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The Moderation in Political Islam in Turkey: The Case of the Justice and Development Party

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Abstract

This paper attempts to understand the moderation of political Islam in Turkey. Comparing across time in the history of Turkish politics, the paper examines the rise and the evolution of Islamist politics, and explains why finally a significant majority of Islamists decided to split from the radical branch, abandoned their previous fundamentalist utopia of an Islamic regime and chose to participate in the liberal secularist system. In answering these specific questions, this study attempts to contribute to broader debates about moderation of radical social movements. Finally, the paper will argue that the moderation of political Islam was the outcome of a particular combination of persistent and routinized state pressure against radicalism and simultaneous openings in the political opportunity structure which encouraged moderation.

Introduction

The tension between two worldviews, modernism and Islam, has shaped Middle Eastern politics since the encounter of these two forces, particularly, since the late 19th century. This tension further increased in the 20th century after the collapse of the traditional regimes (symbolically, with the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1918) and the establishment of modern nation states in the region by the new nationalist and revolutionary elites. Since then, political Islam has been a central issue in Middle Eastern politics. The radical modernization policies of some of the leaders of the newly established states to secularize politics and remove Islamic rules and traditions from political life did not succeed. These projects faced massive resistance from societal groups, which were alienated by the new secularist regimes. The conflict between secular authorities and the Islamists persisted for decades and as the difficulty to overcome this conflict by the old radical policies became better understood, the Islamic actors began to come up with more creative strategies and formulas which utilize the available political opportunities best. The neo-Islamic reformist movement (Muslim Democracy) of the Justice and Development (AKP) in Turkey rose in this context.

The purpose of this study is to understand the factors leading to moderation of political Islam, which is a need to answer the crucial question of whether Islamism can be integrated into a secularist, liberal paradigm. In examining this specific question, I will also attempt to contribute to broader debates about moderation of radical social movements. In this connection, I will particularly focus on the relations between the sociopolitical contexts (or opportunity structures) and the strategic actions of opposition groups. I specifically aim to shed light on circumstances where the public life is strictly regulated and where actors need to choose between challenging the system altogether or pursuing an adaptive rationale (such as cooptation) to reach their interests.

In this context, the following essay is a case study of Turkey which has been a typical example of the phenomenon of top-down modernization and secularization coupled with routine repression of Islamist politics, responded by persistent resistance from Islamic groups. In this vein, the history of Turkish politics can be read as a story of long time tension practiced in the form of a dialectical process between the two worldviews: secularism and Islam (see Yavuz, 1997 and Keyman, 1995 for a similar approach).[1] This dialectical relation between modernist secularist authorities and resistant Islamist actors will be the primary subject of this paper. In this essay, I aim to analyze the dynamics of the most recent episode of this dialectics, namely the rise of a moderate fraction within the Islamists (the Justice and Development Party) and its engagement in a democratic discourse.

When the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won the 2002 general elec-

tions with an unusually high voter turnout, many people interpreted this development as the ultimate success of the Islamists against the secular institutions. On the other hand, several other people argued just the opposite and claimed that the moderate and democratic discourse of the AKP, which is extremely different than the previous radical Islamist party, shows that the secular institutions finally succeeded to eradicate Islamism from the political sphere. In fact, both of these approaches were too narrow and missing the interactive character of the secularism-Islamism conflict in Turkey. I will avoid such approaches and attempt to provide a more dynamic picture of the conflict. I will examine the factors which have been influential in the moderation of the Islamists and also draw attention to their potential to make influence on the political life through the new strategy and discourse they have developed.

As this paper will explain, the state-led modernization and secularization efforts in Turkey have not been able to end Islamic reactionism. On the contrary, Islamism has increased its power since the establishment of modern Turkey, reached its most radical form in the 1990s, finally took over the government after the November 2002 elections, and has been in power since then. On the other hand, one cannot argue that state efforts to repress Islamism have been ineffective. Political Islam went through changes due to several factors and constant state repression has been one of the main factors. Since 1980, and especially after 1990, Islamism started to adopt modern values and practices such as economic liberalism, consumptionism, and women's entrance to the labor force as well as democratic values such as freedom of thought and self-expression.[2] This change in Islamism in favor of modern and democratic values reached its peak when a reformist group finally split from the conservative and fundamentalist Islamists party to establish a new party, namely the Justice and Development Party (AKP), and called their ideology "Muslim Democracy." This reformist movement claimed that it did not challenge the republican regime in any way. The leaders of the movement argued that they have totally internalized democracy and even secularism and they will be the main defenders of those values. They pointed out that their politics will not be based on religion but they will show how Muslims can be democrats. In other words, the goal of this new party was not to overthrow the democratic regime in Turkey but to make an alliance with it and open up opportunities for practicing Muslims within the democratic paradigm.

Social movement literature emphasizes the role of political structure as an influential factor on the rise and shape of social movements. According to this perspective, changes in the political structure such as increased repression as well as political opening in the system affect social movements. Through this connection, I will argue that the rise of a moderate reformist movement within Islamism (and the consequent establishment of the AKP) was shaped by a particular combination of repressive and democratic developments in the political environment. [3]

A main repressive factor which shaped the reformist movement was the constant repression of Islamism through the secular institutions such as the military, the constitution and the Supreme Court as well as the civil secular elite such as business, media and intellectual leaders. These secularist actors particularly increased their pressure on Islamists during the short government experience of the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) in 1998. The second repressive factor that stimulated the rise of the reformist movement was internal pressure (strict party hierarchy and intolerance of ideas which deviate from the fundamentalist path of the conservative leadership) within the Islamist party.

On the other hand, as argued above, there were also democratic openings in the political environment, which influenced the rise of the AKP as well. The first one is the rising popularity of democracy as a result of the accelerated relation between Turkey and the EU (since the 1999 Helsinki summit where Turkey's candidacy for the EU was recognized and the signing of the Accession Partnership Treaty in 2000 which included a formal list of tasks that Turkey must complete in order to join the EU), the relaxation of civil society after the 1980 coup, and the global return to the liberal democratic values. In this connection, the EU support, which was provided before to other activist groups, particularly the Kurds, who struggled for the relaxation of individual rights (such as freedom of expression and cultural rights) and showed the Islamists that operating within the democratic paradigm would be more beneficial for them. The second opening in the political environment that significantly shaped the reformist Islamist movement is the municipal government experience of the Islamist party (RP) in the 1990s.

In sum, I will argue that the rise of a reformist movement in Islamism, which finally established the AKP, is significantly related with the combined effect of those repressive and democratic factors. The insistence of the secular state institutions to limit Islam to the private sphere, coupled with the opportunity to get support from the international institutions such as the EU, convinced the Islamic reformists that engaging in a democratic discourse will provide them more international and domestic benefits. In addition, Islamists' long experience with undemocratic and oppressive treatments from both the secular state institutions as well as the internal hierarchy within the Islamist party, in other words, the experience of being the very victims of undemocratic state and party structures, in time led to a realization and an internalization of the benefits of democracy by some of the Islamist actors. The municipal government experience of the RP further increased the self-confidence of the municipal leaders and, consequently, the intra-party conflict between the municipal leaders (who later became the leaders of the new party) and the hegemonic party leader. The undemocratic hierarchical party organization did not leave any other option for the newly risen actors to move upwards towards party leadership except to establish a different party, and finally in 2002 the AKP was established by the reformist Islamist actors.

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In this connection, the case of the AKP can be read as a strategic moderation and adaptation to the democratic system. I believe that the AKP is a valuable example for studies of learning, adaptation, and democratization processes of political actors and movements.[4] Through this connection, the factors, which shaped this reformist movement, need to be examined for several theoretical and practical purposes.

At the broadest level, the AKP is a useful case of democratization not only because the party is an example of moderation and liberalization of a radical political group, which has been critical of democracy and secularism for a long period of time, but also because the AKP itself has the potential to become a real force for democratization in Turkey (both symbolically—by relaxing the system such that it can tolerate religious actors in politics—and also practically by passing several laws to relax individual rights and limit the role of the military in politics as will explained in following pages). In this respect, the factors, which influenced AKP members' shift from a radical discourse towards a more moderate and democratic one will undoubtedly contribute to our understanding about the dynamics of democratization and moderation of undemocratic or radical political groups.

Second, the strategy followed by the AKP (namely, adapting to the system to shape it from within itself rather than directly challenging it from outside) can teach a lesson to other excluded political actors who contend with strongly institutionalized and restrictive regimes which neither tolerate any challenges to the principles of the regime nor, are easy to overthrow.

Finally, at the most narrow level the case of the AKP (as it shows a rapprochement between the republican regime and the Islamist opposition which had been in conflict for eighty years) has a particular importance for Turkish politics and for other political systems which suffer from a similar conflict between modernism and Islamism since this reformist movement suggests a solution for such conflicts. Turkish radical secularism failed to be a working example for Muslim societies given the persistence of Islamic reactionism since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, but can "Turkish (Democratic) Muslimhood" be an example?[5] In this regard, the study of the case of AKP will provide insight to the dynamics (prevailing problems and possible solutions) of the political life of modern Muslim societies.

In this paper, I will provide an introduction to Islamist politics in Turkey and draw attention the main issues and questions, which need to be examined to understand the case of the AKP. I will attempt to analyze and develop these questions as well as consider their political implications.

A Short History of Islamist Politics in Turkey

Like other political movements, political Islam in Turkey evolved over time. Changing circumstances in the political environment, increasing popularity of liberal values in the world and in Turkey, as well as persisting repression and isolation of Islamism by secularist state institutions and international actors have been influential factors on this change.

Since the establishment of modern Turkey by the Army General Mustafa Kemal after the Independence War (1919-1920), secularism-Islamism conflict has been central to Turkish politics. Mustafa Kemal, the leader of the modern Turkish Republic, rejected the Ottoman past along with the Islamic rule of the empire. Kemal established a secular system, which he considered to be the best system to modernize and catch up with the civilized nations. According to this modernization model, Islam had to be removed from public and political life and isolated to the private sphere. This system was backed by Kemalist institutions such as the constitution (which outlaws Islamism), the Army, and the Supreme Court. Since then, Islamists have resisted Kemalism and defended Islamization of the political and, in return, Kemalist institutions have tried to crush Islamism through constant repression. So far, four Islamic parties and several Islamist political actors were closed down by the Supreme Court or through military intervention.

Islamic politics in Turkey were represented by a relatively marginal party until the 1980s. The first Islamic party, namely the National Order Party (MNP) was established in 1970 by Necmettin Erbakan and banned by the Supreme Court soon after for challenging the secularity principle of the republic.[6] The successor National Salvation Party (MSP) was also banned along with all other parties by the 1980 coup. The third Islamic party, the Welfare Party (RP), was established in the post-1980 period and Islamism has grown faster since then.[7] The new military government pursued a strategy of engaging in a relatively religious discourse in order to decrease the left-right tension in the society, fight communism and unite the people under the umbrella of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Although the military considered this strategy temporary, the following civilian Prime Minister Ozal from the Motherland Party (ANAP) followed the same path.

Coupled with other political and economic liberalization policies in this post-1980 period, Islamism acquired the chance to develop. Taking advantage of the new economic, educational or organizational liberties and opportunities, Islamism expanded to more segments of the population and increased its power. Islamism reached its peak in the 1990s, but towards the end of 1990s, with state repression and the prevailing liberal democratic values in the world, the Islamists adopted a human rights discourse besides the religious one and synthesized the two. Nevertheless, state restrictions and party closures persisted as Islamists retained their religious discourse until finally the Islamists split and a reform-

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This reformist group established the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002 under the leadership of R. Tayyip Erdogan and his collaboraters such as Abdullah Gul and Bulent Arinc. The AKP administration argued that although they were believers they were not going to pursue religious politics. The AKP leaders argued that they had totally internalized democracy and secularism and thus did not constitute any threat to the republican principles of the Turkish state. However, AKP also pointed out that some of those principles such as secularism were misinterpreted in Turkey. They argued that real secularism means protection of all kind of beliefs and that they will establish a free system, the true secularism, which neither enforces nor prevents any religious belief or practice (Party Program of AKP).

AKP was unusually successful in the 2002 general elections. The party won the 33.3 percent of total votes which enabled it to dominate two-thirds of all parliament seats because of the Turkish electoral system which does not let parties whose votes are below 10 percent enter the parliament and so the AKP established a one-party government.[8] Since then, the AKP and its new ideology of bridging Islam and democracy has been a central issue of interest in Turkish politics. In a Muslim country like Turkey, the idea of bridging Islam and democracy is not totally new and was borrowed by many parties who wanted to position themselves in the center of the political spectrum. The interesting point in the case of AKP is how a group of political actors who came from a radical Islamist political background decided to follow a different path, split from the orthodox branch, and aligned with the system and its liberal democratic values. At this stage, in order to analyze the emergence of the reformist movement in Turkey, I will summarize below the important questions, which need to be examined.

The first question is, did this movement emerge as a consequence of state repression? If this is the case, given that repression has been persistent for a long period of time, what explains the particular time of the emergence of this separation and change? Had repression risen at that particular time? Or was there a difference in the perceived repression by the Islamists (at least by a particular group among them who established AKP)? If there is such a change in perception, what is its reason?

The second question is, did this movement rise in parallel to a general democratization in the country? This view is supported by the theory that the political actors in a country can only be democratic within the limitations of the general level of democracy in a country and that they would act through the preexisting political tools and traditions in that country (Gulalp, 2002). In this case, it needs to be examined whether there was a general democratic opening in the country in that period. It also needs to be examined whether the rising popularity of democracy (especially as a result of the state's efforts to

join the EU) both at the state level and also among the public can be considered as such a democratic opening and whether this might have led to this ideological, or at least discursive, change.

It is interesting that the first two arguments may seem to be conflicting but in the case of Turkey both repression and democratization can take place simultaneously because there is top down pressure to be democratic and secular. Apparently, there is a certain extent of a conceptual contradiction in thinking that democratization can take place through state pressure. However, the case of the AKP seems to be an example of such an irony and thereby draws attention to the limits of the democratic theory.

A third important question is, can the rise of the reformist movement be interpreted as a "master–disciple" conflict? Hammoudi (1997) explains the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East by cultural factors. He uses the metaphor of master-disciple relations in Islamic Sufi brotherhoods to observe the cultural foundations of authoritarianism. Hammoudi explains that these relationships are extremely hierarchical. The disciple is absolutely loyal and submissive to the master, as this submission is part of the sacred maturation process of the disciple. However, it does not matter how mature the disciple becomes because this hierarchical relationship leaves no place for a smooth shift from the position of disciple to master. Hence, this transition can only take place through violent means. When the disciple finally feels mature enough he or she kills the master to become a master him/herself.

Regarding the case of the AKP, the question is if this pattern of master-disciple relationship helps to understand the relation between the ideological leader Erbakan and the reformists. In other words, is this division in the Islamist Milli Gorus (National View) community a consequence of increased self-confidence of younger party members through their experience in municipal governments combined with a lack of a democratic party structure in the Islamist party (as the reformist actors explain below) where the new actors cannot replace the leader or influence decision making unless they separate and establish their own party?[9]

If this is the case, how can we explain the timing of the separation? In addition, it must be remembered that this view of leadership conflict can only explain separation but not necessarily why the new leadership followed a different political line. The moderate ideology of the new party is a movement beyond a competition for leadership.

Political Opportunities and Moderation

To begin this section, it is useful to review the puzzle: should we understand the rise of the AKP as a consequence of repression or democratization; as a master-disciple

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conflict between Erbakan and the new actors; or as part of a global political and intellectual development?

Undoubtedly, constant repression and restrictions on Islamism have influenced the Islamists. As the Islamist parliament member Avni Dogan explains, "the head, which is hit by stone, gets smart" (Selim, 2002: 133). While the repression had a radicalizing effect during the earlier years when the party was in opposition, the harsh 28 February period following RP's government experience had a frustrating effect on Islamists. The radical discourse of the party, which helped to increase the party's votes year by year until it gained power, has eventually backfired. The RP's inability to keep its promises under the military repression coupled with the Supreme Court's banning of Erbakan, the RP, and then the FP, made it obvious that not only was a more democratic political system needed but also that directly challenging the existing system was not an effective strategy.

The Kurds' success in lobbying the EU through a framing based on human rights also had an influence, showing that given the political system of Turkey and its ambitions to be a part of the EU, external pressure on the state through the EU was effective. Kurds have been very successful in discovering the "vulnerability" of the Turkish state (which is the state's quasi-dependent relations with the EU) and reshaping their movement strategies accordingly (from terrorism to international lobbying).[10] The learning process of Islamists from the Kurdish experience increased the tendency among the Islamists to adopt democratic principles and reframe the movement accordingly in order to gain legitimacy and support (see Ellingson, 1995 for strategic and interactive framing of social movements).

Regarding the effects of repression on the reformist movement, another key issue encouraging change was internal pressure within the party. As the members of the movement point out, the internal pressure and hierarchy in the party was one of the main reasons why some members became defenders of democracy (Radikal, March 16, 1998; Hurriyet, June 19, 1996; Milliyet, July 5, 2001).

On the other hand, the reformist movement was also influenced by democratic openings in the political structure. First of all, the reformists' proximity to democracy can be related to the fact that as a younger generation most of their political life took place in the post 1980s where civil society was more relaxed than in 1960s and 1970s when Erbakan and his friends at the administrative cadres of the conservative branch had entered politics. Gole (1999) points out that political culture changed in Turkey after 1980. Unlike the ideological discourses in the 1960s and especially the 1970s, in the 1980s concepts like moderation, tolerance and service started to dominate the political discourse. While the pre-1980s was dominated by "single-actor pathology" (exclusionary actors and ideologies), the political culture of post-1980s can be described as a search

for consensus. In this connection, a second change is that political debates started to focus more on the question of "which policy?" rather than "which political system?" In other words, people started to focus on the policies and services of the government and to prefer competent politicians rather than ideological leaders. Indeed, this factor later on becomes the very difference between Erbakan, the ideological, radical leader of Milli Gorus, and Erdogan, the policy-oriented, pragmatic and moderate leader of the reformist movement, as Erdogan himself emphasizes in his speeches.

Gole also emphasizes the rise of the center-right in the 1980s. She points out that the Motherland Party (ANAP) has been the symbol of the 1980s as it was the most successful party of the era because it claimed the four popular values of the period such as economic liberalism, consensus and conservative values. In fact, even Erdogan himself pointed out that the direction of the AKP was going to be parallel to the ANAP in the 1980s. In this connection, it seems that the fact that Erdogan's political life started in the 1980s (compared to Erbakan's political life which started in 1960s) had a significant impact on Erdogan's political line.

In addition to the relaxed atmosphere of the post-1980 years, another democratic opening which influenced AKP's rise is the effects of globalization. Turkey's intensified relations with the EU increased the popularity of democratic values especially among political minority groups such as, the Kurds and the Islamists who expect to pressure the state through the EU.

Another political opening which increased the power of the reformist movement was the period of municipal governance of Islamist parties. As both the reformists (such as Gul and Arinc) and also the conservatives (such as Sevket Kazan and Mukadder Basegmez) pointed out the experience of municipal governance had a significant effect on the rise and success of the reformist movement (Selim 2002). The successful governance experience of the municipalities increased the self confidence of Erdogan and his friends and strengthened their voice against the party administration. The master-disciple relationship between Erbakan and other party members were challenged during the years of Erdogan's mayorship, when Erdogan had his own authority in the municipal organization. In addition, the relative independence of municipal organizations from the party center enabled Erdogan and his friends to develop their own networks and establish a powerful organization beyond the dominance of the party elite. Social movement theorists showed the importance of organization in social movements (Morris, 1981).

Unlike the earlier theories which had argued that social movements rise in politically and socially chaotic environments, later social movement theorists showed that movements rise in those particular environments where people are more organized through various ties (such as family, neighborhood, friends, church, etc.). In this connec-

tion, I believe that the case of the AKP confirms this finding because, as the party members also point out, it was the municipal organizations that started the process of turning the reformist movement to a political party.

In addition, the municipal experience of the RP also encouraged the reformists to move to the center. As reformists frequently point out, this period has enabled them to embrace more segments of the population. Cinar's study on the Istanbul city administration also supports this view. Cinar regards Istanbul as a case of interaction between modernity and Islam and concludes that the municipal leaders of the Islamist RP not only challenged modern totalitarianism but also Islamic totalitarianism. Instead of seeking a cultural unity around a modern or an Islamic identity, the city administration celebrated heterogeneity and difference. The administration engaged in a multiculturalist discourse, which emphasized the difference and the beauty of the "local" but this difference did not mean to eradicate the other. Rather, the localist discourse[11] of the city administration was based on the existence of the other. In other words, the local was determined based on its difference from the other (the Western) and hence the coexistence of the local and the other was accepted and welcomed as it reestablished the distinction between them. Cinar points out that this discursive strategy (localism) of the city administration contrasts with fundamentalist Islam as the city administration never makes references to the Qur'an and the Hadith in policy justifications. Cinar points that "this strategy results in further hybridity where representations of Islam, the Ottoman, the West, the rural and the urban, modernity and tradition all come together in a colorful array of cultural heterogeneity" (1997). In this connection, it seems that this administrative experience has increased the confidence among the reformists that they can pursue their interests within the restrictions of the political regime and thus, as Arinc pointed out, it has been a period where they made peace with the society. In other words, the case of AKP seems to suggest a positive answer to the central question of "whether inclusion in the political system encourages radicals to become moderates" (Cinar, 1997).

Finally, intellectual developments in the world led to a reclaiming of liberal democracy by Islamists. Islamists' critique of liberal democracy, which suggested replacing the existing central political system with a pluralist law system, takes its intellectual roots from multiculturalism.[12] Nevertheless, multiculturalism and pluralist legal systems had their limits in liberating individuals from the oppression of the group norms. This realization of these limits weakened Islamist multiculturalists challenge to liberal democracy (Gulalp, 2002). This led to a search for rereading liberal democracy and secularism in order to discover more space there for practicing Muslims. Certainly, different Islamist groups were influenced by this intellectual development to different extents due to other factors. For several reasons explained above, in Turkey AKP has been the most extreme example of such a change among Islamists.

Conclusion

As Yavuz points out, the case of Turkey constitutes an example of "what is possible in integrating Islamic movements into its relatively democratic system" (1997: 63). This integration process has been a dialectical process between two worldviews. The complex tension and interaction between secularism/modernism/universalism and Islamism/traditionalism/localism has shaped Turkish politics throughout the history of the Turkish Republic and most recently produced the case of the AKP.

The purpose of this paper was to situate the AKP in the political context of Turkey and analyze how AKP emerged in this context. I find that the emergence of the AKP is related to a particular combination of repressive and democratic factors coupled with a general tendency in the world to claim liberal democracy, in a globalized environment. In the most general sense the case of the AKP represents the changing political values in the world. It reflects the shift from an emphasis on ideology to policy and pragmatism; from polarization to consensus; from revolution to moderation and from radical challenges to adaptation. In a more particular sense, the case of AKP, namely, the emergence and development of a reformist Islamist movement among the Islamists in Turkey represents a case of strategic adaptation to the liberal democratic paradigm, moderation and an attempt to reread democratization (which is compatible with the practice of Islam). In this connection, I believe that the case supports two theories.

First, it shows that structural factors (in this case, the power of secular and democratic institutions such as Turkish military or the European Union) affect the strategies of a political movement (such as adoption of a particular discourse, aligning with particular institutions and actors, engaging in or avoiding certain symbolic behaviors such as the use of the veil, etc.) which operates under given structural limitations.

Second, the case of the AKP supports the view that inclusion of political actors into a political system as members of the ruling power (as in the case of the municipal governments of the Islamist party in the 1990s and the current government of the AKP) can have a moderating effect on those actors (or, put in Yavuz's words, can lead to an inner secularization of Islam: 1997: 80) as opposed to the radicalizing effect of isolation of them from the system. In other words, the case of the AKP is drawing attention to the fact that pragmatic moderation does not necessarily mean it is temporary. In contrast, actors get locked in the choices and alliances they make, whether they are pragmatic or not.

In this connection, I believe that analyzing the case of the AKP contributes to theories of moderation and adaptive strategies of social movements. In addition, it serves to a reconsideration of important political concepts such as secularism and democracy in a more inclusive, which is certainly different than the exclusive Kemalist interpretation

currently prevailing in Turkey. Finally, aside from its theoretical implications, the AKP case has high political relevance as well as it serves to widen our perception of what is possible under the circumstances to solve the ongoing conflict between the Islamists and the liberal democrats.

Studying the AKP certainly has its limitations as well. The future of the AKP is still uncertain at this stage, which limits the study of certain questions such as how effective the AKP's strategy is going to be or how it is going to influence the strategies of similar domestic or foreign movements as well as the counter-strategies of the secular opposition.

It is very likely that, the AKP will experience episodes of struggle with Kemalist institutions such as the Army and the Supreme Court. Apparently, the AKP's evolution will take place under the tension between secularist pressures from state institutions, Islamist pressures from the party base, and international norms of democracy. The later episodes of this process are to be observed yet and the limits and parameters of AKP's democratic attempt during this process need further research. However, the freshness of the phenomenon should not discourage us to study it. The emergence of the party constitutes a very important stage of the reformist Islamist movement as it tells us a valuable story about the way the actors learned from previous experiences, moderated and adapted strategically to the prevailing rules of the game and engaged in a liberal democratic discourse.

Endnotes

1. Secularism, as a component of modernism means separation of religion and politics. However, there are different interpretations of secularism. The interpretation of the Turkish state suggests removing religion from the public sphere, which is similar to the French interpretation, though more radical than that. A new interpretation of secularism in Turkey came from the reformist (Yenilikci) Islamists, who do not reject secularism but reread it in a more liberal way. For the reformists, secularism is a system which guarantees the freedom of religious choice, expression or practice both in the private and the public sphere.

2. This change can hardly be defined as a linear and consistent change. Rather, it has been a pragmatic one where Islamists borrowed certain principles of liberal democracy and rejected others or, they moved back and forth between adopting or rejecting certain principles according to their interests at the moment. (For instance, Islamists criticized the lack of democracy in Turkish political system but failed to establish an internal democracy within their own party; they criticized unfair distribution of income and luxuries expenditures but the party leaders enjoyed extremely expensive lifestyles; they criticized Western culture and education system but sent their children to foreign Western schools. This inconsistency has been criticized both by secular opposition and

also from within the Islamists.

3. I approach Islamism as a social movement as it aims to redefine socio-cultural and economical relations through political means. In this connection, I find the social movements literature, particularly the political opportunity structure (McAdam 1982, Tarrow 1994) and strategic framing (Ellingson, Jasper and Paulsen) theories helpful to analyze the Islamists in Turkey.

4. With adaptation I mean learning, moderation, and self-shaping processes of political actors where actors understand and adjust to the structural limitations as well as opportunities of the system.

5. White defines the discourse of the AKP as the "Turkish Muslimhood Model". The Muslimhood model challenges the Kemalist model by asserting that "believing Muslims can be secular politicians and their qualities of personhood not only do not disqualify them from running the secular government machinery, but may even benefit the political realm by inserting personal ethics and a moral stance". White raises important questions such as "if the rise of this Muslimhood is the evidence for the death of Islamism in Turkey and if this can work as a political formula. If so, can this serve as a general model for Muslim governance, or does it reflect characteristics unique to Turkey? (2002: 2).

6. Turkish Constitution guarantees secularism through strict rules. The constitution forbids any political party or actor to challenge secularism through any act (including writing articles or making speeches, which challenge secularism). In this connection, political actors who challenge secularism are punished and removed from political life for a period of time.

7. Defining Islamism or, categorizing actors or movements as Islamist is controversial. I am using the term "Islamism" to define a social movement that aims to Islamize the social and political environment, i.e. to make the social and political order compatible with the rules of the Islamic religion. While academics or journalists frequently use the term Islamist to define the movement and its ideology, the political actors of the movement in Turkey hardly use this term to name themselves given the state repression on Islamism. Since Erbakan's first Islamic party (National Order Party), Islamists name their ideology Milli Gorus (National View) and their political identity Milli Goruscu (National View'ist). Throughout the paper I might use both terms, Islamist and Milli Gorus interchangeably, but in general Islamist is a broader concept including both politicized and non-politicized actors, while Milli Gorus is the particular Islamist community which was politically organized by Erbakan and represented through the Islamic parties National Order Party (MNP), National Salvation Party (MSP), Welfare Party (RP), Virtue Party (FP) and finally split in 2001. While Felicitous Party (SP) is the typical continuation of the Milli Gorus tradition, Justice and Development Party (AKP), whose members are mostly coming from Milli Gorus community, adopted a more moderate discourse than the traditional Islamist view.

8. The 10 percent barrier was adopted by Ozal, the leader of the center-right Motherland Party (ANAP) in 1980s in order to avoid representation of marginal parties and fragmentation in the party system. Consequently, marginal leftist, Islamist, nationalist and Kurdish parties were left

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out of the parliament for a while and ANAP dominated the parliament until early 1990s. Ironically, in 2002 elections ANAP was one of the parties who were left out of the parliament due to that 10 percent barrier.

9. In addition to the explanations of the reformists, the lack of an internal democracy in the previous party was also observed by several academics who studied the RP, such as Yavuz (1997), Gulalp (1999), Navaro-Yashin (1998) and White (1997). In his study of the RP, Yavuz reports that "RP does not have a flexible party structure that can be altered by new participants; rather, he (Erbakan) demands that newcomers accept the form of the party, which act as a school to mold and shape individuals" (75). Navaro-Yashin's study of the RP's local "people's parliaments" has pessimistic conlusions about RP's internal democracy. These people's parliaments which were supposed to realize the dream of direct democracy were ruled by a strict hierarchy between the officials and the people in attendance coupled with a sexual discrimination as no women would attend those meetings. White's observation of RP's neighborhood organizations also concludes that RP pursued a nondemocratic and top-down form of mobilization and converted "civil associations" into tools of social control.

10. See Jasper and Paulsen 1977 for actors' strategies of discovering their targets' vulnerabilities and framing their discourse accordingly in social movements.

11. Regarding the practices of the city administration, localism meant to ban alcohol in public restaurants, replace Coke and other Western beverages with traditional Turkish beverages, decorating restaurants or concert halls with traditional, rural accessories, introducing Turkish cuisine and music to foreign visitors, etc.

12. See Bulac, 1995 and 2001 for an Islamic critique of modernity and liberal democracy.

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