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Critical Junctures, Catalysts, and Democratic Consolidation in Turkey

RAMAZAN KILINÇ

IN FEBRUARY 1997, THE TURKISH MILITARY INTERVENED in politics to protect secularism from the "rising Islamist threat." This intervention resulted in the toppling of the coalition government led by the Islamic-oriented Welfare Party (RP, Refah Partisi). Many civil and political restrictions followed this intervention, including the closure of the RP by the Constitutional Court. Two years later, the Chief of Staff, Hüseyin Kivnkoğlu, stated that "the 28 February process," by which he meant the military-sanctioned political configuration, would continue for one thou- sand years if necessary.[1] However, by 2012, only 15 years after the intervention, the military's ability to shape politics has diminished notably. By any measure, the civilian oversight of the military is now at its highest level since the first military coup in modern Turkey in I960.[2] The Islamic-oriented Justice and Development Party (AK Party, Adalet ve Kalkmma Partisi)[3] stayed in power for more than a decade. Furthermore, Turkey implemented several democratic reforms that reversed the authoritarian movement of the period immediately after the 1997 military intervention. Additionally, the Parliament passed laws that liberalized the Press Law, Turkish Penal Code, the state policies toward religious minorities, rights for Kurdish minorities, and human rights regulations.[4] Since Turkey transited to multi-party politics in 1945, it has experienced four military interventions (I960, 1971, 1980, and 1997); each time, the military built a political system that maintained its influence even after the transfer of power to civilian government. Given Turkey's long history with military tutelage, including its orchestrated effort to redesign Turkish politics in the late 1990s, these liberalizing reforms have been revolutionary for democratic consolidation. Therefore, it can be asked: How did Turkey recover and consolidate its democracy within such a short period?

Scholars have offered institutionalist, structural, international, and process-oriented explanations for democratic consolidation, which is generally defined as a process by which an existing democracy matures so as to make reverting to authoritarianism unlikely, through institutionalization of political and civil liberties.[5] Institutionalists examine the design of political institutions to explain democratic consolidation.[6] Structural theorists look at the macro-social transformations that shift power relationships between state and society.[7] Those who explain democratic change by international context emphasize the role of external variables in a given domestic political configuration so as to privilege one type of regime over another.[8] Finally, process-oriented scholars analyze the strategic interaction among major political actors to explain democratic outcomes.[9]

Although these perspectives have yielded many valuable insights, they underestimate the role that timing plays in questions of democratic consolidation. As Charles Tilly argued, "When things happen within a sequence affects how they happen."[10] Few scholars of democratization have applied this insight by employing the concepts of critical juncture and path dependence in their research.[11] At a critical juncture, structural factors weaken, and actors gain strength for future political trajectories. Once a path is taken, the sequences in the taken path are marked by relatively deterministic causal patterns. Drawing on this body of scholarship, this article demonstrates how events that occur at a particular point in time interact with structural conditions to create democratic consolidation. The article specifically shows how the timing of events facilitates or impedes the causal processes that structural conditions lead.

In this article, the Turkish case is used to demonstrate the relevance of timing in explaining democratic consolidation. Turkey offers an intriguing case of, until recently, unchanging political institutions under the influence of the military and higher judicial bureaucracy such as the Constitutional Court, the Court of State, and the Court of Appeals. Although Turkey undoubtedly differs from other countries in important ways, its distinctiveness should not be overdrawn. Like Turkey of the 1990s, other semi-authoritarian regimes, including Brazil, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, and Greece of the 1960s and 1970s, and Mali, Thailand, and Niger of the 1990s, have experienced political systems with much military influence Turkey also shares much in common with Latin America, including traditionally unstable political system, economic underdevelopment, an similar levels of per capita income.

In Turkey, the rise of an Islamic bourgeoisie and Turkey's relations with the European Union (EU) prepared the background conditions for further democratization. This article argues, however, that the timing of the 199 military intervention was the most significant factor for democratic consolidation. It was the catalyst effect of the 1997 military intervention that unintentionally led to the eventual outcome of democratic consolidation.[12] In the absence of this catalyst, it might have taken several more years for structural factors to create further democratization. The repressive politic environment dominated by the military left no option to Islamic actors but to devise strategies through which they could enhance political space at t expense of the authoritarian bureaucracy. In the past, the only way for a political party to stay in power was to develop corporate relations with the military. The military's attempt to eradicate Islam from the public sphere 1997 transformed the political preferences of the Islamic actors and took the corporate relations option off the table for them. The sequence of even after the 1997 military intervention formed an alliance of Islamic actors liberals, Kurds, and other marginalized groups that would benefit from further democratization. It was this democratic alliance that made democratic consolidation in Turkey possible.

It is important to acknowledge the limits of causal inference that can be gained from a single case article. To tackle this limitation, this article employs the method of what Peter Hall terms "systematic process analysis."[13] The article uses a two-pronged strategy to develop its explanation: first, it tests competing explanations of the Turkish case; second, it employs process tracing to demonstrate "whether the intervening variables between a hypothesized cause and observed effect move as predicted" in the Turkish democratic consolidation.[14]

The article is developed in three sections. First, it assesses the theories of democratic consolidation to explain the Turkish case, showing their merit and limitations. In this section, it also discusses how a temporal approach complements existing explanations of democratization. Second, it demonstrates how the 1997 military intervention shifted the terms of politics i Turkey and discuss how this period was a critical juncture for democratic consolidation. Finally, it illustrates how the 1997 military intervention structured the subsequent events by locking Islamic actors into a democratic path, which contributed to democratic consolidation. It conclude with the theoretical implications of integrating timing onto the study of democratic consolidation.

DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION IN TURKEY: LITERATURE AND ARGUMENT

Institutionalist Explanation

Some scholars have argued that the democratic consolidation can best be explained by the state institutions protect secularism.[15] To them, secular state institutions, part military, disciplined "irresponsible" political and social actors political Islamists or Kurdish separatists, toward democratic ways of behavior.[16]

This view has limits. Some institutions definitely contribute to democratic consolidation; however, the state may manipulate even very democratic institutions so as to maintain authoritarianism. Marsha Pripstein Posusney shows how the Arab rulers have engineered elections so as to control the opposition.[17] For the same cases, Nathan Brown shows how incumbents sustain their authoritarian regimes through constitutional amendments.[18] In the Turkish case, the state institutions protecting Turkish secularism constrained the political actors not to make them function within democratic limits, but to make them function within the limits drawn by the state ideology of Kemalism, the founding ideology of the Turkish Republic that aimed to create a homogenous nation-state based on secularism, nationalism and Westernization.[19]

Kemalism "defines politics as a means to realize an elite-defined and administered common good: a docile, homogeneous, and secular nation- state,"[20] not in pluralistic terms. The institutions established after the military interventions in I960, 1971, 1980, and 1997 increased the stat overhaul of the society and guaranteed the Kemalist guidance over the Turkish people. Each military intervention came after the rise of political activism, which the state perceived as a threat to the Kemalist ideal of

homogenous nation. The interventions constrained the political space in favor of a bureaucratic elite. It is impossible to conclude that the state institutions protected democracy from its enemies; in contrast, they prevented the peripheral forces from accessing power, which is hardly democratic.

Structured Explanation

According to an alternative explanation, the consolidation of democracy in Turkey was the outcome of structural transformations during the economic liberalization policies of the post-1980 period. The key for democratization was the emergence of an Islamic bourgeoisie independent of the state in the 1990s and 2000s.[21] Accordingly, the rise of the Islamic bourgeoisie con- tributed to the formation of alternative social forces to constrain state power. The new bourgeoisie helped the pluralization of civil society, counterbalanced the power of the state, diluted state control over society, and advanced societal interests against the dominant elites.

Even though the rise of the bourgeoisie is associated with democracy, the relationship between the two is not straightforward. Economic liberalization in other contexts did not create democratic outcomes. The state used economic liberalization to reorganize its authoritarian rule in Tunisia;[22] and economic liberalization under Anwar Sadat in Egypt created a bourgeoisie that allied with the state to maintain authoritarianism.[23] Structural conditions lead to democratization only when bourgeoisie pursue deliberate strategies to limit state power. This is why the rising bourgeoisie became the driver of democratization in Turkey only after it pursued active opposition against state authoritarianism. The bourgeoisie of the previous eras, in contrast, searched for ways to cooperate with the authoritarian state to get business support and privileges.[24] The change of the Turkish bourgeoisie's preference toward supporting further democratization needs to be ac- counted for.

Similarly, civil society does not automatically lead to democratization. The state may co-opt civil society, as is the case in Jordan;[25] civil society may not work for democratic causes, as is the case in Weimer Germany;[26] or the state leaves civil society without any power to influence politics, as is the case in Tunisia, Palestinian Authority, and Egypt.[27] Civil society organizations contribute to democratization only when they develop a deliberate opposition against the monopoly of the state. In Turkey, many business professional and bar associations cooperated with the state in the past in the state's efforts to keep society under control; the number of associations to limit the state power remained low. It was only in the late 1990s and early 2000s that many civil society organizations cooperated to limit state power. The question remains: how did the democracy-friendly bourgeoisie and civil society emerge in Turkey, especially after the 1997 military intervention?

International Context Explanation

Yet another group of scholars explain Turkish democratic consolidation by reference to the country's relations with the European Union (EU).[28] Meltem Müftüler Baç, for example, argues that Turkey's becoming a candidate country to the EU in 1999 stimulated the political and civil reform afterwards. The EU pressure, for her, has played a substantial role Turkish democratization.[29]

While international pressure constrains domestic politics under certain conditions, it does not necessarily lead to democratization. Steven Levitsk and Lucan Way show that international pressure cannot induce democratization in the absence of a strong domestic push for democracy.[30] Although the EU influenced the implementation of democratic reforms in Turkey, especially after 1999, the relations with the EU alone cannot explain these reforms. The processes through which the EU norms shape domestic politics need to be accounted for.

Turkey has been under the influence of European institutions since the 1950s, but the reforms did not come until very recently, when domestic actors appropriated a reformist agenda. Without the embrace of the EU reforms by strong domestic actors, especially by the governing AK Part international push for reform would not have created domestic outcomes This requires a special attention to the strategies of the relevant domestic actors, who pushed further democratization by appropriating the E norms.

Process-Oriented Explanation

Yet another group of scholars focus on the strategic in domestic actors to explain Turkish democratization. P example, argues that the strategic use of the EU pressure society organizations rather than the pressure itself is the Turkish democratization.[31] Ihsan Daği shifts the discussion political actors. He argues that Islamic actors, especially supported Turkey's EU membership and implemented liberties to consolidate their position vis-à-vis the Kemali elite.[32]

This approach is helpful in demonstrating the role of a democratic consolidation, yet it does not account for the t these choices. Actor choices are contingent on various specific events. Eva Bellin, for instance, shows how bourgeoisie in South Korea and Brazil shifted their preferences toward democracy due to new domestic and international developments in the 1980s. In both countries, the business community dissented against democracy until the 1980 whereas it exhibited significant enthusiasm for political reform and democratization after the 1980s.[33]

In Turkey, the Islamic actors in the past did not employ Europea pressure to gain ground against the bureaucratic authoritarian elite. I stead Islamic political actors in the past opted for a relatively closer relationship with the Muslim world. The Islamist RP, when it came to power I 1996, not only portrayed the EU as a Christian club but also questioned i intentions over Turkey. Similarly, political parties of the center right an

center left did not implement the EU-imposed reforms enthusiastically their success in implementing the reforms remained very limited. The A Party, on the other hand, worked relentlessly to implement the reforms. If the Turkish case, the critical question, then, remains, why did Islam groups commit to the EU project and corresponding democratizing reform especially after the 1997 military intervention?

Timing in Democratic Consolidation

Although the institutionalist, structural, international context, and process-oriented explanations have developed our understanding of democratic consolidation in Turkey in many ways, they have left unanswered the question of why and how the political preferences of the Islamic actors changed in the late 1990s and early 2000s. This is a significant question because the decision of Islamic actors to support further democratization i Turkey facilitated the causal processes of democratic consolidation stimulated by structural conditions. It was only after the transformation Islamic actors' attitudes toward democracy, that the domestic actors that would utilize the EU pressure for reform emerged. One needs to incorporate the issues of timing to account for the transformation of the Islamic actors' preferences and strategies in Turkey.

Most scholars sensitive to timing suggest that radical institution changes occur at unsettled times, generally known as "critical junctures." Critical junctures,"[34] by shaking the system, minimize the role of structural factors and maximize the range of actor choices.[35] The decisions taken by the powerful actors at critical junctures have long-lasting consequences, since they play a momentous role in re-structuring the institutions.[36] These consequences are explained by the concept of path-dependence.[37] Once a path is taken at a critical juncture, previously viable alternatives become gradually remote, as the sequences in the taken path are marked by relatively deterministic causal patterns.[38] In short, two features identify critical junctures. First, the causal impact of structural conditions prior to the juncture on the outcome of interest is minimized. Second, causal processes that follow the critical juncture are highly dependent on what happens at the juncture.[39]

This article contributes to this literature by elaborating on the interaction between the events at a critical juncture and the structural conditions prior to the event. In certain cases, even though the events that occur at a critical juncture have an independent causal impact on the outcome of interest, the impact of the structural conditions prior to the juncture is not minimized.[40] In these cases, the critical juncture exerts its causal impact on the outcome of interest by interacting with structural variables. Thus, some events at critical junctures may not minimize the causal impact of the structural conditions, but they may enhance prospects for institutional change by influencing the mobilization of actors, advancing particular sorts of claims over others, and prioritizing particular strategies.[41] By interacting with the structural variables, these events can either facilitate or impede the causal processes stimulated by external factors.

By 1997, Turkey was under two structural conditions that could facilitate democratic consolidation: the emergence of an Islamic bourgeoisie, and the EU pressure for political reform. However, to explain what made the Islamic bourgeoisie a democracy-friendly social force and what created domestic actors that used the EU pressure for democratic reform, one needs to focus on the events between 1997 and 1999. The 1997 military intervention and subsequent two years of military-sanctioned governments was a critical juncture for democratic consolidation in Turkey because what happened in these years definitely influenced subsequent developments; however, the impact of the structural conditions before the military intervention was not eliminated. The 1997 intervention demonstrated its impact in interacting with the structural conditions of the pre-intervention era, namely, the emergence of an Islamic bourgeoisie and relations with the EU. The next section examines how the period between the National Security Council meeting in February 1997 and April 1999 elections changed the political preferences and strategies of the Islamic actors, which, in turn, structured the sequences of events in the 2000s that would bring the eventual outcome of democratic consolidation.

THE CRITICAL JUNCTURE: THE 1997 MILITARY INTERVENTION AND THE ISLAMIC ACTORS

That Necmettin Erbakan, the leader of the RP, became the first Islamist Prime Minister in Turkey in June 1996 led to a strong Kemalist opposition to the government. This government, which is known as Refahyol, was formed on 28 June 1996 by a coalition of the RP and the True Path Party (DYP, Doğru Yol Partisi). The Kemalist opposition- the President, the military, Kemalist civil society organizations, the Republican People's Party (CHP: Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi), Democratic Left Party (DSP: Demokra- tik Sol Parti) and higher bureaucratic institutions such as the Council on Higher Education and the Constitutional Court- saw the Erbakan-led coalition government as a threat to Turkish secularism.

The activities of the military and civil opposition against the government reached its culmination on 28 February 1997, when the National Security Council issued a list of policy proposals at its monthly meeting to "nullify the supposed Islamization of Turkey and fortify the secular system."[42] Afterward, the military changed its security doctrine, identifying "Islamic reactionary activities" as the primary security threat. To mobilize opposition against the coalition government, the military organized several briefings for the judiciary, media, and university heads on alleged Islamist threats. The military formed new committees to strictly monitor Islamic groups. This orchestrated campaign forced the Erbakan government to resign in June 1997. Between June 1997 and April 1999, military-sanctioned governments ruled Turkey.

Between June 1997 and January 1999, a coalition government of the Motherland Party (ANAP, Anavatan Partisi), the DSP, and Democratic Turkey Party (DTP,

Demokratik Türkiye Partisi) was formed. The DSP ruled Turkey from January 1999 to April 1999 as a minority government supported by ANAP. These governments implemented the proposals of the February 1997 National Security Council meeting, eliminating any kind of Islamic activity in the public sphere. In this period, the Constitutional Court closed down the RP and banned Erbakan and the party's high-ranking politicians from politics. Strict limitations were put in place over the financial resources of religiously inspired social and political organizations. The Council on Higher Education increased its control over universities. It strictly banned the wearing of the Islamic headscarf at universities, and tens of thousands of female university students were compelled to drop out of schools for not following the dress code. Public employees associated with religious groups were fired.[43]

This two-year period between February 1997 and April 1999 had a radical impact on the democratic transformation of the political preferences of many Islamic actors. Although the state had engaged with Islamic groups one way or another in the 1970s and 1980s, strict policies against Islamic groups in the post-1997 period eliminated the possibility that Islamic actors would find avenues of negotiation with the Kemalist establishment. Many Islamic groups turned to strategies prioritizing democracy to survive in Turkish politics. For them, it was only democratic consolidation that would minimize the role of the military in politics and expand political space in their favor. Analysis of the strategies of Turkey's largest political party, the AK Party, and Islamic social movement, the Gülen movement, illustrates this point.

After the closure of the Islamist RP, its deputies joined the Virtue Party (FP, Fazilet Partisi) in 1998. The FP, in its party program, embraced universal values of democracy and human rights and supported Turkey's EU membership.[44] However, the party was divided on its new identity: the reformists sought to broaden the party's support base, while the old guard wanted to keep the traditional Islamist face of the RP. The reformists engaged in a series of debates about the value of democracy as a guarantor of their social, political, and economic survival in Turkey. Many Islamic intellectuals pointed out the necessity of developing a strategy that embraced democratization to protect their interests.[45] Ali Bulaç, a well-respected journalist among political Islamists, published a book supporting democratic strategies within an Islamic perspective. Even though he had written on the compatibility of Islam and democracy in the past, his new work justified working within a secular system as an Islamic-oriented political party.[46] Many political Islamists realized that "the visibility and power of Islam in the political realm justified only the counter-attack of the Kemalists."[47] The traditionalists, on the other hand, were averse to a radical transformation, as it would eventually lead to the loss of the party's Islamic identity in the long run.[48] After the FP's closure by the Constitutional Court in June 2001, these two competing views were manifested in two separate political parties. The traditionalist wing formed the Felicity Party (SP, Saadet

Partisi); the reformist wing, which experienced a deeper transfor-mation, established the AK Party.

The AK Party pursued a reformist and pragmatic political strategy and developed a new party ideology with an updated economic view and policy positions. In the ideological realm, the AK Party denounced its link with preceding Islamist parties and broadly defined its ideology as "conservative democracy."[49] This allowed the party to broaden its social base and to get the support of the center-right, even some of the center left, electorate.

The party leadership made a clear distinction between Islam as a religion and Islamism as a political ideology, embracing the former and denouncing the latter. The leader of the party, Recep Tayyip Erdoġan, supported secularism as an important constitutional principle and identified his relationship with Islam at a personal level; he once stated, "My reference is Islam at the personal level. But it is the constitution and democratic principles at the political level."[50] This is in contrast with his statements in the 1990s. In 1994, for example, in a party meeting of the RP, Erdogan had stated, "One cannot be both Muslim and secular. ... It is impossible to keep both together. ... Why? Because God, who is the creator of { } Muslim{s}, has the absolute sovereignty."[51] Ihsan Daġi regards the new party as "post- Islamist," keeping its ties with Islam socially but abandoning it politically.[52] The Islamic intellectuals mostly supported, if not strongly encouraged, this shift. Many argued that the shift was a rational response to the 1997 military intervention, which had a negative impact of on Islamic social and political movements.[53] These intellectuals, who had written against democracy in the past, provided the religious arguments to justify the strategic move of the AK Party.[54]

Having denounced its link with previous Islamist parties, the AK Party leadership associated itself with the center-right parties of the past, especially the Democrat Party of the 1950s, with a stronger emphasis on democracy.[55] The ideology of the RP during the 1997 intervention, Milli Görüq (National View), centered on an Islamic revival and made several references to Islamic political concerns such as development, religious freedoms, morality, and anti-imperialism; in contrast, the new center-right position of the party shifted the focus to economic development and political liberalization. In line with the new identity claim, the party developed a comprehensive approach toward democratic reforms, promoting democracy for all.[56] In contrast to the RP's selective democratization agenda, which emphasized religious freedoms, the AK Party stressed its support for democracy and human rights broadly. The party's program and publications were replete with references to the necessity and urgency of democratic reforms. The party program stated, "Nobody is free unless everybody is free."[57] The party program made references to liberties for women and minorities.[58] When criticizing the excesses of Turkish secular- ism, the party leaders used a universal democratic language.[59] In their critique of the state ban of the headscarf at the universities, for

example, they referenced international conventions on women's rights and educational rights, not Islamic teachings on wearing of the headscarf.[60] This stands in contrast to the confrontational discourse of the RP. In the early 1990s, for example, Erbakan stated, "One day, the university presidents will greet our headscarf-wearing daughters in respect."[61]

In the economic realm, the goals of the party rested on the principles of a market economy; however, it also promoted welfare policies for the lower economic classes.[62] In contrast to the former Islamist parties that had a vision of an economic system based on Islamic principles, the AK Party committed to a market economy without serious reservations. In the 1980s and 1990s, the RP criticized the capitalist economic system on the grounds that it maintained the Western hegemony. Along these lines, the RP leadership suggested an economic union with Muslim countries.[63] In 1995, Abdullah Giil, who was a leading politician in both the RP and the AK Party, harshly criticized the government's decision to join the customs union with the EU and portrayed capitalism as an imperialist project.[64] He stated that if Turkey became a member of the customs union, foreign capital would invade the country and buy up all the industry.[65] The AK Party, in contrast, embraced the universal standards of economic capitalism to make Turkey appealing for foreign investment.[66] It supported the Turkish economy's integration into the world markets, including the Western economies. The AK Party program not only included many positive references to the customs union with the EU but also made several references to increase Turkey's attractiveness for foreign capital, including the capital from the EU countries. At the same time, however, the party leadership addressed the issues of social justice to ameliorate the socioeconomic conditions of the poor.[67]

As a foreign policy position, the AK Party strongly supported Turkey's membership in the EU, making it the most-significant policy priority.[68] In the party program, many promised reforms were derived from the EU membership criteria.[69] As opposed to the RP, which developed an anti-EU stance, naming the EU a "Christian Club," the AK Party stated in its election declaration that "meeting the Copenhagen political criteria is an important step forward for the modernization of the country."[70] After coming to power in 1996, the RP leader Necmettin Erbakan gave his first visits to countries such as Libya and Iran; he had little interest in Turkey-EU relations. He led the establishment of an international organization, Developing Eight (D-8), among eight Muslim countries.[71] Abdullah Gül, when he was a deputy at the RP in 1995, named the EU as a Christian Club and opposed to Turkey's EU membership; he suggested an increased cooperation with the Muslim world, especially with the Middle East and Central Asia.[72] However, after 2001, he became one of the ardent supporters of Turkey's EU membership. Later, most of the EU reforms would be implemented when Gül was the foreign minister in the AK Party government between 2003 and 2007.

To what extent did the 1997 military intervention influence the AK Party's changing views toward EU membership? The public debates among the Islamic intellectuals and politicians show the Islamic actors' instrumental approach toward democracy and the EU membership bid. An influential Islamist, Ali Bulaç, explicitly wrote, "The events Rafter the 1997 military intervention^ that turned many people's life into a nightmare led the people to see the EU as a savior."[73] For Bulaç, who had opposed to the EU in the past, only the EU membership process would bring radical reforms protecting individual liberties.[74] Similarly, in November 2000, Abdullah Gül stated that EU membership was desirable not for intrinsic or geopolitical reasons but for the internal struggle of democracy and human rights: "That is the most important point. ... One would have preferred to achieve those objectives by ourselves. But we cannot."[75] The party leadership needed the reforms demanded by the EU to secure their political survival in the wake of the 1997 military intervention; this led them to develop more-positive attitudes toward the EU.

The 1997 military intervention transformed not only the strategies of Islamic political actors but also social movements. The Gülen movement, the largest Islamic social movement in Turkey, is a case in point. The movement focused only on educational activities and refrained from political debates, from its inception in the 1970s up until the late 1990s. The main activities of the movement included constructing educational institutions, providing scholarships for the students coming from poor families, engaging in Islamic print media to increase religious awareness, and mobilizing businessmen around these activities. It avoided taking an open political position against the Kemalist establishment. The movement developed friendly relationships even with the Kemalist political parties of the Re- publican People's Party and the Democratic Left Party. In the wake of the February 1997 meeting, Fethullah Glilen, the intellectual leader of the movement, gave an interview in which he urged Erbakan to leave office for the sake of political stability.[76] Even though the movement supported Turkey's membership in the EU, it had reservations about the West.[77]

The movement's position changed after the military-sanctioned regime cracked down on the movement in the following months. Many restrictions on the movement's educational institutions and civil society organizations were put in place. In 1999, Glilen felt compelled to go into exile in the United States. The Giilen movement "began to draw more and more upon the global discourses of human rights, multiculturalism and democracy."[78] The movement's civil society, business associations, and media outlets, particularly Zaman daily, took a clear opposition to the military's dominance over politics in the ensuing years. Liberal intellectuals became more vocal on the pages of Zaman daily. The movement's Journalists and Writers Foundation organized several annual workshops to spread democratic values. The participants in these workshops included intellectuals, civil society leaders, politicians, journalists, and academics from various ideological backgrounds in Turkey. The themes of the workshops between 1998 and

2002 were Islam and secularism (1998), religion, state, and society (1999), democracy and the rule of law (2000), pluralism and social consensus (2001), and globalization (2002). These meetings contributed to the emergence of a new liberal democratic discourse among Islamic actors in Turkey.[79]

Fethullah Gülen supported Turkey's EU membership from the beginning, but after 1997, the movement became one of the strongest supporters of Turkey's EU membership.[80] The movement's daily, Zaman, monitored Turkey's progress toward EU membership after 1999 very closely. Gülen, when asked why he did not perceive the EU as a threat, responded, "We should be comfortable in our outreach to the world. We will not lose anything from our religion, nationality and culture because of developments like globalization, customs union or membership in the European Union. We firmly believe that the dynamics that hold our unity are strong."[81] As in the case of the AK Party, the increased support of the Gülen movement to the EU membership can also be explained by the movement's belief that EU membership would bring more freedom and democracy to Turkey.[82]

A caveat is in order here. The impact of the 1997 military intervention on the Islamic groups was not monolithic; not all Islamic groups transformed their political preferences toward democracy. The Haydar Ba§ movement, for example, did not take a position against the military. This can be explained by the military's non-confrontational attitude toward these marginal Islamic actors between 1997 and 1999. However, the largest groups, the AK Party and the Gülen movement being the most significant, did take a democratic stance against the authoritarian aspects of the Turkish political system.[83] In the next section, I examine how the democratic transformation of the Islamic actors interacted with structural conditions to result in democratic consolidation in Turkey.

FACILITATING STRUCTURAL FACTORS: THE NEW BOURGEOISIE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The conjectural conditions after the 1997 military intervention led Islamic actors to become strong supporters of democratization in Turkey. The structural factors at the time were supportive of this strategic choice: the newly emerged Islamic bourgeoisie would provide the socioeconomic basis of the democratic move, whereas the external pressures coming from the EU for further democratization would constrain the Kemalist elite. However, it was only the interaction of the 1997 military intervention with the structural factors that consolidated democracy in Turkey. The 1997 military intervention served as a catalyst to speed up democratic consolidation. It is due to this intervention that the Islamic bourgeoisie refrained from cooperating with the military-led authoritarian state and took an independent democracy-friendly position; and it is due to this intervention that the EU found a strong reformist domestic ally that would implement the reforms necessary for Turkish membership in the EU. The outcome for democratic

consolidation might have been very different if Turkey had not experienced a military intervention in 1997. Before discussing the alternative routes that Turkey could have taken if there had been no military intervention in 1997, let me show how structural factors interacted with the political outcomes of the 1997 military intervention in leading to democratic consolidation.

The New Bourgeoisie

With the gradual liberalization of the Turkish economy in the 1980s and 1990s, a new bourgeoisie emerged in Turkey. Systematic integration of the Turkish economy into the global markets started after the 1983 elections, when Turgut Özal became the Prime Minister. Being in close contact with key international institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Turkey experienced a radical structural transformation in the economic realm. Throughout the 1980s, trade became liberalized, and the Turkish lira gained convertibility against the foreign currency after the removal of the ban on foreign currency. Liberalization was extended to financial markets in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Turkey adopted new technologies in the 1980s and 1990s and modernized its infrastructure, especially in the area of telecommunications. The government gradually privatized state-owned enterprises. In the 1990s, the number of privately owned industrial enterprises, educational institutions, radios, and televisions increased tremendously. Economic liberalization efforts, especially in the financial realm, continued after Özal's death, thanks to Turkey's loan agreements with the IMF. The retreat of the state from economic life, and incentives for economic investments allowed the emergence of new economic actors from the periphery.

The economic liberalization in the 1980s and 1990s created a new bourgeoisie, but what made the bourgeoisie a significant social force against state authoritarianism was the 1997 military intervention. In the two-year period after the 1997 military intervention, the Kemalist establishment discriminated the newly emerged economic actors by labeling them as "green capital" (yeşil sermaye), stopping doing business with them, and encouraging others not to do business with these new actors.[84] The National Security Council prepared a list of companies that had links with Islamic movements. This list was circulated within the state institutions; and the institutions were asked to stop doing business with these companies. The state cancelled any business contracts with these companies. In addition to this, the list was also circulated among the civil supporters of the military.[85] The so-called "Islamic businesses" confronted several problems in their interactions with the state. Not to be labeled as Islamic, hundreds of companies cancelled their membership with the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen Association, which was an umbrella organization for conservative businessmen. According to the association, the numbers in this period decreased from 2,823 to 1,800.[86] These developments convinced the new Islamic bourgeoisie that the

more the state was involved in the economy, the worse their positions were. In an effort to limit state involvement in economics, the new economic actors, who felt themselves confident to penetrate domestic and international markets, developed a democratic and market-friendly position. They were convinced that instead of flirting with the state, a more-liberal, less-discriminatory, and market- friendly system would serve their interests better.[87] This led them to support the AK Party and its liberal stance that aimed to limit the state power to open more space for politics.[88]

The European Union

Thanks to Turkey's long-standing quest to join the EU, there was a consensus over the EU-imposed reforms in the late 1990s. The decision of the EU to declare Turkey a candidate country at the Copenhagen Summit in 1999 gave the AK Party a "legitimacy and a unique opportunity to introduce reforms for compliance with the Copenhagen criteria."[89] Thanks to this "external pressure," the AK Party would introduce many reforms after coming to power in November 2002 on the grounds that those reforms were necessarily for Turkey's EU membership. These reforms helped the Party to consolidate civilian control over the military.

EU pressure definitely helped the passing of the Turkish democratizing reforms; however, these reforms would not have been possible without the deliberate choices of the reformists who used the EU membership as leverage. The crucial factor for the reform process was the transformative role of the 1997 military intervention in the strategies of the Islamic actors. As demonstrated above, the military intervention led the Islamic actors to turn to democratic strategies. These actors utilized EU pressure to execute their reformist agenda. This initial strategy to support democratization locked many Islamic groups into a democracy-friendly path in the subsequent years, which led to a democratic coalition among Islamic actors, liberals, social democrats, and minorities. It is this democratic coalition that consolidated Turkish democracy in the 2000s.

The critical question here is: would structural factors have caused democratic consolidation if the military intervention had occurred earlier than the mid-1990s, or if it had just not occurred at all? "Counterfactual thought experiments" can be helpful in answering this question.[90] If the intervention had occurred in late 1980s or early 1990s, democratic consolidation would not have been the outcome, because the Islamic bourgeoisie was in its infancy and the external pressure from the EU was relatively weak. It might have been very difficult for the Islamic/liberal alliance to balance the Kemalist establishment without a strong domestic and international push. Similarly, if the intervention had never occurred, democratic consolidation would not have been the outcome, at least in the early 2000s, for two reasons. First, the military might have co-opted the Islamic bourgeoisie in the existence of the possibilities of more engagement, so that a democracy- friendly bourgeoisie would not have been formed. Second, Islamic

actors, who had anti-Western inclinations, might not have embraced the EU project without a serious threat to their survival from the military. In this case, the external pressure might have been deprived of a strong domestic ally. In short, in the lack of the 1997 military intervention, it might have taken several years for the bourgeoisie and external pressure to lead to democratic consolidation. The next section looks at how the 1997 military intervention structured the subsequent events by creating a new democratic coalition, which contributed to democratic consolidation (see Figure 1 for a summary).

FIGURE 1 Self-reinforcing and Reactive Sequences of Democratic Consolidation in Turkey
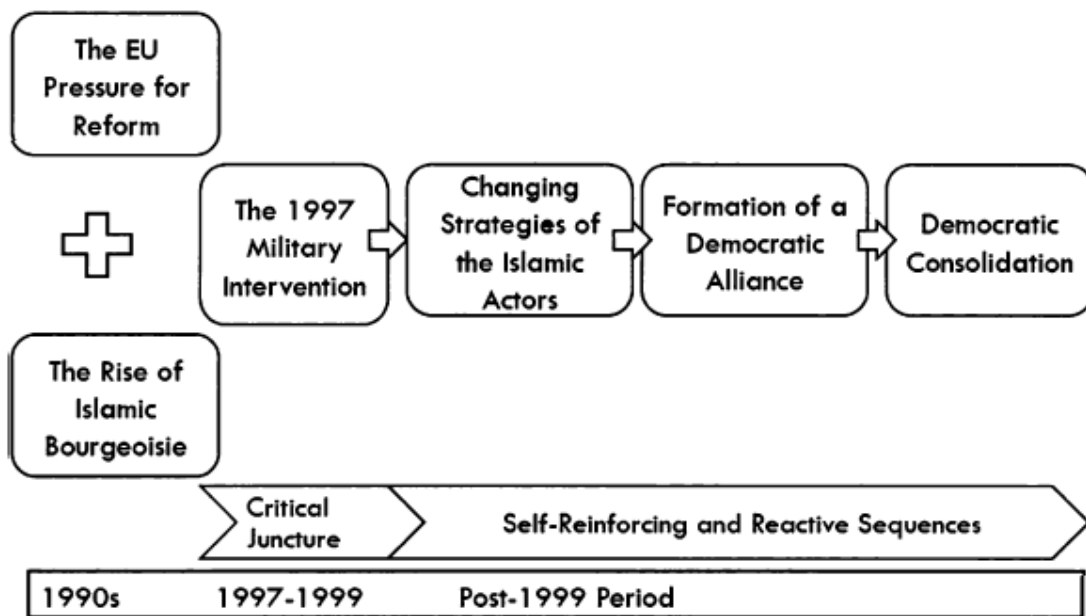
THE PATH TOWARD DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION

After 1999, self-reinforcing and reactive sequences led to the formation of a strong democratic alliance against state authoritarianism, resulting in the eventual outcome of democratic consolidation.

Departing from religious rhetoric, the AK Party countered the criticism of the military and its allies. By its emphasis on democratization and EU membership, the party gained the support of liberals and minority groups. By relying on market economy, the party made both big business and rising bourgeoisie happy. By its emphasis on social policies, the party enhanced its support base within lower socio-economic classes. Gaining the support of broad social groups, the AK Party won a landslide victory in the November 2002 Parliamentary elections and formed a single-party government. Since the party relied on a democratic coalition, it became very difficult for the party to employ

anti-democratic discourse and practice in subsequent years. This new political condition paved the way for a reformist moment in Turkish politics.

From its coming to power, until October 2005, when Turkey started accession negotiations with the EU, the AK Party government implemented several reforms. Thanks to Turkey's EU membership bid, the role of the military in politics was minimized; radio and television broadcasts in languages other than Turkish were allowed; the State Security Courts, special courts to try the crimes against the state, were abolished.[91] On the basis of these reforms, in October 2004, the European Commission decided that Turkey had fulfilled the political criteria of becoming an EU member. A year later, the European Union officially launched accession negotiations with Turkey.

In the period between October 2005 and August 2007, the Kemalists developed a strong opposition against the AK Party government as a reaction to their weakened position by the new reforms. For example, they attempted to prevent the election of Abdullah Gül as the President in April 2007, on the grounds that his wife wore a headscarf. The military issued a memorandum threatening the government with military intervention.[92] The AK Party framed this process as an authoritarian intervention into the democratic system. The threat of the military strengthened the social coalition around the party. Even some former CHP politicians joined the AK Party prior to the 2007 elections. For example, Ertuġrul Giinay and Haluk Özdalga, who took leadership positions in CHP, joined the AK Party during this period, and they became deputies after the elections. The reformists, including non-Muslim minority groups, leftist intellectuals, and liberals, endorsed the AK Party before the elections.[93] With the support of this coalition, the AK Party increased its vote share and won a landslide victory in the July 2007 elections. In August 2007, the new Parliament elected Abdullah Gül as the new President. During this period, democracy and authoritarianism became the major cleavage in Turkish politics, strengthening the democratic coalition around the AK Party.

Despite the lack of any serious reform during this period, there was an ongoing process that gradually undermined the military's ability to shape politics. Beginning mid-2007, the lower courts started a judicial process to eliminate criminal organizations within the state that were alleged to destabilize the political atmosphere by facilitating conditions for a coup.[94] In the summer of 2007, after the police had found grenades and other weapons belonging to the Turkish military in Istanbul, the public prosecutor started an investigation, known as the Ergenekon, against criminal organizations. Hundreds of people, including retired military officers, active officers, journalists, and academics, were arrested between 2008 and 2012 on charges of toppling the government. The allegations included plans to blow up at least two major mosques during Friday prayers, to assassinate some Christian and Jewish leaders, and to shoot down a Turkish warplane and blame it on Greece, the country's historic rival. Prosecutors claimed that the conspirators hoped to create chaos, which would have led

to calls for a military takeover. The revelation of several coup plans prepared by military officials to overthrow the AK Party government damaged the military's credentials.

A deadly confrontation between the Kemalists and their critics around the AK Party characterized the final period after August 2007. After the influence of the military over politics had diminished, the Kemalists used their influence in the higher judiciary to block the government. In March 2008, the chief public prosecutor filed a case against the AK Party to shut it down on the grounds that the party had become the center of anti-secular activities. Although the party was left intact, the Constitutional Court did cut half of its public funding.[95] On the other hand, to block the Kemalist opposition, the AK Party took advantage of its parliamentary majority and the democratic coalition of several social forces. The most-serious reform package came with the referendum of September 2010 to amend the constitution. The amendments further curbed the military's influence over politics. It banned trials of civilians in military courts, and allowed civilian courts to try military officers charged with plotting coups. The amendments also changed the structure of the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors, the strongholds of the Kemalists. Before the June 2011 elections, the AK Party had promised to draft a new constitution. The party increased its support, securing almost half of the ballots. This landslide victory was an indication of the broadening of the coalition around the party.

CONCLUSION

This article shows that particular events may have a significant impact on the path of democratization, either by influencing the role of structural factors or by transforming the preferences of the political actors. Earlier studies have suggested the concept of critical juncture to account for the contributions of those events that minimize the impact of structural factors in institutional change. However, the causal impact of events that interact with structural factors have not been sufficiently addressed. This article demonstrates that particular events can have a causal impact without necessarily minimizing the role of structural conditions. Events at critical junctures can transform actor choices by prioritizing particular preferences over others; and they can facilitate or impede the causal processes stimulated by structural conditions.

The integration of timing into the explanation of democratic consolidation in Turkey helps to address the critical question that institutionalist, structural, international context, and process-oriented perspectives of democratic consolidation left unanswered: the transformation of political preferences of the Islamic groups, who played a critical role in Turkey's democratic transformation in the 2000s. The 1997 military intervention, which eliminated the possibilities for Islamic groups to develop corporatist relations with the military, unintentionally led the transformation of Islamic groups in a way to make them commit to democratization. Only subsequently did the Islamic groups develop strategies to further democratization, which they saw the only

way to survive politically. This strategic choice and self-reinforcing and reactive sequences after the military intervention locked them onto the path of democracy. In sum, by being locked into the democratization path out of necessity, the Islamic actors were able to gather a democratic opposition against authoritarian elite within a favoring domestic (the rise of the Islamic bourgeoisie) and international (the EU pressure) context.

Considering that a social coalition around democracy emerged to limit the authoritarian bureaucracy, a critical question about the future of democracy in Turkey is whether or not the AK Party will continue the reform process after the role of military in politics is minimized. The earlier developments do not harbinger a more democratic future. Getting rid of the military tutelage, the AK Party government increased its control over the Turkish political system. The authoritarian moves of the AK Party government since 2012 led the dissolution of the coalition around the party. Many social democrats and liberals withdrew their support from the party after the government harshly suppressed the protests against its policies in summer 2013. After judiciary initiated a corruption probe against some of the government members and their relatives in December 2013, the AK Party government attempted to fully control the judiciary through reassigning police officers, prosecutors, and judges, and enacting new laws to increase the influence of the minister of justice over judiciary. The Giilen movement also withdrew its support from the government as the AK Party accused the movement of collaborating with external powers such as the United States and Israel to plot against the government through the corruption probe. Today, the only guarantee of a consolidated democracy in Turkey is the emergence of a new coalition to balance the increasing power of the government vis-à-vis the society.

How can integrating timing into our theories help us understand other cases of democratic consolidation? Further research is required to systematically test whether the existence or lack of a critical juncture in a country influences the pace of democratic consolidation. However, it is instructive to give a few illustrative examples from different regions. In Spain, Franco's death in 1975 led to democratic transition; however, the unsuccessful 1981 coup attempt serves as a critical juncture that facilitated democratic consolidation because it persuaded dissidents of democracy that authoritarian reversal was no more an option.[96] In Mexico, the 1994 economic crisis helped the formation of a stronger bloc against the seventy years rule of Institutional Revolutionary Party because of the availability of domestic and international pressures against the government.[97] In Poland, the Solidarity Movement paved the way for democratization in 1989 by forcing the communist government to accept free elections; however the communists' real commitment to democracy came after the Solidarity's economic reforms led a deep economic crisis between 1989 and 1991. This crisis persuaded the Communists that they could stay in power through elections, increasing the legitimacy of the democratic regime.[98]

Analysis of interactions between critical junctures and structural factors yields a synthesis between structural and process-oriented theories of democratic consolidation through putting them onto a temporal plane. Incorporation of timing helps us go beyond the impasse of agent-structure debate and reach synthetic but still analytically coherent theories. It enforces us to ponder more seriously on the role of specific events in developing generalizable theories of democratic consolidation.*

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