the 1974 Peace Operation in Cyprus] made the following comparison:

Because the 1980 coup was committed at midnight, nobody could hear about it, nobody knew. There was only one TV channel back then. It [the coup] happened suddenly. People couldn't take to the

¹¹⁰ Şükrü Hanioglu, "Darbe ve Toplum," *Sabah*, (July 24, 2016).

streets, people were weary. But now, people have self-confidence. We experienced the 1980 coup, the environment in Turkey was very bad (then). But now, there is no such thing (ANK-09, M, 62).

A 56-year-old AK Party voter, interviewed at the CHP rally in Taksim, said people were convinced of the need for a coup due to the environment of conflict in the period of the 1980 coup:

They prepared the people for the 1980 coup. Conflicts between leftists and rightists were used to create a ground to commit the coup. Before our eyes, they [leftists and rightists] were killing men out there in front of our windows. So, they convinced people very well. We got up in the morning of the September 12 coup and heard the Chief of Staff speaking on the radio. People were really pleased. Nobody died nor got wounded. Today, there were no such grounds [for a coup]. The economy may not be great, but there is no reason to commit a coup. How dare you to attempt a coup, what kind of power did you rely on... People were very well convinced for the 1980 coup (TKS-03, M, 56).

Without doubt, one of the most important reasons for the failure of the July 15 attempted coup is that civilian politics has gained strength in Turkey. Compared to the past, democratic politics has gained ground and the military has lost its influence over politics in the new political atmosphere. Popular awareness has increased and people's reaction to events has changed. A 47-year-old male industrialist in Van stresses the point as follows:

Turkey was not developed this much when the 1980 coup took place. The private sector was not that well developed. People did not believe so much in civilian politics back then. In this connection, the AK Party government was a reform government. Thus, compared to the past governments, the AK Party government has concentrated on civilian-democratic reforms rather than having tutelary inclinations. Instead of hoping for help from the military, this time, civilian-democratic politics has been worked on. In the past people with an instinct to seek protection turned to the military (VAN-2, M, 47).

According to a 41-year-old female participant, saying that she was a 5-year-old child when the 1980 coup was committed, skirmishes

had become part of daily life back then, but today, there is no environment of conflict. For this reason, she furiously reacted to the coup attempt:

I was stuck, as a kid, in a conflict environment two months before the 1980 coup. I was five years old. Skirmishes were part of our daily lives. Now, there is no such situation. The attempt was stifled in a short time anyway. This made us very proud: People did not want the coup. Only a small group said, “what a pity, they couldn’t do it”. That is the most dramatic difference between now and the 1980. There was a café house in the 1980s, prosecutors often went there. Right across the café house, leftists were sitting outside a pharmacy. An old woman, a passerby, asked them, “My child, I will pass through you. If you are planning to fight, let me know; so that I will not get stuck in between” (ANK-23, F, 41).

A GLANCE AT THE OPPOSITION PARTIES’ ATTITUDES ON THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

As far as the past coups in Turkey are concerned, examples of cooperation were seen between the military and political actors. It should be noted, without doubt, that such cooperation is critical to provide a ground of legitimacy to coups. The July 15 coup attempt, however, took place in a different setting. Political actors did not collaborate with the coup plotters; to the contrary, they issued statements for a united stand with the elected government and rejected the attempt.

On the course of the July 15 attempted coup, chairmen of the MHP and CHP, Devlet Bahçeli and Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, respectively, called Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım and said the upheaval was unacceptable and that they stood together with the elected government.¹¹¹ The pro-Kurdish HDP, too, announced on social media that they sided with the civilian politics.¹¹²

¹¹¹ “Devlet Bahçeli Darbe Girişiminin Olduğu Gece Ne Yaptı?,” *Hürriyet*, (July 19, 2016).

¹¹² “HDP’den İlk Açıklama,” *Milliyet*, (July 16, 2016).

Regarding the attitudes of the opposition parties on the night of the attempted coup, the participants largely shared three basic views. The first view is that the attitude and joint-stance of the opposition parties –both during and after the coup attempt– and their stance in a special parliamentary session [during the bombing] were praiseworthy.

A 25-year-old male masters student in Sakarya said this picture of unity contributed to the people's motivation, adding:

Bahçeli's initial reaction helped [MHP] idealists to take to the streets and provided a moral boost to everyone. In this sense, his reaction was crucially important and should be praised. I couldn't hear how Kılıçdaroğlu reacted at first. I learned about it later. But, it was too crucial, too. On that day, I couldn't hear about the HDP's reaction either. But later on, I saw how they reacted. It was critical to exhibit such an accord right from the start (SAK-09).

Some of the participants expressed that although the united stand of the government with the opposition parties was critically important, it was more important to turn it into cooperation; and the cooperation of the parties on the first night, in particular, had quite an effect on the failure of the coup attempt. A 32-year old male participant in Trabzon said:

It's questionable whether they did enough, but they did what they had to do. They couldn't bring the people out but supported the people. There were other parties, too, I saw them. They were less in number and statistically, the number may vary, but they were there (TRB-08).

Apparently, regarding sincerity, the participants in general have reservations about other opposition parties except the MHP. The majority of the participants believe that CHP and HDP supported the government because they had to and that they will withdraw their backing in the days to come. A 25-year-old male in Ankara justified his claim in the following way:

I was expecting a move from CHP. I thought CHP would watch the course of events first and then adopt a stance accordingly, which they

did do for a while. As the course of events took a turn in favor of the AK Party, only then CHP adopted a position. CHP's stance reduced the polarization among parties. But if the coup attempt were successful, CHP would have sided with the coup plotters. CHP provided support when the AK Party stood powerful. As for the HDP, [the chairman] Selahattin Demirtaş was in Diyarbakır and did not participate in the joint statement of the parties; that indicates that he did nothing.

The third basic view pertaining to the opposition parties is that supporters of the opposition parties think their parties were insufficient. A 25-year-old female HDP supporter in Ankara criticized her party in the following way:

HDP is my party. I mean, in the last two elections I voted for it even though I had my doubts. But I think although the HDP stood against the coup attempt, it should have called for us to take to the streets as they invite everyone out even for a minor incident. It should have organized a meeting of its own. We usually see AK Party and MHP supporters in the demonstrations. I wish more people like me joined [the demonstrations]. So, I am feeling kind of strange (ANK-14, F, 25).

A 58-year-old retired teacher in Van commented on the HDP's attitude throughout the process:

Unfortunately, I, as an easterner, definitely protest against HDP. They were about to side with the coup. The remark of "I am against the coup, I am against Erdoğan" is rather... This is what happens if we, the Kurds, surrender our destiny into the hands of a few people. I, as a Kurd, don't think that HDP under the leadership of Ertuğrul Kürkçü and Figen Yüksekdağ has the capacity to defend the rights of anyone, let alone the Kurds. I know very well for whom they worked in the past (VAN-9, M, 58).

A 40-year-old HDP supporter female, again in Ankara, criticized her party:

HDP was too late and the statements of Selahattin Demirtaş were highly inadequate. He should've gone out to the squares on the first day of the coup attempt. [HDP co-chair] Figen Yüksekdağ said, "there are no women at the squares". It was a horrible remark. I do criticize HDP in this process. Still, they tried to fix it later on. That's nice. I gave CHP credit for their stance. Kılıçdaroğlu's speech at the general committee

meeting was good. The coup plotters expected CHP voters to take to the streets. But the CHP clearly stood stronger against it, so did the MHP. That's the only subject that the four parties agreed on in a long time. I see this as an advantage gained in the process (ANK-22, F, 40).

SETTLING THE ACCOUNT WITH THE COUP PLOTTERS AND THEIR ACCOMPLICES

Settling the account with the coup attempt on the 15th of July 2016 will satisfy the social conscience and gratify the sense of justice; it will also fulfill two basic functions that will guarantee the sustainability of democracy. In this respect, the state's reaction to FETÖ after the coup attempt is the consequence of the state's struggle for existence. Preventing FETÖ terrorists' infiltrating the state components through similar moves from now on requires a policy of refinement. This process is necessary for a soundly functioning democratic rule of law.

Turkey will settle the score with the July 15 coup attempt through two fundamental channels. One of them is a political showdown based on preventive measures taken by the political will. The second is a legal showdown based on reactions of the judicial system with all of its rules and institutions as a whole.¹¹³ In this context, the participants shared their opinions, in a broad spectrum of thoughts, about prospective measures and policies for refining the processes.

The strongest opinion crystallized as the outcome of all the interviews is that the political establishment should immediately launch the prosecution process and discharge civil servants affiliated with the FETÖ. The participants specifically emphasized that the entrance exams system should be revised so as to prevent FETÖ's penetration into the state. A 36-year-old PhD student in Adana said:

¹¹³ Serdar Güleler, "Dünyada Arındırma Politikaları ve Devletin FETÖ'den Arındırılması," *SETA Perspektif*, No. 142, (September 2016).

First of all, we should thoroughly revise our exam system from top to bottom. These guys select 12-13 year-old children as fresh seeds, these children who have yet seen nothing by then are taken into their [digestive] system, before they open their eyes, they inject into them anyway.... whatever they need to ... Think about this, you become an army general, a police chief, a department head, a judge, a prosecutor, and yet you do literally and strictly follow everything this guy says (orders) (ADN-04, M, 36).

While phrasing the removal of FETÖ members and their partners in the coup attempt from public and state institutions, many participants used the words of “cleaning,” “extermination,” and “eradication.” For some of the interviewees, eliminating FETÖ members from public institutions will not be adequate by itself. For the same reason, in order to not face similar problems in the future, religious groups should be prevented from becoming organized in public institutions. A 33-year-old male faculty member in Kısıklı, İstanbul, said:

We realized the danger very late. These are cynical, cowardly, lying hypocrites. Now, strict policies must be adopted. Their properties must be confiscated. Furthermore, none of the other religious groups should be provided with such a broad sphere of influence. The sense of justice should not be harmed (KSK-06, M, 33).

A great number of the participants also agreed on the consolidation of the structure of the Intelligence. A 61-year-old female retired worker in İzmir shared her opinion as follows:

I am a citizen. I don't, and cannot, have my own news and intelligence. All right then, how come the state couldn't prevent this? How come the state couldn't have the intelligence information on this? The state should have its ears wide open to fight [with FETÖ] (İZM-10, F, 61).

According to some of the interviewees, regulations are needed, as well, for the military institutions and schools. However, some emphasized that any prospective measures should not wear TAF out and cause security weaknesses. They think more control mechanisms over military schools are needed. In addition, a 34-year-old educator in

Sakarya stressed that social understanding on military members should also change:

Discrimination among people should be prevented from now on. Everyone should agree on a minimum education curriculum based on law and get rid of this coup mentality breeding community. For instance, we should adopt a mindset to highlight particular issues, such as democracy, law and human rights instead of praising the military and soldiers and of constantly blessing old victories (SAK-01, M, 34).

In addition to all these issues, the interviewees expect the political establishment to work meticulously on the state of emergency, but in the meantime, not to overlook international connections (of the attempt) as part of the process. The extradition of Fetullah Gülen, in particular, should be fully concentrated on; to this end, more effective talks should be conducted with the U.S.

The violations committed by FETÖ by embarking on the July 15 endeavour have two dimensions, one of which is about the attempted destruction of the constitutional order and the other is human rights violations regarding the deaths and injuries sustained that night. For this reason it would be useful if the prospective system, used to settle the account with the coup attempt, takes as reference the norms that emphasize universal human rights laws and principles, as well as the perspective framed by national laws. Another practical benefit of that would be to form an international public opinion against the coup plotters.¹¹⁴

As a component of the political showdown, the process of determining and purging the cohorts of the coup attempt should be followed by the preparation of the infrastructure to facilitate the legal showdown. Thus, elements who were purged already, and those who are in the process of being purged, will be punished upon completion

¹¹⁴ Gülenler, "Dünyada Arındırma Politikaları ve Devletin FETÖ'den Arındırılması."

of the on-going legal processes; whereby, they will be rendered to account. The normative and institutional framework of the punishments will be determined by the rules of the criminal law and the principles of the universal human rights laws which will be enforced on the perpetrators of the July 15 coup who have already violated human rights.

As for their opinion on how the prosecution process for FETÖ members should be conducted, a 50-year-old artisan male participant in Diyarbakır said the legal process should be conducted very attentively, and each institution should be held liable to accountability.

The prosecution process of these guys must not be diluted as in the Balyoz-Ergenekon [cases]. Mistakes made by the courts and judges must not be pardoned. The suspects of Ergenekon and Balyoz must never be assigned to the seats emptied by the FETÖ terrorists in the military and the judiciary. They will have no mercy for us (DYB-6, M, 50).

It should not be forgotten that the impact of the coup attempt was fresh [in people's minds] and the issue of capital punishment had made the agenda while the interviews were being conducted. Hence, most of the answers to the question about the prosecution process consisted of the participants' opinions on capital punishment. The majority of the interviewees suggested "capital punishment" as an answer when they were asked "How should the score be settled with the coup plotters?" This is an indication of how intensely people feel about the coup plotters and perpetrators.

Opinions on capital punishment may be evaluated under three categories: in favor of capital punishment, against capital punishment and undecided. It has been observed, throughout the interviews, that people who took to the streets on the night of the attempt were still affected by the incidents and their personal experiences with some of the

participants overtly and strongly demanding capital punishment for their relatives or close ones who were harmed in the course of the attempt. A reason for why the participants suggested capital punishment could be that any military revolt against the state and the nation is directly considered as treason and deception. According to two interviewees, capital punishment would be a deterrent; they had the following to say:

All must be hanged. You are a soldier, the State meets all of your needs. What's the matter with you, how dare you attempt a coup? (İZM-02, M, 54).

Discharge from the military is a sufficiently heavy punishment for a soldier. The capital punishment may be [re-enacted] for crimes such as treason and rape. Deterrence must exist (KSK-01, M, 56).

However a significant portion of the participants who were in favor of capital punishment were also concerned that real offenders must be carefully distinguished from others and “the baby should not be thrown out with the bathwater.” The same interviewees underlined the necessity of a fair trial. According to them, the “rank and file” of FETÖ should be meticulously separated from their leaders in the military who willingly and knowingly committed the crime. The participants’ expectation of the government to conduct a fair trial and legal process is a critical point. Some of the views on the matter are as follows:

Perpetrators who plotted the coup and opened fire on people, and the bombers must be subject to the heaviest of punishments, heavier than lifetime imprisonment. Capital punishment would be suitable for them but I don't know if this is legally possible, if not, government representatives should take the pulse of the nation accordingly. Someone who provides even the scant amount of support to the Gülen organization may be punished according to counter-terrorism laws, but if an ordinary man sympathizes with the Gülen organization, he should be subject to minor punishments and partially deprived of personal benefits. Repentance laws should be carefully put into force; otherwise, everyone will regret (ANK-08, M, 29).

My heart's desire is capital punishment! But, may be, some wrong verdicts may be rendered; so, if the punishment is lifetime imprisonment, there would still be a chance to reverse a wrong decision [if any] (SRC-02, M, 48).

A large number of participants believe some prerequisites must be met in order to support capital punishment. At this point, some of the interviewees came to the fore and demanded capital punishment for the PKK's imprisoned leader Abdullah Öcalan and rapists if the capital punishment is re-enacted. Another group of interviewees wish the re-enactment of capital punishment to be implemented only once and solely for the perpetrators of the July 15 coup attempt, yet some others demand capital punishment on condition of no extrajudicial execution.

It appears that those participants who are against capital punishment have reached their decision from a range of different motives which can be grouped into four categories: those who think capital punishment is not sufficient or not humane, those who are of the opinion that the coup plotters should be prosecuted by the existing judicial system, those who reject capital punishment for religious concerns, and those who believe capital punishment negatively affects Turkey's EU membership bid. A substantial number of the interviewees who spoke against capital punishment were undecided at the beginning of the interviews, but they eventually decided against it. This confirms that people have not yet had enough time to assess criminal prosecution procedures and the consequences of reintroducing capital punishment.

The participants not satisfied with capital punishment said the criminals will not pay any price after being hanged, so capital punishment is the easiest way (out for them). The same interviewees preferred the perpetrators of the coup to remain alive but "suffer." A 52-year-old male artisan in Adana had the following to say:

People say “capital punishment,” but I think it is better if they are locked in and suffer. If they are hanged, they will die at once and will be free. But if they are not hanged, they will die slowly every day. Their salaries will be cut, properties will be confiscated. They will experience the pain behind bars. If you hang them, they will be free. Let them remain in prison for life and live in pain; to me, this is worse than a thousand capital punishments (ADN-03, M, 52).

THE FUTURE OF TURKEY

HAD THE COUP ATTEMPT BEEN SUCCESSFUL

After the coup attempt, the question of what would have happened if the coup were successful has been frequently visited. A generally accepted opinion by experts on the matter is that if the coup were successful, it would have been a disaster for Turkey. Turkey would have experienced an internal conflict and a danger of division; and would have turned into a country where many people would have died in clashes or flocked out of the country.

Some commentators have stated that if the coup were successful, FETÖ leader Fetullah Gülen would have returned to Turkey and established a bureaucratic dictatorship in accordance with his own deviant understanding of religion. According to another comment, FETÖ elements, under the newly established regime, would have formed an authoritarian-modernist regime in a separate part of Turkey so as to appear acceptable to the West but maintained their own understanding of ruling in the rest of the country.¹¹⁵

Like the experts, the participants who were interviewed as part of the research often stressed that if the coup had been successful; Turkey would have been like Syria, faced the danger of a civil war and division

¹¹⁵ Halil Berktaş, “Ya Türkiye’deki Darbe Girişimi Başarıya Ulaşsaydı?,” *Serbestiyet*, (August 11, 2016).

and become a colony of external powers. In this context, some participants expressed the following opinions:

Not my life but the life of the T.C. [abbreviation of the Republic of Turkey, in Turkish] would have come to an end. T.C. would have been divided, disintegrated. Our people, future of our children, future of you, and our professions, we (all) would have turned back 40 years; all these investments, all this prosperity... I am 47 years old. We experienced poverty. I went to Egypt, traveled every part of the country, five years later the coup took place. [Abdel Fattah al-] Sisi came to power; they are 50 years back right now. We are witnessing with our own eyes what we would have experienced. We, as the nation, know this. We would not have been secure even in our own homes. Who would have been where, perhaps a civil war would have taken place just like in Syria (YNKP-08, F, 47).

If the coup had been successful, we would have been another Syria (DYB-03, F, 40).

We would have no private life if the coup were successful because a civil war would have started. If the coup were successful, it would not be similar to the 1980 coup; to the opposite, the situation would be like Syria, like Aleppo. This is how I imagine right now (YNKP-02, M, 43).

A 29-year-old male participant at the Yenikapı, İstanbul (meeting), said Gülen would have returned from U.S. to Turkey and led a Syria-like country:

We would've been worse than Syria. For the moment, we have 250 martyrs. That means, [if the coup were successful] thousands would've been dying every day, people would've been armed, taken to the streets every day, and would have stood up against soldiers. Soldiers again would have shot people. Of course, Fetullah Gülen would've come back to Turkey, I guess (YNKP-06).

Some of the participants, drawing attention to their belief that Turkey would have turned into another Syria if the coup had been successful, said nobody would have defended Turkey, and therefore, the situation in the country would have been worse than Syria. Some opinions are as follows:

If the coup were successful, it would've been worse than Syria. Since I believe that it would not (be successful), I even cannot imagine it. There was a place to which Syria(ns) could turn to, but we would have no place to go (VAN-09, M, 58).

A group of the participants said if the coup were successful, Turkey would have entered an endless civil war between the pro-coup and the anti-coup, been divided in the end, and would have never pulled herself up again. A 36-year-old male journalist in Van explained the possibility of division as:

For instance, you wouldn't have been here today. Perhaps, the junta would've killed 20,000 of our people. If the coup were successful, politicians and everyone who is involved in politics would've been sent to prison or hanged; the economy would've collapsed, freedoms would've been ended. Those who intend to divide Turkey would divide it here. Perhaps, the east of the country would've been occupied; we would've been like Syria (VAN-01).

In conclusion, the participants especially emphasized that if the coup had been successful; Turkey would have turned into another Syria, and faced the danger of civil war and division. The interviewees also stressed that the FETÖ structure would have established a bureaucratic oppressive regime in the framework of its own deviant understanding of religion and would have not bestowed the right of expression to others.

On the other side, through the alliance of FETÖ-external powers, Turkey would have been under the complete influence and direction of the West. In this sense, if the coup were successful, the future of Turkey after the coup would have been evaluated through a disintegrated Middle East under the influence of external forces. According to this view, the participants most often referred to a new situation that would have arisen in Turkey similar to those in Iraq and Syria.

IN LIEU OF CONCLUSION: OUTSTANDING FINDINGS IN THE FIELD RESEARCH

The research aimed to measure social perceptions about the coup attempt on 15 July 2016, and was based on the method of semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews conducted with a total of 176 participants (96 males and 80 females) in 9 provinces of Turkey. A substantial portion of the participants said that they took to the streets on the night of July 15. A group of the remaining participants joined democracy watch in the following days although they had not taken to the streets on the first night.

Those who were out there in the streets justified their actions primarily by love of country and nation and reacted to the reading out of a coup communique on TRT, President Erdoğan's call for people to take to the streets and the *sala* (call to gather for a special occasion) from the mosques. Again, a group of the participants who were in the streets on the night of the coup attempt underlined the effect of TV and social media. However, all of the participants emphasized, in particular, that they were especially motivated by Erdoğan's inviting people to the streets and remained in the streets through out the first night.

When people were asked about their motivations to take to the streets following the coup attempt, "the love of country," "the future of the country and nation," and "the national unity and togetherness" seemed to be their main motives which were similarly expressed by all identity groups and political positions. However, as the interviews progressed, the participants broke down the abovementioned motivating factors and they often included "to stand by Erdoğan," "the future of their children," and "to stand by the elected."

Most of those who joined the democracy watch said that they were out from the first day (on). Their main motivation for the democracy

watch –similar to that of the night of the July 15– was “to protect the country and the state, and to claim the homeland.” However, the interviewees added that participating in the democracy watch also meant “to express gratitude to the July 15th martyrs.”

In the research, three different categories of the interviewees formed depending on their comments about their perception on the leading actor of the coup attempt, FETÖ. The first group had negative views on FETÖ all along. The views of the second group had changed in a negative way after the Gezi Park Protests and the December 17-25 activities by FETÖ in 2013. The members of the third group weren't convinced until after the July 15 coup attempt that FETÖ is a very dangerous organization.

According to the participants, FETÖ is the leading actor of the July 15 coup attempt. At this point, a great many of them only accused FETÖ, others said “FETÖ acted together with external powers,” a few believed that “FETÖ and the U.S. cooperated” in the attempted coup. As to why the coup took place, the interviewees stressed that whoever was behind the venture was aiming to stop Turkey from taking critical steps forward in terms of the international balance of power and trade.

The plotting of the coup by the FETÖ members nested in TAF brought the military face-to-face with the society. However, research reveals that the majority of the people have a positive opinion of TAF. The participants predominantly distinguish the FETÖ members embedded in the military from the rest of the TAF. Interestingly, however, a small group of the interviewees still does not trust the military.

In terms of its characteristics, participants believe that the July 15 coup attempt differs from military *coup d'états* that Turkey has experienced in the past. One of the main reasons for such perception in the society is that the coup plotters opened fire on people and acted brutally against their own fellow citizens.

As seen through the popular reaction to the coup attempt and the democracy watch, a negative part of the collective memory created by the culture of military coups in Turkey has become one of the key factors that helped people repel the attempted coup on July 15, 2016. For instance, the participants constantly recalled that the late Prime Minister Menderes was hanged after a military coup in 1960, and a similar scenario would have been put into play against President Erdoğan today. That is sufficient to prove the impact of the collective memory on the July 15 coup attempt.

With the rise of the middle class in Turkey, conservatives have a stronger self-confidence in the public sphere. Thus, the very same conservative masses played a leading role in the prevention of the coup on July 15. Since they have become more affluent and moved from the periphery to the center during the period of the AK Party and the Erdoğan government, conservatives believe every single attack on Erdoğan in fact targets them as well. For conservative masses, in this sense, the fate of Erdoğan is the fate of their own future.

One of the critical factors for the success of the past military coups is that they were supported and encouraged by a broad coalition. Today, however, people have started to question the culture of coups owing to media pluralism in the Erdoğan era, the existence of social media, the transformation of bureaucracy, the consolidation of local administrations, and the emergence of a new intellectual class. Therefore, the harm caused by the coups in Turkey's past political life has a prime position in the collective memory. On the other hand, politics has experienced ample crises during the rule of the AK Party government, successfully passing a range of tests. This has yielded cumulative learning experiences in crisis management and in the nature of reactions that should be shown by the political establishment.

The findings reveal that a significant number of the participants appreciated the opposition's siding with the elected and legitimate government of the Republic of Turkey immediately after the coup attempt. On the other hand, a group of participants commented that other major political parties –except MHP– took action after the course of events became clear and that they were late to invite their constituents to the streets; therefore, their stance was unconvincing. Nonetheless, the participants appreciated the compromise of the opposition parties to stand united with the governing bloc, and considered this a critical factor in the normalization of the society.

One of the key factors in the failure of the July 15 coup attempt is that in the post-December 17-25 (2013) period, Erdoğan worked to convince the masses about the dangers posed by the FETÖ structure. Moreover, the fight against FETÖ, which was launched after the December 17-25 coup attempt, especially the removal of members of FETÖ from the Police Force, have been successful in cleansing certain areas allowing for a decisive response from the police to the events of July 15. After fending off the attempted coup, the state has embarked upon a political and legal struggle, and a showdown against FETÖ – the leading actor of this venture. A great many participants stressed that FETÖ members must be dismissed –especially from public institutions.

Another dimension of the fight against the July 15 coup attempt are the necessary legal regulations. Almost all of the interviewees agreed on the punishment of the coup actors in the heaviest manner. Most participants advocated the re-enactment of capital punishment at this point however as some point out that they believe it will not be possible in the existing international climate; therefore, the coup plotters must be punished with lifetime imprisonment.

On the other hand, if the coup attempt on July 15, 2016 had been successful, Turkey would have become another Syria. That was the argument most often verbalized by the participants. Concordantly, a civil war would have taken place in Turkey and the country would have been rapidly divided, according to the interviewees. In addition, foreign powers would have shaped Turkey at their discretion and FETÖ would have helped them. The interviewees emphasized that Fetullah Gülen would have returned from the U.S., the FETÖ structure would have established a bureaucratic dicta regime in Turkey, eliminated all dissidents and hanged many politicians.

JULY 15: POLITICAL ECONOMY OF A FOILED COUP

Sadık Ünay*

Şerif Dilek**

INTRODUCTION

After a long respite from the era of regular military interventions, a military *coup d'état* was staged to interrupt democratic life in Turkey on the night of July 15, 2016. A large network of military officers; military-civilian bureaucrats; and members of the business world, academia and the mass media affiliated with the Fetullah Gülen Terror Organization (FETÖ) has been confirmed as the group of perpetrators who plotted and attempted the coup.

It has now come to light that FETÖ conspired to develop a shadow state or parallel, state-within-a-state structure in Turkey, which gained strength and legitimacy in national and international public opinion via its media, education, and banking entities, owing to its cooperation with clandestine power centers. FETÖ has concentrated on gaining prestige in the international community through the adoption of discourses such as “Moderate Islam” and “Interfaith Dialogue;” however, it has stayed away as much as possible from traditional Islamic groups and civil society organizations. With the aim of penetrating into Turkey’s military, civilian, and bureaucratic mechanisms, FETÖ opted for a pragmatic interaction with political parties (depending on the conjuncture) and tried to establish a shadow state structure in the country.

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FETÖ adopted a long-term strategy in the service of a Messianic religious ideology; to this end, it recruited qualified youth, provided career opportunities legally or illegally, and placed its members in key positions in society. FETÖ mobilized both financial capital and human resources through its entities located in a wide spectrum of countries, stretching from Central Asia to Africa, and from the Balkans to Latin America; as such, its parallel structure within Turkey reflects a larger, global network. During a previous coup attempt in the period of December 17-25, 2013, FETÖ members, who were vested in security units, media outlets, and the judiciary, made concerted efforts to erase then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the governing AK Party from Turkey's political scene. Upon the failure of these efforts, FETÖ mobilized its members, nested in the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF), to take action against the chain of command on the night of July 15, 2016.

Despite all of the steps towards democratic consolidation that Turkey has taken, both within the frame of its accession bid to the European Union (EU) in the 2000s, and in the legal-constitutional reforms it initiated for the demilitarization of the country, such an unusual coup attempt indicates that Turkey has not completely left the threat of military coups behind. Turkey initially set out on its adventure of democracy by adopting a multi-party political system in 1950, and underwent a normalization process in politics under the late Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and the late President Turgut Özal. Turkey riveted this process in the socio-economic arena as well, through improvements in standards of living and welfare. On the other hand, regularly recurring military coups have paralyzed Turkey's social and political life, leaving the country isolated in the face of grave macro-economic crises.

The military coups of May 27, 1960; March 12, 1971; and September 12, 1980 weakened Turkish democracy in the eyes of the international community and led to grave socio-economic collapses. Differently from previous coups, the February 28, 1997 intervention by the Joint Chiefs of Staff was contrived “to balance democracy” in Turkey, and it still is fresh in people’s minds as a “post-modern” coup, the economic-political and social aspects of which were professionally schemed through the judiciary, the press-media and members of the financial sector. Collectively, coups in Turkey have left indelible marks in the social and collective memory of the country, and have blasted the economy by destroying the environment for investment, expectations for the future, and perception of the rule of law.

This study presents an assessment of the political economy of the coup attempt on July 15, 2016, via the main theoretical approaches to military coups in relation to the economy. In this context, the study looks at the economic background of the pre-coup attempt period, crises scenarios provided by international institutions, and the goals of the perception-management orchestrated by the western world to put a positive spin on the attempted coup.

In the same breath, the study presents in detail the colossal economic power of FETÖ, amounting to billions of dollars; the holdings, networks of schools and hospitals worldwide, shopping malls, medical and software companies, with which the organization has direct or indirect links. This analysis emphasizes that, in the absence of an economic crisis or danger of a recession, the coup attempt simply and overtly targeted President Erdoğan. However, the coup attempt lacked a concrete socio-economic foundation; thus, it was impossible from the very start for it to gain any widespread social support which made it easier to thwart the heinous endeavor.

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO MILITARY COUPS AND THEIR RATIONALE

Military coups still remain a reality, despite strengthening consensus over the merits of democracy on a global scale, and ever-increasing economic and political interactions in the age of economic globalization and social integration. Indeed, successful coups have occurred 232 times in 94 countries since 1950, and about a quarter of these have overthrown democratically elected governments. The motives that drive the military forces of a nation to take over political rule, allegedly in order to protect national unity by stepping outside their legal jurisprudence, have been quite frequently discussed in the literature. A rich literature exists asserting that military coups tend to take place in rather poor countries with unsettled economic structures and institutions. Based largely on the experiences of African and Latin American countries, whose economic structures mainly rely on raw materials and agricultural products, such economic theories have seldom been applied to Asian countries.¹¹⁶

Various studies have been conducted on the negative impacts of coups on national welfare and the development processes of countries,¹¹⁷ the dynamics of economic underdevelopment or failure to develop,¹¹⁸ and the relationship between military spending and

¹¹⁶ Amina Ibrahim, "Guarding the State or Protecting the Economy? The Economic Factors of Pakistan's Military Coups," *Crisis States Research Centre, LSE, Working Paper Series*, (London: May 2009), p. 5.

¹¹⁷ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*, (Oxford and NY: Oxford University Press, August 22, 2008); Erik Meyersson, "Political Man on Horseback: Coups and Development," *Stockholm Institute for Transition Economics (SITE)*, (April 5, 2016).

¹¹⁸ Rosemary H. T. O'Kane, "A Probabilistic Approach to the Causes of Coups d'État," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (July, 1981), pp. 287-308.

coups.¹¹⁹ For instance, Acemoğlu and Robinson point out that the likelihood of coups increases during periods of economic difficulties or during recessions, as in the case of Brazil (1964), Chile (1973), and Argentina (1976).¹²⁰

Research on the economic dimensions of coup attempts in Pakistan suggests that export value growth rates and defense spending in the post-coup years of 1951-1998 were lower, as the ailing economic performance of the country increased the risk of coups.¹²¹ Research on the main causes of coups make a point in common that poor economic performance increases the probability of political instability and the risk of coups. The occurrence of economic instability causes or corresponds to political instability, which eventually initiates a process in which armed forces topple a civilian government.

In the last decades, economic theories, developed to examine the main causes of coups, have gradually loomed large. The main idea emphasized in such theories is that bad economic performance substantially increases the risk of a coup. Rosemary O’Kane argues that coup threats and uprisings are most likely, and most often, seen in countries with underdeveloped economies. Research also underlines that such countries are producers of primary goods and raw materials, and rely on the export of primary products; therefore they have fragile economies and unstable levels of income in the face of fluctuations in global market prices.

¹¹⁹ Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, “Military Spending and the Risks of Coups d’État,” *Centre for the Study of African Economies*, Oxford University, (October 2007); Gabriel Leon, “Loyalty for Sale? Military Spending and Coups d’État,” *Public Choice* 159, No. 3-4 (June 2014), pp. 363- 383.

¹²⁰ Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson, “A Theory of Political Transitions,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 91, No. 4 (September, 2001), pp. 938-963.

¹²¹ İbrahim, “Guarding the State or Protecting the Economy? The Economic Factors of Pakistan’s Military Coups,” p. 13.

Economic instability generally leads to uncertainties and causes a government to lose legitimacy. As the probability of political instability rises, the risk of a coup increases as well. Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, in their study on poverty, stress that low income in less developed countries triggers political instability and sets the stage for coups. The authors in the same study mention the “coup trap,”¹²² that is, poor economic performance in less developed countries triggers coups –and coups, in turn, trigger poor economic development. Samuel Huntington, known for his classical studies in political science literature, acknowledges that a poor economy is a factor, which seriously increases the risk for a coup.

Huntington suggests that the years of ailing economy in Latin America made the region’s countries more vulnerable to coups than the years of recovering economy and increasing per capita income. Fukuyama agrees with Huntington and points out that political instability, historically and generally, increases in periods of economic failures and recessions. In general, all of the experts on the relationship between military coups and the economy underline that a weak economy leads to the possibility of political instability and increases the risk for coups.

Another approach has been developed on the causes of coups, which has to do with corporate or common interests. According to this approach, the military is more likely to stage a coup if there is a real or perceived threat to their interests, such as a cut in the defense budget. According to Finer two main motives for launching a coup,

¹²² For the more details see; Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion: Why the Poorest Countries Are Failing and What Can Be Done About It*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Paul Collier and Anke Hoefler, “Military Spending and the Risks of Coups d’État;” Rosemary H. T. O’Kane, “A Probabilistic Approach to the Causes of Coups d’État.”

in general, are: defending “corporate status and privileges,” and preserving military autonomy.¹²³

Whatever the cause, the relationship between coups and development is clearly negative. The risk for a coup may be driven by many factors such as weak institutions, the military’s political power, social conflicts, and economic crises, etc., which also affect a country’s development potential.¹²⁴ Historical experience shows that military coups create negative impacts on a country’s level of prosperity. In countries that were more democratic, a successful coup lowered growth in income per capita by as much as 1-1.3 percent per year over a decade. Concurrently, economic reforms are interrupted by ousting elected leaders as countries fall into debt traps and severe economic crises.

Successful coups also have considerably negative impacts on the areas of health, education, and investment. As spending in social programs drops in post-coup periods, masses lose economic privileges to political and economic elites.

ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF COUPS IN TURKEY: MAY 27 AND SEPTEMBER 12

Touted as the beginning of the transition to a multi-party political system, half a century old democratic experience in Turkey began with the rise of the Democratic Party government on May 14, 1950. This experience has been interrupted four times by military interventions – on May 27, 1960; March 12, 1971; September 12, 1980; and on February 28, 1997, the latter known as the “post-modern coup.”

¹²³ İbrahim, “Guarding the State or Protecting the Economy? The Economic Factors of Pakistan’s Military Coups,” p. 13.

¹²⁴ Meyersson, “Political Man on Horseback: Coups and Development,” p. 2.

In addition to these interventions, the e-memorandum issued by the military on April 27, 2008 and the lawsuits filed for the annulment of some political parties have also partly blighted democracy in Turkey. Turkey's democracy and economy have fought for their lives under the shadow of coups, during which the military took over the government each and every time, as well as the unease caused by the series of ultimatums, memoranda, warnings and directives against Turkey's elected governments.

Turkey has suffered from interventions and enforcements against its elected governments, on average, once per decade. Although the country is ranked among developing countries in economic terms, in political terms, it has been viewed as the prototype of a "third world country" due to these interventions, which have culminated in the institutionalization of a problematic relationship between Turkey's political authorities and the military, as well as the judiciary and the civilian bureaucracy.¹²⁵ Military interventions, the abolishment of political parties via judicial maneuvering, the splitting of votes caused by the formation of new parties, therefore, paving the way for coalition governments, have all resulted in political deterioration and instability in Turkey.

Such interventions to the detriment of democracy have also harmed Turkey's economy since at least the 1960s. Accordingly, instability and decreases in Turkey's GDP growth rate, economic recession and lack of direct foreign investments, have all become issues of concern. Warranted uncertainties regarding the future of the regime have emerged in periods of anti-democratic enforcements, leading to an inevitable, corresponding regression in direct investments and capital inflows.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Uğur Selçuk Akalın, *Türkiye'de Devlet-Sermaye İşbirliğinin Ekonomi Politikası*, (İstanbul: Önsöz Basım Yayıncılık, 2006), p. 269.

¹²⁶ Akalın, *Türkiye'de Devlet-Sermaye İşbirliğinin Ekonomi Politikası*, p. 270.

In Turkey's political economy, the difficulties experienced in the transition from a liberal growth model based on agriculture in the late 1950s, to the import-substitution industrialization and the planning regime, triggered the May 27, 1960 military *coup d'état*. Similarly, the failure in transition to an open economy, despite problems in the import-substitution economy that preceded it, resulted in macro-economic and socio-political crises in the second half of the 1970s, and eventually led to a military intervention on September 12, 1980. The conditions that activated the dynamics of a crisis to induce and set the stage for the September 12 military coup, developed when political authorities failed to take the necessary, strategic transformative decisions.¹²⁷

In the period prior to the September 12, 1980 coup, Turkey underwent a process of stability and liberation on January 24, 1980 to recover from its social, political and economic fragilities and free itself from the import substitution economic policy. The anticipation was that the January 24 decisions would not be welcomed by a clear majority of Turkey's society, and would be met by public reactions and protests. However, the military coup on September 12, 1980 shut down all channels for popular reaction and imposed the necessary conditions to put the January 24 decisions into force. It was clearly demonstrated that the military authority's assistance was needed to implement the necessary neoliberal economy policies, and thus favorable results were achieved under the circumstances of the day.¹²⁸

With the onset of the globalization processes after 1980, Turkey adopted a neoliberal approach in terms of its economic policies, so as to minimize the influence and authority of the state on the economy.

¹²⁷ Sadık Ünay, *Kalkınmacı Modernlik*, (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2013), p. 249.

¹²⁸ Akalın, *Türkiye'de Devlet-Sermaye İşbirliğinin Ekonomi Politikası*, p. 196.

Around the world, structural harmonization packages have been imposed on developing countries, including Turkey, and on a few less developed countries, to ease their integration to the global system. The institutionalization of import substitution industrialization and the planned economy regime were achieved under the extraordinary circumstances set in motion by the May 27, 1960 military intervention. In a similar fashion, the frame of neoliberal politics was placed in service in an environment in which democratic freedoms were suspended by the September 12, 1980 military coup.¹²⁹ Thus, it can be said that these two military coups were based on socio-political polarization, the need to change the outdated development strategy, and the requirements of the global system. For this reason, both coups were supported by certain interest and pressure groups and powerful socio-economic segments of society.

MERCANTILE MILITARISM: THE OYAK EXAMPLE

In Turkey's unfortunate history of coups, the May 27, 1960 military *coup d'état*, with the extraordinary political and socio-economic environment it created, indicated a critical threshold of a transition to a new period. The military coup on May 27, 1960 initiated the legal and institutional configuration of the transition to planned development and to the import substitution industrialization strategy. As modern Turkey's first military coup, the May 27 intervention was staged by a group of army officers, and the National Unity Committee consisting of junta members took the helm of the country, instituting a period of military tutelage. As a holding company and a product of military tutelage, the Turkish Armed Forces Assistance and Pension Fund (OYAK)

¹²⁹ Ünay, *Kalkınmacı Modernlik*, p. 255.

was established by the army to play a part in critical sectors of the Turkish economy. Through OYAK's establishment, therefore, both an economic power center and a kind of social security mechanism for the upper ranks of the army was formed.

Substantial analyses have been made into the Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) venture into the business world via OYAK, as a critical act, and the consequences of its having partnerships with both domestic and foreign capital. Based on the concept of collective capital ownership, some experts evaluate the growth of the army through OYAK in different sectors from production to finance by making investments and forming partnerships, whereas some others evaluate the commercial and industrialist development of the TAF based on the concept of mercantile militarism.¹³⁰ The functionality of OYAK in performing both economically and politically has served as a convenient tool to preserve unity and the hierarchical order within the armed forces. In this regard, there are also studies on the economic power of the armed forces obtained by its financial independence from the civilian governance.¹³¹

¹³⁰ For studies on OYAK see: Taha Parla, "Mercantile Militarism in Turkey, 1960-1998," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Vol. 19, (Autumn 1998), pp. 29-52; İsmet Akça, *Militarism Capitalism and the State in Turkey*, (LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2014); İsmet Akça, "The Conglomerate of the Turkish Military (OYAK) and Dynamics of the Turkish Capitalism," in Elke Grwert and Zeinab Abul-Magd (Ed), *Businessmen in Arms: How the Military and Other Armed Groups Profit in the MENA Region*, (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016), pp. 69-93; İsmet Akça, "Kollektif Bir Sermayedar Olarak Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri," *Birikim*, No. 160-161 (2002); Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu (Eds.), *Bir Zümre Bir Parti Türkiye'de Ordu*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2013).

¹³¹ Gerassimos Karabelias, "Civil Military Relations: A Comparative Analysis of the Role of the Military in the Political Transformation of Post-War Turkey and Greece, 1980-1995," *Final Report Submitted to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, (June 1998); İnsel and Bayramoğlu (Ed), *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu*; Firat Demir "A Political Economy Analysis of the Turkish Military's Split Personality: The Patriarchal Master or Crony Capitalist?" in Tamer Çetin and Feridun Yılmaz (Ed), *Understanding the Process of Economic Change in Turkey: an Institutional Approach*, (New York: Nova Science Publishers, Inc, 2010).

In studies drawing attention to the army as the central figure of mercantile militarism in Turkey, the military-economic structure is examined as a triad: The first pod is OYAK, described as a private holding using the privileges of public institutions, which is evident in the army's role as a direct and autonomous economic actor in Turkey. The second pod is military expenditure, a bloc of capital that has been under the almost absolute control of the army and exempted from audit by the Courts of Account and the Grand National Assembly. The third pod is the defense industry, which has undergone a rapid development process, particularly in recent years, through new investments and university collaboration.

All three pods have remained under the absolute control of the army since the 1960s and have been off-limits to access by civilian politics. OYAK is a *sui generis* corporation; initially established as a pension fund, it has expanded into a holding involved in economic activities and domestic and foreign partnerships in key sectors. More than a social security or pension fund, OYAK is a paramount capital group functioning through its investments in production and trade, and the service and finance sectors. The TAF itself, acting like a collective capital group, calls to mind the Egyptian army; its autonomy and power in this respect constitute a critical aspect of militarization in Turkey.¹³²

The social base of the May 27, 1960 coup, i.e. military members, the bureaucracy, intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie of that time, supported OYAK during its establishment phase, and took office in OYAK's administrative boards. As far as its activities are concerned, due to deductions in member salaries, OYAK is a compulsory savings

¹³² İsmet Akça, "Türkiye'de Askeri-İktisadi Yapı," *TESEV Yayınları*, (June 2010), p. 8-9.

fund, a social security institution functioning for its members in addition to the *Emekli Sandığı* (State Retirement Fund), and a holding having direct investments in both real estate and financial sectors.

In its establishment phase, OYAK was envisioned as a capital group and its investment activities were not subject to any restrictions –in contrast to other social security investment holdings. OYAK’s trading activities in the business world currently vary from production to finance sectors, and its investment activities mostly take the form of horizontal and vertical integration. Since its establishment, the OYAK group has engaged in partnerships at various levels with big domestic and foreign capital groups and domestic economic enterprises. Many of OYAK companies are among the largest and most profitable economic establishments in Turkey.¹³³

OYAK also functions as an investment holding with activities in iron-steel, cement, concrete, automotive, logistics, chemicals, financial services, energy, freight-logistics, domestic and foreign trade, private security, technology-informatics, tourism, and other sectors, having 88 direct and indirect participations, joint management and subsidiary companies. The OYAK Group is composed of about 90 companies, 19 of which function abroad; all are active in Turkey’s industry, finance and service sectors countrywide. The total number of OYAK employees exceeds 29,000. According to consolidated 2015 results, its total assets amount to 51.6 billion TL with total revenue of 23.5 billion TL. The Group’s total export was 3.288 million USD in 2015, about 2.3 percent of Turkey’s total export.¹³⁴

¹³³ İsmet Akça, “Ekonomide Askerin Varlığı, Askeri Sermaye, Oyak,” pp. 17-26 in *Türkiye Siyasetinde Ordunun Rolü: Asker Sivil İlişkileri, Güvenlik Sektörü ve Sivil Denetimi*, (İstanbul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Derneği, August 2010).

¹³⁴ OYAK, 2015 Annual Report, retrieved from [http://content.oyak.com.tr/oyak-dosyalar/media/editor/files/KURUMSAL/faaliyet-raporlari/OYAKfr_tr\(1\).pdf](http://content.oyak.com.tr/oyak-dosyalar/media/editor/files/KURUMSAL/faaliyet-raporlari/OYAKfr_tr(1).pdf)

Since its establishment, OYAK has taken part in joint ventures at various levels not only with big domestic and foreign equity groups but with state economic enterprises as well.¹³⁵ Gerassimos Karabelias, who specializes in military sociology and civil-military relations in Greece, Turkey, and Southeastern European states, emphasized that OYAK's economic activities have assisted not only in increasing the degree of the political and financial autonomy of the officer corps as opposed to the civilian government, but also in the development of closer, direct ties between the military establishment and leading industrialists both in Turkey (e.g. Koç, Eczacıbaşı and Sabancı Holdings) and abroad (e.g. the American, German, French, Israeli, and Russian military and high-tech companies).¹³⁶ Although civilian auditing and authority were strengthened by the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government in the 2000s, OYAK's economic conglomerate still stands.

The most important criticisms regarding OYAK's structure involve their efforts to stand out in strategic privatizations by using the special status of the Group, and the moral risk this poses in the market. Being a retirement fund with a semi-public nature, OYAK has often bid for privatization tenders in various areas from banking to iron-steel sectors.

OYAK has acquired many cement companies (e.g. Niğde, İskenderun and Elazığ Çimento (Cement)), a leading bank (Sümerbank), the Turkish Cellulose and Paper Factories (SEKA Çaycuma), as well as a majority share in Turkey's giant, state-owned iron-steel company (Erdemir). In this process, OYAK has benefited from some privatization tenders and received public support thanks to privileges it has gained in the private sector and its emphasis on the national economy. For instance,

¹³⁵ Akça, "Türkiye'de Askeri-İktisadi Yapı," p. 10.

¹³⁶ Gerassimos Karabelias, "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Turkey, 1980-95," *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 4, (1999).

OYAK managed to win an auction to buy a controlling stake in the world's third largest iron-steel company (Erdemir), owing to its privileged semi-public status. During the privatization process and in advance of the auction, OYAK launched a massive public campaign via leftist-nationalist groups, to argue that such a strategic and critical company must be acquired by a Turkish company, not by foreigners. Some non-governmental organizations, newspapers, trade unions, and chambers of commerce and industry were urged to publicly protest to prevent the possible sale of Erdemir to a foreign company.¹³⁷

In terms of national security, OYAK's importance as a strategic enterprise was underlined; public pressure was exerted not to sell Erdemir to foreigners but to a national and indigenous company. When Erdemir was purchased by OYAK, international public opinion stressed concerns that Erdemir's privatization bore traces of economic nationalism.¹³⁸

A few months later, however, OYAK launched talks for partnership with Arcelor Mittal of India, one of the largest global players in the iron-steel sector, and reached a financing agreement with a Dutch group. Similarly, OYAK bought state-owned Sümerbank in advance of the bank's privatization, renamed it Oyakbank, and Oyakbank grew. Later on, however, the OYAK group sold Oyakbank to the Dutch banking and insurance group ING, for the highest price ever offered in a bank sale.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Demir, "A Political Economy Analysis of the Turkish Military's Split Personality: The Patriarchal Master or Crony Capitalist?," p. 177.

¹³⁸ Vincent Boland, "Turkish Army Fund Wins Stake in Steelmaker," *Financial Times*, (October 5, 2005), retrieved from <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/4c0ba858-353c-11da-9e12-00000e2511c8.html#axzz4JSq1mz2F>.

¹³⁹ Akça, "Ekonomide Askerin Varlığı, Askeri Sermaye, Oyak," p. 21; Demir, "A Political Economy Analysis of the Turkish Military's Split Personality: The Patriarchal Master or Crony Capitalist?," p. 178; "OYAK'ın Milliyetçiliği Lafta Kaldı," *Patronlar Dünyası*, (May 30, 2008).

Such examples have exposed the reality that OYAK, as an effective actor in the market, behaves quite pragmatically and just like other holdings, tries to maximize its profit margin, and do not hesitate to use its privileged status and economic nationalistic narratives at critical times. As the third largest conglomerate in the country, OYAK also gains various tax advantages, and is protected from fair market competition, a fact that has garnered significant criticisms.

Therefore, the disproportional impact of OYAK on the Turkish economy as a representative a mercantile militarism creates sensitivities for the institutionalization of democratic consolidation. Clandestine institutions such as FETÖ exploit such institutional weaknesses and try to undermine both the market economy and the democratic political system.

MILITARY TUTELAGE AND ITS INSTITUTIONS

Historically speaking, when the May 27 junta took over the government, it not only changed the political power composition but also dramatically executed the Prime Minister and two ministers of the period. Through counter-constitutional and legal regulations, the junta extraordinarily increased its supervision and influence on political life and maintained and institutionalized military tutelage over civilian politics by means of the newly formed National Security Council.

In the aftermath of the March 12, 1971 military memorandum, a state of emergency was declared in 11 provinces; many political parties, trade unions and professional associations were closed, the functions of many others were suspended, and publication of several newspapers were banned. Following the September 12, 1980 military *coup d'état*, all political parties were closed down and party leaders were detained at

military bases and then put on trial. Existing civil society organizations, associations, foundations and trade unions were shut down. Although some of the organizations were allowed to function, the majority was banned from resuming their activities. The critical aspect of the September 12 coup for Turkish society is that the coup changed not only the structure of public life through constitutional reforms and the imposition of laws, but also tried to redesign society itself, and succeeded in this to a great extent.

On February 28, 1997, the army issued a NSC (National Security Council) statement, similar to the March 12, 1971 military memorandum, rather than directly intervening in politics. But this time, the biggest threat against the Republic regime was announced to be “religious reactionism.” With the statement published at the end of the NSC meeting held on February 28, 1997, the military, in fact, aimed for the resignation of then Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, and asked the government to take some measures to restrict the freedoms of social segments with Islamic sensitivities. Conservative NGOs were substantially disempowered during the February 28 process and civil society activities decreased remarkably.¹⁴⁰ In short, the four military coups Turkey has endured since 1960 have directly affected the settlement of democracy and the development of NGOs.

Beyond exerting a tutelary hold on Turkey’s civil society, efforts have been made to bring political life and political parties under tight military control through the May 27 coup, the March 12, 1971 memorandum, the September 12 coup, the February 28 post-modern coup, and also through coup attempts in later years.

¹⁴⁰ Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, “Sivil Toplumun ve Siyasi Partilerin Talep ve Rollerini,” in *Türkiye Siyasetinde Ordunun Rolü: Asker-Sivil İlişkileri, Güvenlik Sektörü ve Sivil Denetimi*, (İstanbul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association, August 2010), pp. 57-58.

The tutelage system assigned military authorities a determinative role in ruling the country; the September 12 Constitution consolidated this system, and the NSC, which was established by the 1961 Constitution, institutionalized it. Prior to the rise of the AK Party governments, the tutelary system flourished without a pause. The NSC functioned like a parallel parliament; the NSC General Secretariat worked as a parallel, yet more veritable government, as legislative and executive actors were compelled to continue their activities within the scope of basic policies determined by the NSC and the NSC's General Secretariat.

Notwithstanding, military interventions in Turkey have heeded social legitimacy, to an extent, by paying regard to whether or not political-social conditions were convenient to intervene. Therefore, the relations between military coups and civil society have been considerably determined by the social legitimacy concerns of the army.¹⁴¹ In other words, the army wanted to make sure that a military intervention could be acceptable by the majority of the society under the given conditions of a specific conjuncture.

The army institutionalized the tradition of military tutelage through military coups. The role of the army in the tutelage system was consolidated by the establishment of an extremely centralist structure and the armed forces' absolute autonomy within the state. A crooked structure has thus emerged in which the political and financial endeavors of the military have not been controlled effectively; on the contrary, the military has constantly supervised politics. The TAF has never submitted to control by the political will in terms of military spending, activities, or administrative acts.

¹⁴¹ Ensaroğlu, "Sivil Toplumun ve Siyasi Partilerin Talep ve Rollerini," pp. 61-66.

For years, then, the TAF managed to keep its budget and expenditures free from oversight by Turkey's legislative bodies and auditing mechanisms –owing to its financial autonomy in particular. In the 2000s, however, the AK Party government gained institutional control over the system, and began taking steps to break the financial autonomy of the military tutelage mechanism, by amending critical laws to this end, and subjugating military spending to external audit.

Through critical amendments and regulations in the NSC Law, the military's representation in various institutions has been terminated.¹⁴² As of 2005 in particular, in connection with Turkey's full membership talks with the EU, the AK Party took steps to move the military into the purview of the civilian government; these measures have gradually weakened the tutelage system, and have been maintained despite the e-memorandum and the closure cases filed against the AK Party and other political parties. Thus, many of the institutional foundations of military tutelage were gradually eliminated in the process leading up to the July 15 coup attempt.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FIGHT AGAINST FETÖ

As a result of the advances made in the 2000s, Turkey is currently the world's 18th largest economy and is considered a medium-scale emerging economy; with its peculiar strategic and geopolitical position, combined with a dynamic and young population, Turkey stands

¹⁴² Ali Bayramoğlu, "Türkiye Siyasi Sisteminde Ordunun Rolü, Devlet Geleneği, Geleceğe Dair Genel Bir Çerçeve," in *Türkiye Siyasetinde Ordunun Rolü: Asker-Sivil İlişkileri, Güvenlik Sektörü ve Sivil Denetimi*, (İstanbul: Heinrich Böll Stiftung Association, August 2010).

poised to become an energy supply-and-demand hub. The July 15 coup attempt obviously aimed at Turkey's political stability, along with its development goals and economic potential.

The averted July 15 coup will leave scars in the collective memory of Turkish society. In a period in which everyone had been thinking, "There cannot be military coups anymore," the Gülenist junta created a profound social trauma in Turkey with the attempted coup on the night of July 15, 2016. The social ramification of the attempt is a loss of sense of security among Turkey's populous. Re-strengthening the Turkish people's sense of security and belief in the future is important for a soundly functioning political and social order.¹⁴³

FETÖ built its "shadow state" structure by penetrating into the military, the security sector, the judiciary, the national intelligence organization, and the state bureaucracy on account of its influence in political, bureaucratic and security mechanisms. The structure recruits qualified human capital via education institutions, private schools, student houses, prep schools and dormitories.

In press and media, FETÖ spread its mass power through TV channels, radio stations, newspapers, magazines, news agencies, publishing houses and bookstores. It established a foothold in the international community through NGOs, humanitarian relief foundations and associations, interfaith dialogue, and intellectual and cultural activities. In addition, the FETÖ parallel state structure reinforced its economic power through banks, finance and insurance companies.

¹⁴³ Francis Fukuyama, "Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity," *Free Press*, (1996).

TABLE 1. FETÖ FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Institutions	Domestic (Number)	Abroad (Number)
Primary, Secondary, High School (College)	1,700	2,500
Prep. School	1,000	
University	15	10
Youth Hostel	449	200
Association and Foundation	1,225	1,500
Healthcare Organization	35	15
Company	8,000	3,000
Bank	1	
Media Enterprise	131	50
News Agency	3	
TV Channel	16	
Radio Station	23	
Newspaper	45	
Magazine	15	
Publishing Firm	29	

Source: SETA, Infographic

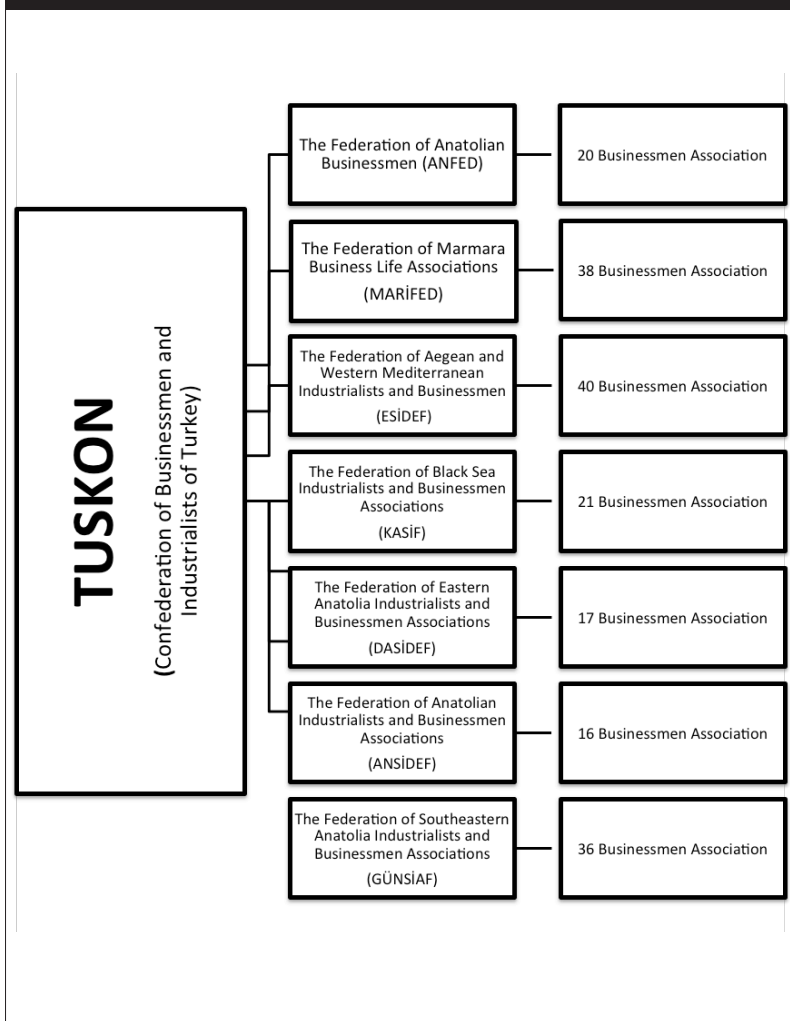
Established in 2005, FETÖ's umbrella organization, the Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey (TUSKON) formed a giant network representing about 55,000 entrepreneurs and 140,000 companies in 211 business associations across 80 provinces of Turkey. TUSKON was formed as an NGO in the form of a confederation comprising regional federations. The network was organized across seven geographical regions of Turkey as separate federations, with representatives in a total of 140 countries, including Brussels, Washington D.C., Moscow, Beijing, and Addis Ababa.¹⁴⁴

TUSKON is composed of the following federations:

1. The Federation of Anatolian Businessmen (ANFED),
2. The Federation of Marmara Business Life Associations (MARİFED),
3. The Federation of Aegean and Western Mediterranean Industrialists and Businessmen (EDİFED),
4. The Federation of Black Sea Industrialists and Businessmen Associations (KASİF),
5. The Federation of Eastern Anatolia Industrialists and Businessmen Associations (DASİDEF),
6. The Federation of Anatolian Industrialists and Businessmen Associations (ANSİDEF), and
7. The Federation of Southeastern Anatolia Industrialists and Businessmen Associations (GÜNSİAF), and their affiliated business associations.

¹⁴⁴ "7 Bölgede Örgütlü FETÖ'nün 188 İni Var," *Yeni Şafak*, (July 22, 2016).

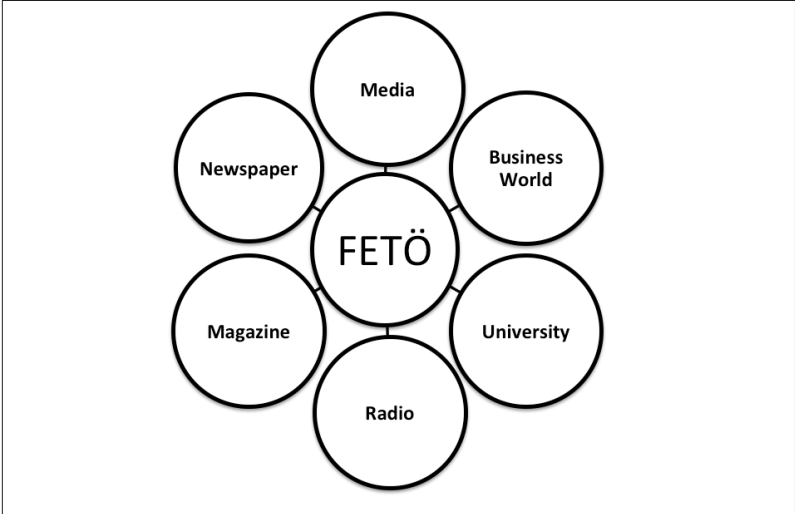
SCHEME 1. NUMBER OF TUSKON MEMBER FEDERATIONS AND AFFILIATED BUSINESSMEN ASSOCIATIONS



Source: *Daily Sabah*, (July 25, 2016).

FETÖ entertained a large degree of power in Turkey's economic and media spheres. As depicted in Scheme 1, trustees were appointed to some FETÖ companies prior to the July 15 coup attempt; in its wake, a large number of FETÖ corporations have been shut down.

SCHEME 2. FETÖ ECONOMY, EDUCATION, AND MEDIA STRUCTURE



SCHEME 3. FETÖ'S PRESS-MEDIA LEG

MEDIA	NEWSPAPER	RADIO
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Samanyolu• STV Avrupa• STV Amerika• S Haber• Mehtap• Ebru• Yumurcak• Küre• Hazar• Dünya• MC• Kanaltürk• Bugün• Barış• Can Erzincan• Kanal 124• Merkur• SRT• Tuna Shopping• Cihan News Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Zaman• Today's Zaman• Meydan• Bugün• Millet• Taraf• Özgür Düşünce• Yarına Bakış• Yeni Hayat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burç FM• Samanyolu Haber• Dünya• Aktüel• Berfin FM• Cihan• Esra• Haber Radio Ege• Herkul FM• Jest FM• Kanaltürk• Radio 59• Aile Rehberi• Bamteli• Radio Cihan• Fıkıh• Küre• Mehtap• Nur• Şimşek• Yağmur FM• Umut FM• Aksaray Mavi

SCHEME 4. FETÖ'S BUSINESS WORLD-ACADEMICS (EDUCATION) LEG

BUSINESS WORLD	ACADEMY (UNIVERSITY)	MAGAZINE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Bank Asya •TUSKON (Marifed, Arifed, Esidef, Kasif, Anfed, Ansifed, Dasidef, Günsiaf etc..) •Kaynak (Sürat Cargo, Sızıntı, NT store etc..) •Koza-lpek (Koza Altn, ATP Aviation etc..) •Naksan (Naksan Plastic, Nakpilsa textile..) •Cihan-Sen Confederation (Affiliated 10 labor unions; Aktif Eğitim-Sen, Ufuk Sağlık-Sen, Ufuk Haber-Sen, etc..) •Aksiyon Confederation of business (Affiliated 9 labor unions; Pak Gıda-İş, Pak Maden-İş, Pak-Finans İş etc..) •Boydak (İstikbal, Bellona, Boydak Energy, HES Cable, Boyçelik, Bizim Asset Management Company etc..) •Akbulut (Ortadoğu Textile, BJ Textile, Oden Energy, Erfa Engineering etc..) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Altn Koza (İpek) University •Bursa Orhangazi University •Canik Başarı University •Melikşah University •Fatih University •Selahattin Eyyubi University •Murat Hüdavendigâr University •Süleyman Şah University •Turgut Özal University •Mevlana University •Kanuni University •İzmir University •Zirve University •Gediz University •Şifa University 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Aksiyon •Turkish Review •Sızıntı •Akademik Araştırma •Asya Pasifik •Bisiklet Çocuk •Diyalog Avrasya •Ekolife •Ekoloji •Fountain •Gonca •Gül Yaprığı •Nokta •Yağmur •Yeni Ümit •Zirve

THE MARKETS' REACTION TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

Turkey's strong financial and economic structure, based on the country's success in macroeconomic governance in recent years, prevented a potential economic crisis. The coup attempt may of course have a negative impact on the Turkish economy in the short-term; however, the reactions of markets to the developments should be taken in stride. Kar and Ayhan analyzed the impact of the July 15th coup attempt on Turkey's financial sector and economy. They investigated a number of variables to assess the volatility of Turkey's financial system and any changes in the overall economy. Their results indicate that the coup attempt did not affect the financial system, which bounced quick-

ly back after a short run recession. In light of their findings, they conclude that the Turkish economy and financial system are in a good position among other emerging market economies.¹⁴⁵ A similar study shows that the Turkish economy demonstrated resilience in the aftermath of the coup attempt; within a few days of the crisis, the economy and financial system were functioning well without any signs of instability, as if nothing major had taken place just a short time earlier. The Turkish economy has survived other serious challenges, and has actually fared markedly better than that of numerous other countries, especially in Europe, in the last few years. The economy remains stable, the banking system robust, and the investment climate as advantageous as ever. In short, the ill-fated incident's negative impact on Turkey's financial markets has been limited and short-lived.¹⁴⁶

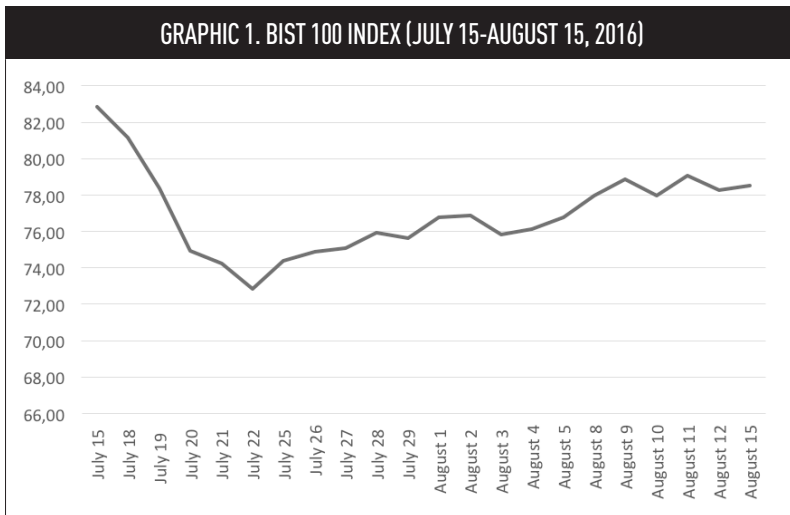
While conjunctural fluctuations are part of any national economy, a coup attempt is one of the biggest political risks a country faces. In contrast to the coup attempt in Turkey, after the Brexit decision in the British referendum, sterling plummeted against the U.S. dollar as the London Stock Market hit rock bottom. Considering that Turkey fended off a political risk, incomparably more serious than Britain's Brexit experience, the Turkish economy stands sober and has not experienced any big shocks either in terms of exchange rates or investments. Reactions in markets mellowed quickly, owing to the rapid thwarting of the political risk.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Muhsin Kar and Selim Kayhan, "Resilience of the Turkish Financial System to Failed Coup Attempt," *Bilig*, Vol. 79, (Autumn 2016), pp. 275-291.

¹⁴⁶ Lütfü Elvan, "After the Coup Attempt, Turkey Stays on Course," *Al Jazeera*, (August 18, 2016); Nurullah Gür and Mevlüt Tatlıyer, "The Resilience of The Turkish Economy After the Failed Coup Attempt," *SETA Analiz*, (August 2016).

¹⁴⁷ Nurullah Gür, "Türkiye Ekonomisi Darbe Teşebbüsünden Neden Etkilenmedi?" *SETA Perspektif*, (July 2016).

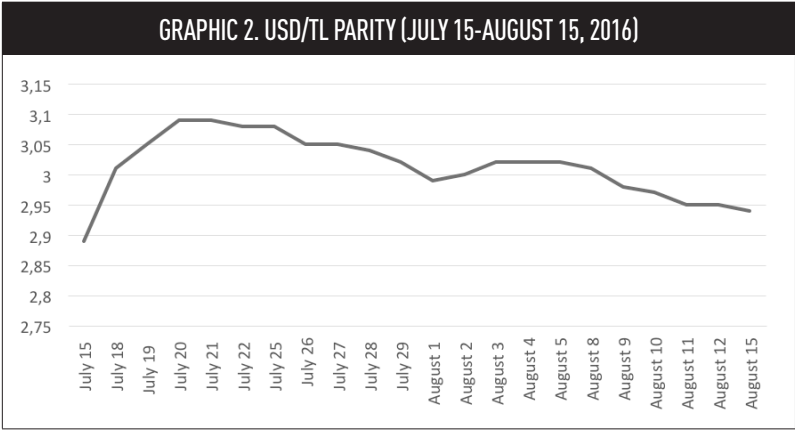
Despite the capital outflow after the coup attempt, citizens and domestic investors prevented the possible depreciation of the Turkish lira by exchanging much of the foreign currency in their portfolios and wallets. In a single week after the coup attempt, \$11.5 billion worth of currency was exchanged to the Turkish lira.¹⁴⁸ Although there is no rational explanation for this behavior in such a capitalistic system, Turkish citizens prevented the coup attempt not only physically but also economically. In other words, while they protected democracy on the streets, they also protected economic stability in their bank accounts.¹⁴⁹



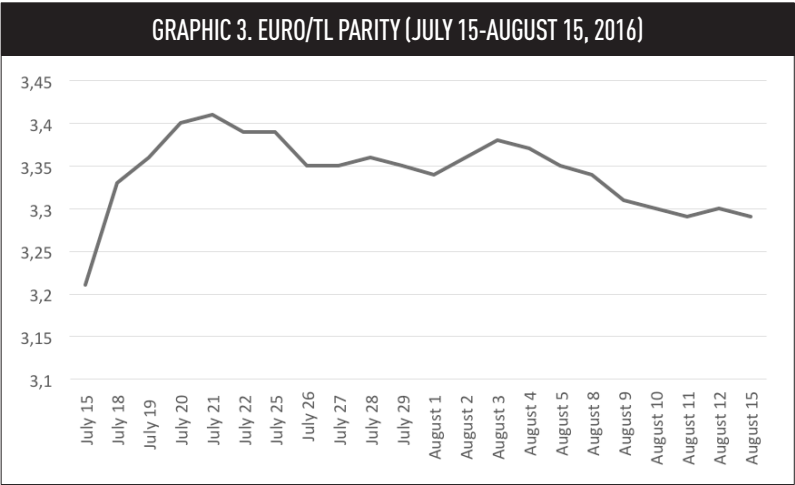
Source: Bloomberg HT

¹⁴⁸ "Turkey Minister Defines Post-Coup Economy as 'Miracle,'" Anadolu Agency, (July 22, 2016).

¹⁴⁹ Kar and Kayhan, "Resilience of the Turkish Financial System to Failed Coup Attempt," pp. 283-284.

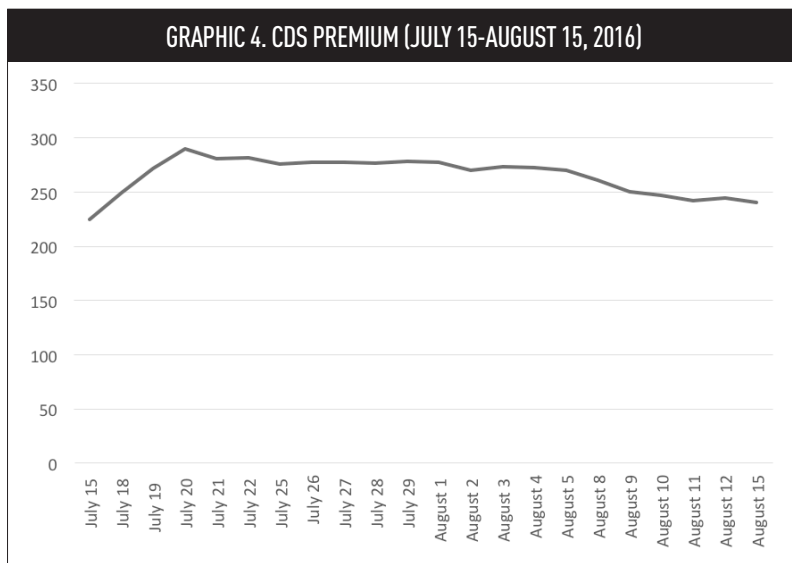


Source: Bloomberg HT



Source: Bloomberg HT

The foiled coup attempt took place on the night of Friday July 15, 2016. Since the markets were closed for the weekend, many watched and waited anxiously to see the markets' reaction on Monday morning, July 18. During the business week that followed, the BIST 100 Index dropped as the American Dollar and Euro gained value against the TL. Graphic 4 depicts CDS premiums. CDS can be employed to assess the



Source: Bloomberg HT

stability of a country's financial system; an increase in CDS means that the economy is worsening. After the end of the quantitative easing program, the CDS of emerging market economies increased because of capital outflows. The coup attempt on July 15 influenced CDS premiums and the hike was about 29 percent, increasing from 224 to 289 points. However, after a short time, it started to diminish gradually. A month after the coup attempt, it was 239 points again. The steepness of the slope of CDS premiums was lower than that of the other indicators, while the impact of the coup attempt on CDS premiums was not as high as that of an unstable political environment (i.e., between the two elections in 2015). CDS premiums were close to the pre-coup levels when we compared the volatility range. Hence, there is no need to make a prediction for the normalization of CDS premiums.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ Kar and Kayhan, "Resilience of the Turkish Financial System to Failed Coup Attempt," pp. 285-286.

The initial shock, the Central Bank's interest rate decision for a reduction despite the coup attempt and, more importantly, anxiety stemming from the declaration of the state of emergency, played a role in the first week's developments after the coup attempt. In addition, announcements by credit rating agencies, starting with Standard and Poor's (S&P) hasty decision to cut Turkey's credit rating, are among the negative developments in the course of events.¹⁵¹

However, in the context of effective crisis management the Central Bank of Turkey adopted the following measures, as part of its crisis management, to maintain effective activities in financial markets:¹⁵²

1. The Central Bank of Turkey provided banks with necessary liquidity, without limits,
2. The commission rate for the intraday liquidity facility was zero,
3. Banks were allowed to place foreign exchange deposits as collateral without limits for necessary Turkish Lira liquidity,
4. Foreign exchange deposit limits of around \$50 billion were increased and utilization conditions (collateral and cost) were improved,
5. All markets and systems (Electronic Fund Transfer and Electronic Securities Transfer) were kept open until transactions were completed,
6. Market depth and prices were monitored closely, and
7. Necessary measures were taken to maintain financial stability.

¹⁵¹ Hatice Karahan, "5 Soru: Darbe Girişiminin Ekonomik Yansımaları," SETA, (July 28, 2016).

¹⁵² "Finans Piyasalarına İlişkin Basın Duyurusu," TCMB, (July 17, 2016).

The Central Bank's decision to provide banks with necessary liquidity without limits to ward off a possible panic atmosphere was critical for Turkey's financial stability. With the announcement of the preventive measures package, the Bank immediately positioned itself to respond to all demands by banks and people; therefore, in an environment of security concerns, it forestalled possible increases in exchange rates in financial markets and losses in the Stock Market.

Thanks to the Central Bank's preventive measures, the Turkish people and markets relaxed and recovered from the initial shock after the failed coup attempt with minimal damage, and quickly reaffirmed their confidence in the economy and Turkey's financial administration.¹⁵³ Top economy officials and institutions issued effective and positive statements, which changed the upward trends in index and exchange rate figures to horizontal trends. Messages of confidence in the Turkish economy given by both domestic and foreign market players definitely stopped possible losses in the Stock Market and forestalled increases in exchange rates.

THE WESTERN APPROACH TO THE COUP ATTEMPT AND EFFORTS TO INDUCE A FINANCIAL CRISIS

Turkey was deeply disappointed by the fact that the U.S., the EU countries and international institutions, and the western world in general, did not rush to condemn the July 15 military coup attempt; anti-Americanism in particular has reached a new peak due to the fact that FETÖ leader Fetullah Gülen continues to live in the U.S. Affiliates of FETÖ's parallel state structure nested in the İstanbul Stock Market, the BDDK, the SPK and the Central Bank tried to trigger an economic crisis through financial instability in Turkey and spread despair among people.

¹⁵³ Erdal T. Karagöl, "15 Temmuz Darbe Girişimi ve Türkiye Ekonomisi," *SETA Perspektif*, (July 22, 2016).

The attempted military coup aimed to affect production and investments in Turkey through financial channels, destroy Turkey's economic environment, end stability and replace it with vulnerability, thereby triggering a crisis and blasting the country's political structure. After the coup attempt was repelled, FETÖ affiliated individuals nested in various parts of the economic structure, such as financial institutions, the Stock Market, the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK), and the Capital Markets Board (SPK), were immediately purged as suspects were suspended from their jobs so that in-depth inquiries could be carried out.

The Central Bank, which had previously hesitated to select policy instruments that would vitalize the investment environment in risky political times, and which had also sharply increased Turkey's interest rate many times, made a courageous move in the immediate wake of the July 15 coup attempt, lowering the interest rate and challenging FETÖ affiliated individuals and speculators who had penetrated into Turkey's finance institutions.

Two days after fending off the coup attempt, the credit rating institution S&P promptly reacted and cut Turkey's credit rating although an evaluation by the agency was not scheduled at the time. S&P move demonstrates that decisions of the international credit-rating agencies may be motivated by political rather than economic factors. Credit rating business in the world is controlled by three oligopoly corporations and that is generally accepted by international capital markets as an indication that these corporations can easily change the financial atmosphere in a country. Although there are about 80 credit rating agencies around the world, S&P, Moody's, and Fitch Ratings, which are known as the "Big Three," control about 95 percent of the sector.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ "Derecelendirme Sektöründe Daha Fazla Rekabete İhtiyaç Var," Anadolu Ajansı, (August 4, 2016); Erdal T. Karagöl "Kredi Derecelendirme Kuruluşlarının Amacı Not Mu Soygun Mu?," *Yeni Şafak*, (July 25, 2016).

As credit rating establishments are the West's modern financial instruments on a global scale, S&P's objectivity is questionable in terms of its rating criteria. While S&P cut Turkey's credit rating to negative, Moody's and Fitch announced that they would rate Turkey after seeing reactions of the Turkish government [to the failed coup attempt]. Indeed, S&P's rejection of the government's offer to have a meeting in advance of the announcement of S&P's decision is an indication of S&P's on-going subjective attitude towards Turkey.¹⁵⁵

It is still fresh in people's minds that international credit rating agencies failed with their decisions in the pre-global crisis period and that their decisions dragged the global economy into turbulence. Since the global economic crisis, the subjective and unethical decisions of credit rating institutions are being held to deeper scrutiny.

A STYLIZED POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

An analysis of the military intervention processes in Turkey's history of coups reveals that the coups generally coincided with times of economic shrinkage, and that they struck a blow to Turkey's economic policies and triggered cyclical fluctuations. The coups that followed economic and political instability created environments vulnerable to coups every decade. These coups have resulted in the suspension and regression of Turkey's democratization process, and have had an especially negative impact on the masses. In the end, all of the coups and military interventions in Turkey have generated tremendous social,

¹⁵⁵ As examples of questionable objectivity of the Standard & Poor's' recent rating, it should be noted that Turkey was rated on the same level as Brazil, which has been struggling with dire economic and political problems, and was rated two ranks below South Africa, whose economy of which is also turning gray. See Hatice Karahan, "5 Soru: Darbe Girişiminin Ekonomik Yansımaları."

economic, and political losses.¹⁵⁶ Through these interventions, the armed forces have habitually attempted to gain a relatively more powerful position legally, politically, and economically.

In the aftermath of the 2000-2001 economic crises, the AK Party governments took the helm of a country suffering from dire socio-economic conditions, and adopted an array of measures to constrict the military tutelage and expand the sphere of civilian politics. The steps taken by the AK Party to break the political-economic power of the military tutelage are the most critical and noticeable of these measures. For instance, military spending has been subjected to the Court of Account's auditing. Moreover, OYAK's institutional privileges have been truncated; military members of Turkey's high civilian boards, such as the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK) and the Higher Education Council (YÖK), have been eliminated; the military officers who were involved in past coups have been tried in court, the weight of the NSC chief commanders has been reduced, the authority of Turkey's military courts have been restricted, and the State Security Courts have been abolished. Such steps aim to break the settled structure of the military tutelage and get rid of the coup tradition in Turkey.

The ruling AK Party, which faced political crises by virtue of the party closure case filed against it in 2008, and the December 17-25, 2013 anti-government operations, realized that the tutelage is nurtured by the civilian bureaucracy and accordingly tried to find a common ground with the opposition to remedy the situation.

The Fetullah Gülen Terrorist Organization (FETÖ) sought at numerous times to take over Turkey's elected and legitimate government via latent judicial-police operations and various instruments until July

¹⁵⁶ Yıldız Zeliha Hatipoğlu et al., "Türkiye'de Darbelerin Ekonomi Politikası," *EconAnadolu*, (June 2011), p. 24.

15, 2016, when the organization attempted to overthrow the government by a military coup. FETÖ terrorist structure takes the form of a multifaceted organization nested within various institutions and enterprises in Turkey, from education to the business world, from NGOs to the bureaucracy, from the judiciary to academia, and it has proven to be a global threat.

In the wake of the July 15 coup attempt, some of the profound changes made in the TAF for a more civilian army are as follows:¹⁵⁷

1. The Ministry of National Defense (MoND) will have civilian personnel and staff.
2. The Land, Navy and Air Force commands are directly connected to the MoND.
3. The President and Prime Minister have the authority to receive information directly from, and to issue direct orders to the commanders of the army, air force, and navy.
4. The control of all factories, industrial facilities and navy yards under the TAF have been transferred to the MoND.
5. The disciplinary and personal affairs procedures of military judges have been transferred to the MoND.
6. The Supreme Military Council has been expanded to include the deputy prime ministers and the justice, foreign, and interior ministers.
7. All military academies are to be shut down within two years.
8. A National Defense University (NDU) has been established under the MoND to train officers for the army.

¹⁵⁷ "İşte TSK'da Devrim Niteliğindeki Düzenlemeler," TRT Haber, (July 31, 2016); Metin Gürcan, "Askeri Reformlarda Demokratikleşme Açığı," *Al-Monitor*, (August 8, 2016).

9. A major institutional restructuring process to regulate TAF's appointment and promotion system, and the duties and authorities of its administrative elites has been launched.
10. All military hospitals have been put under the authority of the Health Ministry instead of the military.
11. The Gendarmerie Command and Coast Guard Command controlled by the TSK, for their personnel, training and procurements, are now fully part of the Ministry of Interior.
12. Military barracks in strategic metropolitan cities, e.g. İstanbul and Ankara, have been moved outside of city limits.
13. Graduates of Religious and Vocational High Schools may enroll in the military academies.

These structural changes deeply affect the TAF's structure in terms of civilizing and making it more accountable. Accordingly, a more robust and democratically controlled army would be less immune to capture by clandestine organizations such as FETÖ.

CONCLUSION: INSTITUTIONAL AND SOCIAL RESISTANCE TO THE COUP ATTEMPT

At the end of a long and painful July 15 night, Turkish democracy averted an unconventional military coup attempt, plotted by FETÖ affiliated pro-junta personnel operating outside of the legitimate chain of command. President Erdoğan's courageous leadership, and the self-sacrificing struggle of the people of Turkey against the coup attempt, played a leading role in fending off the coup. However, the July 15 episode triggered a deep social trauma and created a profound lack of confidence in Turkish society towards public institutions and religious communities.

From the economic perspective, reassuring statements and effective governance on the part of Turkey's bureaucracy and the Central Bank, combined with the bonding together of the business world are key factors that helped to prevent chaos and panic in the markets after July 15, 2016. Significantly, immediately after the coup attempt, the Treasury, the Central Bank, the SPK, the BDDK, and the Union of Banks of Turkey jointly addressed international market actors, emphasizing the sound functioning of the judicial system, the fact that the state of emergency declared in Turkey will not affect free market conditions, and that all necessary steps will be taken for the sustainability of economic stability.

By the same token, leading representatives of the Turkish business world, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM), the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK), the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen Association (TÜSİAD), the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD), the Anatolian Businessmen Association (ASKON), and the Confederation of Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen (TESK), announced their commitment to act in concert to protect Turkey's economic stability and reverse any negative perception about Turkey in international markets.¹⁵⁸

Similarly, international conglomerates such as General Electric, Intel, Cargill, Boeing, Microsoft, Toyota, IBM, Nestle, Siemens, Ford Otosan, and Socar, announced their confidence in Turkey's future and asserted that their investments in Turkey will continue without pause.

¹⁵⁸ "Beş Kurumdan Dünyaya 6 Önemli Mesaj," *Sabah*, (July 25, 2016); "Ekonomi Dünyası İstişare Toplantısı," *Ministry of Economy*, (July 27, 2016); "Türk Şirketlerinden Dünyaya 'Demokrasi' İlanı," *Dünya*, (July 31, 2016); "Sermaye Çıkışı Söz Konusu Değil," *Dünya*, (July 31, 2016).

In addition to international finance, independent auditing and consultancy firms, the South Korean global automotive giant Hyundai called on its partners and subsidies across the globe for “special support to Turkey” after the July 15 failed coup attempt.¹⁵⁹

In summary, the Gülenist coup attempt on July 15, 2016, took place at a time when many believed that conventional military coups in Turkey would never occur again. Past military coups generally had taken place in times of social polarizations caused by economic stagnation, failing development strategies or risks of financial crises. The July 15 coup attempt, however, occurred at a time when the Turkish economy was exhibiting the parameters of strong macroeconomic governance and sustained growth rates.

Hence, the July 15 coup attempt, with a weak socio-economic basis, never stood a chance to destroy the foundation of President Erdoğan’s social legitimacy backed by political will. The Turkish people’s social resistance to the coup attempt has proven that it is impossible for conventional military coups to gain social legitimacy in Turkey any more. In the history of Turkish democracy, the pages of military coups are forever closed.

¹⁵⁹ “Türkiye’nin Ekonomik Temelleri Darbe Girişimine Karşı Dirençli,” Anadolu Ajansı, (July 21, 2016); “Bağımsız Denetçilerden ‘Ekonomiye Güven’ Vurgusu,” *Dünya*, (July 31, 2016); “Hyundai’den ‘Türkiye’ye Özel Destek’ Çağrısı,” *HT Ekonomi*, (August 1, 2016).

CULTURE, SOCIAL CONTESTATION AND TURKEY'S FAILED COUP: THE RIVALRY OF SOCIAL IMAGINARIES

Farhan Mujahid Chak*

INTRODUCTION

On July 15, 2016, Turkey was abruptly thrown into gory disarray, initiated by a treacherous faction within the Turkish military, whose members unwisely, but certainly not thoughtlessly, attempted a bloodthirsty *coup d'état*. Essentially, the apparent poor planning, or theatrics, of the coup-plotters is an entirely disingenuous allegation. In fact, the usurping conspirators, with meticulous planning, orchestrated “a number of coordinated attacks in both Ankara and İstanbul in an illegitimate attempt to seize key government institutions, including the Presidential Compound and the National Intelligence Agency (MİT).”¹⁶⁰ Tanks, combat aircraft, attack helicopters and thousands of troops were simultaneously dispatched all over the country.

In addition, menacing, low-flying F-16's began circling Turkey's largest urban centers. Meanwhile, military units were instructed to block the Bosphorus and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridges, close İstanbul Atatürk International Airport, bomb the Gölbaşı Special Forces Headquarters and Ankara Police Department, suppress independent news, and apprehend President Erdoğan, dead or alive. To that end,

¹⁶⁰ Sena Alkan, et al, “July 15: The Gülenists' Coup Attempt,” (Policy Paper), *Daily Sabah Centre for Policy Studies*. No. 3 (July/2016), retrieved August 4, 2016.

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elite military commandoes flew to the western coastal city of Marmaris, where President Erdoğan was known to be on holiday, and opened fire, causing panic and pandemonium in their failed bid to capture him.¹⁶¹ Thereabouts, the national Turkish Radio and Television (TRT) station was assaulted and an anchorwoman, at gunpoint, broadcast the bravado of the coup-plotters, declaring the Turkish military in total control.¹⁶² The propaganda war had begun, and it continued with the unfolding brutality of the coup. Nevertheless, what was quite extraordinary, and ultimately proved fatal to the coup attempt, was the decisive tenacity of the Turkish people. Even as treasonous military personnel bombed the Turkish Grand National Assembly again and again, the recoiling people's representatives, from both the ruling party and the opposition, valiantly denounced the coup.¹⁶³ Our critical query, to which we will return, is: where did this indomitable resolve come from?

This is not all, the coup-plotters carefully calculated and executed the swift kidnapping of key senior military personnel, including General Hulusi Akar, Commander Salih Çolak, and General İhsan Ayar, forcibly taking them to Akıncı air base.¹⁶⁴ While there, these senior military officers were battered and threatened with fatal consequences

¹⁶¹ "Family's Escape from Erdoğan Hotel Attack," Sky News, retrieved July 29, 2016 from <http://news.sky.com/story/familys-escape-from-erdogan-hotel-attack>.

¹⁶² "Coup Soldiers Raided State Run Broadcaster TRT," *Daily Sabah*, retrieved July 21, 2016 from <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2016/07/17/coup-soldiers-raided-state-run-broadcaster-trt>.

¹⁶³ They bombed the Parliament building a total of 11 times. See: Will Worley, "Turkish Coup: Parliament Bombed," *Independent*, retrieved July 16, 2016 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-coup-parliament-hit-by-bomb>.

¹⁶⁴ Uğur Ergen, "Chief of Staff Held at Gunpoint by Coup-plotters," *Hurriyet Daily News*, retrieved July 24, 2016 from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/chief-of-staff-held-at-gunpoint>.

if they refused to comply with the directives issued by the murky recluse Fetullah Gülen.¹⁶⁵ Trickery, ruse and perfidy characterize the deep-rootedness of the Gülen Movement, emblemized by the appearance of Ramazan Gözel, General Hulusi's Executive Assistant, on CCTV assisting the coup-plotters.¹⁶⁶ However, irrespective of the plotters' planning, embeddedness, or depth of intrigue, the hostages flatly refused to relent to their demands. The coup plotters had played all their cards, banking on quick surrender, which was not forthcoming. And, against every act of sabotage, terror and death that they inflicted, everyday men and women resisted courageously. After all, rights once acquiesced are not so easily withdrawn.

Chaotic scenes of professional military infantry raiding CNN Turk, only to be countered by unruly mobs and, soon thereafter, arrested by their own police force are surreal. Imagine heavily armed and well-trained military soldiers being scolded and manhandled by the citizenry, with the intervening police officers struggling to prevent a lynching.¹⁶⁷ In actuality, at that point, popular mobilization was already rapidly under way. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan publicly condemned the coup as an illegal act and ordered the police to restore order. Specifically, he used the FaceTime app on his iPhone to connect to CNN Turk and broadcast a galvanizing message: "people, everywhere, should come out on the streets and defend their democracy."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ "Most Turks Believe a Secretive Muslim Sect Was Behind the Failed Coup," *The Economist*, retrieved July 28, 2016 from <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21703186-president-erdogan-blames-Gülenists>.

¹⁶⁶ "Shocking Images Show Coup Soldiers Being Taken Hostage," *Daily Sabah*, retrieved August 21, 2016 from <http://www.dailysabah.com/gallery/politics/shocking-images-show-coup-soldiers-taking-senior-military-officials-hostage>.

¹⁶⁷ "Pro-Coup Soldiers Seize CNN Turk," CNN Turk, filmed July 15, 2016, retrieved July 16, 2016 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtZ3tuIv_RI.

¹⁶⁸ Alkan, et al, "July 15: The Gülenists' Coup Attempt."

Responding by the millions, the Turkish people flooded the streets throughout the entire country, attesting to the legion of enthusiasts ready to sacrifice for their shared social imaginary. Using the Mosques, the Tariqats, Tekkes, independent local dailies, and employing ingenious signage throughout the public transportation networks –the metro, tramways, and buses– the entire civic spectrum of Turkish society stood strong and condemned the coup.¹⁶⁹ Truly, such united resistance from all sections of society has not only revealed democracy as a non-negotiable value, but illuminated the pervasiveness, and the inclusivity, of Turkey's principal social imaginary led by the AK Party.

In the midst of this atmosphere, with resistance to the coup gaining momentum, unforeseen censure from the U.S. and Turkey's European allies raised eyebrows across Turkey. Ridiculously, both John Kerry, the U.S. Secretary of State, and Federica Mogherini, the EU's foreign policy chief, issued outlandish outbursts that President Erdoğan should respect democracy.¹⁷⁰ While millions were mourning their fatalities, this brazen issue of nonsensical statements was devastating for U.S./NATO and Turkish relations. "The clear implication, for listeners inside Turkey, was that Europe and America were more concerned for the thugs who had tried to seize the state than they were for its democratically elected leaders."¹⁷¹ Responding dismissively to these statements, President Erdoğan berated the West for its hypocrisy and for "siding

¹⁶⁹ Şenol Kazancı, et al. "FETÖ's Coup Attempt in Turkey: A Timeline," (Policy Paper), *Anadolu Agency Special Report*, (August 5, 2016).

¹⁷⁰ Charles De Bellaigue, "Welcome to Demokrasi: How Erdoğan Got More Popular Than Ever," *The Guardian*, (August 30, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/30/welcome-to-demokrasi-how-erdogan-got-more-popular-than-ever>.

¹⁷¹ De Bellaigue, "Welcome to Demokrasi: How Erdoğan Got More Popular Than Ever."

with the putchists.”¹⁷² Then, making matters worse, NBC’s Kyle Griffin falsely, and irresponsibly, tweeted that President Erdoğan was seeking asylum in Germany, citing an unnamed military source.¹⁷³ For Sibel Edmonds, the FBI whistleblower who heads the alternative media organization Newsbud, this was a clear instance of a “psy-op” designed to be spread in order to defuse the Turkish public’s violent reaction to the coup.¹⁷⁴ Still, what is important to highlight is this did not work. The putchists, along with their co-conspirators –local and foreign– grossly misinterpreted and underestimated Turkish society by undervaluing the new social imaginary of millions of Turks. Naturally, they were surely in for a rude awakening when popular capitulation was not forthcoming; now, the Turkish peoples’ heroic resistance is celebrated as “Democracy Day.”¹⁷⁵

Looking back, the instance that best encapsulates the failed military coup is the spectacular arrest of Brigadier General Gökhan Sönmeztaş. He was the commanding officer ordered to capture or kill President Erdoğan and, in his fate, we find everything that went wrong for the putchists. Grippingly enough, consider how a decorated military officer of prestigious rank, commanding tremendous respect, broke the law –in the most scandalous of fashions, murdering civilians and trying to assassinate his democratically-elected President. Upon his arrest, this disgraced brigadier offered to fully cooperate on a single condition: that he

¹⁷² De Bellaigue, “Welcome to Demokrasi: How Erdoğan Got More Popular Than Ever.”

¹⁷³ Esra Kaymak Avcı, “Turkey Demands NBC Apologize for False Erdoğan Report,” Anadolu Agency, (July 26, 2016), retrieved from <http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/turkey-demands-nbc-apologize-for-false-erdogan>.

¹⁷⁴ James Corbett, “Independent Media Heads to New York to Confront NBC” *Corbett Report Blog*, (August 2, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.corbettreport.com/independent-media-heads-to-new-york-to-confront-nbc-over-msm-lies/>.

¹⁷⁵ Kazancı, et al. “FETÖ’s Coup Attempt in Turkey: A Timeline.”

be permitted to divorce his wife, and have his children change their names, in order to conceal their identity.¹⁷⁶ How shockingly precipitous, and painfully conclusive, must that moment have been? Tragic, and devastating, such is the cost of his high stakes treachery. Fittingly, just as his actions claimed the lives of many, so too will he be abruptly taken away from his loved ones. All of this, though, is the consequence of his sedition –rationalized on a rejectionist social imaginary, which directly led to the untimely deaths of more than 249 people and the wounding of thousands.¹⁷⁷ Still, in his ignominy, we find what was emblematic of the failed coup: no matter the level of financial support and planning, a *coup d'état* cannot succeed without widespread commitment to the usurpers' social imaginary, at least enough to pacify competitors.

Distinctly then, it was not poor planning that explains the coup's failure, although that reasoning seems surprisingly ubiquitous in mainstream European and U.S. media.¹⁷⁸ Instead, the usurpers' debacle resulted from a multiplicity of factors, including their disbelief, and ignorance, of the people's propensity for resistance, the street power of the AK Party cadre with its exemplary mobilization, the deep resentment in the collective conscious of the Turkish people to military coups, and, most importantly, the impetus for this roused resolve, to which we initially alluded, the AK Party's widespread social imaginary in present-day Turkey. Specifically, social imaginaries, and their competing

¹⁷⁶ "Coordinating General of Erdoğan Assassination Mission Wants Children to Have Different Surname," *Daily Sabah*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2016/07/21/coordinating-general-of-erdogan-assassination-mission-wants-children-to-have-different-surname>.

¹⁷⁷ Galip Dalay, "Let's Close the Chapter of Coups," *Aljazeera English*, (August 19, 2016) retrieved from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe>.

¹⁷⁸ Edward Luttwak, "Why Turkey's Coup D'état Failed," *Foreign Policy*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/16/why-turkeys-coup-detat-failed-erdogan/>.

ideological trajectories are critical to explore. For in the failed social imaginary of the Gülenist terror network, and the competence of its ideological competitors led by the AK Party, Turkey's coup was lost.

Taylor describes a social imaginary as,

The ways people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others, how things go on between them and their fellows, the expectations that are normally met, and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations.¹⁷⁹

A social imaginary is, for all intents and purposes, a binding creed that makes existence intelligible. And, among Turkey's variant social imaginaries there are some, such as those of the Gülenists, the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation party (DHKP-C), and Ergenekon, that exist on the periphery of the cultural ecosystem, and others like that of the AK Party, the CHP, and the MHP, located in its core. It is in their interaction, then, that we locate the social imaginary contestation and the machinations behind the coup fiasco. Of course, a social imaginary is only as persuasive as its committed faithful, needing "*asabiyya*,"¹⁸⁰ a "creative minority,"¹⁸¹ or—simply put—a team for ascendancy. That being said, the usurpers' social imaginary did not find significant resonance among the Turkish populace. Perceptibly, they either did not understand or ignored this necessity. Nor did they seem to comprehend the concurrent dynamics of culture and social contestation vital in the ongoing formation of competing social imaginaries. Hence, by deconstructing the social contestation and emergence of competing social imaginaries in Turkey, we explicate the coup's failure.

¹⁷⁹ Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, (Duke University Press, 2004), p. 23.

¹⁸⁰ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, p. 57.

¹⁸¹ Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History, V.1, Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 230.

To begin, this article explores the processes involved in the emergence of rival social imaginaries, as they develop in a cultural ecosystem, and relates these processes to Turkey's failed coup. To accomplish that, it unravels how social actors, partial to their values, participate in the social construction of reality. Thereafter, what we see and how it is understood leads to the emergence of diverging ideological trajectories and, eventually, to social contestation as a result of competing claims. Then, to scrutinize the founding of those competing claims, this article employs what social constructivists describe as the binary processes of "habitualization" and the "inheritance of meaning."¹⁸² Looking closely, this also involves the twin idealizations of "Interchangeability of Standpoints" and "Congruency of the System of Relevancies,"¹⁸³ which are requisites for shared meaning to occur. In other words, if interchangeability, mutual understanding and commitment occur, only then does a social imaginary win adherents. And, enhancing that, Epstein's insights into brain functioning assist our discovery of how social imaginaries use "observation, pairing, and punish/reward cycles" to propagate their narratives.¹⁸⁴

To clarify, Epstein articulates in his article, "The Empty Brain," how the information processor (IP) metaphor, for the brain, is inaccurate. He argues the brain does not process, store or retrieve information.

We don't create representations of visual stimuli, store them in a short-term memory buffer, and then transfer the representation into a long-term memory device. We don't retrieve information or images or words from memory registers. Computers do all of these things, but organisms do not.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, (Open Road Media, 2011), pp. 67-75. Both of these, collectively, are referred to as "idealizations."

¹⁸³ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75.

¹⁸⁴ Bruce Epstein, "The Empty Brain," Aeon Blog, retrieved July 01, 2016 from <https://aeon.co/essays/your-brain-does-not-process-information-and-it-is-not-a-computer>.

¹⁸⁵ Epstein, "The Empty Brain."

Instead, Epstein reasons that,

As we navigate through the world, we are changed by a variety of experiences. Of special note are experiences of three types: (1) we observe what is happening around us (other people behaving, sounds of music, instructions directed at us, words on pages, images on screens); (2) we are exposed to the pairing of unimportant stimuli (such as sirens) with important stimuli (such as the appearance of police cars); (3) we are punished or rewarded for behaving in certain ways.¹⁸⁶

Consequently, human agency constructs social reality through a process involving “habitualization” and the “inheritance of meaning,” with the added empirical typologies of observation, pairing, and the punishment/reward cycle. During this activity, we take in, process, and recreate phenomena, then translate and project our narratives. However, in this complex process, a singular outcome is a rarity; instead, a multiplicity of trajectories ensures diverging social imaginaries. Here, social contestation occurs regarding the result of that re-creation and how narratives and social imaginaries interact. Now, two important questions follow:

1. Who are the agents competing for dominion in order to concretize those rules of the game in Turkey?
2. Upon what mandate do the competing trajectories claim legitimacy for dominion?

Turkey’s socially contested cultural ecosystem of rival social imaginaries includes such terrorist groups as the Gülenists, the PKK, the DHKP-C and Ergenekon, which exist on the peripheries of the cultural ecosystem, and the AK Party, the CHP and the MHP, which inhabit its core, to mention a few. All of these groups constitute discursive communities which are led by competing “creative minorities;” among them, only the fittest survive. In its conclusion, this article explains Toynbee’s

¹⁸⁶ Epstein, “The Empty Brain.”

“creative minority” and the Darwin’s “fittest” as essential factors in the long-term supremacy of the principal, “winning” social imaginary. Of course, this model, currently in effect, needs sophistication, and the victor mustn’t take all. Opening too much space may diminish one’s powerbase; too little will not sufficiently pacify resistance. The nuance of managing diversity and social contestation requires a compelling gradation, unique to the cultural context, and must be judiciously actualized.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

As we explore the intricacies involved in deciphering culture, including its inherent contestations and social imaginary productions, two factors—the social construction of reality and phenomenology (the study of consciousness)—come to the fore. Alfred Schutz first extended this complex relationship to the social world.¹⁸⁷ Thereafter, Welch utilized both factors to address shortcomings in political culture research, while relying on Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann’s amplification of it.¹⁸⁸ All in all, both Luckmann and Berger begin with the assumption that people “construct their own nature” and that the transference of that construction occurs in a two-fold manner involving “habitualization” and the “inheritance of meaning.”¹⁸⁹ Here, habitualization means any action that is repeated frequently, becomes familiar and, thereby, is apprehended by its performer as a pattern. In other words, the process of habitualization makes it unnecessary for each situation to be articu-

¹⁸⁷ Alfred Schutz, *Phenomenology of the Social World*, (Northwestern University Press, 1967), pp. 3-15. In reference to the relationship between the social construction of reality and the study of consciousness. Transference refers to transference of a singular phenomenon –and associated meaning, to a habitualization.

¹⁸⁸ Stephen Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), p. 108.

¹⁸⁹ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75.

lated repeatedly. Habitualization is an enabling force, manufacturing how others perceive, yet prior to its transference, humans “observe” and “pair” stimuli.¹⁹⁰

Secondly, Luckmann and Berger explain the importance of phenomenology –the study of consciousness and meaning, by human agency, for the “inheritance of meaning.” Clarifying, in order for two people to communicate, they must overcome their differences in perception of their environments. This is accomplished through two idealizations: the “interchangeability of standpoints” and the “congruency of the system of relevancies.”¹⁹¹ All of this, as Welch explains, leads to the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives and the apprehension of objects and their aspects that are actually known by me and potentially known by you, conceived to be objective and anonymous.¹⁹² It is here, then, after consciousness and meaning is conveyed, that Epstein’s punishment/reward cycles are introduced based on the consequences of what is understood. Both aspects of “habitualization” and the “inheritance of meaning” are instrumental in deconstructing culture, locating social imaginaries, and deciphering social contestation in a cultural ecosystem. Moreover, in order to effectively relay how habitualization and the inheritance of meaning are idealized to social actors, Epstein’s insights into psychology are essential. Social actors, based on their social imaginary, are commandeering observation, facilitating pairing and punish/reward cycles, to achieve intelligibility, interchangeability and congruity.¹⁹³ All the variant social imaginaries in Turkey are en-

¹⁹⁰ Epstein, “The Empty Brain.”

¹⁹¹ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75. Herein, both are collectively referred to as “idealizations.”

¹⁹² Stephen, *The Concept of Political Culture*, p. 109.

¹⁹³ Epstein, “The Empty Brain.” This implies the “congruency of the system of relevancies.”

gaged in this complex process to manufacture meaning and ensure intelligibility. Still, as will be explored later, the Gülenists did this improperly without concern for interchangeability, due to their lack of transparency and their secrecy.

There is an important precursor, prior to our observing the world, engaging in the social construction of reality, and, possibly, planting the seed of a social imaginary, namely, our values. Before human agency participates in the social construction of reality, one must observe stimuli and it is our values that color our observation. In fact, it is through our values that we first begin to shape our perception of stimuli. Of course, the possibility of having *apriori* values or developing values after observing the world are possibilities. Looking out a window, one can perceive the sky or the dirt; the values we embrace compel us to make that choice. Hence, drawing on phenomenology, an adult person perceives the world with values already in place, and these values, in turn, color our perceptions.

VALUES-OBSERVING THE WORLD

Unquestionably, human beings come into a world of existing meanings, types, roles, “formulae,” and “storehouses of knowledge” or “significant symbols.”¹⁹⁴ Inglehart refers to this as the enduring cultural component that makes each society distinct.¹⁹⁵ This is all-important in elucidating social theory, yet herein lies the problem: in today’s globalized, multi-ethnic, multi-religious world, nation-states lack a single

¹⁹⁴ See, Schutz, *Phenomenology of the Social World*, p. 3; Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75; Clifford Geertz, “The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man” in the *Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 45.

¹⁹⁵ Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 246.

culture, nor is any given culture entirely monolithic. Instead, individuals are exposed to competing and contradictory stimuli in their cultural environment from the moment they are born. And, while an individual may or may not have a hand in these stimuli, they remain, in varying degrees, before, during and, even after that individual's death. Therefore, by deconstructing social imaginaries and better understanding the values impacting the processes of "habitualization" and the "inheritance of meaning," which includes observation, pairing and punish/reward cycles, we are better able to interpret those varying stimuli from which trajectories flow and social imaginaries emerge.

Further explaining, Geertz describes extant stimuli as "significant symbols" which an individual uses, "sometimes deliberately and with care, most often spontaneously with ease, but always with the same end in view: to put a construction upon events through which he lives, to adjust themselves within the ongoing course of experiencing things."¹⁹⁶ Phenomenology then sheds light on the cognitive processes involved in interpreting stimuli or the "significant symbols" as experienced by human agency, in order to unravel social imaginaries. Welch highlights phenomenology to address gaps in political culture research. Chak deems it critical to learn "how" to comprehend the "foundational" aspect of political culture in Muslim polities.¹⁹⁷ In this article, though, phenomenology instructs our social construction of reality and informs eventual social contestation by competing social imaginaries.

More specifically, by exploring the values that color our observation and shape our interpretation of stimuli, we address the formative stage of how social imaginaries develop and transfer the social construction

¹⁹⁶ Clifford, "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," p. 45.

¹⁹⁷ Farhan Mujahid Chak, *Islam and Pakistan's Political Culture*, (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 7.

of reality through “habitualizations,” and the ensuing “inheritance of meaning.” This occurs after we observe our social environment, pair stimuli and internalize punishment/reward cycles. Now, what is important to reiterate is that habitualization, the inheritance of meaning, and idealizations are only possible if there exists an agreement, latent or otherwise, of the values –and meaning(s) associated with them, perpetuating each social imaginary. Without that, there can be no idealizations –interchangeability or congruency. In other words, where there is no agreement, the potential for conflict arises; depending on the gravity of the disagreement, this potential can lead to war. Here, therefore, analyzing the core values of each variant of the social imaginary provides clues to its mandate.

A CREATIVE MINORITY

Until now, this article has shed some light on the processes involved in the formation of social imaginaries in a cultural ecosystem. It notes that within a cultural ecosystem, a multiplicity of ideological trajectories and social imaginaries may develop. Yet, the comprehensive directing of each social imaginary requires capable leadership. Toynbee envisions that capable leadership as a “creative minority” –or, in other words, a small group of gifted, innovative, and industrious individuals who come together, as a team, with a shared vision and social imaginary, and respond to the challenges that their society is facing.¹⁹⁸ By doing so, and successfully establishing dominance over competing trajectories, the principal “creative minority” ensures the supremacy of its social imaginary.

To further explain, a cultural ecosystem –or its larger corollary a civilization, may be characterized as either primitive, arrested, or dy-

¹⁹⁸ Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V.1, *Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 50.

namic.¹⁹⁹ The distinguishing features include the maturation level of the creative minority, the management of social contestation and the level of effectiveness in responding to challenges. All human societies, whether primitive, arrested, or dynamic, contain creative individuals. However, in primitive or arrested civilizations, creative individuals either cannot form a team, or, if they are able to do so, they exhaust their creative energies by engaging in destructive conflict with rivals. In essence, the inability to find commonality through inclusion or to put forth a social imaginary that resonates sufficiently with people is crippling, leading to an arrested civilization. Contrariwise, in dynamic civilizations, like-minded creative individuals join together to resolve social contestation, at least, to the extent that it disrupts cohesion. So, a dynamic civilization is described as such since its socialization has nurtured a unique cadre of leadership that responds to difficult situations, offers solutions, imperatively upholds authority, and instructs apprenticeship in the dissemination of the dominant social imaginary. This describes a cycle whereby the social imaginary becomes more deeply habituated over time. The widespread embrace of that social imaginary is what propels this cadre into leadership.

Elaborating, Toynbee specifies that “a natural organism is made up, like a human society, of a creative minority and an uncreative majority of ‘members;’ in a growing and healthy organism, as in a growing and healthy society, the majority is drilled into following the minority’s lead mechanically.”²⁰⁰ Basically, this minority of superior, dedicated and hard-working people sets the standard for others to follow. And, these unique individuals effectively respond to social challenges and encourage others to follow suit, almost instinctively, through a process called

¹⁹⁹ Toynbee, *A Study of History, V.1, Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 26.

²⁰⁰ Toynbee, *A Study of History, V.1, Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 277.

“mimesis.”²⁰¹ What this means is that by solving society’s pressing and difficult issues, a creative minority is rewarded by the majority imitating them, sharing their vision and embracing their social imaginary.

Taking a step back, creative minorities are responsible for the actualization of their social imaginary. Particularly so, since, the manner in which a creative minority imparts their vision and indulges in social contestation impacts the totality of the cultural ecosystem. Here, Letwin’s explanation of the word “culture” is insightful, literally meaning “handing down.”²⁰² For a social imaginary constitutes a conception of how things should be done, as well as a manner of understanding and dealing with extant stimuli; it comprises a complicated cluster of criteria and skills. And, resultantly, each creative minority is responsible for thoughtfully deciding, and skillfully directing, what to “hand down.” In other words, creative minorities perpetuate their social imaginaries through apprenticeship.

Plainly speaking, each creative minority must ensure that their own house is in order and, thereafter, advance the vitality of their social imaginary through apprenticeship. Purposely, each group normalizes their social construction of reality into recognizable and shared traditions. “This is why the personal association of parent-child, teacher-pupil, has been considered essential to the transmission of a tradition.”²⁰³ However, this is not so easy or straightforward as it may seem. Social imaginaries and the traditions they inculcate remain coherent not through changelessness but through continuity. For that to occur, it must be expressed with considerations, both historic and contempo-

²⁰¹ Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V.1, *Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 284.

²⁰² Shirley Robin Letwin, “Culture, Individuality and Deference,” in *Culture and Politics*, Maurice Cranston and Lea Boralevi (eds.), (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), p. 2.

²⁰³ Letwin, “Culture, Individuality and Deference,” p. 3.

rary, the management of which is not altogether quite clear. For instance, the Gülen movement draws on Turkish reverence for Islam and the learned. Two issues are important to highlight here: the Gülenist's use of Imams to ensure the continuity of their social imaginary, and the invention of tradition.²⁰⁴

In their now seized Yamanlar High School in İzmir, hand casts were found, reportedly of Fetullah Gülen.²⁰⁵ If true, this would be a clear indication of Gülenist authority figures using local the Turkish tradition of kissing hands to signify reverence. The discovery of these hand casts, for many Turks, was seen as an outrageous adulteration of a cherished tradition.²⁰⁶ Hence, the continuity of tradition is dependent on the teaching skills of the creative minority, which recognizes the embeddedness of certain values, but should not require mere imitations of historic performance or style. The misuse of a tradition could very well result in mockery and the opposite of the intended effect, in this case, of enhancing reverence or supporting the spread of the social imaginary.

Accordingly, there is an inherent disharmony in culture *per se*, as it emerges through social contestation, between the competing values, traditions, and given cultural context. Moreover, the emergence of creative minorities vying for ascendancy adds to the dissonance. Of course, throughout history there have been those rare epochal paradigm shifts that alter the values of a people. Taylors refers to that phenomenon in

²⁰⁴ Aslı Aydıntaşbaş, "The Good, the Bad and the Gülenists," *European Council on Foreign Relations Online*, (September 23, 2016), retrieved from http://www.ecfr.eu/publications/summary/the_good_the_bad_and_the_Gülenists.

²⁰⁵ "Secret Tunnel Discovered in Gülen School," *Daily Sabah*, (August 9, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.dailysabah.com/investigations/2016/08/09/secret-tunnel-discovered-in-Gülen-run-high-school-in-western-turkey-raises-suspensions>.

²⁰⁶ "Relics and Rituals Reveal Sick Devotion to Cult Leader Gülen," *Turkish American News*, (September 9, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.turkishamericannews.com/headline-news/item/12623-relics-rituals-reveal-sick-devotion-to-terror-cult-leader-guelen>.

Europe citing the intellectual impact of Locke and Grotius.²⁰⁷ Still, that rarity involves social contestation between the old and new, in which victory depends on how authoritatively the creative minority establishes its new social imaginary. What is important to accentuate is the manner in which the creative minorities –elites, teachers or Imams, play a decisive role in establishing the coherence of their traditions.²⁰⁸

Essentially, in light of this, one needs to closely investigate the distinctive social imaginaries in Turkey –not just their formation, but how they navigate relations with each other– and explore the currents and crosscurrents that animate their history. Every creative minority must multi-task, confronting internal challenges within their social imaginary and competing with others in their shared cultural ecosystem. Whether Gülenists, ISIS, the DHKP-C, the PKK, the Kemalists, Milli Görüş, Süleymançı, Naqshbandi-Khalidi, Semerkand, or the AK Party cadre in Turkey, among others, each belongs to and generates a distinctive social imaginary. Granted, each cooperate at a level dependent on their creative leadership.²⁰⁹ On the contrary, without cooperation or minimal agreement, the social imaginary becomes destructive towards the totality of the cultural ecosystem. This is how the Gülenists' rationalized "cheating" in examinations, based on their belief, real or otherwise, that corruption would prohibit their rightful advancement.²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 24.

²⁰⁸ Murat Bilginçan, "Everything You Wanted to Know About Fetullah Gülen," *Al-Monitor*, (April 16, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2016/04/turkey-Fetullah-Gülen-cleric-opposition-erdogan-akp.html>.

²⁰⁹ Svante Cornell and M. K. Kaya, "The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey," (Policy Paper), *Hudson Institute*, (September 3, 2015), retrieved from <http://hudson.org/research/11601-the-naqshbandi-khalidi-order-and-political-islam-in-turkey>.

²¹⁰ Fevzi Kızılkoyun and Mesut Hasan Benli, "Fetullah Gülen Key Suspect in Exam Cheating," *Hürriyet Daily News*, (March 25, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Fetullah-Gülen-key-suspect-in-exam-cheating-probe.aspx?pageID=238&nid=80136>.

Or, how the HDP rationalizes PKK violence against the Turkish state due to perceived historical injustices.²¹¹ Indeed, even the radical left in Turkey advocates rebellion against the state due to its social imaginary, which teaches extremist Marxism.²¹² Indeed, in each of these instances, through the rationalization of polarizing behavior that negatively impacts others, the challenges and responsibilities of creative minorities and their social imaginaries are underscored. Creative minorities, in fact, are the social actors commandeering social contestation.

THE RIVALRY OF SOCIAL IMAGINARIES

The natural affinity between culture and social contestation, often neglected, is a profoundly vital criterion for evaluating the rivalry of social imaginaries in a cultural ecosystem. Without it, accurately interpreting the variables or characteristics that impede or enhance the social commons, according to the divergent narratives of social actors, is difficult.²¹³ Knowing the mind, and appreciating the deepest, most intimate values of one another, is essential for mutual understanding. And, this allows for the potential of reconciling differing thought patterns and behaviors. Notwithstanding, it is prudent to recognize that social contestation occurs not only between different peoples, societies and nations, but, most importantly, inside them. In other words, “culture functions as a contested sphere” in which it is constantly evolving, transforming and undergoing adaptation through human agency –

²¹¹ Lucy Kafanov, “End of Turkey-PKK Ceasefire,” *Al Jazeera*, (August 10, 2015), retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/08/turkey-pkk-ceasefire-puts-hdp-tough-spot>.

²¹² “Profile: Turkey’s Marxist DHKP-C,” BBC, (February 02, 2013), retrieved June 05, 2015 from <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-21296893>.

²¹³ Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, p. 23.

both bygone and extant.²¹⁴ This internal social contestation is vividly pronounced in Turkey, and elsewhere throughout Muslim polities, although the conundrum is how to manage it and whether the competing social imaginaries are even in an ideological position for that to take place.

To be more clear, social contestation is a given, due to divergent social imaginaries and creative minorities in any society, yet zero-sum binaries between them is not.²¹⁵ Here, then, two variant social imaginary pathways emerge dependent on their management by creative minorities:

1. Discerning competing social imaginaries, within the cultural ecosystem, but abiding by cohesion, or
2. Rejecting competing social imaginaries and any framework of commonality or agreement.

In the first instance, the social imaginary, even while differing from other trajectories, accepts a framework of maneuverability composed, for example, of elections, police, the judiciary, authority figures, etc., in society. In the latter, social contestation becomes destructive by not accepting any framework of agreement. Consequently, a social imaginary arising within a discursive community that rejects a common framework exists on the peripheries or outside the frontiers of the cultural ecosystem—as in the case of the PKK, Ergenekon, the DKHP-C or the Gülenist coup-plotters in Turkey, leaving forcefulness, subter-

²¹⁴ Henry Giroux, "Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (March 2004), pp. 59-79.

²¹⁵ Omar Shariff, "Is Peace in the Region a Zero-Sum Game?," Gulf News, retrieved from <http://gulfnews.com/news/mena/iran/is-peace-in-the-region-a-zero-sum-game-1.1586861>; Michael Hudson, "Middle East Policy: A Zero-Sum Game," Al Jazeera, retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2011/08/201181681017137387.html>. "Zero-Sum binaries" refers to one person's loss must necessitate another's gain. In this predicament, no compromise is foreseeable.

fuge or duplicity as their only recourse. These peripheral social imaginaries, since they do not have enough people, or enough social resonance, to exert their imaginary on the populous at large, rationalize violence.

To reiterate, it is not necessary for diverging social imaginaries to exist outside a cultural ecosystem. All that is necessary is for participating ideological trajectories, within a cultural ecosystem, to have a minimal level of shared agreement or commitment to the “rules of the game,” so to speak. Every effort should be made by the principle creative minority to ensure that variant social imaginaries are not pushed to the brink. When such efforts are not made, or are unsuccessful, and a social imaginary accepts no basic framework from which to coexist with others, then that social imaginary becomes a counter-culture or rebellious movement. It views competing social imaginaries in zero-sum binaries, holds no moral standard across imaginaries, and is only able to obtain power through brute force. In Turkey, the Gülenists, Ergenekon, the DHKP-C and the PKK are examples of such rebellious and counter-cultural social imaginaries, working against cohesion in their cultural ecosystem. By doing so, they employ subversion and sabotage to actualize their agendas, representing what Jean-Paul Sartre calls “*mauvaise foi*”²¹⁶—bad faith, or insincerity towards their own professed highest values.²¹⁷ Be that as it may, these rival social imaginaries operate in private and in public, and are embedded in social networks and institutions, competing for ascendancy.

²¹⁶ Christian Onuf, “Jean-Paul Sartre: Existentialism,” *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, retrieved September 10, 2016 from <http://www.iep.utm.edu/sartre-ex/>.

²¹⁷ Hakan Yavuz and Mujeeb Khan, “Turkish Coup, Muslim Democracy and Western Bad Faith,” Al Jazeera, (September 9, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2016/09/turkish-coup-muslim-democracy-western-bad-faith-160908091821163.html>.

Concerning Turkey's failed coup, had the usurpers done their homework properly, they would have realized that their attempts at habituations had not led to substantial interchangeability or congruency. Not only that, the Gülenists hold little in common with the other social imaginaries in Turkey, which is why they lack transparency and rationalize murder. Their secrecy prevents them from engaging, in a straightforward manner, with other trajectories since it is based on zero-sum binaries. Moreover, their lack of transparency and existence in the peripheries of Turkey's cultural ecosystem further alienate them. In fact, in a twisted reality, the Gülen movement, while growing as a reaction to Kemalist repression, grew in fear, apprehension and duplicity. Now, it oddly requires these elements, without the conditions that initially led to them. Hence, the Gülenists developed in resistance to authority, and continued this resistance even when authority was in the hands of their erstwhile allies.

Understanding the rivalry of social imaginaries requires a recognition of the transformative processes utilized by conflicting social actors, i.e. creative minorities, as they develop their unique narratives. Together, social actors and their consequent intellectual trajectories, utilize the experiential typologies of observation, pairing and the punishment/reward cycle, to intake, process and recreate phenomena, translate and project their narratives, and create their social imaginaries. It is here, then, that social contestation occurs as to what the result of that re-creation entails and how the social imaginaries will interact. Social contestation or ideological rivalry occurs regardless of circumstance, but its severity depends on whether the social imaginary exists as a core or periphery, inside or outside a cultural ecosystem.

Henceforth, analyzing cultural rivalry in society leads to an appreciation of the manner in which human agency and social contestation

formations materialize to contend with the direction of “culture” in a given society—whether through social media, oral history, film, art, education, through imams, secular teachers, popular figures, or literature.²¹⁸ Essentially, this includes the manner in which each trajectory and its proponents produce their imaginaries. Broadly speaking, this is what any thorough exploration of “cultural analyses” should discover—what is important for that cultural ecosystem, distinguishing competing social imaginaries, which institutions are perpetuating divergent cultural repositories and what are the impending consequences of those trajectories. Yet, no matter what the competing trajectories are, the momentarily resolved yet ultimately unresolvable conflict of culture, is aptly described by De Tocqueville’s explanation of the French revolution, relevant, also, for the Arab Spring and the awe-inspiring Turkish triumph for democracy:²¹⁹ “*elle dure encore*”—it still continues.²²⁰

Plainly speaking, culture is continuously being contested; reconciliation, even if attained, is only momentary. In fact, the content and process of “handing down” culture or ascertaining “how things are done” includes the competing trajectories and social imaginaries of both winners and losers, as an outcome of historic contestation, which inevitably will continue to evolve. Therefore, what amounts to the totality of a given cultural ecosystem—including its different social imaginaries and extant learning and sharing—is a matter of continuous social contestation and rivalry.

²¹⁸ Giroux, “Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals.”

²¹⁹ Kazancı, et al. “FETÖ’s Coup Attempt in Turkey: A Timeline.”

²²⁰ Alexis De Tocqueville, cited in “Preface,” *Social Movements, Mobilization and Contestation in the Middle East and North Africa*, Joel Beinin and Frederic Vairel (eds.), (Stanford University Press, 2011), p. x.

Clearly then, rival social imaginaries, particularly in regard to orientations to stimuli, phenomena and political objects in a society, remain important and often distinct. Cultural analyses are effective for understanding those distinctions. During this ongoing process of disputation, a principle social imaginary becomes dominant by overcoming internal challenges towards cohesion, and external challenges confronting society at large. It is difficulty, rather than ease, that provides the stimulus. Yet that difficulty must not be too great. In fact, Toynbee argues “that the challenge must be a golden mean; an excessive challenge will crush the civilization, and too little challenge will cause it to stagnate.”²²¹ Toynbee identifies five challenges that assist creative minorities in improving performance and sharpening their wit:

A hard environment; a new environment; one or more “blows,” such as a military defeat; pressures, such as a frontier society subjected to frequent attack; and penalizations, such as slavery or other measures in which one class or race is oppressed by another.²²²

Nevertheless, all of this helps the creative minority strengthen its resolve in order to achieve supremacy for itself—and this competition with other social imaginaries, ultimately, leads to civilizational growth.

Toynbee reminds us that, aside from those 5 challenges, there is another requisite for the maturation and ascendancy of a creative minority. For that, neither military prowess, political expansion, advances technology, agriculture or industry, are reliable criteria. These are external indicators, whereas what is important is what he calls “etherialization.”²²³ Toynbee explains that etherialization occurs when the energies of a society are directed away from external material objects, towards challenges that arise from within and require an “inner or spiritual re-

²²¹ Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V.1, *Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 80.

²²² Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V.1, *Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 140.

²²³ Toynbee, *A Study of History*, V.1, *Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 198.

sponse.” In Arabic, the closest approximation would be a belief in the unseen –a movement away from the physical to the metaphysical world.²²⁴ Secondly, adding to that, the principle social imaginary achieves dominion when it follows the Darwinian concept of survival of the fittest. In short, Darwin suggest that individuals,

Who, from possessing in a high degree the spirit of patriotism, fidelity, obedience, courage, and sympathy, were always ready to give aid to each other and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most other tribes; and this would be natural selection.²²⁵

Here, clearly, Darwin describes the “fittest” as those embodying moral excellence –exemplified by social solidarity and concern for the group, not physical prowess.

By virtue of its domination, the “winning” principal social imaginary sets out the rules of the game and establishes the momentary supremacy of its rendition of local values over others. In Turkey, the AK Party has done precisely that. Stability ensues when competitors acknowledge those basic values and acquiesce to the results of that internal competition, respecting the institutions that adjudicate them. Of course, the winning social imaginary –in this case the AK Party, needs to ensure that its base is constantly invigorated, and not “resting on its oars.”²²⁶ Instability, or chaos, arises when competing social imaginaries do not have agreed upon “rules of the game,” view the “state” as an enemy, the people as “illiterate,” and rely on coercion to enforce their will. Here, Fetullah Gülen’s diatribe blasting the Turks who fought on

²²⁴ Holy Qur’an: Chapter 2: 1.

²²⁵ Charles Darwin, “The Advantage of Morality” in *Oxford Readers: Political Thought*, Michael Rosen and Jonathon Wolff (eds.), (Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 30.

²²⁶ Toynbee, *A Study of History, V.1, Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 89.

the streets against the usurpers as “fools” is indicative of his appraisal of the people.²²⁷ Is it any wonder that the masses are not attracted to his social imaginary? Belittling people, and then self-righteously expecting them to follow a grandiose message, are exactly what will prevent the embrace of a social imaginary.

CONCLUSION

This article explored the processes involved in the emergence of rival social imaginaries and social contestation, relating these processes to Turkey's failed coup. It did so by unravelling how people construct their social reality, identifying its partiality to the values of social actors. That is, what we see and how it is understood leads to the manifestation of diverging ideological trajectories and, eventually, to contending social imaginaries led by variant creative minorities. Thereupon, inevitably, social contestation proceeds as a result of competing claims, the irreconcilability of which deteriorates into wide-ranging levels of instability, or, as in this study, a *coup d'état*. What is occurring, though, is chronic rivalry, not just of culture as a continually contested sphere, but between organized social competitors, for legitimacy, authority and dominion. The magnitude of this sociopolitical contestation is seen in the ascendancy of a “principal” social imaginary, which, in order to secure durable equipoise, necessitates inclusion, establishes mutually agreeable “rules of the game” and offers maximum breathing space. Still, the recognition and management of diversity requires each social imaginary to commit to a broad-based framework of agreeability. Otherwise, it functions as a dictatorship, or as a rebellious force, or count-

²²⁷ “Fetullah Gülen Calls Millions of Turkish Anti-Coup Protestors Fools,” *Daily Sabah*, (July 22, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.dailysabah.com/nation/2016/07/22/Gülen-calls-millions-of-coup-protesters-in-turkey-fools-and-says-they-wont-succeed>.

er-culture phenomenon, leaving recourse to political power only through compulsion.

To begin, and deconstruct the precise sequences involved in the formation of competing ideological trajectories, this article utilized Luckmann and Berger's terms outlining the social construction of knowledge: habitualizations, the inheritance of meaning, and the idealizations of interchangeability and congruency.²²⁸ Collectively, these contribute to the evolution, expansiveness and contention of social imaginaries. First, habitualizations are an enabling force, manufacturing how others should perceive. Second, inheriting meaning—or transferring it, is susceptible to pairing and quantifying the consequences of our choices to some form of punishment or reward. Afterwards, for meaning to be shared, and two or more people to communicate, they must overcome their valuational and perceptual differences. This is only possible if there exists an underlying agreement, or tacit awareness, of the requisite values enabling understanding. This is accomplished through idealizations of the “interchangeability of standpoints” and the “congruency of the system of relevancies.”²²⁹ Together, with Epstein's insightful critique of how the human brain uses “observation, pairing and punish/reward cycles” to propagate their narratives, we intricately deconstructed some of the factors involved in the complex formation of social imaginaries.²³⁰

Essentially, by exploring social imaginaries, this article presented an unusual perspective on the origins and failure of the Turkish coup. Studying a social imaginary offers insights into how human agency

²²⁸ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75.

²²⁹ Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Knowledge: A Treatise on the Sociology of Knowledge*, pp. 67-75.

²³⁰ Bruce, “The Empty Brain.”

constructs social reality to intake, process and recreate phenomena, and then translate and project their narratives. We wanted to understand, how the Gülenists, for instance, knowingly or unknowingly engaged in this process. Strictly speaking, social actors craft their social imaginaries by manufacturing perceptions, or attempting to create perceptions, that will elicit particular observations, pairing and punishment/reward cycles. This we do, every day, almost instinctively. Yet, notably, in this complex process, a singular outcome is a rarity; in fact, culture is not monolithic. Instead, within a cultural ecosystem, a multiplicity of ideological trajectories and social imaginaries may develop. And, the comprehensive management or directing of each social imaginary requires capable leadership or, as Toynbee describes, a “creative minority” –with a shared social imaginary.²³¹ This creative minority, resultantly, directs its social imaginary and enthusiasts, in a manner that will either exacerbate or decrease the fissures and differences in society –leading to equipoise or agitation.

To put it plainly, social contestation in any cultural ecosystem is a given, due to divergent social imaginaries and the creative minorities leading them. However, these leading figures must decide on the manner in which they will engage with others. Resultantly, they must choose either of two variant pathways: Firstly, to engage in the growth, development and ascendancy of their social imaginary, even if in disagreement with others, by committing to the shared responsibilities and of basic values within the cultural ecosystem; or, secondly, they engage in the growth, development and ascendancy of their social imaginary, but reject other social imaginaries and any framework of commonality or agreement.

²³¹ Toynbee, *A Study of History, V.1, Abridgment of Volumes 1-6*, p. 50.

In the first instance, the social imaginary, even while differing from other trajectories, accepts a sense of responsibility and framework of maneuverability –elections, the judiciary, authority figures, the rule of law, etc., in society. Therefore, it exists, and navigates, in the cultural ecosystem and commits to three tangible responsibilities in the triangulation of their social imaginary. Firstly, to ensure recognition of extant stimuli in a cultural ecosystem; secondly, to navigate their social imaginary in a responsible manner with other ideological trajectories. Thirdly, they establish a basic modicum of agreement with other social imaginaries for the collective well-being of society. By doing so, each attests to their social responsibility and maneuvers in a way that recognizes the extant stimuli, and values, permeating society. Correspondingly, they develop agreeable “rules of the game” –certainly not in opposition. Their obligations facilitate human agency to traverse this complex process, project its narratives and reinforce its ideological trajectories and, meanwhile, responsibly engage in social contestation. Here, again, Giroux notes the importance of recognizing the “performative workings of culture” that are instrumental for “expanding the possibilities of a democratic politics, the dynamics of resistance, and the capacities for social agency.”²³² Essentially, “creative minorities” must work in that performative capacity, for the management of diversity and regulating of social contestation.

Contrariwise, if there is no commitment, or agreeability, and the social imaginary accepts no basic framework from which to exist with others –or feels rejected– then it becomes a counter-culture or rebellious phenomenon. It views competing social imaginaries in zero-sum binaries, holds no moral standard across imaginaries, and is only able

²³² Giroux, “Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals.”

to obtain power through brute force. Consequently, social contestation becomes disparaging and that social imaginary exists on the fringes, periphery or outside the frontiers of the cultural ecosystem –as in the case of the PKK, Ergenekon, the DKHP-C or the Gülenist coup-plotters in Turkey, leaving forcefulness as their only recourse. These troublemaking social imaginaries are rebellious and counter-cultural, working in the shadows, against cohesion in their own cultural ecosystem. In fact, some of these groups are at such odds with wider society, that in Turkey they deny that a coup even occurred.²³³

In light of all this, the exploration of the failed Turkish coup reveals some strengths and weaknesses of the variant social imaginaries engaged in social contestation. Specifically, the failure of the Gülenist social imaginary to establish dominion arose from its general disdain for millions of Turkish citizens –calling them stupid, and their cryptic, non-transparent, cult-like initiations that included caricatures of Turkish tradition.²³⁴ Because of that, there were little efforts at cultivating habitualizations, the inheritance of meaning, or the idealizations required for mutual comprehension to follow, since they view people as sheep –or the illiterate, unworthy multitude, that are unable to truly understand what God, or His representatives, want.²³⁵ This disempowering idea lies at the root of authoritarianism, whether in politics or religion. The idea that only a few people can understand, inevitably leads to an aversion towards transparency, which directly impacts recruitment.

²³³ Amana Khan-Fontanella, "Fetullah Gülen: Turkey Coup May Have Been Staged," *The Guardian*, retrieved July 16, 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/16/Fetullah-Gülen-turkey-coup-erdogan>.

²³⁴ "Gülen Confesses to Coup Attempt Calling Turks Stupid," *Yeni Şafak*, (August 22, 2016), retrieved from <http://www.yenisafak.com/en/world/Gülen-confesses-to-coup-attempt-calling-turks-stupid-2498137>.

²³⁵ Aydıntaşbaş, "The Good, the Bad and the Gülenists."

Lastly, this article acknowledges the *modus operandi* by which contesting social forces engage in rivalry by utilizing power to structure and systematize diverse systems of representation, production, consumption, and distribution. Those insights clarify how symbolic and institutional forms of culture and power are mutually entangled in fashioning dissimilar identities, modes of political agency, and, even the social world. To quote Giroux, “within this approach, material relations of power and the production of social meaning do not cancel each other out but constitute the precondition for all meaningful practices.”²³⁶ In other words, those meaningful practices, and the ever-present potentiality for social contestation, explicate the difficulties of managing diversity. Indeed, such a confluence of contesting cultural repositories, social contestations, knowledge production and human agency, is clearly displayed in Turkey’s failed *coup d’état*.

Our social world is rife with all sorts of intellectual tussles; recognition of the need to open spaces for that social contestation within any singular cultural ecosystem is essential to facilitate equipoise. In many respects, culture is a product of a contested past, between varying social imaginaries, negotiating their way to the present through the value orientation of creative minorities. However, social contestations and their impact are, also, entirely immediate. Providing space upon which Turkish societies’ unique social contestation, between secular, religious, or other human agents may take place ensures its widest possible embrace. By widening the ideological embrace, and maintaining the neutrality of state institutions in fulfilling their objective, which is to serve people, we realize what it takes to manage, if not resolve, social contestation in order to achieve a modicum of so-

²³⁶ Giroux, “Cultural Studies, Public Pedagogy, and the Responsibility of Intellectuals.”

cial equilibrium. This civil society objective results in an active, politicized Turkish civil society, aiming for social cohesion and aspiring for reconciliation that has already matured enough to allow divergent trajectories “breathing space.” If that breathing space were not provided then the whole social milieu would begin to suffocate, and the consequences, imaginably, are atrocious.

Much has already been written on the centrifugal forces pitting ideological rivals against one another in Turkey, or the wider Middle East. Far from impeding growth, internalizing and constructively utilizing diversity furthers the maturation of a vibrant, just civil society. Arguably, that too, is built upon an agreement of the Rawlsian conception of “justice as fairness” in which a critical liberal ethos of “maximum liberty, minimal inequality,” is rationally mandated throughout society.²³⁷ In other words, social contestation is a given –certainly not something to be afraid of or nervous about, though it ought to be regulated by a commitment to maximizing individual freedoms, including equivalent opportunities, and minimizing inequalities of wealth, class and power. Indeed, these initiatives, if adequately institutionalized, take the steam right out of any potential radicalization, disenfranchisement or zero-sum social imaginaries that function on the outskirts of society. Moreover, by empowering civil society, the dominant or ascendant social imaginary becomes the defenders against any would-be usurper, as in the case of Turkey.

In Turkey, a wide-range of diverse social imaginaries from the nationalist MHP, the committed secularists of the CHP, along with various Sufi Brotherhoods –the Naqshbandi, Süleymancı, Işıkçı, Nurcu and Milli Görüş, condemned the coup attempt.²³⁸ This list, certainly, is

²³⁷ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, (2001).

²³⁸ Cornell and Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey.”

not exhaustive, but it reinforces the idea that each of these social groupings have created their unique social imaginaries, and compete for meaning and aim to recruit adherents, by navigating “inside” Turkey’s cultural ecosystem. As indicated, some of these social groupings form political parties, such the CHP and MHP. Others contribute to civil society through charitable organizations and Sufi Brotherhoods, which, collectively, provide the backbone of the AK Party.²³⁹ Nevertheless, the reason for this societal unanimity, was largely the consequence of the AK Party’s inclusivity, drawing people from all segments of Turkish society into its fold; secularists through their fiscal policies, disaffected Kurds through their Islamic credentials and multi-ethnic character; Nationalists through their emphasis on “Ottoman Pride” and “Turkish Culture;” and the Sufi Brotherhoods thorough shared Islamic values. This is the AK Party’s real strength; it has successfully commandeered this magnificent diversity towards a commonality.

By acknowledging and providing space for cultural contestation, managed by broad adherence to a sense of equality and protection of individual liberties, the productivity of a cultural ecosystem is enhanced. The results of that social contestation are the advent of a principal creative minority, based on its intellectual prowess, etherialization and moral excellence. Every effort should be made by the principle creative minority to ensure that variant social imaginaries are not pushed to the brink. Of course, this implies espousing plurality, and enduring what we may find distasteful. But, since social cohesiveness occurs when people listen to one another, the initial distastefulness is understood as a necessary sacrifice in order to achieve equipoise. This, in fact, is a rather obvious point; that for equipoise and social equilib-

²³⁹ Cornell and Kaya, “The Naqshbandi-Khalidi Order and Political Islam in Turkey.”

rium to occur there needs to be a careful, systematic effort made to allow “space” –political, economic, and cultural– for divergent social actors. In essence, this does not necessarily imply accepting everything under the sun, irrespective of the moral or ethical boundaries of a society, yet its broadening embrace needs to be as wide as possible to give as little rationale as possible to those on the fringes or otherwise radicalized to extremes. There is no other alternative to resolve the long-standing polarization, or prevalent zero-sum mentality, currently gripping Middle Eastern society.²⁴⁰

²⁴⁰ Shariff, “Is Peace in the Region a Zero-Sum Game?,”; Michael Hudson, “Middle East Policy: A Zero-Sum Game.”

COUP D'ÉTAT RECORD OF THE WEST AND THE WESTERN REACTION TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

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INTRODUCTION

The July 15 coup attempt and the subsequent resistance and democracy watch are historical and significant events not only for Turkish political history but for the history of the region and the world as well. This important development in Turkish history can only be compared to *Kuva-ı Milliye Hareketi* (the National Forces Movement), which was initiated by the people of Turkey following the occupation of Anatolia in the early period of the Turkish War of Independence. In terms of world history, the night of July 15 and the subsequent resistance is similar to the American Revolution because both are examples of public movements and revolutions that resisted and succeeded against the joint operation of internal and external forces. This development in Turkey, that took place in the non-Western world, should be put down in the history of world democracy in golden letters.

The reactions during the night of July 15 and the subsequent democracy watch may be regarded as a resistance movement that materialized as a consequence of the reactions of the people of Turkey towards the attempts to occupy their homeland. July 15, a manifestation of the will of the people of Turkey to determine their fate, is a mass civil resistance performed by heroes willing to risk their lives to protect and save their homeland, nation, honor, liberty and future. It was a heroic step

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taken to strengthen democracy in the country and a counter-revolution against the coup attempt that tried to bypass the national will.

In terms of regional history, the fact that almost all countries that are in the process of democratization during the recent “Arab Spring” revolutions face political instabilities makes the existence of the only secular and democratic country of the region more significant. The July 15 coup attempt aimed to take down this last fortress, but with the effective resistance of the people of Turkey it failed, just like the other attempts that utilized different methods. The active intervention of the Turkish people helped thwart the heaviest and most forceful step of the negative campaign of the last few years that has been tenaciously run against Turkey, the sole country of the Muslim world with similar institutionalization to Western countries.

After developing effective responses to the campaigns Turkey is faced with disrupting the forces and factions who believe that political stability in Turkey is against their best interests. The security measures taken by the decision making authorities in Turkey following July 15 were regarded as authoritarian and a deviation from democracy by Western countries and the government in Turkey has been even more marginalized. As an extension of this viewpoint, similar reactions given to the July 15 coup attempt by the official and civil segments of Western countries show that what is supported is not actually democracy but the ones who intend to destroy it.

The July 15 coup attempt should be regarded as an immense political defeat experienced by domestic actors and their external contacts, who are under the protection of the West. FETÖ, the main actor of the coup attempt, intended not only a traditional military coup but a coup that aspired to redefine the history and fate of Turkey. The July 15 coup attempt, which should be contemplated as the putschist organization's

endeavor, appeal and means to persuade the West to intervene in Turkey failed in its attempts to restructure the policy in Turkey. Had the coup been successful, the fate that awaited Turkey would have been very bleak.

This study analyzes the reactions of Western countries to the July 15 coup attempt. The first section addresses the policies of the West and especially of the U.S, the most influential state of the Western world, with regards to military coups that have taken place in different parts of the world. The second section aims to analyze how the Western politicians and the media responded to the July 15 coup attempt. While the statements of the politicians were significantly ambiguous, the mainstream Western media openly supported the coup attempt in general and voiced disappointment in the face of failure. In the light of these reactions, we believe that President Erdoğan and the Turkish people, who took their fate into their own hands, were in fact the targets of this Western attitude. Erdoğan was placed at the center of the event by the West while the heroic resistance of the Turkish people was ignored. The purpose of targeting the personality of Erdoğan by ignoring the realities of Turkey was to develop the image of Turkey as an authoritarian Middle Eastern country and facilitate a revision of the relationships between Turkey and the West.

THE HISTORY OF WESTERN STATES' SUPPORT TO COUPS

Western countries implement political, economic and, if required, military interventions to the countries that do not follow policies in line with their will. As can be seen in tens of direct and indirect interventions, they have now mobilized their resources to change the administration in Turkey. The *coup d'état* record of the Western global

powers and of the U.S., the most influential and powerful state of the 20th century, is substantial in terms of directly staging coups, facilitating others to stage coups and supporting coups. Even a simple Internet search will show that the number of military coups openly supported by the U.S. in the 20th century is more than 20. Closer inspection reveals the fact that the interventions and coups of the West are usually against the countries and leaders that start nationalization projects and develop an independent policy discourse and independent ideology. The similarity that can be observed in the developments experienced during the processes before and after military coups may be the outcome of the interventions of some of the same actors using similar tools. It is seen that the only common denominator for the West, that cites various reasons, such as deviation from democracy, authoritative-ness and human rights, for intervening in the internal affairs of other countries, is actually their own national interests.

Western countries do not really want the development of real democratic regimes in the non-Western world. Westerners appear to prefer to define the concept of democracy outside the Western world as “governing the public by the public for Western countries” rather than “governing the public by the public for the public.” It can be observed that immediate involvement of Western powers led to a failure of the democratization process in the Arab revolutions, usually defined as the fourth wave of democratization, which started at the end of 2010. As a result, all the new regimes in the Middle East that were pro-public or strived to meet public demands were doomed to failure. Recently, Turkey, which has intended to free itself from historic ties of guardianship in the country, has been the only democratic country that can be taken as an example by Muslim communities. Therefore, the fact that Turkey continues to inspire democratic movements in Middle Eastern com-

munities was intolerable for Westerners and it became necessary to fail or destroy this last example as well.

In today's world Western countries, with the U.S. being the most powerful of them, intervene in the internal affairs of many countries known as anti-American or anti-western. For instance, the administrations of strong leaders of Latin America with a strong anti-American tradition were either terminated or were put on the defensive. To give an example, the socialist president of Brazil, Dilma Roussef, was dismissed from her position in 2016 as a result of the process started in December 2015. Many observers characterized this as a "silent coup" in which the U.S. was involved.²⁴¹ Similarly, U.S. intervention is witnessed in Venezuela which also has an anti-American discourse. The U.S., which tried to stage a coup of the leader Hugo Chavez in 2002, continues to take different measures to change the current administration of the president Nicolas Maduro.²⁴²

As these and many other examples show, Western states' interference in the domestic affairs of non-Western countries still continues its influence as a style of general politics. In order to demonstrate who the Western countries are opposed to and under what conditions, this section briefly addresses the four military coups staged at different times and places with the contribution of the West.

²⁴¹ Ted Snider, "A U.S. Hand in Brazil's Coup?," *Consortium News*, (June 1, 2016), retrieved December 25, 2016 from <https://consortiumnews.com/2016/06/01/a-us-hand-in-brazils-coup/>; "Made in USA: 3 Key Signs That Point to Washington's Hand in Brazil's Coup," *Russia Today*, (May 18, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.rt.com/news/343390-brazil-rousseffimpeachmentus>.

²⁴² Mark Weisbrot, "A U.S. Policy of Non-intervention in Venezuela Would Be a Welcome Change," *The New York Times*, (June 30, 2016), retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/06/28/how-to-save-venezuela/the-us-bears-blame-for-the-crisis-in-venezuela-and-it-should-stop-intervening-there>.

1953 Iranian Coup D'état: CIA's First Military Coup

One of the most striking examples of the role that Western states have played in military coups is the *coup d'état* staged to overthrow Iranian Prime Minister Mohammed Mosaddegh in 1953 in order to strengthen the authoritarian Shah regime. Mosaddegh, who was elected with a referendum to the Iranian Parliament in 1949 and appointed as the Prime Minister by Mohammad-Reza Shah Pavlavi in 1951, was unseated after a short time by a military coup against him staged by the operatives of American and English Intelligence. This action was precipitated by the nationalistic and independent policy he followed and especially due to his attempt to nationalize of Anglo-Iranian Oil Company petroleum facilities—whose name was later changed to *British Petroleum* (BP)—operated by the British. Mohammad-Reza Shah Pavlavi then assigned General Fazlollah Zahedi, the preference of the CIA, as Prime Minister. For decades, this event was regarded as one of the main causes of anti-American sentiments in the Middle East, especially in Iran.

The National Front of Iran, led by Mosaddegh was overthrown by the military coup in August 19, 1953 and the role of political parties in the administration of the country ended there. Thus, the U.S. ensured the reestablishment of the dominance of a despotic regime in Iran through by-passing democracy. The regime of the nationalist, constitutionalist and anti-American Mosaddegh, who was known to respect the people's will, was replaced with that of the Shah who assumed the role of policing American interests in the region. Following a three-year incarceration, Mosaddegh was kept under house arrest until his demise in 1967.

American authorities were able to make statements that acknowledged their role in the coup a long time after the global and regional

equilibriums changed. In 2000, the U.S Foreign Minister acknowledged, for the first time, the role of his country in the coup. In a speech he gave in Egypt on June 4 2009, President Obama officially apologized to the Iranian Government and public for the role of the U.S. in the coup whereas the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) did not officially explain its active role and responsibility in the coup until 2013.²⁴³

As is evident, the crisis caused by Mosaddegh was related to his nationalistic policies; a legitimate and democratic government was overthrown because these policies damaged the American and British interests in Iran. Mosaddegh, who took steps to make Iranian politics more participative and democratic, was overthrown through a joint operation of domestic and foreign powers.²⁴⁴

1973 Chilean Coup D'etat:

Exercising Control over Latin America

A similar coup was staged against Salvador Allende in Chile, a Latin American country with a long-time democratic experience. The comprehensive nationalization policy adopted by Allende, particularly on the copper mines in the country with a socialist, nationalist and independent approach resulted in a military coup led by General Pinochet with American provocation and support. Following the coup, the fate of the country was delegated to a pro-American military administration.

²⁴³ "CIA'in 1953'teki İran Darbesinde Rol Oynadığı Belgelendi," BBC Türkçe, (August 20, 2013), retrieved from http://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2013/08/130820_iran_cia.

²⁴⁴ Pınar Arkan Sinkaya, "İran: Musaddık ve Darbe," *Ortadoğu Analiz*, Vol. 8, No. 76, pp. 18-21, p. 21.

The U.S. first started with diplomatic and economic attacks followed by secret operations against the socialist president Allende, who was implementing policies that could result in establishing a successful socialist regime in a manner that conflicted with U.S. interests in the region. The country underwent social and political unrest and the then Nixon administration started an economic war.²⁴⁵ The U.S., which prepared the conditions for a coup with all its relevant institutions, had the military and the police stage a coup using the right wing politicians and supporters in the country.

The fact that Allende nationalized and collectivized the three major industrial copper companies, two of which belonged to Americans (Anaconda and Kennicott) as soon as he came into power, created economic instability and non-confidence in the country steered by America.²⁴⁶ The unions, craftsman's associations, trade associations and students stepped into action together to overthrow the elected government. They organized long-lasting strikes to compromise the government yet despite the resulting economic problems, President Allende increased his votes in the 1973 elections.

In response, the U.S. secret intelligence service CIA started to distribute millions of dollars to opposition groups to be used in anti-government activities. The intention was to generate an anti-Allende perception in the country. American organizations attempted to precipitate a constitutional coup by working to have a new election in which Allende would not be a candidate. When they were not successful in this endeavor, military coup preparations were instigated as a second alter-

²⁴⁵ Ralph Miliband, "The Coup in Chile," *Jacobin*, (September 9, 2016), retrieved December 26, 2016 from <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2016/09/chile-coup-santiago-allende-social-democracy-september-11/>.

²⁴⁶ "The Allende Years and the Pinochet Coup, 1969-1973," Office of the Historian, retrieved December 24, 2016 from <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1969-1976/allende>.

native resulting in the military coup, led by the Chief of the Staff General Augusto Pinochet, staged on September 11, 1973.²⁴⁷ On the other hand, it was alleged that Australian secret intelligence service ASIS²⁴⁸ and the United Kingdom (U.K.)²⁴⁹ played an accessory role in the coup process by aiding the U.S.

The soldiers that overthrew the Allende Government established a junta government; General Pinochet formed a personal and despotic regime in a short time. All democratic institutions and movements in the country were dissolved after the coup and all political activities and processes were terminated. All leftist movements and political parties that adopted an anti-American discourse especially during the Cold War period were banned. Pinochet founded death squads in order to suppress the opposition and used widespread corporal punishment.²⁵⁰ The U.S. which had supported the coup then provided all kinds of support to strengthen the position of the junta government. Chile, known as the Latin American island of democracy before the coup and having formed governments through democratic election since 1932, was now characterized by the despotism and chaos in the country and it took a very long time to end this political instability. The impact of the human rights violations and anti-democratic practices experienced

²⁴⁷ Hugh O'Shaughnessy, "Chilean Coup: 40 Years Ago I Watched Pinochet Crush a Democratic Dream," *The Guardian*, (September 7, 2013), retrieved December 24, 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/07/chile-coup-pinochet-allende>.

²⁴⁸ Max Suich, "Spymaster Stirs Spectre of Covert Foreign Activities," *The Australian*, (March 20, 2010), retrieved December 24, 2016 from <http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/inquirer/spymaster-stirs-spectre-of-covert-foreign-activities/news-story/81531449790cf1321578d684e368905c>.

²⁴⁹ Sinan Özdemir, "Bir Darbenin Anatomisi: Şili (1973-2013)," *Dünya Bülteni*, (September 11, 2013), retrieved December 24, 2016 from <http://www.dunyabulteni.net/haber-analiz/273976/bir-darbenin-anatomisi-sili-1973-2013>.

²⁵⁰ Suich, "Spymaster Stirs Spectre of Covert Foreign Activities."

in Chile during the Pinochet period is still ongoing and Chileans are demanding that “the truth and reconciliation commission” take legal action against all responsible parties.²⁵¹

2013 Egyptian Coup D'état: Middle Eastern Order by the West

One of the most recent examples of coup traditions staged under the charge of Western countries was the military coup staged against the elected president Mohammed Morsi in Egypt in 2013. The Egyptian coup was a military coup, jointly organized by the Western countries, which aimed to create a system to support the status quo in the Middle East with the help of authoritarian regimes and the monarchically controlled Gulf states. General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, who had been assigned as the chief of staff by Morsi, was brought to power with the support and encouragement from the Western countries that perceived the Muslim Brotherhood as a direct or indirect threat to the authoritarian regimes in the region. Hence, the “Arab Spring” which started as a hope for the development of democracy turned into the “Arab Winter” within two years.

The change, experienced after the majority of the Egyptian people rose up against the authoritarian Hosni Mubarak administration in 2011, started a democratic process and structuring in Egypt for the first time. Following the revolution in Egypt on January 25, 2011 the first free independent elections were held in 2012. The Freedom and Justice Party, which represents the political wing of the Muslim Brotherhood movement, won the majority in the congress as a result of the Egyptian people's will. The party leader Mohammed Morsi was

²⁵¹ Özdemir, “Bir Darbenin Anatomisi: Şili (1973-2013).”

appointed as the fifth president of Egypt and the first democratically elected president in the second round presidential elections held in the same year.

Morsi started a serious political reorganization process after he took his seat. This included the preparation of a new constitution, a political initiative process that began to embrace the political and religious differences in the country. However, with the influence of the fragile Egyptian economy and politics on ongoing and long term structural problems, mass protests started with organizers blaming the unsolved problems as the reason. These demonstrations, held by supporters of the previous regime and some other groups, brought together in this new process, were used as the justification by the military to overthrow the administration.

With the intervention and support of Western countries and the Gulf states, President Mohammed Morsi was dismissed and jailed following the military coup staged on July 3 only a few days after the mass protests against the structural economic problems started on June 30, 2013. With the help of the powers behind the coup, it was ensured that different political groups in the country supported the putschist administration. The fact that the grand imam of al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayyeb, Coptic Patriarch Tawadros II, the opposition leader Mohammed al-Baradei, Tamarud (Rebellion) movement leaders and the spokesperson for the Salafi al-Nour party accompanied Sisi while the coup announcement was read was a first indicator. Formation of this coalition pointed to both the power of wide domestic and foreign circles behind the coup and the upcoming purge of the Muslim Brotherhood from all areas.²⁵²

²⁵² Veysel Kurt, "3 Temmuz Darbesi: Mısır'da Müesses Nizamın Yeniden Tesisi," *Ortadoğu Analiz*, Vol. 8, No. 76 (2016), pp. 36-39, p. 38.

The people of Egypt took to the streets to protest against the military coup but thousands of peaceful demonstrators were killed by the putschists with the encouragement of the forces which did not seek change or stability in the country. After the military coup that cost thousands of people their lives took command of the administration, President Morsi and the leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood movement who were arrested and jailed, were put on trial under different premises. While the leader cadre of the Muslim Brotherhood movement was sentenced to life imprisonment others were sentenced to death in show trials. After a brief attempt at democracy once again fear was used to silence the peoples' voices.

The putschist Sisi administration gained acceptance in the international arena in a short time with Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, which gave active support to the coup, providing billions of dollars of financial and economic aid to secure the new regime.²⁵³ It wasn't long before the Western states, led by the U.S. and the EU, announced their support to the military regime.²⁵⁴ John Kerry, U.S. Secretary of State, characterized the military coup as "the restoration of democracy." Notably U.S. officials did not specifically describe the events in Egypt as a coup because it is banned by law in the U.S. to assist putschists and the government continues to provide an annual 1.5 billion dollars of aid to Egypt.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ Yahia Hamed, "Egypt's Coup Has Plunged the Country into Catastrophe," *The Guardian*, (March 16, 2014), retrieved December 25, 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/mar/16/egypt-coup-catastrophe-mohamed-morsi>.

²⁵⁴ Wadah Khanfar, "Egypt's al-Sisi Drags the Country Closer to Civil War," *Huffington Post*, (July 24, 2013), retrieved December 23, 2016 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/wadah-khanfar/egypt-militarycoup_b_3647871.html.

²⁵⁵ Robert Scheer, "A Gift from the United States to Mideast Zealots," *Huffington Post*, (September 7, 2013), retrieved December 23, 2016 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/robert-scheer/a-gift-from-the-unitedst_b_3565033.html.

The U.S. was critical and unsupportive of the democratically elected Muslim Brotherhood in their short time in government yet has not refrained from supporting the Sisi government both in economic and military terms. Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Foreign Policy Chief of the EU made a visit to Cairo and significantly contributed to approval of the Sisi regime on an international scale.²⁵⁶ Both the U.S. and the EU continue to provide all kinds of support to the Sisi administration as the last example of their cooperation with authoritarian administrations.

2014 Ukrainian Coup D'état:

The First Front of the Cold War between the West and Russia

The European Union (EU) wanted to sign an association agreement with Ukraine at the end of 2013 however the negotiations came to a negative conclusion. EU officials were quick to point a finger at the Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich for the inability to obtain an agreement during negotiations. Yanukovich, who did not want to follow a pro-western policy and therefore did not sign the association agreement with the EU, sought to develop relations with Russia instead. The fact that Yanukovich followed a pro-Russian policy was the result of a *realpolitik* attitude because Russia is an irreplaceable partner as the most important neighbor, the biggest partner in trade, the country which meets almost all of Ukraine's natural gas demand and the country culturally closest to Ukraine.

Thereupon, the U.S. and the EU countries that did not want Yanukovich to affiliate with Russia started a new color revolution process in

²⁵⁶ Kurt, "3 Temmuz Darbesi: Mısır'da Müesses Nizamın Yeniden Tesisi," p. 39.

Ukraine.²⁵⁷ The Western countries embarked on a quest to find an administration that would make Ukraine follow policies in line with EU and NATO. So, they wanted to create the perception that the change in administration was desired by the public by having people take to the streets. As a result, mass demonstrations against Yanukovych were started in the Meydan Square in central Kiev by pro-EU fractions. There were also allegations that the demonstrations supported by the U.S. and EU were guided by ultra-nationalistic even neo-Nazi groups.²⁵⁸ Western countries commenced to impose sanctions on the Yanukovych administration.

In a short time, the demonstrations proved to be effective and the pro-Russian President Yanukovych fled to Russia on February 21, 2014. The Ukraine Parliament was convened on February 22 to dismiss Yanukovych and made a decision to demand his arrest. Western countries had the anti-Russian Arseniy Yatsenyuk, with whom they believed they would get their way, to form a new government and to ensure political stability and territorial integrity.²⁵⁹ However, the events were already out of hand and the country slid into political chaos and civil war in a very short time. Counter demonstrations were held in the regions of the country where Russian is spoken such as Eastern Ukraine and Crimea to demand separation.

²⁵⁷ Vladislav B. Sotirović, "The 2014 Coup D'état and the Ukrainian Crisis," Vladislav B. Sotirović's Blog, (June 13, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <http://vsotirovic.home.mruni.eu/2016/06/13/the-2014-coup-detat-and-the-ukrainian-crisis/>.

²⁵⁸ Tony Cartalucci, "BBC Now Admits: Armed Nazis Led 'Revolution' in Kiev, Ukraine," *Global Research*, (March 7, 2014), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <http://www.global-research.ca/bbc-now-admits-armed-nazis-ledrevolution-in-kiev-ukraine/5372232>.

²⁵⁹ Renee Parsons, "Chronology of the Ukrainian Coup," *Counter Punch*, (March 5, 2014), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <http://www.counterpunch.org/2014/03/05/chronology-of-the-ukrainian-coup/>.

Russia, which did not allow the EU and NATO to act as they wish on its borders, became involved in the crisis. While it supported the separatists in Eastern Ukraine that were fighting against the new administration in Kiev on one hand, it announced the annexation of Crimea to the world on the other. At that time, Donetsk and Luhansk regions situated in the east of the country declared independence under the control of pro-Russian groups and separated from Kiev. Therefore, despite the fact that the Western backed coup seemed successful, it cannot be claimed that it achieved its goal because Ukraine was now split and has lost the sovereignty of crucial territories to Russia. Hence, it can be argued that the first front of a new cold war between the Western countries and Russia was won by Russia.

WESTERN REACTIONS TO THE JULY 15 COUP ATTEMPT

Almost all Western actors were either indifferent to the coup attempt staged on the night of July 15 or they made statements that directly supported the putschists. Some did not respond on the night of the coup attempt, waiting for the outcome. When it was clear that the coup had not been successful, officials of some countries declared their support to the democratically elected government, albeit reluctantly while others announced their support to the coup attempt and even emphasized the benefits it would have provided. The majority of political, economic and social actors were already questioning the legitimacy of the elected government in Turkey by deliberately not using the words “coup attempt” and “putschists” from the first hours of the attempt.

Right after the coup attempt was announced, some wrote that the process would be an opportunity and benefit to both Turkey and Western countries. For instance, Ralph Peters, a retired United States Army

lieutenant colonel, made the following remarks to Fox News: “This coup is the last chance for Turkey to stop being an Islamist dictatorship. The people staging the coup are the good guys.”²⁶⁰ The same person also made another statement admitting that “if the coup succeeds, Islamists lose and we win.”²⁶¹

In this section, the reactions of the West to the July 15 coup attempt are examined under two different headings. While the first sub heading focuses on the statements made by state officials and decision makers, the second sub heading addresses the viewpoints expressed in the mainstream media with regards to the process subsequent to the coup attempt.

Reactions of the Western

Official Authorities to July 15

Only after it was clear that the coup attempt had failed were the western politicians and officials able to clearly announce that they condemned the attempt. Western statesmen neither condemned the coup attempt in a principled and unconditional manner nor praised the Turkish officials or the Turkish public. They continue to protect the putschist groups, do not accept the statements about the putschist groups made by Turkish officials, are dubious about the confessions of the military officers that took part in the coup attempt and the narratives of civilian witnesses and have not uttered a word about the identities of the putschists.

²⁶⁰ Ralph Peters, “Turkey’s Last Hope Dies,” Fox News, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/07/16/turkeys-last-hope-dies.html>.

²⁶¹ Ralph Peters, Fox News, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <https://twitter.com/FoxNews/status/754112160423215104>.

The first official statement from the U.S. was made by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry in Moscow. In a brief comment, Kerry said he hoped for “peace, stability and continuity.”²⁶² Another U.S. statement came from the Office of President Obama after the coup attempt. In the press release it was expressed that “there were no indications that any Americans were killed or injured during the violence.” The statement also stated that the president and his team lamented the loss of life and registered the need for “all parties” in Turkey to act within the “rule of law” and to avoid actions that would lead to violence or instability.²⁶³ It is interesting to note that this statement did not differentiate between the coup plotters and the terrorist organization that killed innocent civilians and the democratically elected legitimate government and the innocent civilians that defended it. In fact quite the opposite, both parties were treated equally in the statement. The statement called for respect to the rule of law by using shallow terms. Ironically no criticism was made of those parties who have just acted outside of the “rule of law.” Most importantly, the statement did not include the expressions of “coup attempt” or “coup plotters” even once.

Therefore it was clear that the U.S. did not want to take a definitive stance against the coup attempt during the initial hours, nor did it regard the events as an illegal attempt to overthrow the legitimate government. The American Embassy, believing that the coup attempt was an uprising, displayed the same attitude in its report. The statement made by the Embassy during the coup attempt stated that “the elements of

²⁶² “Kerry Says Hopes for Peace and Stability in Turkey,” Reuters, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-usa-russia-idUSKCN0ZV2NQ>.

²⁶³ “Readout of the President’s Update on the Situation in Turkey,” The White House, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2016/07/16/readout-presidents-update-situation-turkey>.

the Turkish military are *attempting an uprising*, security forces are taking action to contain it, and some buildings are under blockade.”²⁶⁴ As can be seen, the U.S. did not use concepts such as coup, putschist, illegal uprising and legitimate government that would define its side and instead used expressions that could be interpreted as support for the coup attempt.

EU institutions also did not make any statements during the early hours of the coup attempt. The first statement came in June 16 jointly from High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn. Taking a different approach from the U.S. this statement condemned the coup attempt but emphasized the need for a swift return to Turkey’s constitutional order with its “checks and balances” focusing on the superiority of the rule of law and fundamental freedoms.²⁶⁵ Such an emphasis during a period when 249 individuals had lost their lives, in a struggle to protect democracy and the legitimate government, shows the West’s lack of empathy with the Turkish government and Turkish public. The statement made by the EU, which demonstrates the perception of the events as ordinary, asks for limited measures to be used against the coup plotters.

²⁶⁴ “Emergency Message for U.S. Citizens: Shots Heard in Ankara, Bridges Closed in Istanbul,” U.S. Embassy and Consulates in Turkey, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <https://tr.usembassy.gov/emergency-message-u-s-citizens-shots-heard-ankara-bridges-closed-istanbul/>.

²⁶⁵ “Joint Statement by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations Johannes Hahn on the Situation in Turkey,” European Commission, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-2555_en.htm.

On July 18, 2016, only a few days after the coup attempt John Kerry and Federica Mogherini held a joint press conference in Brussels to assess the situation in Turkey. Instead of focusing on the actions of the public and how democracy was protected against the coup attempt on July 15, Kerry and Mogherini emphasized upholding the rule of law and pointed to what the Turkish government and President Erdoğan should do. Kerry said that “they firmly urged the Turkish government to maintain calm and stability throughout the country.”²⁶⁶ Kerry also invited the Turkish Government “to uphold the highest standards for the nation’s democratic institutions and the rule of law.”²⁶⁷ Stating that they carefully observed the events in Turkey due to its NATO membership, Kerry also added that NATO issued a declaration as well. This declaration, a text to caution the Turkish Administration, was regarded as a warning by the Western media to internationally isolate Turkey including the suspension of its NATO membership.²⁶⁸

Statements came from other Western leaders such as German Prime Minister Angela Merkel, British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson and French Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault. Similarly, in their statements, these leaders focused on the precautions government should take rather than the events that had a design against democracy and under-

²⁶⁶ “Joint Press Availability with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini,” U.S. Department of State, (July 18, 2016), retrieved December 22, 2016 from <https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/07/260174.htm>.

²⁶⁷ “Joint Press Availability with EU High Representative Federica Mogherini.”

²⁶⁸ Josie Ensor and James Rothwell, “Turkey Coup Attempt: Risk of NATO Suspension as Erdogan’s Purge Intensifies,” *The Telegraph*, (July 18, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/07/18/turkey-coup-attempt-istanbul-deputy-mayor-shot-in-the-head>; Jonathan Stearns, “U.S. Warns on Turkey’s Place in NATO as Erdogan Cracks Down,” *Bloomberg*, (July 18, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-07-18/u-s-warns-on-turkey-s-place-in-nato-as-erdogan-cracks-down>.

scored their concerns for the future of democracy. French Foreign Minister Ayrault even warned that Erdoğan had become “authoritarian.”²⁶⁹

A more negative campaign started against the legitimate government in Turkey when the state of emergency was declared on July 21, 2016. From the first day the West tried to prevent the necessary measures to be taken by objecting to the state of emergency and to the campaign against the individuals that were liaised or connected to putschists. Such that, United States Central Command (CENTCOM) Commander Joseph Votel, one of the most important military authorities in the U.S. openly objected to the arrest of putschist officers. He expressed the view that the arrested officers were their allies and addressees and they would now face difficulties in finding new addressees in the Turkish Armed Forces.²⁷⁰ The contrasting positions taken by the West, to two similar developments, can be clearly observed by comparing the stance of the West in regards to the state of emergency in Turkey with their support of the state of emergency declared in France in November 2015 after the attacks in Paris accredited by them to ISIS.

The reactions of Western statesmen and leaders during and after the coup attempt in Turkey do not accord with democracy. In this context, if the July 15 coup attempt had been successful, the ambiguous and indirect statements and declarations made by the West would have created the necessary position for the West to support the putschists. Unfortunately it would have been no surprise if, as in the Egyptian exam-

²⁶⁹ log Martin Banks, “EU Voices Fears for the Future of Turkey Following Attempted Military Coup,” *The Parliament Magazine*, (July 18, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu/articles/news/eu-voices-fears-future-turkey-following-attempted-military-coup>.

²⁷⁰ Damian Paletta, “Pentagon Allies Jailed in Turkey amid Coup Backlash, General Says,” *The Wall Street Journal*, (July 28, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://blogs.wsj.com/washwire/2016/07/28/pentagon-allies-jailed-in-turkey-amid-coup-backlash-general-says/>.

ple, the Western statements had been meant to be taken as a support for the coup plotters desire to “reestablish democracy.” It is evident that Western officials do not experience any difficulty to find rationales for putschists as is shown by the Egyptian example among others.²⁷¹

Reactions of the Western Media to July 15

After July 15 the Western media continued the perception management operations that they have been exercising against Turkey in recent years. Even after this abominable attempt that negatively affected all democratic institutions, media, civil society and civilians including the opposition parties, the AK Party Government and President Erdoğan, they competed with one another to outlaw the legitimate government instead of the putschists who acted against the will of the public. As a whole, the mainstream Western media twisted and warped the events of the July 15 coup attempt and the developments after the attempt. Setting aside their widely espoused ethics, they frequently captioned the news about Turkey with fabrications, distortions and misinformation, readily reporting items without verifying their accuracy.

One of the striking news items broadcasted a few hours after the coup attempt was the statement made by the vice president of NBC. The news that wished the coup success stated that “Erdogan, refused landing rights in İstanbul, is reported to be seeking asylum in Germany.”²⁷² American news and opinion website *Daily Beast* which went on

²⁷¹ In a television interview in Pakistan, Mr. Kerry said: “The military was asked to intervene by millions and millions of people, all of whom were afraid of a descent into chaos, into violence... And the military did not take over, to the best of our judgment - so far. To run the country, there is a civilian government. In effect, they were restoring democracy.” See: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23543744>.

²⁷² “Military Coup in Turkey,” *National Review*, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/437951/turkey-military-coup-reported>.

with the fabrication believed that Erdoğan went to the U.K. after having his right to seek asylum refused by Germany.²⁷³

On the other hand, during the hottest hours of the coup, Stratfor, the effective U.S based intelligence platform sent a few tweets that showed the route of the Turkish president's flight to İstanbul from Marmaris where there had been an assassination attempt on Erdoğan's life.²⁷⁴ When there was criticism of this security breach Stratfor deleted them but the tweets created a psychological impact on Turkish citizens. Despite the pro-putschists broadcasts and publications like Stratfor's that aimed to demoralize the public and deter them from taking to the streets, Erdoğan was able to mobilize the public against the putschists. However, considering the fact that the assassination of the President could have resulted in a successful coup, it can be argued that with these tweets Stratfor was effectively providing logistical support to the putschists.

While the coup attempt was going on, the Western media was making suggestions to the putschists on how to overthrow the government in its broadcasts and publications and at the same time discussions were going on about how the coup could be successful. In a statement made to CNN, Bob Baer, a former CIA official expressed that the putschists should "seize CNN Turk and cut off radio, social media and internet broadcasts in the first minutes." He also said that "these should be taken care of first" although Erdoğan was not seized yet.²⁷⁵ On the other

²⁷³ "Erdoğan Now Headed to London," *The Daily Beast*, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://coupfacts.com/daily-beast-erdogan-now-headed-to-london/>.

²⁷⁴ "July 15 Tweets Pose Questions on 'Shadow CIA' Stratfor," Anadolu Agency, (August 2, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://aa.com.tr/en/americas/july-15-tweets-pose-questions-on-shadow-cia-stratfor/620283>.

²⁷⁵ Daniel Marans, "Former CIA Officials Give Turkish Coup Plotters Advice on CNN," *Huffington Post*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cia-officials-turkey-coup-advice_us_578a2d02e4b08608d334c32c.

hand, FOX News analysts defended the opinion that the coup had to succeed and it was the only way to overcome ISIS.²⁷⁶

In the aftermath of the coup attempt, the Western media criticized the people who were victims of the coup, rather than the perpetrators. Western media organizations declared that the goal of people who took to the streets at the night of July 15 was only to support and protect Erdoğan, accusing the Turkish citizens of torturing captured soldiers and featuring very disturbing photos most of which were fabricated.²⁷⁷

All these explanations show the Western media's failure to present the fact that the Turkish public sought to protect Turkish democracy on July 15 and they lost their lives for this cause. Most notably the mainstream Western media, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary never directly acknowledges FETÖ as the organization behind the coup attempt. In fact quite the opposite, they continue to depict the organization as a peaceful movement. Always referring to them as the "organization blamed by Erdoğan" thereby implying that the events in Turkey are simply about personal vendettas. Moreover, they have been in cahoots to hold the legitimate democratic government of Turkey and its elected President responsible for all negative developments in Turkey and are very hasty to make unjust accusations. The Western media which turned a blind eye to putschists' bombings of the most

²⁷⁶ Brigitte Gabriel, "We Need the Coup to Succeed, because that Will Be Our Way to Actually Be Able to Defeat ISIS," Fox News, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://twitter.com/foxnews/status/754128252684210176>.

²⁷⁷ "'Cleansing' Sweeps up Thousands in Post-coup Turkey," CBS News, (July 17, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/turkey-military-coup-thousands-arrested-fired-roundup-erdogan/?ftag=CNM-00-10aab6a&linkId=26640747>; "Turkey Coup Attempt: Crowds Confront Soldiers on Bosphorus Bridge," BBC, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36816605?ocid=socialflow_facebook&ns_mchannel=social&ns_campaign=bbcnews&ns_source=facebook.

important governmental institutions with immense symbolic significance (such as the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Presidential Complex, Presidency of General Staff, National Intelligence Service, Ankara Police Headquarters, Special Operations Centre and Turkish Radio And Television Association), assassination attempts against the political leaders of Turkey and most importantly the murder of 249 innocent civilians with heavy artillery such as F-16 combat aircrafts, helicopters and tanks was quick to criticize the security measures taken by the government, in the framework of the constitution, following these blatant attacks.

Although all social groupings in Turkey such as Sunni-Alawi, Kurdish-Turkish, and religious-secular took a clear stance against the coup attempt, the Western media displayed Islamophobic and orientalist attitudes by largely choosing to depict the bearded men and veiled women on the streets. The Western world, characterized the public struggle against communism in Latin America which was supported by the Catholic Church, as a liberal movement. However it has depicted the religious and conservative sections of Turkish society, which protected the legitimate government and democracy in Turkey against the coup, with negative characterizations and epithets. This has increased the skepticism already existing in Turkey against the West and generated anti-American sentiments after the coup attempt. As a result of these negative broadcasts and publications in a highly sensitive period, anti-Western and especially anti-American sentiments in Turkey have notably increased.

Examining the content of the most influential media organizations in the major Western countries (U.S., U.K., and Germany) will be sufficient in order to comprehend the conjectural anti-Western sentiments rising in Turkey and the deep-seated anti-Turkey sentiments in the Western world.

The New York Times, generally regarded as the leading national newspaper in the U.S., is one of the primary news outlets that addressed the developments in Turkey during and after the coup attempt in the most unashamed and crude manner. For instance, by simply choosing to ignore the fact that President Erdoğan was a leader elected with 52 percent of the public vote, the paper wrote that the people of Turkey took to the streets not for democracy but for Erdoğan, shouting slogans.²⁷⁸ The newspaper ignored the votes of more than half of the people of Turkey. Ironically presidents in the U.S. are usually selected by the votes of one third of the American electorate. For instance, in the most recent elections Donald Trump received approximately one fourth of the votes and obtained less votes in total than his competitor yet was elected as the president. Not content with this, the same paper unashamedly went so far as to insult the pro-democracy minded people who took to the streets to fight against the putschists' and those who have no respect for the will of the people. By likening them to sheep, the newspaper depicted the people who resisted the anti-democratic movements and actors in the streets as weak-willed and simple minded crowds.²⁷⁹

Similarly, *Foreign Affairs* and *Foreign Policy*, the two most esteemed magazines from the U.S. in the field of international relations, had their share of the amateur and partisan journalism that seemed to have engulfed the Western media. An article published in *Foreign Affairs* claimed that Erdoğan was the only culprit behind the coup attempt and that "the Turkish President got his just reward due to years of un-

²⁷⁸ "Erdogan Triumphs after Coup Attempt, but Turkey's Fate Is Unclear," *The New York Times*, (July 17, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://twitter.com/nytimesworld/status/754776778204389376>.

²⁷⁹ "The Erdogan Supporters Are Sheep, and They Will Follow Whatever He Says," *The New York Times*, (July 19, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://twitter.com/nytimesworld/status/755364571389591558>.

kempt promises and the deepening paranoia of the public.”²⁸⁰ Immediately after the coup, a *Foreign Policy* article penned by Edward Luttwak a prominent terror expert in the U.S., presented very clearly the deep seated anti-Turkey and anti-democracy approach of the Western media. Setting aside the spirit of scholarly analysis and intellectual morals, the paper blatantly claimed: that not the women, but only men with moustaches had taken to the streets, that their slogans had not been related to patriotism but to Islam, that it was not the putschists but Erdoğan who had destroyed democracy and that it was the Kemalists not the Gülenists who had supported the coup attempt.²⁸¹

From the minute the coup attempt was initiated, *The Economist*, one of the U.K.’s most respected weekly magazines, started providing suggestions as to how a successful coup should be conducted. With the headline “The Sultan Survives,” *The Economist* wrote that the putschists had to ensure control starting with the first hours of the coup.²⁸² Immediately after the coup attempt, the magazine published the headline “Erdoğan’s Revenge” in a hurry to hide the events of Turkey from the world and by reversing the truth, asserted that Erdoğan had destroyed the democracy for which the Turks risked their lives.²⁸³

²⁸⁰ Michael Rubin, “Erdogan Has Nobody to Blame for the Coup but Himself,” *Foreign Affairs*, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/15/erdogan-has-nobody-to-blame-for-the-coup-but-himself/>.

²⁸¹ Edward Luttwak, “Why Turkey’s Coup D’état Failed,” *Foreign Policy*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/07/16/why-turkeys-coup-detat-failed-erdogan/>.

²⁸² “The Sultan Survives: In Turkey, a Failed Coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan,” *The Economist*, (July 15, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21702319-regardless-outcome-turkish-politics-will-change-worse-soldiers-turkey-have>.

²⁸³ “Erdoğan’s Revenge,” *The Economist*, (July 23, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21702465-turkeys-president-destroying-democracy-turks-risked-their-lives>.

Blatantly and in an insult to the intelligence of the Turkish people, the magazine continued to undermine their efforts to determine their fate by creating the opposite perception in the minds of the readers.

The Economist ignored the existence of democratic institutions in Turkey and likened the attitude of Erdoğan and AK Party government to that of the Baath Party, the representatives of dictatorial regimes in Iraq and Syria where no true democratic elections existed. In synchrony with *The New York Times*' discourse the magazine, with an air of aspiration, predicted that Turkey would slide into a state of chaos.

The Independent, another substantial British newspaper, did not hesitate to undermine the Turkish government when the developments awaited by the West did not materialize. In the days after the coup, the newspaper expressed its intolerance by writing, "Erdoğan has survived this coup but his future is still uncertain" as if to re-state the decision to overthrow the government in Turkey.²⁸⁴ Correspondents working for the International News Agency *Reuters* contacted Fetullah Gülen, who has been shown by the confessions of the putschists to have ordered the coup, and published his statement that the coup attempt in Turkey was staged by others.²⁸⁵ The possibility that Erdoğan and the Turkish Government could have staged the coup started to reverberate in the Western media.

²⁸⁴ "Erdogan Has Survived This Coup – But His Future Is Still Uncertain," *The Independent*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/turkey-coup-erdogan-military-army-erdogan-has-survived-this-coup-but-his-future-is-still-uncertain-a7140736.html>.

²⁸⁵ "Muslim Cleric Gulen: Coup Bid in Turkey Could Have Been Staged," *Reuters*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-security-gulen-remarks-idUSKCN0ZW11D>.

Other newspapers such as *The Guardian* or *Daily Mail* also assumed similar attitudes to the coup attempt in Turkey.²⁸⁶ Under the headline “Crocodile Tears,” the newspaper wrote that “Turkish President Erdoğan broke down in tears at coup victim’s funeral as he calls his opponents a ‘virus’ who must be purged.” By publishing a completely inaccurate and fabricated story, *Daily Mail* claimed Erdoğan’s political opponents stated that the government itself was responsible for the events in a cynical move to strengthen its power on the state.²⁸⁷ Here it should be noted that all leading political party leaders, especially the leaders of MHP and CHP strongly condemned the coup attempt and supported the legitimate government.

Lastly, *Der Spiegel*, one of the most prominent news magazines in Germany published a provocative headline immediately after the coup attempt: “Once Upon a Time, There Was Democracy: Dictator Erdoğan and Helpless West.”²⁸⁸ It is plausible that anyone who saw the headlines would think that the coup in Turkey was staged and the opposition was wiped out. As can be seen once again, the newspaper published news and opinions that targeted not the coup attempt and the putschists, but those that resisted it with determination and defended

²⁸⁶ Ranj Alaaldin, “Aftermath of Turkey Coup Attempt Will Be Bloody and Repressive,” *The Guardian*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/16/aftermath-of-turkish-coup-attempt-will-be-bloody-and-repressive>.

²⁸⁷ “Crocodile Tears? Turkish President Erdogan Breaks Down in Tears at Coup Victim’s Funeral as He Calls His Opponents a ‘Virus’ Who Must Be Purged,” *The Daily Mail*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3693828/Turkish-president-Recep-Erdogan-describes-overthrow-plot-gift-God-allowing-cleanse-army-ordering-arrest-3-000-judges-prosecutors-thousands-supporters-continue-occupy-streets.html>.

²⁸⁸ “Diktator Erdoğan und der hilflose Westen: Es war einmal eine Demokratie,” *Der Spiegel*, No. 30, (July 23, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/index-2016-30.html>.

the legitimate government even though all the political parties and the majority of the public were against the coup attempt. *Der Spiegel*, cited the measures taken in response to the coup attempt, as evidence of an erosion of the freedom of the people and, referring to Turkey as “the country which lost its independence,” made serious accusations against the Turkish government and the public in a special issue to which 16 correspondents contributed. The news magazine, provocatively depicting the minarets of the Sultan Ahmet Mosque as ignited rockets on its cover, tried to be more controversial by handling the issue of anti-Turkish sentiments along with anti-Islam sentiments.²⁸⁹

It appears that when the Western media, which followed an editorial policy with no moral qualms whose main goal was to blatantly spread anti-Turkey sentiments, failed to achieve the desired reaction from the people of Turkey, it had to call for the support of other Western organizations and institutions. For instance, Moody's, the credit ranking company, downgraded Turkey's investment-grade rating even though political stability was ensured in the country in the aftermath of the coup.²⁹⁰

Reactions of the West and especially of the Western media reflected the Western intentions for presenting Turkey in this manner. Such a policy had two main goals: undermining President Erdoğan and the will of the Turkish people. The Western statesmen and the media, who were not satisfied with the failure of the coup attempt, targeted President Erdoğan's personality. They criticized him and the government for

²⁸⁹ “Turkey Slams German Magazine Der Spiegel's Provocative Edition, Cover,” *Daily Sabah*, (September 14, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.dailysabah.com/diplomacy/2016/09/14/turkey-slams-german-magazine-der-spiegels-provocative-edition-cover>.

²⁹⁰ Nurullah Gür, “Moody's'in Ekonomik Rasyonaliteden Uzak Not Kararı,” *SETA Perspektif*, No. 146, (September 28, 2016), retrieved December 23, 2016 from <http://www.setav.org/moodysin-ekonomik-rasyonaliteden-uzak-not-karari/>.

arresting FETÖ members and even threatening to isolate Turkey in the international arena. They willfully ignored the fact that Erdoğan received more than 50% of the public vote and has won many free and transparent elections during the 12 years of AK Party being the dominant party in Turkish politics.

The West has tried to impose its own perspective and agenda on Turkey and in doing so cynically manipulate international opinion through the so called “free-press” by targeting the Turkish state and its citizens. They have belittled or given token coverage to the brave resistance of the people and how the government and the public fearlessly defended their nation. The only explanation for ignoring such a stance is that the Western media desires to present Turkey as an authoritarian Middle Eastern state with no place in the West. This desire is connected to the existence of Erdoğan who is being presented as an Islamist dictator by Western countries not because he is oppressing his people but because he is providing an example of a strong and trustable leader who is attempting to chart a new course for Muslims in the Middle East. To follow the current arguments of Western governments to their logical end, if Erdoğan had been overthrown, a “democratic” leader who would follow their lead would have been installed and Turkey would have been gladly been included in their “club.”

CONCLUSION

The victory of July 15, which is a major failure for the Westernized marionettes and their masterminds, was an unexpected development for the Western states that desire to overthrow the leaders who are not the proponents of Westernization without fail. In other words, July 15 is a defeated coup attempt although it materialized with extensive domestic and foreign connections.

The reactions given to the July 15 coup attempt by the Western countries once again show that their outlook to others is still problematic. The grounds for moral superiority held for a long time by Western countries over the world has been further damaged. Western countries have no predilections for democracy in the Middle East particularly in Egypt and choose to treat the administrations in these countries as pawns, removing those whom they regard to be against their interests. As can be seen in the recent Brazilian, Egyptian and Ukrainian examples, they are on the whole successful in achieving their goals.

On the night of July 15, the people of Turkey declared to the whole world that they did not choose to transfer their right to determine their own fate. The resistance of the Turkish public did not allow the manipulations of Western countries to materialize and the tangible disappointment and anger reflected by the Western states after July 15 were against this national resistance. The resistance of July 15, an important step for democracy and the right of the public to determine its own fate, is a counter revolution against the coup attempt staged to overthrow the democratic legitimate government and to annihilate the national will.

As a result, the Western actors; both the political actors and the media institutions, experienced a serious disappointment because the possibility of failure in coups backed by Western global powers is minimal. During the post-coup process, the Western world has lost the moral high ground they claim to hold as “established democracies” and should not criticize Turkey or claim to teach democracy and human rights to the world. The Western countries, who hypocritically act against their basic values, should be subjected to defending their own values through the discourses of countries such as Turkey.

COUP IN TURKEY AND EGYPT: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DYNAMICS

Gamal Nassar*

INTRODUCTION

A coup is a sudden displacement of a country's government by a group belonging to an institution of the state, usually the military. A coup is successful only when the coup plotters manage to impose hegemony and take control over the situation; if a coup attempt is thwarted, either civil war ensues or the government restores democratic rule. Although there are many academic studies on dynamics leading to a successful coup, analyzes focusing on the factors that might cause a coup to fail once attempted are rare.²⁹¹ A comparative analysis of the Egyptian and Turkish cases has potential to provide fruitful thoughts on the causes behind the success and failure of coup attempts. Those causes vary from rapidly increasing population to uneven industrialization, from economic dependency to ethnic composition, and from the degree of media freedom to economic wealth. Of them, the structure of armed forces is the most significant variable in explaining the success and failure of coup attempts in any country.

The recent military coups in Egypt and in Turkey respectively have different internal and external dynamics that led to the success of the former and the failure of the latter. In this commentary, I try to shed

²⁹¹ See for example, Jonathan M. Powell and Clayton L. Thyne, "Global Instances of Coups from 1950 to 2010: A New Dataset," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 48, No. 2 (2011), pp. 249-259.

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light on the internal structures of Egyptian and Turkish society, the role of the military establishment in the two coups and the role that political and religious actors in the two countries played in the military coup. Moreover, I discuss the media's role in the success of the coup in Egypt and in the thwarting of the coup attempt in Turkey, and conclude with an analysis of the role played by regional and international actors in both countries.

THE INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF EGYPTIAN AND TURKISH SOCIETY

The structure of Egyptian society includes a blend of several civilizations that have been hosted in Egypt over the ages, and a history interwoven with unique threads that carry the impressions of the people who have lived there and interacted on the land. Ultimately, the outcome is a distinctive Egyptian character that is generally kind and religious, due to the nature of living in an agricultural environment. Traditionally, throughout the ages, this population has tended to comply with the ruler in most cases, especially if the ruler deals with the people in a manner characterized by violence, cruelty and control. Thus, Egyptian citizens fear their ruler, and often depend on the government for the administration of their lives.

Due to the nature of the Egyptian people's simple life, after the transition from monarchy to republic in 1952 and the military's predominance over the reins of power, the Egyptian people have declined in many fields. In spite of free education, there is still a significant rate of illiteracy in Egypt. This lack of fundamental education has helped the Egyptian rulers to reshape the consciousness of the Egyptian character, sometimes with high-sounding speeches, and sometimes through the media's influence over public opinion.

On the other side, the Turkish people treasure their nationality and language, tending to hold onto them as they have never been subjected to occupation by any foreign country. This historical factor makes them arguably less open and less interactive with other cultures,²⁹² unlike the Egyptian people who were subjected to French and British occupation before gaining independence.

It is important to note that there is a fundamental difference between the recent histories of the two nations. The Egyptian nation went through more than 60 years of corrupt military rule that dominated the reins of government using security control and election fraud. On the other hand, the Turkish nation is unfamiliar with the culture of fraud, in spite of its history of successive military coups. Also, the illiteracy rate in Egypt is more than 40 percent, and people suffer from ignorance and poverty; while the Egyptian media conducts a pervasive and systematic distortion process on the consciousness of the Egyptians. In contrast, the Turkish people have one of the top higher education rates in the world, and the fastest growth in allocations for research and scientific studies. Turkey has more than 150,000 scientific researchers and 6 universities rated among the top 500 universities in the world. The Turkish people have gone through the scourge of four military coups (1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997), and know very well the disastrous effects of military coups on the economy; the media there cannot change people's convictions easily.

The Islamic-oriented government have therefore able to take advantage of the democratic climate in the country to gain civilian support for their electoral platform –addressing and serving a well-educated populous who understand the adverse effects of living under military

²⁹² Muhammad I'mari, "al-Turkiyyah Lugha la Taqbal al-Muzahama fi Baladiha," *al-Jazeera Net*, (June 19, 2013), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/2TJAd5>.

rule— instead of solely depending on rhetoric to whip up crowds. In Egypt on the other hand, where military rule has been present for decades, the Muslim Brotherhood could only depend on crowd mobilizations, as seen during the 25th January revolution which propelled Morsi to become the President, and during the November 2012 constitutional declaration which triggered strong opposition.²⁹³

In terms of affiliation, the Egyptian nation can be divided into four segments: the first is the Islamist segment, which represents the largest segment of the Egyptian people, due to the religious nature that characterizes ordinary Egyptians, despite the 10-15 percent proportion of Copts; the second biggest segment is the national stream, which believes in Pan-Arab nationalism; the third segment is the liberal stream that is smaller than the previous two segments; the fourth segment is the left-wing, the smallest and weakest among them, especially in the recent period.

Looking at the structure and division of the Turkish nation, we find that it is divided into five segments; each one is different in composition. Firstly, the secular segment includes a high proportion of the Turkish population, as most of the Turkish people were born and grew up after the Atatürk revolution, thus, the principles of secular thought are rooted in their minds by educational, cultural and informational means. The Islamic-oriented segment is the second largest segment in terms of influence and population; it includes different ethnic groups, although most of them are from the Turkish ethnic group. This segment believes that the Turkish government and nation are an integral part of the Islamic nation, arguing that Turkey ruled the Islamic world for several centuries, before secularism penetrated the Turkish political

²⁹³ See also Ahmet Uysal, "Insights for Egypt's and Tunisia's Islamists from Turkish Experience of Democratic Transition," *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (2013), pp. 69-76.

structure. This segment has widened in recent years, as a result of the remarkable activity of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party).

Thirdly, there is the Turkish nationalist segment whose supporters consider themselves to be the alternative to the secular segment, and consider Atatürk in a positive light as the Lenin or Mao Zedong of the Turkish nation; in other words, they believe that Atatürk established the modern Turkish state with an orientation towards the revival of Turkish nationalism, culture and heritage, emphasizing separation from the Islamic world, maintaining Turkey's independence and full sovereignty over its territory, adopting an economic socialist ideology, establishing a powerful army and military arsenal enabling it to consolidate these basic principles and to protect Turkey from foreign interventions both from the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc. The fourth segment is that of Kurdish nationalism, representing the largest ethnic minority in Turkey, they believe that the Kurds are an Aryan Muslim nation, speaking their own Kurdish language, and representing their own, distinct nationality. The last segment is that of other minorities. It comprises a small percentage of the Turkish population structure with heterogeneous affiliations such as Arabs, Circassians, Armenians, Turkmens, Uzbeks and others, as well as religious minorities such as the Alawites, Dervishes, Sufis, and finally ideological minorities such as Marxists and socialists.²⁹⁴

The differing structures of Egyptian and Turkish societies contributed in one way or another to the outcome of each country's respective coup attempt. Egypt's military rule, in effect since 1952 (the one exception being the one-year rule of President Morsi), prepared the

²⁹⁴ Abd al-Rahman Ibrahim al-Sanee, "al-Shab al-Turki wa Azmat al-Intima," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, No. 871, (October 4, 2002), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/XAyAEy>.

way for the coup there, and its quick control over situation; meanwhile, the Turkish people have experienced alternating civilian and military rule for long periods of time since Kemal Atatürk's rule in 1924. They had indeed suffered from military coups in different periods, however, we can say that, "for many years, the Turkish people experienced civilian rule that solved issues in a democratic way, while the first Egyptian civilian experience did not have the chance to solve issues democratically."²⁹⁵

THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AND ITS ROLE IN THE EGYPTIAN AND TURKISH COUPS

The military establishment in both countries has played a vital role and exerted a prominent influence on the public. This is particularly true of political life in Egypt, starting from 1881 during the Orabi Revolution, when Ahmed Orabi stood with all sections of the Egyptian people before the Abdeen Palace to present the people's demands to the Khedive Tawfiq. This military role continued for successive periods of time including the Free Officers Movement, which sparked a military coup in 1952, which later turned into a political revolution, and has been the most prominent milestone concerning the role played by the Egyptian military in political and public life.²⁹⁶ The military establishment continued to play this role in Egypt in different eras: from Sadat and Mubarak, who resigned and handed over the reins of power to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), to the "defense coup" led by Minister Abdel Fattah al-Sisi on 3 July 2013.

²⁹⁵ Abdullah al-Najjar, "Limadha Najah al-Inqilab fi Misr wa Fashila fi Turkiyyah Hatta al-An," *Sasa Post*, (July 25, 2016), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/XvVIGJ>.

²⁹⁶ Mustafa Alawi, "al-Jaysh Bayna al-Thawra wa al-Siyasa: Halatu Misr," *al-Dimoqratiyya*, (October 21, 2013) retrieved from <https://goo.gl/FmsoEE>.

In Turkey's military history, Atatürk, together with some Ottoman army leaders, led the Turkish National Resistance Movement (1920-1922) against the occupation armies. The War of Independence, which evolved from the Movement, brought a strong mixture of the political and military role to the concept of military function. Atatürk utilized this background in taking over the reins of power in Turkey. Thus, the role of the army was not limited to transferring power to the Kemalists, but rather involved turning the army itself into an active agent in the structuring of the Turkish Republic.²⁹⁷ It is generally stated that, "since its establishment, the Turkish army was the protector of the republic's secular values and the faithful guardian to guarantee commitment to these values."²⁹⁸

Military intervention in the guidance or orientation of Turkey's political life has been demonstrated in several different ways, but most notably through military coups. Turkey's generals have derived the legal legitimacy of military coups from Article 35 of the military service law that gives the military establishment the right to intervene to protect the six principles of the Turkish Republic (six arrows) when they seem to be violated. During the era of the Republic, the military establishment conducted four coups, the first three of which were straight-out military take-overs (May, 1960; March, 1971; and September, 1980); the last successful coup, which occurred in February 1997 and is known as a post-modern coup, differed from the previous three coups in terms of its framework, since it did not directly intervene into political affairs.

²⁹⁷ Sidi Amar Shaykhuna, "al-Askar wa al-Dustoor fi Turkiyyah," *Islam Online*, (June 28, 2016), retrieved from <http://islamonline.net/17305>.

²⁹⁸ Bakr Muhammad Rasheed al-Budoor, *al-Makana al-Iqlimiyya li Turkiyyah Hatta 2020: Dirasah Mustaqbaliyyah*, (Doha, Qatar: Markaz al-Jazeera li Addirasat, 1st Edition, 2016), p. 93.

If we look at what happened on the 3rd of July 2013 coup in Egypt, we find that the army, or rather the SCAF, could not bear for the elected civilian president Muhammed Morsi to remain in power until the end of his first term. Therefore, obstacles were put in his way, and problems were created for him; all of the state institutions were put under SCAF control, so that the president could not properly administrate Egypt's state affairs. The armed forces as a whole, with all its branches and their leaders, were involved in the coup against the president, under the pretext of preserving the state and protecting it from civil war. This pretext was a major and important reason behind the success of the coup in Egypt. Not only did the SCAF play the abovementioned role in the coup, but also military intelligence, from the very beginning, actively worked to turn public opinion against President Morsi.

As for the Turkish case, despite the push and pull that has taken place over the years between President Erdoğan and the military establishment, Erdoğan has excelled in the last ten years in neutralizing the army's role in politics, a factor which contributed significantly in the incomplete involvement of the military establishment in the coup attempt of 15 July 2016. The majority of the Turkish military establishment "thwarted the coup attempt that came from inside with an iron fist, as they put the interest of Turkey and its security and stability above all other considerations, and thus unite[ed] with the people to achieve these goals."²⁹⁹

The coup attempt in Turkey lasted only a few hours, starting and ending abruptly. The main reason that led to the thwarting of the coup was that a strong segment within the military, present in all of its components and units, did not support the idea of a coup against the elect-

²⁹⁹ Abd al-Bari Atwan, "Lihadhihi al-Asbab Fashila al-Inqilab al-Turki. Erdogan Badau Sayakoon Mukhtalifan Tamaman," *Rai al-Youm*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/YfdUur>.

ed authority. There was a split in the army concerning the democratic process, one that reduced the coup plotters' powers –a fact which prompted them to execute the detention of Hulusi Akar, the Chief of the General Staff, who was Erdoğan's confidant, and many of the generals who refused to comply with the coup attempt.

THE ROLE OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTORS IN EGYPT AND TURKEY'S MILITARY COUPS

Given the role of political parties and political actors in both Egypt and Turkey, we find that there is a clear contrast in attitudes toward military coups in both countries. In Turkey, the political attitudes towards the failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016 were all intended to achieve one goal: that of protecting the Turkish nation, which embraces all its citizens of various beliefs, affiliations and colors. It was clear to observers on the scene that Turkish society, including both secularists and Islamists, journalists and intellectuals, men and women from all ranks, expressed their full support to President Erdoğan and the democratic experience, standing as one bloc against the coup attempt. This was opposite to the way that the political parties dealt with President Morsi. Their first reaction was to settle old scores with the Muslim Brotherhood, disregarding national interest and people's rights, as if they had been conducting a coup against democracy even before the military did. Some Islamists, who shared the same Islamic reference with Morsi, even hastened, before some other secularists, nationalists, and socialists, to bless and embrace the coup. This included the alNour Party and some religious leaders, not to mention the support that al-Azhar and the Church provided for the coup.³⁰⁰

³⁰⁰ Jamal Nassar, "Bayna Shabayn wa Raisayn," *Huffington Post Arabi*, (July 27, 2016), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/SWiykG>.

It is worth noting that the opposition parties' determination not to support the coup attempt in Turkey does not mean that they stood by Erdoğan and the AK Party government. It implies, rather, their awareness of the current political situation in their country, and their refusal to replace the legitimate political framework with another that lacks democracy and involves military intervention in authority.

Despite their reservations about Erdoğan and the AK Party government, the Turkish opposition parties do not deny the renaissance Turkey has experienced since its transfer of power to a civilian government. In addition, they acknowledge that the Turkish civil authority has accomplished several acclaimed democratic practices, such as giving the Kurds a precious chance to play a role in the political scene, by letting the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) into political life, after the army's withdrawal from power and the rise of civilian authority.

The two opposition parties in Turkey, namely HDP and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), considered the coup attempt abortive due to its absence of leadership and, specifically, its lack of support from Turkish military leaders from the beginning, as well as the Chief of the General Staff's rejection of the coup. In addition, the lack of international support for this coup has been noted, in contrast to previous military coups in Turkey, which were supported by NATO and had obvious international approval.³⁰¹ The religious establishment stood completely with President Erdoğan, and warned against the military coup and the risk it posed to the country; during the attempt, Imams broadcast verbal glorification of Allah and called upon people to mobilize and stand against the coup.

³⁰¹ "Khubaraa: al-Muarada al-Turkiyyah Rafadat al-Inqilab Khawfan min Awaqib al-Hukm al-Askari," *al-Watan Daily*, (July 16, 2016), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/FCfLD8>.

In the Egyptian case, Mohammed Morsi became the President of the Republic through a free and fair election unprecedented in Egypt's modern history. This followed a period in which the SCAF had managed the affairs of the country, subsequent to the fall of Hosni Mubarak, who had reined for 30 years, yet stepped down after 18 days of the demonstrations that started on January 25, 2011. The Tamarod Movement was founded in April 26, 2013, after ten months of Muhammed Morsi's rule. This movement collected Egyptians' signatures to withdraw confidence from Morsi and call for early presidential elections. The movement announced the collection of 22 million signatures³⁰² to withdraw confidence from Morsi, and invited signatories to demonstrate on June 30, 2013. It turned out that this movement was subordinate to state agencies, especially military intelligence. Among the leading supporters of this campaign were Muhammed al-Baradei, Hamdeen Sabahi, Amr Moussa, al-Sayyid al-Badawi Shehata, the president of al-Wafd Party, and the movement was supported by many journalists and intellectuals. It is noticeable that the Egyptian opposition in this period prioritized their own interests over the interests of Egypt. Most of the opposition leaders considered themselves more eligible for the presidency than Morsi, although they had no tangible popular support; and many of them were funded by Gulf or Western countries, and took advantage of the frustration that had spread among some Egyptians to pursue their own bids for power.

When Muhammed Morsi invited the opposition to engage in dialogue and proposed the formation of a constitutional amendment and

³⁰² Some observers later questioned this figure, saying that the pro-coup media exaggerated the number of signatures, as they also exaggerated the number of participants in the June 30 demonstrations.

national reconciliation committee, the opposition promptly declined the offer. Muhammed al-Baradei read the statement of the National Salvation Front, saying that Morsi's speech reflected a clear lack of acknowledgment of the difficulties ordinary Egyptians were experiencing due to his failure to skillfully manage the country's affairs since taking office a year ago. The National Salvation Front insisted on calling for early presidential elections.

When it comes to the religious actors in Egypt, in a statement, the Grand Imam of al-Azhar Ahmed al-Tayyeb called every Egyptian to take responsibility "before God, history, and the world," and warned of drifting towards a civil war, which seemed to be looming with threatening consequences for the history and unity of Egypt, an impending tragedy that subsequent generations would not be able to forgive. The Coptic Orthodox Pope Tawadros II called for Egyptians to think together and have dialogue together, and asked them to pray for Egypt.³⁰³

All these interactions were collusively masterminded by the military coup leader Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, the defense minister at the time, who gradually paved the way for the opposition to President Morsi. There were numerous signs of his disloyalty, most notably Sisi's invitation of political opposition to political dialogue without the knowledge of the President. Strangely, Morsi, supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, showed confidence in the military commanders led by Sisi until the very end.³⁰⁴

³⁰³ "al-Azhar wa al-Anba Twadros Vahuddan Ala al-Hudoo' wa al-Jaysh al-Masri Mutahhib," *al-Nahar Daily*, (June 30, 2013), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/5V0EI7>.

³⁰⁴ Anass Zaki, "30 June... Jadal al-Thawrah wa al-Muamara," *al-Jazeera Net*, (June 30, 2015), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/qBNkTW>.

THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE COUP IN EGYPT AND THE THWARTING OF THE TURKISH COUP ATTEMPT

The media of any country plays a key role in the formation of public opinion through satellite TV, press, radio, and social networking sites, which are now considered one of the most important means of mass communication. These influential means work together in consistency to form public opinion in different areas, circumstances, situations and issues that arise in relation to various political, social, cultural, or economic events.

These means of communication, especially the private satellite channels, played a major role in both the Egyptian and Turkish coups. They contributed in one way or another in the promotion and success of the first, and in the confounding of the second, supporting Turkey's democratic experiment against the failed coup attempt.

In Egypt, the media is dominated by either the state, or non-state businessmen close to the regime; both have worked in the interest of the existing political regime since the era of Mubarak until the period in which the SCAF ruled after the 25 January 2011 revolution. However, it is notable that during Muhammed Morsi's period in office, the media worked hard to tarnish the image of the President, crafting crises for him, showing him in an indecent image, and continually attacking him. This antagonistic bias was particularly obvious on the private satellite channels supported by businessmen.

The BBC published a lengthy report on the media's role in the coup against Egypt's ousted President, particularly with regard to the provocation of the Egyptians peoples' anger toward the government, as the media played a key role in highlighting Morsi's faults and mobilizing the demonstrations that took place against him.³⁰⁵ All of the

³⁰⁵ "BBC Takshifu Dawr al-I'lam fi Isqat Mursi," *Rassd*, (July 10, 2013), retrieved from <http://rassd.com/1-66656.htm>.

media's efforts contributed in one way or another in the formation of a certain mental image of President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood; these machinations have led people from many sectors of Egyptian society to express discontent, and even rage, over the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood.

As mentioned by Rasha Abdullah,

Many media outlets in Egypt have strongly supported the regime's official narrative of events since the removal of the Muslim Brotherhood-backed President Muhammed Morsi from office, in July 2013. The voices of opposition were almost absent in newspapers and television programs, as the government has shut down the Islamists' media outlets.³⁰⁶

In Turkey, prior to the rise of the AK Party, the media played a similar role in dealing with the successive governments before the failed coup attempt, as "media organizations were devoted to incite the army against the government as happened in 1997, when the media attacked Necmettin Erbakan's government to incite the people against it, preparing them to accept the coup later."³⁰⁷ But during the coup attempt of 15 July 2016, the media played a different role, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Public condemnation and rejection of the coup attempt; none of the media outlets dared to promote or to find any justification for the coup.
2. Blaming the Gülen movement, calling state institutions to purge its members, and to hold the military network involved accountable for the coup.

³⁰⁶ Rasha Abdullah, "Egypt's Media in the Midst of Revolution," *Carnegie Middle East Center*, (July 16, 2014), retrieved from <http://carnegie-mec.org/2014/07/16/egypt-s-media-in-midst-of-revolution-pub-56164>.

³⁰⁷ al-Budoor, *al-Makana al-Iqlimiyya li Turkiyyah Hatta 2020*, p. 94.

3. Refraining from attacking the military institution, emphasizing that the army is a national institution and that the coup plotters are only a small group of the “parallel entity.”
4. Glorification of the Turkish people, highlighting the heroic role that the people played in thwarting the coup.
5. Demonstrating to the outside world that Turkey stands strong and unified, while at the same time defending the measures taken by the government against the coup plotters, and emphasizing legality of such measures.³⁰⁸

It is clearly evident that most of the local media outlets refrained from supporting the coup. It is also obvious that the coup plotters lacked control over the different means of communication, and that the media in general remained outside of their control. In addition, al-Jazeera provided good coverage of the event, where people watched what was happening in the streets live, on air. There were also channels that were hostile to the Turkish regime, such as the Egyptian and Syrian media, al-Arabiya channel and Sky News.

THE ROLE OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ACTORS IN THE COUP IN BOTH COUNTRIES

Regional and international players always have interest in countries where a coup takes place, seeking to promote their interests in those countries, and dominate their resources on the other hand. Throughout history there has never been a coup without regional or international supporters or sponsors; this is a historical, political, and military

³⁰⁸ Islam Halayqa, “Dawr al-I’lam wa Tattheeratuhi fi Masar al-Inqilab al-Fashil bi Turkiyyah,” *Markaz al-Jazeera li Addirasat*, (August 8, 2016), retrieved from <http://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/mediastudies/2016/08/160807113634101.html>.

postulate. Often, the military leaders who plot the coup have links to foreign entities, especially the intelligence agencies of Western countries, mainly the United States.

In Egypt, the regional role had the greatest impact in the preparation for the coup, and in supporting it later. Most remarkably, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia are known to have encouraged and contributed to the coup. The UAE played a more significant role because its leaders fear the legitimacy of an Islamic, democratically elected force in the region. This phobia may cause more problems in the foreseeable future when the democracy “infection” spreads to their country. In addition to this fear, some regional players supported the coup for economic reasons, such as the external orientation of the Republic of Egypt during the reign of Muhammed Morsi, which created a change in the map of the regional actors; generally, a change in positions has an impact on the old political axes. The UAE considered these changes threatening to their geopolitical interests in the region.

Among the reasons why the UAE opposed President Morsi and the Brotherhood Government, and supported the opposition, is the Egyptian government’s application of a package of economic measures aiming to reduce Egypt’s dependence on foreign countries, in order to empower national resources and establish Egypt’s service economy. Egypt’s economy depends on tourism and the logistics of seaports, as well as the production of electronics, automobiles, and equipment, etc. Perhaps the most important project in Morsi’s package was the Suez Canal development project; this concerned the UAE, which assumed that this project would withdraw all its expected privileges from the investment structure. Therefore this project would have made Egypt competitive in the foreseeable future with the investments of Emirate of Dubai, and

provided an attractive environment for Arab, regional and international capital, ending the UAE's forefront place in the regional economy in the long run –a specter which the government of Dubai considers threatening to its present economic identity.³⁰⁹

There are other Arab and regional countries that have different attitudes towards the coup; among them was Qatar, which expressed reservations about removing Morsi from office, although it covered its bases by sending a congratulatory telegram to the interim president, expressing Qatar's understanding of the new reality in Egypt. In contrast, Tunisia described what happened as a military coup; Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki proclaimed the military intervention "totally unacceptable." Similarly, Turkey condemned the coup altogether. Meanwhile, Sudan and the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) have refrained from commenting on the event, emphasizing its being an internal affair.³¹⁰

As for international actors, the major countries and international institutions have expressed varied reactions to the Egyptian army's announcement of removing elected President Muhammed Morsi, and the consequent events. Immediately after the declaration of removing Morsi, U.S. President Barack Obama expressed concern over the decision, and called on the Egyptian army to quickly hand over power to an elected civilian president, ordering a review of U.S. aid to Egypt. Meanwhile, the European Union (EU) expressed awareness of the deep divisions in Egyptian society and the popular claims for political change, and urged all parties to return rapidly to the democratic process in a comprehensive way, so that Egypt would be able to complete

³⁰⁹ "Dawr al-Dam al-Irani fi Adam Istiqrar Misr," *Noon Post*, (November 29, 2015), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/BY0M1p>.

³¹⁰ Misr, "Am Ala al-Inqilab," *al-Jazeera Net*, retrieved from <https://goo.gl/gZ1Buv>.

the process of democratic transformation. On July 5, 2013, the African Union suspended Egypt's membership until the restoration of constitutional order.³¹¹

Turkey's geographical location and regional, strategic importance makes many countries try to manipulate the situation in Turkey in order to achieve their own interests, all the more so because there are American and Western troops in military bases on Turkish territory, and both U.S. fleet units and Western fleets in the Mediterranean Sea close to Turkey's coast; these forces must be supported by military in one way or another. It is hard to believe that the agencies or intelligence entities overseeing the U.S. presence in the region were ignorant of the coup. This suggests that the U.S. and Western countries were completely knowledgeable of the coup attempt, if not backing and supporting it altogether.³¹²

At the regional level and after the coup attempt had taken place, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Iran delayed in issuing statements of support to the legitimate Turkish government until noon of the next day; Cairo kept silent, and the Jordanian government released an ambiguous statement that barely welcomed the failure of the coup attempt. The Egyptian representative in the UN Security Council rejected a draft of a council statement that expressed condemnation of the coup and support for the elected government,³¹³ while Qatar was one of the first regional and Arab states to reject the coup and fully support the elected government.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Mustafa Ibrahim, "al-Dawr al-Dawli wa al-Iqlimi fi al-Inqilab al-Turki," *al-Taqrer al-Misri*, (July 18, 2016), retrieved from <https://goo.gl/z9l1sys>.

³¹³ "Tashreeh al-Fashal: Binyat al-Inqilab al-Turki wa Dinamiyyatuh wa Tadaiyatuh," Position Paper, *Markaz al-Jazeera li Addirasat*, retrieved from <http://studies.aljazeera.net/ar/positionestimate/2016/07/160720103630108.html>.

At the international level, as the failure of the coup attempt became fully evident, the U.S. president and U.S. Secretary of State issued statements expressing support for the democratic regime in Turkey, condemning the coup attempt and calling for restraint and avoiding bloodshed. The EU also issued a similar statement that was followed by statements from European capitals in the following hours. There are signs that Russia disapproved of the coup attempt, in spite of the tension that had marred Moscow-Ankara relations since November; the Russian leadership appeared pleased with the failure of the coup, possibly because President Vladimir Putin's administration saw the coup attempt as an action closely linked to the United States.³¹⁴

CONCLUSION

The nature of the social structure of the Egyptian and Turkish peoples contributed significantly to the success of the coup in the former and the thwarting of the coup attempt in the latter. The military establishment in both countries played an active role in directing the course of events, while political parties and religious institutions played a key role in the preparation for the coup in both countries. The opposition parties in Egypt supported the coup, while Turkey's opposition groups stood with the democratically elected government. The media was influential in both cases, with different results: while the media paved the way for the coup in Egypt and was an effective tool in the hand of plotters, the media in Turkey stood against the coup attempt from the very beginning. Lastly, the regional and international actors in both countries were obviously influential in creating the coup.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

Turkey's democracy has historically suffered from continuous coup attempts which aimed directly to overthrow the elected governments of the time. At least four successful coups have occurred in a period of 50 years and in July 15 2016 the latest attempt was executed. However, unlike the previous coups, the plotters failed to achieve their goals on the night of July 15, resulting in a triumph for Turkish unity and democracy. As such, the July 15 coup attempt can be considered as an example per se of people power which is worth studying.

July 15 Coup Attempt in Turkey: Context, Causes and Consequences presents different perspectives focusing on political, economic, sociological and psychological aspects of the factors leading up to, the events during and aftermath of this historic date. Academicians and journalists have aimed to examine in detail the coup attempt and to present an accurate account of July 15. History and current events are analyzed through an academic perspective, creating a fuller picture to better understand this most recent attempt to compromise the will of the Turkish people.

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