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**UNDERSTANDING ISLAMIST MODERATION:**

**A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF  
TURKISH ISLAMIST PARTIES  
FROM THE NOP TO THE JDP**

Settore Scientifico-Disciplinare: SPS/04 SCIENZA POLITICA

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present dissertation takes issue with the ideological moderation of Islamist political parties, and tries to develop an explanatory model regarding the domestic conditions of such party ideological repositioning by drawing on the empirical evidence coming from the Islamist parties in Turkey. The research design consists of a longitudinal comparative study of six Islamist political parties that appeared on the Turkish political scene, and covers a time period of approximately three decades (1970-2001). The comparison, which is conducted using both historical comparative and statistical methods, aims at assessing the contribution of three distinct, yet interrelated factors to the ideological moderation of the Turkish Islamist movement in the late 1990s, which culminated into the birth of the Justice and Development Party. These factors are the socio-economic transformation of the Islamist constituency, the repressive policies of the Turkish state vis-à-vis Islamist political actors, and the exposure of these actors to moderating influences emanating from democratic institutions and practices. Through an in-depth examination of the ideological evolution of the Islamist parties in the above-mentioned period, a number of intervening variables that mediated between these factors and the outcome of ideological moderation are identified including the antagonistic relations between the secular state and Islamist businesses, the changing role of Islam in the official ideology of the Turkish state and the shifts in the distribution of power inside Islamist parties as they are manifested in changes in leadership and the dominant faction.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>DP</b>	: Democrat Party ( <i>Demokrat Parti</i> )
<b>DLP</b>	: Democratic Left Party ( <i>Demokratik Sol Parti</i> )
<b>DRA</b>	: Directorate of Religious Affairs ( <i>Diyanet Isleri Baskanligi</i> )
<b>ECHR</b>	: European Court of Human Rights
<b>FJP</b>	: Freedom and Justice Party
<b>FIS</b>	: Islamic Salvation Front
<b>FP</b>	: Felicity Party ( <i>Saadet Partisi</i> )
<b>IAF</b>	: Islamic Action Front
<b>JDP</b>	: Justice and Development Party ( <i>Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi</i> )
<b>JP</b>	: Justice Party ( <i>Adalet Partisi</i> )
<b>MP</b>	: Motherland Party ( <i>Anavatan Partisi</i> )
<b>MUSIAD</b>	: Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen ( <i>Mustakil Sanayi ve Isadamlari Dernegi</i> )
<b>NOP</b>	: National Order Party ( <i>Milli Nizam Partisi</i> )
<b>NSP</b>	: National Salvation Party ( <i>Milli Selamet Partisi</i> )
<b>NAP</b>	: Nationalist Action Party ( <i>Milliyetci Hareket Partisi</i> )
<b>NSC</b>	: National Security Council ( <i>Milli Guvenlik Kurulu</i> )
<b>NWP</b>	: Nationalist Work Party ( <i>Milliyetci Calisma Partisi</i> )
<b>OLS</b>	: Ordinary least squares
<b>PCSEs</b>	: Panel corrected standard errors
<b>PJD</b>	: Party of Justice and Development
<b>RDP</b>	: Reformist Democracy Party ( <i>Islahatci Demokrasi Partisi</i> )
<b>RPP</b>	: Republican Peoples Party ( <i>Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi</i> )
<b>RRP</b>	: Republican Reliance Party ( <i>Cumhuriyetci Guven Partisi</i> )
<b>TAF</b>	: Turkish Armed Forces ( <i>Turk Silahlı Kuvvetleri</i> )
<b>TIS</b>	: Turkish-Islamic Synthesis ( <i>Turk-Islam Sentezi</i> )
<b>TPC</b>	: Turkish Penal Code
<b>TPP</b>	: True Path Party ( <i>Dogruiyol Partisi</i> )
<b>TUSIAD</b>	: Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association ( <i>Turkiye Sanayici ve Isadamları Dernegi</i> )
<b>VP</b>	: Virtue Party ( <i>Fazilet Partisi</i> )
<b>WP</b>	: Welfare Party ( <i>Refah Partisi</i> )
<b>WPT</b>	: Worker's Party of Turkey ( <i>Turkiye Isçi Partisi</i> )

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## INTRODUCTION

The year 2011 has been a turning point in the history of the Middle East. The political landscape of the region underwent a serious transformation as a series of popular revolutions brought down some of the strongest and longest standing authoritarian regimes in the Arabic-speaking world such as those in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in addition to forcing others to undertake serious democratic reforms to contain and sometimes to preempt the social unrest that has spread all over the region.

The "Arab Spring" has had another important consequence for the polities in question. Several moderate Islamist parties, admittedly inspired by the experience and success of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP - *Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi*), came to the forefront of the political struggle obtaining significant electoral victories at the polls. In Morocco, a party with the same name and a very similar political platform, the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) led by Abdelillah Benkirane, won the November 2011 parliamentary elections thereby becoming the first Islamist party ruling the country. The party's ruling cadres has pledged to reconcile Islam and democracy pointing to the JDP as a concrete model to emulate ("Islamic Party", 2007; "Morocco's new", 2011). They even chose the oil lamp as their party's emblem in striking similarity to the JDP's party symbol, the light bulb.

Likewise, in Tunisia, the historical leader of the Islamist movement, Rachid Ghannouchi turned back from his regime-imposed exile in the UK, and took the helms of the Ennahda ("Renaissance") Party after Ben Ali's fall. The party regained its legal status in March 2011 after twenty two years of political ban and won the October 2011 constituent assembly elections gaining about 40 percent of the seats. On his return from exile, Ghannouchi, better known in the 1980s for his radical political outlook, firmly rejected all the comparisons made between him and Ayotollah Khomeini of Iran, saying instead that his party can actually be compared to Turkey's JDP ("Tunisian Islamist", 2011).

The "Justice and Development political franchise" (McNeil, 2011) has extended its arms also to Egypt and Libya where parties with similar names and platforms emerged after the start of the Arab Spring. The Muslim Brothers in Egypt established the moderate Islamist Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in June 2011 while the Brotherhood's Libyan branch announced the formation of the Justice and

Development Party in March 2012.<sup>1</sup> In Iraq, a Shiite group founded yet another Justice and Development Party not to mention the emergence of Islamist parties with a moderate platform and bearing the same name in other Muslim-majority countries outside the Middle East such as in Pakistan and Indonesia. Reflecting the rising popularity of the JDP's political image and platform among the various Islamist movements around the world, the party's leader and the Turkey's current Prime Minister R.T. Erdogan jokingly asked Mohammed Morsi, the FJP's leader, to compensate Turkey for the intellectual property rights of his party's name in his last official visit to Egypt (Kader, 2011).

The Justice and Development Party of Turkey, the source of inspiration for these post-Arab Spring Islamist parties, was established in August 2001 as a direct heir to a line of Islamist political parties that had been vying for political power since the early 1970s. In less than a year after its establishment, the party managed to win the November 2002 general elections obtaining 34.3% of the votes cast and approximately two thirds of the parliamentary seats. This first electoral victory was followed by an even more impressive one in June 2007 with the JDP garnering 46.7% of the voter support giving it the possibility to form a majority government. In June 2011, when the last Turkish parliamentary elections held, the party secured 49.8% of all votes, and consequently received the mandate to form a majority government for the third time in a row.

The JDP rose from the ashes of the Virtue Party (VP - *Fazilet Partisi*), the penultimate party that belongs to the Islamist movement National Outlook (*Milli Gorus*). Yet, right from its inception, it has denounced the anti-secular and pro-Sharia political platform of its predecessors and stressed that it's a conservative democratic party fully committed to the founding principles of the Turkish Republic albeit with an acknowledged sensibility towards religious social demands. The extent of this ideological transformation was such that not only did the JDP accept the main parameters of the Turkish secular regime by giving up the ideal of an Islamic state, but also promised to carry Turkey's Western-oriented modernization process to its logical end, namely a European style liberal democracy, by removing the anti-democratic vestiges of the 1980 military intervention and by undertaking necessary reforms to improve political pluralism in accordance with the EU accession criteria.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that in Libya the first political party established after the fall of the Gheddafi regime, the Motherland Party, too, reportedly has been modeled after Turkey's JDP ("Libya's first", 2011).

The present thesis takes issue with this radical ideological transformation underwent by the Turkish Islamist movement in the context of late 1990s. It is an attempt to make sense of the socio-economic and political factors that brought about the movement's moderation that culminated in the emergence of the pro-democratic JDP as a conservative centre-right party. More specifically, it aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the domestic determinants of Islamist moderation including the changing class composition of the Islamist constituency, the role of state repression and the impact of participation in competitive democratic processes.

The successful moderation of the Islamist movement in Turkey has attracted a lot of scholarly attention to date among the students of religious party politics in general and Islamist politics in particular. Yet, there are very few of them that adopt a comparative analytical framework to account for Islamist party moderation. Notable in this respect are the studies of Gumuscu (2010), Yilmaz (2009), Demiralp (2010), Tezcur (2010a, 2010b) and Pushkar & Gupta (2004), which respectively confront the processes of Islamist moderation in Turkey and Egypt; Turkey, Indonesia and Sudan; Turkey and Iran, and Turkey, Chile and India. On the other hand, there are no studies that systematically compare and contrast Islamist parties in Turkey across time in terms of their ideological evolution despite the ubiquitousness of studies of individual Islamist parties as well as histories of the Islamist movement as a whole.

Moreover, as far as the explanatory claims that will be dealt with in this study are concerned, there are a number of important gaps in the literature pertaining to the moderation of Turkish political Islam. First, no satisfactory answers are given to the question why democratic and extra-democratic constraints on Islamist party behavior did not bring about the movement's ideological moderation for about three decades given that Islamist parties are active participants in formal political life since 1970. Second, changing organizational characteristics of Islamist parties and the resulting shifts in the intra-party distribution of power have so far received scarce attention in the current debate on Islamist moderation despite a growing body of comparative literature that point to these factors as endogenous sources of party change. Third, the socio-economic conditions conducive to Islamist moderation have been imported from the modernization theory instead of being informed by a careful examination of the actual political preferences of different class segments inside the Islamist constituency, especially those of the conservative middle classes, in view of their supposed pivotal role in democratizing the Islamist movement.

The Turkish case presents a unique analytical opportunity to study Islamist moderation from a comparative perspective in that it features both moderated (JDP) and non-moderated Islamist parties (NOP, NSP, WP, VP and FP) distributed across time both diachronically and synchronically. The present thesis exploits this variation in the outcome of ideological moderation by proposing a focused historical comparison of Turkish Islamist parties starting from their first appearance in 1970, the year in which the NOP established, until 2001, the year in which the JDP and the FP were established. Such a research design has certain disadvantages with respect to a cross-country comparison in that its substantial conclusions inevitably have limited generalizability outside the Turkish context, and hence needs to be checked against the empirical data coming from other countries in future studies. Yet, on the positive side, it controls for the impact of macro contextual variables such as the impact of the country's political history, political culture and political system on the ideological trajectory of Islamist political parties.

### ***Structure of the Thesis***

The thesis's empirical sections seek answers to three distinct yet interrelated research questions regarding the conditions for Islamist moderation. The first question is if and how the changing socio-economic configuration of the Islamist constituency under the impact of post-1980 liberalization policies has contributed to the Islamist parties' ideological repositioning. The second question regards the extent to which the repressive policies of the Turkish state, known for its attachment to a strict interpretation of secularism, have curbed down the Turkish Islamists' extremist tendencies. The third question is whether or not the Islamist political actors' political participation in democratic political processes such as elections, legislative activities and coalition formation has contributed to the cooling down of their uncompromising opposition to secular democratic principles.

These research questions are distilled from a growing literature on the ideological repositioning of religious political parties in general and on the de-radicalization of Islamist parties in particular. Moderation literature may be said to constitute a sub-set of the broader literature on political party change. Thus, many of the arguments advanced to account for Islamist moderation are informed by previous explanations put forward to account for the ideological and organizational transformations underwent by political parties in the history of democratic politics.

Consequently, in the first chapter, I provide a summary of the background literature on party change from a variety of perspectives including the rise and decline of new party types, social cleavage structures, bureaucratization of party organizations, electoral competition and changes in the internal distribution of power. The specific literature that deals with different aspects of Islamist moderation, instead, will be overviewed in the beginning of each empirical chapter.

In the second chapter, I lay down the main elements of the research design I employed and the methodological strategy I pursued throughout the study, i.e. historical comparison and methodological triangulation. In the third chapter, I aim to clarify the main concepts I utilize in this study by exploring the tension between democratic politics and the political Islamist project, by proposing a typology of Islamically-oriented parties and by offering a working definition of Islamist moderation. Then, I provide a brief history of Islamist political parties in Turkey starting from the late 1960s until the early 2000s. In the final section of the chapter I examine the ideological platforms of all the Islamist parties included in the present analysis in an attempt to identify changes and continuities across time in the light of the Islamist party typology proposed earlier, i.e. radical Islamist, moderate Islamist and non-Islamist conservative.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters of the thesis are each dedicated to the three research questions mentioned above regarding the domestic determinants of Islamist party moderation. In this respect, in the fourth chapter I scrutinize the role of the rise of an authentic bourgeoisie class inside the Islamist constituency and the parallel change in constituency values as a potential explanation for the movement's ideological transformation. More specifically, I first try to find out if such a change has actually taken place, i.e. whether or not there are significant differences between the JDP's electoral base and its predecessors in terms of socio-economic characteristics. Then, I problematize the democratic agency of the Islamist bourgeois class by tracing the evolution of their political views starting from their emergence as an organized interest group in the early 1990s.

In this respect, the fourth chapter starts out with a theoretical examination of the contribution of poverty to Islamist party success, and identifies several historical and ideological factors that pushed electorates in the Muslim world into the orbit of Islamist oppositional politics. Then, it compares and contrasts the social bases of successive Turkish Islamist parties both among themselves and with that of the JDP in

order to identify the distinguishing characteristics of the social base of political Islam drawing on the previous studies of the social bases of Islamist political parties in Turkey. This first comparison reveals that political Islam has attracted followers from a wide range of social classes in different historical periods, and has evolved from being a party of mostly traditional middle classes in the early 1970s to a party that attracts large segments of lower socio-economic status groups along with the ascendant business class of the Anatolian hinterland in the early 1990s. Yet, available historical data is neither sufficient to differentiate clearly the social bases of the WP and the JDP from each other nor to conclude that income poverty no longer plays a role in the electoral success of the latter as both parties appear as multi-class coalitions with a large lower class presence.

In order to overcome this indeterminacy in research findings as well as to corroborate the conclusions, I propose a time-series cross-sectional statistical analysis of the electoral performance of Islamist parties at the provincial level. Drawing on a panel dataset that consists of all the general election results obtained by Islamist parties until the year 2007 and per capita income levels in respective election years, I estimate an OLS linear regression model with panel corrected standard errors (PCSEs) that incorporates three additional control variables (educational attainment, urbanization and ethnic identity). The model, when applied to the pooled dataset comprising the results obtained by the political Islamist NSP, WP, VP and FP, reveals that as the constituency gets poorer, the Islamists' vote share gets larger. Besides, in provinces with a sizeable Kurdish minority (over 10%), we find that the Islamist parties has historically performed better. When these parties are examined separately, though, we observe a positive correlation between income poverty and Islamist support only in the case of the WP, while the NSP's, VP's and FP's electoral performances appear to be independent from per capita income levels. Hence, the statistical analysis corroborates the earlier conclusion that the causal connection between poverty and Islamist voting has been established in the WP years.

As far as the JDP is concerned, the statistical findings indicate that unlike the WP the JDP's electoral appeal has been by and large independent from the electorate's income status while the party has performed better in less educated, more urbanized and non-Kurdish provinces. Therefore, even though the WP and the JDP both rely on a multi-class social coalition, the poor is overrepresented in the WP's

electoral base whereas all income groups find representation inside the JDP's constituency at levels more or less commensurate with their national percentages.

In the final section of the fourth chapter I ask whether or not the Turkish Islamist bourgeoisie has been a consistent supporter of democratization as is suggested by the bourgeoisie-moderation thesis. First, I overview the theoretical debate on the democratic agency of middle classes by presenting both the arguments of the modernization theory and its critics. Then, I trace the evolution the political views of the Islamist sub-section of the Turkish bourgeoisie from a historical perspective, and find that the Islamist middle classes until the late 1990s had been ardent supporters of the political Islamist project, and that their conversion to the cause of democracy promotion took place roughly around the same time as the Islamist politicians, that is, following the Turkish state's crackdown on Islamists in 1997. These empirical findings run counter to the expectations of the modernization theory since they demonstrate that middle classes are not pro-democratic social forces irrespective of time and political context. More importantly, they also shed doubt on the democratizing influence of the conservative middle classes over the Islamist movement by showing that they did not actually advance a substantial criticism of National Outlook-style political Islam from a democratization perspective prior to the onset of the ideological moderation of the movement. On the whole, absent antagonistic relations with the state apparatus that create obstacles for the pursuit of their material interests on the political arena, the rise and expansion of conservative middle classes is not likely to exert a democratizing influence on Islamist politics.

In the fifth chapter, I turn my attention to the relationship between the Turkish state and Islamist political parties at the institutional level, and investigate the role of strict state secularism exercised in Turkey on the moderation of political Islam. When approached from a historical perspective, the Turkish case presents an important empirical puzzle. It is a well-known fact that all the Islamist parties in Turkey had faced state persecution at a certain point in their history leading invariably to their exclusion from the formal political arena by way of party closures. Yet, up until the February 28 "post-modern" coup d'état staged by the Turkish military in 1997, the movement appeared to be unaffected by its harsh treatment in the hands of the Turkish state in terms of its integralist political ideology.

I attempt to resolve this empirical puzzle by examining the state-Islam interaction in Turkey at two different levels. The first level concerns the institutional

interaction between the secularist establishment and Islamist political parties as illustrated by party closure cases. The second broader level, instead, concerns the various ways in which Islam has found a place in the official ideology of the Turkish state, mostly for “reasons of state”, and hence affected the public legitimacy and electoral viability of political Islam in the medium and long run. In this respect, the third chapter starts out by a discussion of the basic features of the legal-constitutional framework in Turkey that enable party closures based on charges of anti-secularism. Then, I compare and contrast in detail the closure processes of the NOP, NSP and the WP. In each case, I look at both the short-term consequences of party closures for the Islamist movement and the broader shape of Islam-state relations prevailing in the same period. In this way, I identify some crucial differences between these three historical instances of state repression of political Islam, which respectively took place in the aftermath of 1971, 1980 and 1997 military interventions. To begin with, in contrast to the 1971 and 1980 interventions which were directed against civilian political life in general, 1997 intervention’s sole target was political Islam. Second, unlike the 1971 and 1980 interventions, the secularist establishment in 1997 cracked down on not only Islamist politicians, but also the Islamist networks in civil society including businesses, NGOs and media outlets. More importantly, however, the Turkish state’s attitude towards Islamist ideologies was characterized by a policy of unofficial tolerance behind a façade of hawkish secularism both when the NOP and the WP were shut down. Therefore, in each case, the damage inflicted on Islamist politicians in the short-term was compensated by state policies that improved the public legitimacy and electoral viability of religious identity politics in the medium and long-term due to their supposed contribution to the fight against communism and to the depolitization of the post-1980 youth. In contrast, the 1997 intervention represents a turning point in official attitudes towards Islam signaling the beginning of highly antagonistic relations underwritten by a reassertion of radical state secularism in the face of its religious opponents. All in all, I reach the conclusion that coercive policies towards Islamists are not likely to bring about ideological moderation if the broader policy orientation of the state vis-à-vis religious identity politics is tolerant and accommodating.

In the sixth and last chapter, I assess the contribution of Islamist political actors’ participation in democratic political processes to the democratization of their ideological outlook. In particular, I attempt to resolve the empirical puzzle resulting



from the “participation-moderation” thesis’s inability to account for the timing of Islamist moderation in Turkey by looking at the changes in the intra-party distribution of power. The participation-moderation thesis is by far the most pronounced argument in favor of including religious extremists into the orbit of competitive political life. In this respect, it has been argued that even though political Islamists are not fully respectful of liberal democratic principles and hence might try to subvert the regime once in power, the risk presented by political exclusion is much higher as it is likely to lead to further radicalization while through inclusion Islamists can be pushed towards the political mainstream. Consequently, I first go over the theoretical links established in the literature between Islamist participation and political moderation as well as the differences of opinion as to the exact causal mechanism at work (strategic adaptation vs. identity transformation). Then, I probe the ways in which these arguments have been carried to the Turkish context to account for the emergence of the JDP. Third, I examine the track record of Turkish Islamist parties starting from the NOP up to the VP by looking at the different facets of their political participation from electoral competition to coalition government, and ask why the Islamist political actors waited so long – approximately thirty years – to respond to the moderating incentives emanating from the competitive institutional arrangements.

I attempt to answer this question by drawing on the insights provided by the students of comparative party politics that emphasize the endogenous sources of party change: changes in leadership and the dominant faction. These are factors that have hitherto been overlooked in the existing analyses of Islamist moderation in Turkey though frequently mentioned. In order to assess the role of factional struggle in the ideological trajectory of the Islamist movement, I compare and contrast National Outlook parties’ organizational structures, leadership cadres and factional makeup with a particular focus on the changes taking place in the internal distribution of power inside the movement over the years.

Several findings emerge from this comparative analysis. First, during the NOP, NSP as well as the WP years the movement’s historical leader Necmettin Erbakan managed to keep a tap on the emergence of internal factions with the help of a highly hierarchical and leader-dominated party organizational structure, and in this way ensured the continuity of the party’s integralist political platform in the face of strong pressures for moderation. Yet, when the Turkish state removed him from the formal leadership of the movement after the WP’s closure in 1998, the simmering

tension between the movement's older leaders and younger generation of mid-level executives transformed itself into a fully-blown factional struggle between Erbakan loyalists and the young Islamist cadres led by R.T. Erdogan. However, the latter could not succeed in capturing the party leadership from Erbakan loyalists. Hence, from the WP to the VP party leadership changed hands, but the dominant faction remained the same, and this set limits on the magnitude of ideological change that could take place. With the closure of the VP, the last barrier before a much more radical ideological shift was removed as the JDP was established and hence was now fully controlled by Erdogan's opposition faction.

On the whole, the Turkish case demonstrates that democratic participation is unlikely to work its moderating magic on Islamists, regardless of its duration, scope and intensity, unless it is accompanied by the existence of rival factions that are willing to capitalize on the political opportunities presented by a moderate discourse to win the power struggle inside the party. Moreover, ideological transformation of the movement appears to be a multi-dimensional process triggered by external factors, yet at the same time closely related to the changes in leadership and the dominant faction that took place in the second half of the 1990s.

In the concluding pages, I first provide a comprehensive summary of my research findings. Then, I mention the ways in which I believe I contributed to the literature on Islamist party moderation. Finally, I point to avenues for future research from both an analytical and substantial point of view.

# CHAPTER 1

## BACKGROUND LITERATURE: EXTANT THEORIES OF PARTY CHANGE

The moderation of Islamist parties constitutes a sub-type of party change. In this respect, the current theories of Islamist party moderation are mostly informed by the broader literature on party change that account for the birth, development and transformation of political parties and party systems in the context of Western political systems. Among theories of party change, those that explain the moderation of revolutionary socialist parties in Europe have proved to be particularly attractive to the students of Islamist party moderation due to the element of ideological extremism and anti-systemic behavior common to both political Islamist and revolutionary Left-wing political parties.

The following chapter is dedicated to a general overview of the extant theories of party change that form the basis of the current literature on Islamist party moderation. The arguments specific to the field of Islamist political parties, instead, will be dealt with at the beginning of each empirical chapter.

Existing theories of party change can be classified according to their understanding of the nature of party change (Panebianco, 1988). First, it is possible to approach party change as a gradual process that unfolds throughout a relatively long period of time under the influence of changes taking place in society at large. This approach is characterized by a tendency to identify long-term socio-economic and political trends that lead to a transformation in party organizational structures, ideologies, functions as well as their social bases. Second, one can focus its attention on abrupt instances of party change that appear to fall outside the evolutionary pattern seen in long-term transformations. This second approach in general prioritizes the agency of political actors in its accounts of party change. Consequently, the direction of change is not deduced from broad social processes, but from the strategic interaction of party elite and members with other political forces.

# 1. PARTY CHANGE AS AN EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

## *1a. The Rise and Demise of Party Organizational Types*

The best examples of a gradualist approach to party change are provided by studies that explore the rise and demise of party organizational types from a historical perspective. Beyond the diversity of typologies adopted and of the criteria upon which such typologizing is based,<sup>2</sup> it would not be wrong to argue that there is a general consensus in the literature on the historical succession of party types starting from elite-based parties (or “parties of individual representation”<sup>3</sup>) of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, towards mass-based parties (or “parties of mass integration”<sup>4</sup>) of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that in turn experienced a decline in the second half of the century in favor of parties that operate more on electoralist concerns such as catch-all (or electoral-professional<sup>5</sup>) and cartel parties (Gunther & Diamond, 2001b).

The classical distinction between cadre and mass parties was first introduced by Duverger (1954).<sup>6</sup> Duverger (1954) suggested that the differences between the two were first and foremost of organizational in nature. To count a few, while the cadre party consisted of a limited number of influential figures and did not really care to have a mass following, the mass party had an extensive membership base and dedicated a good deal of resources to expand its grassroots presence; while the former depended on the individual sponsorship of its elite cadres, the latter turned to membership fees to finance ever-growing party activities; in contrast to cadre parties’ organizational inactivity outside the parliament and in-between the elections, mass parties created large extra-parliamentary organizations with several branches and remained active also in-between the elections. From Duverger’s perspective what rendered this organizational change inevitable was the introduction of mass suffrage which opened the political arena to demands from working and lower classes, thereby forcing party leaders to look for sources of financing for new party functions, such as political education and electoral canvassing, other than individual benefactors.

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<sup>2</sup> See Gunther & Diamond (2001a) as well as Gunther & Diamond (2003) for an overview and critique of existing typologies of political parties.

<sup>3</sup> Neumann (1956) prefers to call cadre parties "parties of individual representation".

<sup>4</sup> Neumann (1956) calls mass parties as "parties of mass integration".

<sup>5</sup> Panebianco (1988) calls catch-all parties "electoral-professional parties" contrasting it with "mass bureaucratic parties".

<sup>6</sup> Duverger (1954) talks also about cell (communist) and militia (fascist) parties, now nearly obsolete as party organizational forms, as additional categories, which are classified as parties of total integration by Neumann (1956).

Therefore, cadre and mass parties are also different in terms of the social strata they represent, a point prioritized by Neumann (1956) in his somewhat similar classificatory scheme of political parties.

The next major organizational transformation underwent by Western political parties was from mass to catch-all parties. This last passage is most powerfully theorized by Kirchheimer (1966) who observed the gradual decline of class-mass and denominational-mass parties, and their parallel replacement with a new type of “catch-all” party in the post-WWII period. The catch-all party as a new comer on the political scene displayed some distinct characteristics that set it apart from the two predecessor party types. First, it had a very shallow organizational structure unlike mass parties. Second, its ideological makeup was superficial and vague, a point which connects us to the third characteristic of this new party type: an overriding concern for winning elections at the expense of “the old political style which rested on the primordial need for sweeping political change” (Kirchheimer, 1966, p.191). As noted previously, the emergence of catch-all parties is explained in reference to socio-economic as well as technological transformations underwent by Western societies such as the blurring of class lines, increasing secularization, the advent of mass consumption and of mass media that all together rendered mass parties “incongruous” with the concrete conditions of the epoch.

The historical evolution of party types did not, however, finish with emergence of the phenomenon of catch-allism. Katz and Mair (1995, 2002) postulated the more recent birth of a new party type, namely the “cartel party”, that they claimed to be slowly undermining the much-debated dominance of catch-all parties. According to Katz & Mair (2002), political parties have three different organizational “faces”: party on the ground, party in central office and party in public office. From this perspective, the historical succession of elite, mass, catch-all and finally cartel-type parties can be best understood as successive shifts in the balance of power among these different organizational faces triggered by socio-economic and political developments. While at the elite party phase all faces were by and large undifferentiated, with the arrival of mass parties the party on the ground and the party in central office began to dominate the party in public office. Catch-all parties, instead, are characterized by recurrent conflicts between the party’s public role, its grassroots organization and central governing institutions with the last organizational aspect trying to mediate between the former two.

Finally, cartel parties are parties that privilege their role “in public office” above other functions they perform both through their central organizations and grassroots networks. For the large part, their emergence is accounted for with reference to a process of organizational adaptation in response to a number of environmental changes that have both institutional and socio-cultural dimensions. The introduction of public funding of political parties that subsequently diminished their dependence on the membership base as a source of revenue, the ever-growing number of parties that take part in government formation and hence become indistinguishable from the state, and the transformation of partisan activity into a professionalized and career-oriented endeavor are the principle environmental factors that have been suggested by Katz & Mair (1995, 2002) to contribute to the “cartelization” of parties.

As political parties have undergone these organizational mutations, as reflected in the rise and demise of new organizational forms, their ideological platforms, too, have changed. In this respect, mass-class and mass-denominational parties, not to mention parties of total integration, have been characterized by strong ideological commitments and a concomitant desire on the part of the party both to politically educate the constituency and to radically restructure society and politics in line with these convictions. Catch-all parties instead adopted a much more pragmatic attitude in terms of their programmatic commitments and diluted their ideological platforms so as to appeal to broader sections of the electorate. In the case of cartel parties, the ideological element seems to be pushed even further to the background in favor of technocratic attitudes as the intra-party competition is now much more focused on good and efficient governance than on diverging visions of good society.

### ***1b. Political Parties and Social Cleavage Structures***

The questions how and why parties change have also been approached from the perspective of social cleavage structures. Two prominent arguments put forward from this perspective, in this respect, are known as the “realignment” (Inglehart, 1977) and “de-alignment” (Dalton, 1984) theses. Both arguments start from and take issue with the cleavage thesis put forward by Lipset & Rokkan (1967) in their seminal work *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* in which they attempt to explain the formation of Western European party systems. In very broad terms, the cleavage thesis stated that the political parties in Western Europe are a reflection of social divisions prevalent in those societies at the time of their emergence. In this respect, Lipset & Rokkan (1967)

identified four dominant social cleavages that were strong enough to form the basis of collective action and mobilization exemplified by political parties: centre-periphery, church-state, urban-rural and class cleavages.

Lipset & Rokkan (1967) have further argued that these traditional cleavage structures were “frozen” into the European party systems in the sense that they would continue to animate party competition also in the future. Yet, by the 1970s new parties drawing their electoral support predominantly from the members of new social movements, such as environmental and feminist parties, began to emerge and attract voters. Facing this new reality, Inglehart (1977) argued that traditional cleavages such as class and religion entered a period of decline as Western societies increasingly adopted “post-materialist” values that reflect, more than anything else, the expansion of middle classes and the resulting state of wide-spread affluence in these societies. Consequently, the political competition has been “realigned” in a way to reflect these new axes of social and cultural conflict.<sup>7</sup>

On the other hand, Dalton (1984) suggested that what we have been witnessing is a process of “de-alignment” rather than realignment, the concrete manifestations of which are general political apathy, higher electoral volatility and lower voter turnouts.<sup>8</sup> Central to his argument is the concept of “cognitive mobilization”. He uses the term to refer to the more educated and better informed citizenry of today, which, he stresses, is no longer in need of partisan clues to make up its mind when it comes to political preferences. Cognitive mobilization coupled with the growing incapacity of existing political parties to meet new challenges, he claims, is the primary force that has weakened the ties between political parties and their constituents in the last decades.

## **2. PARTY CHANGE AS A DISCONTINUOUS EVENT**

Party organizations and ideologies may undergo changes over time in a gradual manner in reflection of the wider societal and political trends prevalent in their respective societies. Yet, there are also instances of abrupt party change during which

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<sup>7</sup> Lipset (2001) seems to concur with Inglehart (1977) in his more recent writings on the transformation of the European left-wing parties. He, too, considers the new non-socialist pro-free market ideological posture adopted by leftist parties in Europe, most clearly illustrated by the Labor Party under Tony Blair, as a direct consequence of socio-economic changes comprising growing affluence, expanded middle-classes and mass consumption, and admits to the decreasing importance of class cleavages in the determination of political struggles.

<sup>8</sup> See also Flickinger & Studlar (1992) on the phenomenon of dwindling voter turnouts in European elections.

a political party introduces a major change in its ideological platform and/or organizational structure in a relatively short period of time. These types of party change may be seen as discontinuous events in which the agency of political actors plays a crucial role.

The transformation of socialist parties in Europe away from bastions of working class radicalism into proponents of social democracy is a good case in point. A number of scholars have put forward theories to account for this major ideological shift. To begin with, Robert Michels (1966) has pointed to the historical tendency of modern political parties' to turn into large bureaucratic organizations to perform their ever-complicated functions in today's societies as the root cause of the ideological moderation in question. In particular, he argued that the decision to participate in elections exposed revolutionary parties to severe organizational pressures that forced them to transform into highly complex bureaucratic organizations. Moderation of their ideological positions was a byproduct of this organizational dynamic. As there were now electoral campaigns to organize, funds to be raised and an over-growing party staff to manage, these parties found less time and energy to engage in traditional revolutionary activities. Equally crucial was the creation of professionalized leadership positions within socialist parties that emphasized competency and tactical skills over full representation of the wishes of working class masses.

Electoral competition has been postulated also by Przeworski (1980, 1985) and Przeworski & Sprague (1986) as a key cause of the ideological transformation underwent by European socialist parties. However, unlike Michels (1966) who concentrated on organizational dynamics, these scholars have explained the birth of social democratic parties with reference to a rational decision on the part of socialist political actors that were facing a trade-off. This trade-off was between the strict representation of working class interests and the expansion of the socialist parties' appeal to other class segments. The former would have conserved the party's ideological purity, yet kept it out of power indefinitely whereas the latter necessitated the loosening of ideological commitments such that governing majorities necessary to undertake a socialist transformation of society could be attained at the polls. In other words, according to this theoretical perspective, socialists realized that the number of working class voters would never reach the majority needed to win the elections, and consequently went on to broaden their appeal to other sectors of society by abandoning their ideological rigidity. Likewise, Panebianco (1988) attributed the



German SPD's ideological switch to the right in late 1950s to electoral calculations. Share (1999), too, has proposed a similar analysis of the Spanish PSOE's (*Partido Socialista Obrero Espanol* –Spanish Socialist Workers' Party) rather sudden change of heart in late 1970s from Marxist socialism to social democracy when he pointed to the party leadership's concerns over the electoral viability of a radical left-wing ideological stance, concerns that were vindicated by several public opinion polls conducted at the time (Share, 1999).

Another theoretical perspective on abrupt episodes of party ideological change expands on these earlier theories by proposing an “integrated theory” of party change that comprises both endogenous and exogenous sources of party change (Harmel & Janda, 1994).<sup>9</sup> Endogenous sources of party change concern the internal distribution of power within the party, and consist of changes in party leadership and in the dominant faction. Exogenous sources, instead, are those environmental stimuli that force party political actors to reconsider the party's programmatic commitments, electoral strategies and organizational makeup in order to ensure its political viability. Poor electoral performance is, arguably, one of the strongest environmental stimuli to which competitive political parties react by repositioning themselves on the ideological spectrum. Yet, the magnitude of party change this particular stimulus can actually bring about is hardly given. Rather, it is a function of the primary goal orientation of the party at hand; that is, whether or not it is a vote-seeking, office-seeking, policy-seeking or a democracy-seeking party.<sup>10</sup> In this respect, a serious electoral defeat is more likely to trigger change in a vote-seeking party than in other party types. Likewise, policy-seeking parties tend to be more sensitive towards environmental stimuli that concern their ideological convictions (e.g. the collapse of real socialism in the late 1980s) than electoral signals.

As noted earlier, among the theories of party change outlined above, those that try to account for the transformation of extremist Left-wing parties has received the greatest attention among the students of Islamist political parties. In this respect, many of the contentions put forward under the “participation-moderation” thesis, which will be

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<sup>9</sup> For empirical applications of the theory, see Harmel, Heo, Tan & Janda (1995) and Harmel & Tan (2003).

<sup>10</sup> See Strom (1990) for more on party goals and its impact on party behavior. For more on democracy-seeking parties, as parties dedicated primarily to ensuring the representation of the party constituency and intra-party democracy, see Deschouwer (1992).

examined in detail in Chapter 6, have drawn both implicitly and explicitly on the theses of Michels (1966) and of Przeworski (1980, 1985) and Przeworski & Sprague (1986) as they tried to demonstrate the necessity of including these anti-systemic confessional parties into the orbit of electoral competition. Since multi-party electoral competition is a rather new phenomenon in most of the Middle Eastern countries, and hence party systems are in earlier stages of development with respect to their Western counterparts, much less attention has been paid to the interaction between different party organizational types and party ideologies in the context of Islamist politics. Likewise, in terms of the social bases of Islamist moderation, the current debate is much more influenced by the modernization theory than the social cleavages thesis as will be discussed further in Chapter 4.

## CHAPTER 2

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 1. RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is a longitudinal comparative analysis of six political parties that belong to or originate from the political Islamist National Outlook movement in Turkey, namely the NOP (1970-1971), NSP (1972-1980), the WP (1983-1998), the VP (1997-2001), the JDP (2001-present) and the FP (2001-present). It examines the ideological transformation of these parties from a historical and comparative perspective in an attempt to uncover the factors that have contributed to the moderation of the Islamist movement as the 1990s drew to a close. In this respect, the time period it covers starts from 1970, the year the first Islamist party was established, and runs until the year 2001 when the Islamist movement split and consequently gave birth to two parties, one centre-right conservative and the other Islamist.

The factors that have been hypothesized to bring about this outcome, i.e. ideological moderation, are categorized according to their levels of analysis and analyzed in separate chapters in line with a multi-causal understanding of political phenomena. In this respect, the first empirical chapter looks into the socio-economic conditions that created fertile grounds for such a transformation, and problematizes the relationship between party ideologies and the transformation of the Islamist constituency in terms of its socio-economic make-up. The second chapter, instead, concerns itself with the institutional background of such ideological repositioning. Consequently, it takes a closer look at the antagonistic relations between the strictly secularist institutions of the Turkish state, the most prominent among which are the military and the judiciary, and the Islamist political parties. Finally, the last empirical chapter zooms further into the phenomenon, and investigates if and how Islamist political actors have reacted to the moderating influences emanating from democratic political practices.

Here, it is important to underline the fact that the different causal claims to be scrutinized in this work are neither regarded as competing explanations of the phenomenon at hand, nor mutually exclusive. Rather, they constitute different facets of Islamists' ideological transformation operating, more often than not, in

complementary ways. To be sure, their consideration under separate sections results also from analytical convenience in that, as will be demonstrated shortly, these factors have not worked in an isolated fashion from each other. To illustrate, one cannot make sense of the birth of Islamic middle classes without taking into consideration the relatively tolerant attitude of the Turkish state towards Islamic economic activity in the relevant historical period. Nor can one fully account for Islamist politicians' concrete electoral strategies without taking into consideration the historical transformation of their constituency.

Conventionally, most comparative studies in the field of political science are comparisons across countries; that is, the preferred unit of analysis is the country. Yet, logically speaking, "the comparative method can also be employed in intra-country comparisons...or across time" (Mackie & Stoker, 1995, p.173) so long as empirical evidence is compared systematically and explicitly (Rose, 1991). In fact, the unit of analysis adopted here is the political party, and observations, except for the JDP and FP, are not synchronic, but diachronic. Therefore, the variation is achieved "within the case" (Landman, 2003) rather than across cases through a longitudinal research design.<sup>11</sup>

A common problem associated with historical comparisons is the selection of the cases based on the values of the dependent variable, otherwise known as the "selection bias".<sup>12</sup> Such a research design has distorting effects on the inferences that are drawn from the comparative analysis including the under and overestimation of the effects of certain explanatory factors (Geddes, 1990). The present study avoids these inferential problems thanks to the inclusion into the analysis of Islamist political parties that did not moderate; that is, cases where the outcome of ideological moderation is not present.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The present study employs a "mixed methods" strategy under the broader framework of comparative research. More precisely, it brings together focused and qualitatively-oriented historical comparison with time-series cross-sectional statistical analysis to

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<sup>11</sup> See also Eckstein (1975) and Ragin (2000) on single country studies with a large-*n*.

<sup>12</sup> This problem is much more acute in studies adopting a most different systems design (MDSD) than those adopting a most similar systems design (MSSD) (Landman, 2003). For more on the subject, see Geddes (1990) and Collier (1995).

better exploit the potentialities of both methods and to improve the validity of its research findings.

Mixed methods research can be defined as “the type of research in which a researcher or a team of researchers combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (e.g., use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration” (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007, p.123).<sup>13</sup> As a distinct research practice, it was formulated first in Campbell and Fiske’s (1959) article suggesting the use of more than one method to make sure that the variance to be explained results from the phenomenon studied itself rather than dictated by the method choice (Jick, 1979; Johnson *et al.*, 2007). Another common name for the mixed methods research is methodological “triangulation”<sup>14</sup>, a term coined first by Webb, Campbell, Schwartz & Sechrest (1968) in the context of social scientific inquiry.

In addition to contributing to a better understanding of the phenomenon at hand (“expansion”) and improving the validity of research results (“corroboration”), a mixed methods approach can particularly prove useful at the exploratory stage of scientific research by pointing to factors that can be overlooked by single method studies (“initiation”) (Rossman & Wilson, 1985 as cited in Bazeley, 2002). In fact, several proponents of this methodological approach argue that the cross-pollination that takes place between qualitative and quantitative research traditions is the key strength of the mixed methods approach (Jick, 1979; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, Johnson *et al.*, 2007). This is the case because “although it has always been observed that each method has assets and liabilities, triangulation purports to exploit the assets and neutralize, rather than compound, the liabilities” (Jick, 1979, p.604).<sup>15</sup>

Then, what are the concrete advantages of a mixed methods research strategy with respect to mono-method studies? First of all, when the research results yielded by different methods converge, the researcher can have more confidence in his/her research results. Divergent results, instead, can lead to better explanations and more

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<sup>13</sup> This definition represents the synthesis arrived at by Johnson *et al.* (2007) after reviewing the definitions provided by the leading methodologists working in the mixed methods research field.

<sup>14</sup> According to Denzin (1978), triangulation in social sciences can take other forms as well including data triangulation, theory triangulation and investigator triangulation all designed to minimize the bias resulting from the employment of a single type of data, of a single type of theory or the involvement of a single researcher in the research project.

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed comparison of relative weaknesses and strengths of qualitative, quantitative and mixed method studies, see Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004).

comprehensive theories by encouraging researchers to dig deeper into the phenomenon in an attempt to account for the incongruence.<sup>16</sup> Third, the cross-method dialogue that characterizes multi method studies can stimulate methodological innovation. Forth, the same process can encourage the integration of apparently disparate theories in addition to providing a venue where claims of competing theories can be tested against each other. Finally, when the qualitative dimension is stronger, such a research strategy can produce “holistic” explanations (Jick, 1978).

In spite of these advantages, mixed methods research also suffers from certain weaknesses peculiar to this type of methodological choice. Most notable among these downsides is the difficulty of replicating research results due to its complicated nature. Moreover, research designs combining multiple methods generally require more resources on the part of the researcher, both material and intellectual (Jick, 1979). In particular, it is not always easy, if not impossible, for researchers to acquire the necessary skills and technical competence in all the methods employed (Bazeley, 2002).

Studies employing a mixed methods research design can be categorized on a number of dimensions. First, in terms of the actual methods combined, some studies belong to the “within-methods” subtype which integrates different techniques under the same research paradigm while others fall into the “between-methods” category combining methods coming from both qualitative and quantitative traditions (Denzin, 1978). Second, the mixing and meshing of methods can occur at different stages. In this respect, mixed methods studies are classified under two groups: simultaneous and sequential designs (Morse, 1991). In simultaneous designs, different research methods are employed and combined simultaneously whereas in sequential designs, qualitative and quantitative methods are applied to the object of study in a sequential manner and the combination takes place at the final stage of interpretation of results. A further categorization concerns the relative weight of qualitative and quantitative methods in research design (Johnson *et al*, 2007). In this respect, it is possible to talk about qualitative-dominant, quantitative-dominant and “pure” mixed designs where the weight of qualitative and quantitative methods are more or less equal.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Rather than being convergent and divergent, the research results can also be complimentary. That is, they can shed light upon the different facets of the phenomenon without contradicting each other.

<sup>17</sup> For an overview of the various classification schemes put forward by students of mixed methods research see, Niglas (2000).

In broad terms, the present dissertation blends qualitative and quantitative versions of longitudinal comparative research. Therefore, in terms of the actual methods mixed, it falls under the between-methods subtype of mixed methods research.<sup>18</sup> Regarding the relative weight of quantitative and qualitative elements, it fits into the qualitative-dominant subtype as two of the main research questions (the roles of political participation and state repression in Islamist party moderation) are dealt with primarily through historical qualitative method while the third (the role of socio-economic factors) is analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

I have chosen to employ a mixed methods research strategy in order to analyze the socio-economic background of Islamist moderation for two principal reasons. First, available historical data is not sufficient to differentiate between the social bases of the Islamist WP and the moderate conservative JDP, both of which are depicted in previous studies as parties drawing their electoral strength from a multi-class electoral coalition within which the poor constitutes the majority. Moreover, the findings of the previous studies on the social bases of individual Islamist parties are not fully comparable because they are based on a mixture of expert opinion, interpretation of the electoral results and survey data rather than on systematically collected time-series data. I overcame the resulting indeterminacy in research results by employing statistical methods that captured with more clarity the difference between the social bases of non-moderated and moderated Islamist parties.

Second, the focused historical comparison has revealed that the poor and the underprivileged joined the political Islamist constituency during the WP years. In other words, the causal connection between poverty and political Islam appeared to be historically contingent rather than universally valid. When I applied my statistical model to individual Islamist parties, I reached the same conclusion, i.e. income poverty is correlated with the electoral performance of only in the case of the WP among all the Islamist parties under scrutiny, and this improved my confidence in my research results.

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<sup>18</sup> Denzin (1978), on the whole, considers between-methods triangulation a superior method compared to the within-methods version, because only through the former, the inherent weaknesses of individual research paradigms can be overcome.





## CHAPTER 3

### TURKISH ISLAMIST POLITICAL PARTIES AT THE INTERSECTION OF POLITICAL ISLAM AND DEMOCRACY

#### 1. ISLAMIST PARTIES, DEMOCRACY AND MODERATION

##### *1a. Political Islam and Democracy*

“Political Islam”, or “Islamism”, may be defined as a modern political ideology, rather than “a religious or theological construct” (Ayoob, 2004), that seeks the establishment of a theocratic political order based on Islamic principles (Roy as cited in “The Gods”, 2003; Shephard, 1996). The main origin of these principles is Sharia, or Islamic law. Sharia has two fundamental sources: Quran and the examples set by the words and deeds of Prophet Mohammed (the *sunna*). The issues that are not directly addressed in these primary sources are handled by Islamic jurists that use secondary sources such as the teachings of recognized Islamic scholars or analogies established through comparison with these two primary sources (the *ijtihad*).

There are differences of interpretation and application of Sharia law among different sects of Islam, among different Islamist movements as well as among different Muslim countries<sup>19</sup>. The actual content of Islamic law, i.e. its extent and scope, has also been debated widely among Islamist thinkers, who disagree over whether or not Sharia provides a comprehensive set of rules that should regulate human life in all its aspects or whether it should merely be seen as a general guideline for leading a good and moral life, thus leaving a lot of room for human interpretation and adaptation (Krämer, 1997). Moreover, political Islam, used in reference to a certain type of political ideology, should be differentiated from other forms of Islamism of a mysticist and proselytizing nature that delimit themselves to the creation of a more religious society in mainly socio-cultural terms, and hence do not attempt to alter directly state structures and their underlying legal basis (Kalyvas, 2003)

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<sup>19</sup> See, for instance, Wickham’s (2004) comparison of Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and its moderate offspring, the Wasat Party.

The relationship between political Islam and democracy, i.e. whether the two are compatible or not, has become one of the most debated subjects in academic and policy circles especially after the 9/11 attacks even though it is possible to talk about an earlier surge of interest at the beginning of the 1980s following the Iranian Revolution. The outbreak of the Arab Spring in the early months of 2011 a decade later has rendered the issue even more salient as Islamist political parties confessing to replace authoritarian state structures with more democratic and equitable political arrangements proliferated in the Middle East.

To illustrate, the *Journal of Democracy* has recently dedicated two full issues to the subject matter not to mention several other special issues in scholarly journals and edited volumes hosting opposing points of view (e.g. Beinin & Stork, 1997; Kramer, 1997; Salame, 1994; Volpi, 2010). While an exhaustive account of the debate is beyond the scope of this dissertation<sup>20</sup>, recognition of the difference between Islam as a religious faith and political Islam as a well articulated ideology intent on changing state structures can do much to clear several points of contention. In other words, it is analytically misleading to conflate the cultural and political expressions of Islam despite the close interaction between the two. In this respect, the present dissertation does not subscribe to the essentialist view of Islam as a religion intrinsically inimical to the development of democratic institutions and norms (Huntington, 1993; Lewis, 1990).<sup>21</sup> After all, the enormous variety of political regimes that have been established in Muslim societies, both historically and currently, suggests that “it is not possible to talk about Islam and democracy in general but only about Muslims living and theorizing under specific historical circumstances” (Krämer, 1997, p.72). Besides, it should be noted that, as aptly observed by Stepan (2001), religious traditions, including Islam, have been anything

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<sup>20</sup> Huntington (1993) and Lewis (1990) are arguably the most vocal proponents of the incompatibility thesis on cultural grounds. Their arguments have been countered by those of Esposito & Voll (1996) who have pointed to certain Islamic concepts, especially *shura* (consultation), *ijma* (consensus) and *ijtihad* (independent reasoning), in an effort to demonstrate that Islam does not lack the cultural prerequisites for the flourishing of democratic institutions and practices. The incompatibility thesis have also been challenged on non-cultural grounds by studies that highlight certain socio-economic and political conditions prevailing in Middle Eastern polities that mitigate against the establishment and consolidation of democratic regimes (e.g. Halliday, 1996; Hinnebusch, 2000). For a historical survey of the debate, see Anderson (2009).

<sup>21</sup> For a powerful critique of the culturalist assumptions animating the current debate on Islam and democracy, see Sadowski (1997). See also Anderson (2009), for a midway position that refuses the irrelevancy of cultural dispositions informed by religious traditions in explaining democratic transitions while, by and large, agreeing with the points raised by the critics of culture-based accounts of the religion-democracy nexus.

but multi-vocal regarding matters of governance, as evident in their use and mobilization as a source of legitimacy for political ambitions as diverse as democratization and authoritarianism.

Moreover, Islamist parties, regardless of their ideological position, may be said to perform a representative function by carrying the preferences of their constituencies onto the political arena (Burgat, 1997). Very often these constituencies involve, in large numbers, marginalized sections of society typically, if not exclusively, on socio-economic grounds.<sup>22</sup> Previously neglected by mainstream political forces, these underprivileged social groups, *via* Islamist parties, might get a chance to express their grievances and demand solutions. Besides, most of the regimes challenged by Islamist opposition parties display an authoritarian or semi-authoritarian character. In this respect, the forced opening and liberalization of these regimes by whatever political force emerging from civil society, including religious integralists, might be considered as a good in itself comprising the first steps of a future democratic transition.

Nevertheless, the ultimate goal of the establishment of a theocratic state based on Islamic principles, the defining characteristic of political Islam, clashes on two major fronts with the basic precepts of democracy. The first one regards the notion of popular sovereignty in that, according to Islamist thought, all sovereignty ultimately resides in God, and therefore laws should not be based on popular will, but on God's revelations. This tension can also be generalized to other forms of secular government due to the fact that in the political Islamist mindset "state legitimacy [should be] derived from the application of sharia and fusion of religion and politics (*din wa-dawla*) as opposed to separation of state and church and legislation without reference to religion" (Kalyvas, 2003, p.300).<sup>23</sup> The second problem arises at the level of social and political pluralism and their protection through individual rights and freedoms (Anderson, 2009; Krämer, 1997; Wickham, 2004). Political Islam's integralist and

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<sup>22</sup> See Chapter 4 for a detailed discussion of the relationship between the support for Islamist parties and socio-economic hardship.

<sup>23</sup> Despite the rejection of state secularism as implied by the *din wa-dawla* formula, some mainstream Islamist political thinkers differentiate between the realm of individual faith and the realm of worldly affairs including economic, political and familial arrangements. Unlike the former, the latter is open to change according to the necessities of history and society so long as these arrangements do not contradict basic Islamic values. The concrete organization of the state and political institutions is usually considered part of this second, more technical realm, enabling the adoption of certain democratic practices even if they originate from outside the Muslim world (Flores, 1997; Krämer, 1997).

organic understanding of state-society relations might easily lead to exclusionary policies towards cultural minorities in addition to breeding intolerance towards social and political opposition. Since political community and religious community is generally considered as one and the same thing, it is not untypical for women, non-Muslims, secular Muslims and Muslims belonging to non-Orthodox sects to be excluded from formal decision-making mechanisms.<sup>24</sup> A competitive party system also appears to be at odds, at least in theory, with more radical interpretations of political Islam because it “places on an equal footing the true ‘party of God’ and other parties” (Kalyvas, 2003, p.300).<sup>25</sup>

### ***1b. Classifying Islamist Political Parties***

Needless to say, this is an ideal-typical definition of political Islam, and in this sense is unable to capture some important differences among real-world cases of Islamist political parties. For one thing, the concrete particulars of a Sharia-based order promoted by these parties vary depending on the interpretation of sacred texts adopted by the party in question as well as on the political traditions and institutions of the countries in which they operate. In addition, in terms of political strategies, there are Islamist political parties who prefer to wage their struggle on the formal public plane with fundamentally pacifist strategies (e.g. Wasat Party in Egypt, Islamic Action Front in Jordan) as well as those that engage in revolutionary activities in order to violently overthrow existing regimes (e.g. Armed Islamic Group in Algeria). Still, there are some others that have both a formal political branch and an underground militant organization (e.g. Hamas in Israel, Hezbollah in Lebanon).

The recognition of above-mentioned differences has led students of Islamist politics to develop a number of classificatory schemes regarding Islamist groups around the world. The classical distinction is between the *moderates* and *radicals* (Schwedler, 2006), the former used in reference to Islamist groups who try to achieve their goals through gradual reform within the framework of existing political institutions, regardless of whether one is talking about a constitutional monarchy

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<sup>24</sup> For instance, in Egypt, the post-Arab Spring Freedom and Justice Party with a moderate Islamist platform has recently declared that they are not favorable to women and Copt Christians’ becoming presidents despite giving assurances to stand at an equal distance from both male and female citizens and religious creeds (“Brotherhood sticks”, 2011). The more radical Salafist Al-Nour Party is also categorically against women and Copts becoming presidents in particular and occupying leadership positions in general on the grounds that one of the duties of the president is to preserve the Islamic nature of the Egyptian society (Al-Nour Party Profile, 2011).

<sup>25</sup> See also Haqqani & Fradkin (2008) on the Islamist approach to political parties.

(such as in Jordan) or a parliamentary democracy (such as in Turkey). The latter, instead, is used in reference to groups that seek radical social and political change by way of revolutionary and, very often, violent methods.<sup>26</sup> The two categories proposed by Brumberg (1997), “reformist” vs. “militant fundamentalism”, might also be seen as different names for the same concepts in that the difference between the two boils down to a difference of tactics rather than substance.

While Brumberg’s third category, “tactical modernism”, refers to the discursive strategies adopted by reformist fundamentalists, and in that sense cannot be seen as a distinct class of Islamists as he himself points out (Brumberg, 1997, p.18), his fourth category “strategic modernism” refers to Islamic liberals who call for the establishment of a liberal democratic order within which Muslim religious piety can be expressed freely in peaceful coexistence with other religious orientations. This last category, unlike the first two, signifies a shift not only in tactics but also in the goals of the Islamist movement as the ideal Muslim polity is not envisaged as one governed according to Islamic principles but as a liberal and democratic order respectful of religious differences. If ideological commitment to the establishment of a theocratic state is the yardstick by which one can differentiate a political Islamist from a conservative politician based on the narrow definition of political Islam adopted here, Brumberg’s strategic modernists can also be labeled as “non-Islamists”. In this respect, the present thesis proposes a three-fold classification of Islamically-oriented political actors: radical political Islamists, moderate political Islamists and non-Islamist conservatives (see Table 3.1 below).

**Table 3.1- Classification of Islamically-oriented Political Parties**

	<b>PARTY TYPE</b>		
	<i>Radical Islamist</i>	<i>Moderate Islamist</i>	<i>Non-Islamist conservative</i>
<b>PARTY OBJECTIVE</b>	Sharia state	Sharia state	Liberal democracy
<b>PARTY STRATEGY</b>	Revolutionary/ violent	Reformist/ non-violent	Reformist/ non-violent

<sup>26</sup> In contrast to the distinction made between the means and the ends of Islamist groups in the literature on Islamist politics, Pipes (1995), rather controversially, lumps together all Islamist movements and argues that moderate Islamists do not actually exist as this would be a contradiction in terms.

### ***1c. What is Islamist moderation?***

Based on the above classificatory scheme, political moderation of Islamist parties can be conceptualized as a two-phase process. The first phase involves a movement from radical political Islam to moderate political Islam, and in this sense, implies a transformation of the political strategies pursued by the party in question. This phase, in practice, corresponds to the decision to give up armed struggle in favor of participation in legal political life. The second phase of moderation, instead, involves a movement from moderate Islamism to a conservative, yet non-Islamist ideological position. In this respect, it concerns the substance of the programmatic commitments of Islamist parties rather than how these commitments have been pursued. More concretely, in this second phase, the moderate Islamist party abandons the objective of the establishment of an Islamic state altogether, and officially commits itself to a liberal democratic order, at least in procedural terms.

This two-phase definition of Islamist moderation is slightly different from the definitions of the phenomenon proposed in earlier studies. For instance, Wickham (2004) defines moderation as “the abandonment, postponement, or revision of radical goals that enables an opposition movement to accommodate itself to the give and take of ‘normal’ competitive politics. It entails a shift toward a substantive commitment to democratic principles, including the peaceful alternation of power, ideological and political pluralism, and citizenship rights“ (p.206). Schwedler (2006), instead, proposes a narrower definition as “movement from a relatively closed and rigid worldview to one more open and tolerant of alternative perspectives” (p.3). Both definitions do not differentiate between tactical and substantial dimensions of Islamist moderation presupposing that the former is a behavioral reflection of the former. More importantly, they do not openly confront the issue of the Islamists’ commitment to a *Sharia*-based social and political order and the obvious limits that this anti-secular position sets on their adaptation to democratic norms and institutions.

Part of the reason why this last issue is overlooked in the above definitions of Islamist moderation has to do with the fact that even though several Islamist parties in the Muslim world have embarked on a course of political moderation in recent decades, declaring in the process their commitment to electoral competition, social and political pluralism and individual rights to varying extents, even the most moderate ones still consider *Sharia* as the basis upon which a just social and political order should be erected. The case of the Turkish Islamist movement, in this sense, is

quite exceptional in terms both the scope and depth of moderation it underwent. Besides, underground militant Islamist groups such as the Turkish Hezbollah<sup>27</sup> have always remained a marginal element of the overall Turkish Islamist movement. Turkish Islamist parties, right from their appearance on the formal political plane in the early 1970s, preferred to work within the “system”, which in the Turkish case happens to be a multi-party parliamentary democracy with universal suffrage and regular free and fair elections, albeit with well-known defects. These parties regularly participated in local and national elections, gained representation in the parliament, and formed coalition governments with secular parties. All these aspects of their political participation already qualified them as moderate Islamist parties. More importantly, however, when this already moderate movement embarked on a process of ideological moderation in the late 1990s, it ended up completely renouncing the goal of the establishment of a *Sharia*-based state, and declared its commitment to the protection and consolidation of Turkish secular democracy.

In the remainder of this chapter, I will first present a short historical overview of Islamist political parties in Turkey. I will then examine the political and ideological platform of each Islamist party in chronological order and assign them to the appropriate category in terms of their ideological inclinations (radical Islamist, moderate Islamist and non-Islamist conservative).

## **2. ISLAMICALLY-ORIENTED POLITICAL PARTIES IN TURKEY: A SHORT HISTORICAL OVERVIEW**

There are six Islamically-oriented parties in Turkish Republican history: National Order Party (*Milli Nizam Partisi* – NOP) (1970-1971), National Salvation Party (*Milli Selamet Partisi* – NSP) (1972-1980), Welfare Party (*Refah Partisi* – WP) (1983 - 1998), Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi* – VP) (1997-2001), Felicity Party (*Saadet Partisi* – FP) (2001-present), and Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – JDP) (2001-present). All of these parties belong to a broader Islamist political movement known as the National Outlook (*Milli Görüş*) movement. The movement’s historical leader is Necmettin Erbakan (1926 - 2011), a professor in mechanical engineering. He acted as the general-secretary of the first three of the National

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<sup>27</sup> Turkish (or Kurdish) Hezbollah is an armed Islamist group active in the Southeastern regions of Turkey. It is Kurdish-Sunni organization fighting against both the Turkish government and the Marxist-Leninist Kurdish separatist group PKK. The group is believed to be involved in several killings and suicide-bombings.

Outlook parties (NOP, NSP and WP). After his political ban following the closure of the WP, he retreated from formal politics but remained as the behind-the-scenes leader of both the VP and the FP until his recent death in 2011.

The National Outlook movement, in addition to its formal party organization, has had affiliated youth branches, NGOs, trade unions as well as a very developed foreign network which recruited supporters among Turkish workers in Europe, particularly in Germany. Nevertheless, the driving force of the movement has always remained the political party (Cakir, 2004). Here, it should be noted that the JDP formally disassociated itself from the National Outlook movement immediately after its establishment. Nevertheless, most of its current leading cadres are National Outlook-trained politicians who began their careers in various branches of the movement, and over time came to occupy several key posts in National Outlook parties preceding the JDP.

While the history of the Islamist opposition movement in Turkey can be traced back to the establishment of the secular republic in the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement did not transform itself into a full-fledged political party until January 1970, the year when Erbakan founded the NOP. Until that date Islamist groups either provided implicit and/or explicit support to centre-right conservative parties, sometimes forming small factions within them, or remained underground mainly due to several legal restrictions that outlaw the use of religion for political purposes (Narli, 1999).

The very first attempt to establish an Islamist party dates back to 1967 when a number of Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi* – JP) parliamentarians and a senator from the same party decided to split and establish an independent Islamist party. They were joined by Erbakan, who at the time was the head of Industry Section under the roof of the Turkish Union of Chambers. Unable to finish the preparations for a new party, Erbakan decided to run under the JP ticket at the 1969 general election. However, his candidacy was vetoed by Suleyman Demirel, then the leader of the JP, who himself was fearful of the takeover of party leadership by the Islamist faction within the JP. As a result, the founders of the NOP decided to run as independents. Among the independent candidates, only Erbakan managed to enter the parliament. He was later on joined by two JP parliamentarians, and established on January 26, 1970 the NOP (Cakir, 2004).



Shortly after the party's establishment, on May 12, 1971, the Turkish Constitutional Court shut down the NOP based on charges of anti-secularism. This closure decision came after the March 12, 1970 military intervention which led to the resignation of the incumbent JP government under the pressure of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF).<sup>28</sup> Erbakan went into exile in Switzerland, only to come back a few years later when the military relatively relaxed its hold over civilian politics.

The NOP party cadres quickly formed a new party, the National Salvation Party, on October 11, 1972. Erbakan did not immediately assume a leadership position in the party as he could be accused of reincarnating the outlawed NOP, and turned back to an active role only after the full transition to civilian rule following the October 14, 1973 elections (Ozbudun,1987). The NSP participated in two general elections and two local elections. In 1973, it managed to obtain 11.8% of the votes cast and 48 parliamentary seats out of the 450. At the 1977 general election, its voter support dropped to 8.6%. Subsequently, it was able to send only 24 parliamentarians to the national assembly. Notwithstanding its rather weak electoral performance, the NSP enjoyed substantial bargaining power in the legislative throughout the 1970s due to its position as the third largest party. Combined with the particularity of the parliamentary arithmetic during those years, this position allowed the party to participate in three coalition governments.

The first of these coalitions was formed with the social-democratic Republican Peoples Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – RPP*) in January 1974 and dissolved in November the same year. This was followed by the “1<sup>st</sup> National Front Government” Front Government” (*1.Milliyetçi Cephe Hukumeti*) that was established in March 1975 with the participation of the centre-right JP, the Islamist NSP, the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – NAP*) and the centrist Republican Reliance Party (*Cumhuriyetçi Güven Partisi – RRP*). This second coalition came to an end in June 1977 shortly before the general elections scheduled the same year. After the 1977 election, the NSP founded its last coalition government again with the JP and the NAP (the “2<sup>nd</sup> National Front Government”). Neither did this third coalition experiment last long falling apart in about half a year in January 1978.

The NSP was shut down, along with all other political parties of the period, following the military intervention on September 12, 1980. An additional lawsuit was

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<sup>28</sup> Not only the military but also the Justice Party, which wanted to curtail Erbakan's growing strength, is believed to have played a role in the disbandment of the NOP (Alkan, 1984).

brought against the party in February 1981 by a military court that later on found several party members guilty of attempting to undermine secularism and sentenced them to two to four years in prison in February 1983. Among the party officials put to trial, Erbakan received the longest prison term.

The National Outlook movement resurrected its political arm on July 19, 1983 by forming the Welfare Party. The party could not participate in the first general elections held after the end of the military rule in 1983 because of the veto exercised by the military junta leaders. Erbakan, too, had to wait until the year 1987 to join the WP during which the political bans incurred by pre-1980 political leaders were lifted by a referendum.

The WP participated in three local (1984, 1989, 1994) and three national elections (1987, 1991, 1995), all but one (1984 local elections) under Erbakan's leadership. In 1987, the party could not enter the parliament failing to surpass the 10% national threshold. Four years later, prior to the 1991 general elections, it formed a pre-electoral coalition with the ultra-nationalist NWP (*Milliyetçi Calisma Partisi* – Nationalist Work Party) and RDP (*Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi* – Reformist Democracy Party). The three parties received 16.2% of all the votes cast, and obtained 62 seats in the parliament. Later on, 22 members of the WP's parliamentary group broke away to rejoin their parties of origin.

The WP's electoral popularity grew quickly into the mid-1990s. At the local elections of March 1994, not only did the WP increase its votes to 19.1%, but also won the municipalities of the two largest cities of Turkey, Istanbul and Ankara, much to the surprise of the Turkish electorate. This was ensued only a year later by another impressive electoral victory which eventually carried the party to power. At the 1995 parliamentary elections, the WP obtained the highest share of votes (21.4%), and sent 158 parliamentarians to the Turkish Grand National Assembly. The initial attempts of Erbakan to form a government were doomed to failure because its potential coalition partners, the secular and centre-right True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi* – TPP) and the Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi* – MP), were reluctant to work with an Islamist party, seen by both the Turkish state and the secular public opinion as a threat to the Republic. As a result, the TPP and MP went on to form a government (*Anayol Hükümeti*) in March 1996 with the outside backing of the social democratic Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti* – DLP). The *Anayol* coalition government collapsed in only three months with the resignation of the Prime Minister

Mesut Yilmaz following a motion of no confidence brought to the parliamentary agenda by the WP.

After the fall of the *Anayol* government, the WP managed to strike a bargain with the TPP leading to the establishment of the *Refahyol* government on June 28, 1996 with the WP as the senior coalition partner. This fourth coalition established by a National-Outlook party was probably the most controversial among all. The political controversy resulted mainly from the WP's policies in government such as Erbakan's attempts to tighten Turkey's ties with the Muslim world and its exceptionally warm relations with *de jure* banned but *de facto* tolerated religious orders. These policies, coupled with the growing militancy of the WP's grassroots organizations, quickly antagonized its coalition partner TPP, secular sections of the media and civil society, and, more importantly, the Turkish military that had already entertained serious doubts about the potential implications of the rise of a reactionary party to power.

The tension between the WP and the military reached its zenith when the Islamist mayor of a town near Ankara organized a mass protest meeting in support of the Palestinian cause on January 31, 1997. The event quickly turned into an Islamist show of strength against the secular regime while the military responded by staging a march of armed personnel carriers through the same town in a few days time. Yet, the final showdown between the WP and the military was yet to come. During the infamous National Security Council meeting on February 28, 1997, Erbakan received a list of eighteen measures from the TAF to be implemented with urgency. These measures identified Islamic reactionism as the principal internal security threat, and aimed at putting a cap on the perceived Islamization of society particularly through steps to be taken in the field of education (see Appendix B at the end of Chapter 5 for the complete list).<sup>29</sup> Erbakan, after an initial period of hesitation, reluctantly undersigned the document since he feared he could alienate the party grassroots if he implemented the measures. In the meantime, a closure case was brought against the WP before the Constitutional Court on May 21, 1997 with the chief public prosecutor, Vural Savas, accusing the party of "carrying the country to the brink of civil war" ("Cumhuriyetin seyir", 1998). On January 16, 1998, the Court decided to shut down the WP, and imposed a five-year political on its five top politicians including Erbakan.

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<sup>29</sup> For an incisive account of the "February 28 process" see Cizre & Cinar (2003).

The WP parliamentarians founded the Virtue Party in December 1997 anticipating the closure decision. Recai Kutan, a close associate of Erbakan, took over the formal leadership of the party, but Erbakan continued to rule over party affairs behind the closed doors. The VP, throughout its lifetime, participated in one general election and one local election, both in 1999. At the general elections, it received 15.4% of the votes faring better at the local elections with % 18.4 voter support. The party, now on the defensive, tried hard to distance itself from the WP, especially from its characteristic anti-Western discourse, as this would be enough grounds to face another closure case. Yet, these attempts could not prevent the party becoming the subject of another party closure case that started in May 1999. The Constitutional Court found the VP guilty of both being a continuation of a previously banned party and of its anti-secular activities on June 22, 2001 and shut it down.

The February 28 process led to a serious schism among Islamist ranks between Erbakan loyalists, the so-called traditionalist wing, and a group of younger generation Islamist politicians, known as the innovationist wing. The latter became increasingly local in their criticisms of the party leadership, but due to the continued grip of Erbakan over party affairs failed to overtake the control of the party. Following the closure of the VP, these two factions parted ways. The Erbakan loyalists established the Felicity Party on July 20, 2001, and the dissident faction the Justice and Development Party on August 14, 2001.

In the first general election after the break-up in November 2002, the JDP recorded an impressive victory with 34.4% voter support while the FP could only obtain 2.5%. In 2007, the gap between these sister parties grew even bigger as the JDP further increased its share to 46.4%, and the FP stalled at around 2.3%. In the last general election held in 2011, the FP's voter base further shrank down to 1.3% while the JDP continued to expand its electoral backing reaching 49.8%.

The FP has so far not been able to gain seats in the national assembly. Performing somewhat better (around 5%) in local elections, it is now considered a marginal political force. The JDP, on the other hand, has dominated the Turkish political scene since November 2002 elections. Currently in its third term in government, the party continues to enjoy wide public support, and is in full control of both the executive and legislative branches of the Turkish state. This is not only thanks to the JDP's strong parliamentary majority, but also to its success in capturing the office of the president of the Republic in 2007 and to the reforms directed towards

eliminating military influence over civilian politics. The JDP, too, found itself facing a party closure case like the previous National Outlook parties, but escaped their faith. The Constitutional Court, in March 2008, declared the party guilty of engaging in anti-secular activities, but opted for a 50% cut in the public funds allocated to the party instead of party ban.

### **3. CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE IDEOLOGICAL PLATFORMS OF TURKISH ISLAMIST PARTIES**

#### ***3a. National Order Party (1970-1971)***

According to its party program, the NOP was established in order to promote a “moral order” based on national and religious traditions and values (NOP Party Program, ND). The party differentiated between moral and material development, and argued that the former is a pre-requisite for the latter. Crucial in achieving moral development was the strengthening and expansion of religious education to all sectors of Turkish society and the elimination of Western influence and its corrupting effects from the cultural and educational fields.

The NOP argued that Islamic morality should form the basis not only of economic and technological progress but also of democratic politics as without a moral basis “democracy, too, would certainly degenerate and transform into one of the regimes against human dignity becoming a tool of anarchy” (NOP Party Program, ND). In the same vein, the protection of morality and family structure was defined as the outer limit of fundamental rights and freedoms, especially of the freedoms of thought and press. The party stated that it was not against secularism in principle, but its application as an anti-clerical state ideology in order to delimit freedoms of conscience and belief. Mainstream political parties, both to the right and left of the political spectrum, were hailed as the “imitators of the West” with the NOP as the only party reflecting the true character of Turkish society.

In the economic field, the NOP rejected both capitalist and socialist developmental models, and defended an ISI-based mixed economic model based on private property, extensive state intervention, heavy industrialization and social justice. It also opposed Turkey’s inclusion in the European Economic Community considering it as a Christian conspiracy to rob Turkey of its political and economic independence (“Prof.Erbakan”, 1970). As a precursor of Erbakan’s later initiatives to

set up alternative alliances outside both the Western and Eastern blocs, the NOP promised to seek closer relations with Muslim countries.

### ***3b. National Salvation Party (1972-1980)***

Like its predecessor NOP, it is difficult to find explicit religious references in NSP's official party documents let alone open calls for the establishment of a Sharia state mainly due to the legal restrictions on the use of religion for political purposes. In addition, the very recent memory of the closure of the NOP imposed a good deal of self-restraint on NSP leaders who certainly did not want to share the same end (Toprak, 1984; Saribay, 2004).

In continuity with the NOP, the religious element, instead, manifested itself in the form of proposals to ensure the "moral development" of the population such as the promotion of religious and moral education, delimitation of the freedom of press in order to protect national and moral values, and restrictions on foreign tourism on the grounds that it morally corrupted the youth. Within this framework, NSP fiercely opposed pornography, indecency in female dressing, alcohol, gambling and birth control (Ozbudun, 1987). The party appeared to endorse the principle of secularism, interpreted as the right of believers to freely express their religious beliefs, and to live a life accordingly. The protection of the freedom of belief and conscience received the highest attention in the party program among all the human rights.

Again in continuity with the NOP, the party's position on the foreign relations front reflected a certain "Moslem parochialism" (Toprak, 1984, p.127), as a part of which closer ties with the Islamic world were emphasized at the expense of Turkey's traditional Western orientation (Alkan, 1984). Consequently, the party staunchly opposed Turkey's membership in the European Community, and, in its stead, aspired to establish an alternative Muslim economic community with its own currency, an Islamic United Nations as well as an Islamic NATO to create a common defense front among the Muslim nations.

The party's views in the economic field were influenced more by state developmentalist economic models popular in the developing world in the 1970s than Islamic principles. In this respect, few proposals, such as the establishment of an interest-free banking system, had a distinct Islamic touch while other policies put a lot of stress on heavy industrialization under state tutelage and the protection of small and medium-sized business from monopoly capital.

The NSP appeared much more outspoken regarding the place of Islam in politics on less official platforms. Noteworthy in this respect is the content analysis of the party's semi-official newspaper *Milli Gazete* conducted by Alkan (1984). Focusing on the years 1973 and 1980, i.e. the years of establishment and closure of the NSP, Alkan (1984) found a significant reduction in the coverage of themes such as religion, secularism and moral development in Erbakan's speeches. On the other hand, though, he also found that support for the establishment of a Sharia state became much more pronounced over the same period. Crucial here was the impact of both the Iranian revolution of 1979 and the declaration of Sharia in Pakistan by General Ziya ul Hakk in 1978 as these developments "confirmed in many Muslim and Western minds that Western institutions were inappropriate for Muslim states and that efforts to secularize socio-political life could never yield substantial results in the Muslim world." (Karaosmanoglu, 1984, p.103). The NSP ideologues, too, started openly discussing the possibility of such a transformation in Turkey, tabling concrete proposals in terms of necessary political activities and tactics, in contrast to their previous prudence regarding the issue (Alkan, 1984).

As the party talked more about Sharia, themes such as "liberties, human rights and democracy" began to receive less attention (Alkan, 1984). In the wake of the party's establishment, Erbakan had stated that the new party would respect the freedom of thought of all citizens. However, once the repressive atmosphere of the first few years after the 1971 military memorandum lifted, the party lost its interest in democracy and human rights except freedoms of thought and conscience. On the discursive terrain, the freedom of thought was reduced to a right reserved only to believers while the freedom of conscience was interpreted in a particularistic way as a Muslim right rather than a universal one. Toward the late 1970s, the relative disinterest of NSP ideologues gave way to open attacks on democracy on the grounds that it was a Western invention designed to harm Muslim people and consequently it was incompatible with Islamic principles (Alkan, 1984).

Here, it is also illuminating to look at the NSP's record in power as part of coalition governments. The religiously-inspired policies undertaken by the NSP, while generally symbolic in nature, reflected by and large the above-mentioned aspiration of moral development in line with traditional-religious values. They included the removal of a nude sculpture in a square in Istanbul, the attempt to prosecute the director-general of the state-owned TV station TRT for airing a documentary showing

naked Amazonian tribes, the refusal to grant state credit for the construction of a tourist resort on the grounds that it leads to moral corruption, limitations on the sale of alcoholic beverages and an anti-pornography campaign spearheaded by the Minister of Interior of the NSP (Toprak, 1984). In addition, the party, obtaining serious budgetary concessions from its coalition partners, worked to make sure that more public resources were allocated to religious education through the introduction of ethics classes in primary and secondary education, and increases in state funds for religious functionaries, Preacher and Prayer Leader high schools (*Imam-Hatip liseleri*), Quran courses and mosque construction (Saribay, 2004).

### **3c. Welfare Party (1983-1998)**

Like its pre-1980 predecessors NOP and NSP, the WP's ideological platform was characterized, first and foremost, by a strong dose of anti-Westernism that identified the Westernization policies of the secular establishment as the fundamental source of the country's current political and socio-economic problems, and accordingly claimed that these policies had to be abandoned in favor of an alternative Islamic socio-political model. Likewise, the issue of Sharia had never been addressed explicitly on official platforms despite the fact that Erbakan as well as some other important party figures reportedly made pro-Sharia statements while addressing the party's supporters. As had been the case with the NOP and NSP, this Janus-faced discourse resulted by and large from several legal restrictions on the formation of religiously-motivated political parties, restrictions that posed a chronic problem for Islamist politicians. Consequently, they were, most often than not, accused of engaging in *takiyye*, i.e. dissimulation, by their secular critics who questioned the sincerity of these parties' attachment to the basic democratic principles. (Yildiz, 2003).

Again, like its predecessors, the party always presented itself as fundamentally different from both parties of the left and the right. The anti-systemic qualities setting the party apart from the political mainstream were tactfully underlined as part of an electoral strategy that aimed at capturing a growing number of disillusioned voters due to the bad economic performance and corruption of governments in the early 1990s (Onis, 1997; White, 1997).

The only significant discursive discontinuity between pre-1980 National Outlook parties and the WP arguably concerns economic issues. In contrast to the NOP/NSP line, the WP's economic discourse took a pro-free market turn at the



expense of pre-1980 statist policies. The party no longer mentioned heavy industrialization as a precondition for material development, and in their stead, called for measures for the transformation of Turkish economy into an interest-free Islamic economy based on private enterprise. Its elaborate Just Order (*Adil Duzen*) program, within which the specifics of this transformation were outlined, proposed a brand-new socio-economic vision that was claimed to be different from both capitalism and communism (Bugra, 2002b; Kamrava, 1998).

On the foreign policy front on the other hand, we observe more continuity than change. The WP at every occasion fiercely criticized the Western orientation of Turkish foreign policy, including its bid for the EU membership, on the grounds that it damaged national independence by accepting subservience to an “imperialist Zionist system” (Mecham, 2004). The party, instead, tried to develop warmer relationships with Muslim countries as part of its plans to create an alternative international bloc.<sup>30</sup> Blaming the underdevelopment of the Islamic nations in general and that of Turkey in particular on Western domination, Erbakan expressed even more vocally in the post-1980 period his desire to establish an Islamic United Nations, an Islamic common market with a common currency as well as a joint Islamic defense force (Kamrava, 1998).

As to the question of democracy, the WP appeared to entertain a rather restricted notion characterized, first and foremost, by a religiously-informed majoritarianism (Ozbudun, 2006a) that typically used a language of hard dichotomies such as truths and lies, and rights and wrongs reflecting an Islamic “axiomatic certitude” (Yildiz, 2003, p.7).<sup>31</sup> On the one hand, all the parties belonging to the National Outlook tradition, including the WP, appeared to recognize the legitimacy of electoral politics as they took part in elections, entered the parliament, participated in governments and showed great determination to stay in the electoral game. Besides, the WP officials in their public statements hardly ever challenged democratic principles in an overt fashion, and maintained that political power can only be obtained *via* elections (Ozbudun, 2006a). On the other hand, however, this adherence to the procedural aspects of parliamentary democracy was very often justified by the

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<sup>30</sup> Erbakan took a number of steps - including high profile official trips to Muslim countries with the ultimate aim of establishing an Islamic D-8 - during his short premiership to reorient Turkish foreign policy away from the Western World towards Islamic countries much to the annoyance of its secularly-oriented coalition partner TPP.

<sup>31</sup> For more on this point, see Cinar (2006), especially pp. 477-478

party elite in instrumentalist terms, that is, as a means to obtain political power with the purpose of undertaking a radical transformation of Turkish society along Islamic principles.

Underlying the WP's half-hearted attachment to the basics of democratic politics, in addition to religious integralism, was the Turkish Islamists' ambition, at least in those days, to challenge and find Islamic alternatives not only to Western political and socio-economic models but also to the forms of knowledge that rendered those models meaningful and legitimate (Dagi, 2004; Toprak, 1993). Accordingly, the notion of democracy was considered by a good many Islamists as a Western imposition on Muslim societies, which in theory were able to produce more authentic and hence adequate solutions to modern day problems. On the one hand, this ideological rigidity effectively prevented the adoption of democracy as a collective ideal, and required that participation in existing democratic processes be justified on instrumentalist grounds. On the other hand, it gave birth to such awkward policy proposals as the "confederation of faiths" to deal with the worsening situation in the Kurdish regions in particular and with the ever-present ethno-religious tensions in Turkish society in general. The proposal consisted of a communitarian segregation of ethno-religious communities each governed according to the dictates of its own faith with the central government performing the role of an above-faith coordinating entity (White, 2008). While the WP presented this attempt as an instance of authentic Muslim-style "pluralism", as opposed to "democracy" (White, 2008), in reality the proposal seemed more like a contemporary reincarnation of the Ottoman *millet* system, which was fundamentally pre-modern in character as it handled the problem of ethno-religious diversity by assigning rights to "communities" rather than "individuals".

Needless to say, non-Orthodox Muslim sects such as Alevis, or non-observant Muslims were not included among the groups that the WP planned to grant socio-cultural autonomy. When interrogated about the fate of such Muslims under a future Sharia regime, one WP official responded that he did not even consider them Muslims (White, 1997). Similar communitarian premises were also reflected in the approach of the WP to the Kurdish problem as the party emphasized the unifying force of Islam as an overarching and cross-ethnicity force in accordance with its rejection of the official secular nationalism that drew more on ethnicity than on religion as a unifying element (Dinc, 2006; Duran, 1998). In the same vein, the WP approached the question of

human rights in a very limited and particularistic way, i.e. solely as a matter of ending the historical oppression of Muslim believers by the Kemalist regime (White, 1997). The problems regarding the status of women also did not fall within the purview of the WP's political concerns, which kept the doors of its central decision-making organs closed to women despite their strong presence at the grassroots level (Narli, 1999).

### ***3d. Virtue Party (1997-2001)***

Founded in December 1997, the VP brought under its umbrella ex-parliamentarians of the WP in addition to inheriting the party's grassroots organizational network. The new party, now in opposition, spared no effort to distance itself from the WP as this would be sufficient legal grounds for closure. With this purpose in mind, it significantly cooled down its anti-systemic rhetoric "by shifting from the old claim that Turkey was not religious enough to the claim that Turkey was not democratic enough" (Mecham, 2004, 346). In other words, the party, while remaining committed to the demands of its predominantly conservative constituency, rearticulated those demands in the now-popular language of democracy and human rights with the hope that this would protect it from the wrath of the Kemalist establishment (Dagi, 2005; Onis, 2001; Narli, 1999).

This discursive shift could easily be noticed in the party's program within which the talk of democracy, human rights and personal liberties overshadowed that of the creation of an ideal Muslim society (Narli, 1999, p.44; Yildiz, 2003). Parallel to these developments, the VP took a u-turn from its predecessor's anti-Europeanism, and declared its full support for Turkey's EU membership bid. In the meantime, Erbakan appealed the Turkish Constitutional Court's closure decision and the resulting political bans at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in May 1998.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> The European Commission on Human Rights later on referred the case to the ECHR, which in turn ruled in favor of Turkey in February 2003. In their application to the ECHR, Erbakan and three of his close associates claimed that the Constitutional Court's decision was in violation of the several articles of the European Convention of Human Rights and the Protocol No.1 of the EU that relate to the freedom of association and the right to assembly and the right to freedom of expression and religion. In its decision, the court reasoned that even though the claimed violations took place, they should be seen as legitimate restrictions on individual freedoms for the protection of democracy because the RP's ultimate objective was the establishment of a theocratic state. The court also stressed that there was no obligation on the part of the Turkish state to tolerate such parties in the name of political pluralism. For further details of the case, see the decision of the European Court of Human Rights dated February 13, 2003 in the case of Refah Partisi (The Welfare Party) And Others V. Turkey.

In economic matters, the “just order” was completely shelved, and a fully pro-free market stance was adopted with minor reservations. The party cadres also underwent certain changes as modern educated women were included in decision-making mechanisms and several prominent names were transferred from centre-right parties.

There is disagreement in the literature on how to classify the VP given its ambivalent ideological stance. Hale & Ozbudun (2009) consider above-mentioned shifts in ideological outlook sufficient to classify the VP as an Islamic liberal party *a la* Blumberg. In contrast, some other students of the VP (e.g. Cizre & Cinar, 2003; Duzgit & Cakir, 2009; Gulalp, 1999) argue that the VP should be seen as a continuation of the moderate Islamist WP. I concur with the latter for three main reasons. First, the VP’s Islamist cadres were feeling extremely insecure vis-à-vis the secular establishment at the time (Cizre & Cinar, 2003). This was the case because the “February 28 process” resulted not only in the ousting from power of the WP, but also in the wide-spread persecution of Islamist businesses, NGOs and religious orders in the years that ensued. The levels of insecurity among Islamists reached such levels that the VP consulted the chief of staff on the appropriateness of its party program, and even stated that it understood the military’s worries about the protection of secularism in reference to the February 28 decisions (Cizre & Cinar, 2003). Second, despite political bans, Erbakan continued to steer party leadership with the help of his close associates including his protégé Recai Kutan, who assumed the VP’s leadership. According to one prominent ex-WP parliamentarian, the VP’s ruling cadres were planning to go back to the WP line as soon as the February 28 atmosphere disappeared (Cizre & Cinar, 2003). Finally, the few legislative initiatives taken by the VP in the parliament were blatantly self-serving to cast further doubt on the party’s understanding of democracy (Gulalp, 1999). They remained limited to attempts to lift Erbakan’s political bans and to render more difficult the closure of political parties. On the whole, however much the VP tried to put a distance between itself and political Islam on the discursive terrain, in the light of the harshness of the Turkish state’s post-February 28 policies, the party’s ruling cadres and its political initiatives, it would be more correct to label the VP as a moderate Islamist political party.

### ***3e. Justice and Development Party (2001-present)***

The JDP was founded in August 2001 by the reformist wing that split from the VP. The new party's by-laws gave maybe the earliest signals as to the magnitude of ideological change that was to occur in the following years. In clear contrast to all previous National Outlook parties, these by-laws introduced several institutional mechanisms designed to prevent leader-domination in particular and ensure intra-party democracy in general within the limits imposed by the Law on Political Parties (Ozbudun, 2006a; Tepe, 2005). Not only did the new spin-off party introduce unprecedented measures for the democratization of its internal affairs, but also adopted a brand new official ideology, "conservative democracy", to cut its ties with the Islamist National Outlook tradition altogether. To launch this new identity, Erdogan commissioned the writing of a book titled *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* ("Conservative Democracy") by a close associate. The book was subsequently distributed to all local branches, and a high profile international conference was organized in Istanbul with the same theme to further elaborate on the concept.

The new identity of the party combined a number of important messages regarding the questions of religion, the party's place in the political spectrum and democracy. First, right from the beginning, the JDP elite, whenever possible, emphasized that the JDP was not a religious party, and was very careful to exclude references to a politicized Islam in their public speeches. This was paralleled by a ubiquitously expressed commitment to republican principles in general and secularism in particular. The latter was described as an indispensable aspect of democratic life despite differences between the JDP's interpretation of the term and the official version.<sup>33</sup> In the same vein, the party, at least initially, pursued a non-confrontational strategy vis-à-vis the secularist establishment keeping such thorny issues as the headscarf ban firmly out of its agenda (Cosar & Ozman, 2004; Ozbudun, 2006a). The party's desire to dissociate itself from political Islam reached such extents that Erdogan publicly refused to be referred to as a "Muslim democrat" party, as opposed to a conservative one, because, according to him, "these two [identities] should be considered on different planes" (as cited in Cosar & Ozman, 2004, p.66).

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<sup>33</sup> Whereas the official understanding of secularism in Turkey is founded upon a strict separation of state and religion along French lines, the JDP's version appears more akin to the American model as it emphasizes state neutrality towards all religious groups and full protection of religious rights and freedoms (Kuru, 2006). For more on different notions of state secularism, and a comparative account of state policies towards religion in France, Turkey and the US, see Kuru (2009).

In this statement, one could also find clues as to how the newly-emerging conservative democrats would accommodate the demands of their religiously conservative electoral base without rocking the republican boat too much, and without tarnishing their liberal image both at home and abroad. The compromise took the form of a refusal of Islam as a political project and its cherishing as a socio-cultural ideal to be nourished in the realm of civil society (Akdogan, 2006; Dagi, 2004; Yavuz, 2006a, 2009). In fact, according to Akdogan (2006), a prominent party ideologue, the JDP's goal was "to transform cultural values in such a way that religion as a political identity is acceptable, rather than to simply reduce religion to an ideology" (p. 62). In this respect, JDP's conservatism signified both the party's attachment to family values and traditional morality and their rejection of top-down social engineering in reference to the state-led and Western-oriented Turkish modernization experience.

Having severed its ties with Turkish religious far-right, the JDP firmly anchored itself in the political center, which has constituted the predominant voter preference since the beginning of the multi-party politics in 1946 especially in its right-wing form (Insel, 2003; Ozbudun, 2006b; Sayari, 2007). This repositioning was explicitly revealed in the introduction written by Erdogan to the book *Conservative Democracy* (Akdogan, 2003) within which he described the JDP as "the single-most undisputable force of the center right". In another public speech, he drew parallels between the JDP and the Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti – DP*), from which the Turkish centre-right tradition sprang off ("Merkezle butunlesmeye", 2003). The centrist image of the party was further reinforced with the transfer of several prominent names from established parties of the center-right, who were subsequently given key positions both in the cabinet and in the parliament (Ozbudun, 2006b). A related development was the adoption of a technocratic political discourse - familiar to the students of post-1980 center-right parties - that emphasized the party's "post-ideological" character in the face of doctrinaire approaches and extremist attitudes (Yavuz, 2006a). On the whole, it may be argued that the JDP adopted the opposite electoral strategy of the WP that underlined as much as possible its differences from the political center of gravity.

Not only did the party cleanse its rhetoric from Islamic references and aspire to present itself as the heir to the throne of the Turkish center-right, but it also declared full commitment to liberal democratic principles. As part of this

commitment, it continuously stressed the need to consolidate Turkish democracy through the establishment of an extended and better protected human rights regime. Likewise, rendering public administration more accountable, transparent and open to citizens' participation was identified by the party as one of its main policy goals. Corollary to this process, on the foreign policy front, the JDP carried the VP's rapprochement with Europe to its logical end, and fully embraced Turkey's EU membership bid as the external anchor of future democratic reforms (Taniyici, 2003). As a result, the EU and the JDP became rather unusual allies in furthering the democratization of Turkish political system - a phenomenon aptly captured by Grigoriadis (2004) as the "paradox of Islamic Europhilia" - given the historical opposition of Islamist political actors to the Westernization policies of the Republic as the overarching framework of Turkish modernization project.

### ***3f. Felicity Party (2001-present)***

Established in 2001 by the Erbakan loyalists inside the Virtue Party, the FP is the last party that belongs to the National Outlook movement. In terms of its ideological outlook, the party is very similar to its predecessor moderate Islamist WP. It is staunchly anti-Western and anti-Zionist, it opposes Turkey's entry into the European Union, and condemns the US and Israel, the main agents of "racist imperialism", for trying to reshape the Muslim world according to their interests (FP Party Program, ND). As a panacea, the FP's party program emphasizes policies geared towards national independence, and calls for the establishment of alternative regional and international alliances including the revitalization of the D-8 initiative of Erbakan, an economic alliance consisting of eight Muslim developing nations.

The party program blames Western powers also for the economic situation in Turkey claiming that the economic policies pursued by the government are a reflection of the "consolidation of all of the institutions of finance capitalism of racist imperialism" (FP Party Program, ND). Reminiscent of the WP's "Just Order" rhetoric, the program makes repeated calls for the creation of a just economic order, which appears to be a mixed economic model emphasizing social justice and combining private sector activities with extensive state intervention in critical areas.

The FP officially enshrines fundamental rights and freedoms recognized by the international community, democracy and the rule of law as well as the principle of secularism, understood as state neutrality towards and protection of religious beliefs

and practices. Yet, all of these principles depend on the realization of another, higher goal, which is the moral and spiritual development of the population based on national and religious values (FP Party Program, ND). In order to ensure this development, the party argues that the traditional Turkish family structure should be protected and promoted, the youth should be imbued with national-religious values through the family and the educational system, and the Western cultural influences should be contained.

As has always been the case with National Outlook parties, the issue of the establishment of a Sharia state is hardly ever addressed in official party documents in a direct fashion. Yet, the statements of party activists on less official platforms indicate that the FP is still keen on undertaking an Islamic transformation of Turkish society as illustrated by the words of Orhan Altinoz, a member of the FP's General Administrative Council: "we are a party of jihad and Islam" ("Saadet Partisi GIK", 2012).

The preceding chapter attempted to clarify the main concepts used in the present study including political Islam, types of political Islamist parties and moderation. It then provided a short history of the Islamist parties that emerged from the National Outlook tradition. This was followed by a careful examination of the ideological platforms of all the Islamist parties under scrutiny in chronological order, and their categorization according to the three-fold classificatory scheme introduced earlier. In this way, it elucidated the historical variation in the Islamist party ideologies that the next three empirical chapters will try to account for by focusing on the transformation of the Islamist constituency (Chapter 4), repressive policies of the Turkish state (Chapter 5) and the shifts in the intra-party balance of power in the context of competitive politics (Chapter 6).



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASES OF ISLAMIST MODERATION**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The following chapter consists of a detailed examination of the socio-economic factors underlying the ideological moderation of political Islam in Turkey. More precisely, it takes issue with the argument that the rise of conservative middle classes inside the Islamist constituency is the key socio-economic factor that explains the ideological repositioning of the movement from political Islam to conservative democracy. With this purpose in mind, it offers a comparative account of the social bases of successive Islamist parties, and explores whether or not the Islamist constituency has truly undergone a substantial change over the years in terms of the social groups that are represented inside. This comparative analysis is conducted in two steps. In the first step, the social bases of Islamist parties are compared and contrasted both among themselves and with that of the JDP by way of qualitative historical comparison. In the second step, statistical methods are employed to corroborate and expand on the findings reached by the historical comparison. The statistical analysis consists of a time-series cross-sectional analysis of panel data from 67 administrative provinces over a period of thirty six years (1973-2007) covering all the general elections that took place with the participation of Islamist parties in this period (N=536).

After examining the impact of socio-economic status on Islamist voting, the chapter takes a critical look at the agency of the conservative middle classes as the key social actors bringing about Islamist moderation. More precisely, it advances both a theoretical and empirical critique of the assumption that informs the debate on the democratic agency of the rising Muslim bourgeoisie in the Turkish context: democracy promotion constitutes a natural, i.e. transhistorical and transgeographical, political preference on the part of middle classes. The theoretical critique is informed by the works of prominent comparativist scholars working in the field of economic and political modernization (e.g. Bellin, 2000; Harris, 1987; Huber, Rueschemeyer & Stephens, 1997; Huber & Stephens, 1997; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens,

1992; Therborn, 1977) who maintain that the bourgeoisie-democracy connection is at best a contingent one, and hence cannot be assumed away in discussions regarding the socio-economic basis of democratic political attitudes. The empirical critique is based on a careful examination of the transformation of the Turkish Muslim bourgeoisie's approach to democracy and human rights since their emergence as an organized interest group in the early 1990s.

The chapter is organized as follows. It starts out with a theoretical survey of the connection between poverty and political Islam, and between pious middle classes and moderation in the context of Muslim polities. It continues with a historical comparison of the socio-economic bases of successive Islamist parties in Turkey by drawing on earlier studies on the subject matter. Then, a multivariate regression model that correlates the constituency's economic well-being with the Islamists' electoral performance is estimated using a panel dataset covering eight general elections.

After the discussion of the results of the statistical analysis, the literature on the democratic agency of middle classes as the missing link between economic and political development will be overviewed. Then, the ideological evolution of the Turkish conservative bourgeoisie will be traced starting from political Islam in the early 1990s to democracy promotion in the early 2000s by drawing on the official documents and statements of *Mustakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği* (Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen, MUSIAD) as the principle and, arguably, the most vocal association representing conservative businesses in Turkey.<sup>34</sup>

## **2. POVERTY AND POLITICAL ISLAM: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

The idea that the rise and growing strength of radical Islamist movements in the Muslim world is closely linked to the dire economic conditions prevalent in these countries has recently reached the status of conventional wisdom both in scholarly and policy circles (Pipes, 2001). Many studies of Islamic radicalism, in this respect, consider poverty as the perfect breeding ground for religious extremism. For instance, Mammoud (1998) has observed that “the economic situation in Egypt is perhaps one

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<sup>34</sup> Other business associations with a conservative membership basis include, among others, the *Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu* (Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey, TUSKON), the *Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği* (Association of Anatolian Businessmen, ASKON), and the *İs Hayati Dayanışma Derneği* (Business Life Cooperation Association, İSHAD).

of the main factors behind the increasing popularity of the Islamic fundamentalist movement” in reference to the negative social consequences of the liberalization policies carried out since Anwar Sadat. Western policy-makers seem to concur with his conclusions as evident in the statement of the former US assistant secretary of state Robert Pelletrau (1994) before the Subcommittee on Africa on the House Foreign Affairs Committee. In this statement, Pelletrau pointed to the “dissatisfaction with socioeconomic conditions” as “a major component of political Islam in the Magreb” (p.48), and consequently underlined the necessity of furthering economic development in the region in order to reduce the appeal of political Islam. Former US president Bill Clinton, too, seemed to strongly agree with Pelletrau’s diagnosis when he said “these forces of reaction feed on disillusionment, poverty and despair” and suggested that the remedy is economic prosperity and security.<sup>35</sup>

Starting from the fact the great majority of Muslim countries harboring strong Islamist movements are still located in the developing world featuring authoritarian regimes and backward economies, proponents of this view have argued that the type of opposition represented by political Islam cannot simply be understood within the framework of a cultural clash that pits Western Christian values against those of the Muslims as suggested by the “clash of civilizations” thesis of Samuel Huntington (1993). Rather, it should be understood as a protest movement driving its strength from a particular socio-historical context characterized by the failure of state-led development projects, the parallel decline in the credibility of secular-nationalist and leftist ideologies and the growing incapacity of incumbent regimes in welfare provision (Beinin & Stork, 1997).

The late 1970s and early 1980s were a period of severe social and economic crisis in many Middle Eastern countries. Various forms of state-led development pursued in the region, most notably Arab socialism, by and large failed to fulfill the promise of sustained economic growth and to improve the living conditions of citizens except for select social groups allied with establishment forces. Coupled with state repression and widespread corruption, the failure of developmental policies discredited nationalist, secularist and leftist political ideologies informing these policies (Beinin & Stork, 1997; Wickham, 1997). The Islamist oppositional forces

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<sup>35</sup> See for Clinton’s full speech before the Jordanian Parliament in October 1994, “President Clinton” (1994). For a comparative account of the different approaches adopted by the Reagan, Bush and Clinton administrations towards Islamic radicalism, see Gordon (1996).

moved quickly in to fill in this domestic political vacuum and enlarged their supporter base through an extensive grassroots network. This was, by no means, a purely domestic process in that the movements under question had strong international links with like-minded groups in other Muslim countries. They received strategic as well as financial support from Islamist regimes, the most prominent of which was Iran. Another important source of funding was workers' remittances flowing from the Gulf countries as well as the growing international network of interest-free Islamic banks (Beinin & Stork, 1997).<sup>36</sup> On top of this, one should also mention the instrumentalization of Islamic groups by incumbent regimes, inspired by the changes in US foreign policy doctrine in the late 1950s, in order to debilitate local leftist groups within the broader framework of the fight against communism.<sup>37</sup>

Yet, the Islamists' activities did not remain limited to the espousal and dissemination of pro-Sharia ideas on the political arena as a radical alternative to Western-inspired economic and political arrangements, which allegedly brought about nothing but socio-economic deprivation and cultural degeneration in Muslim societies. In addition to the channeling of social and political dissent, they emerged as an alternative, and most of the time the only available, source of welfare services in their respective countries reaching out to the most underprivileged sections of society (Beinin & Stork, 1997; Hammoud, 1998; Kfoury, 1997; Khashan, 1998; Wickham, 1997).

In response to the international debt crisis of the early 1980s, many states in the developing world including the Middle East had to take deep-seated measures to liberalize their economies and open them up to global competition. As part of this drive, they downsized the public sector and retreated from several welfare services in order to achieve fiscal austerity in line with IMF-imposed structural adjustment programs. However, the shrinking of the public sector deprived these regimes of some of the principal tools they came to rely on to incorporate and obtain the acquiescence of lower and middle classes: welfare provision and employment in the public sector.

The history of Islamist mobilization in Egypt in the 1990s is a good case in point. In this respect, Wickham (1997) found that Islamist groups benefitted greatly from the dire economic atmosphere at the time in Egypt as they considerably

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<sup>36</sup> For more on the role of worker's remittances and petro-dollars in the rise of radical Islamist networks, see Beinin & Stork (1997).

<sup>37</sup> For the changes brought about by the US acknowledgement of Islam as an antidote to communism on state-Islam relations in Turkey, see Chapter 3.

increased their influence inside the Egyptian youth, especially among university students and new graduates, by offering a wide catalogue of employment services including, but not limited to, job placements in the ever-growing Islamic economic sector. A similar process took place in Algeria, where the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) provided the underprivileged sections of the Algerian society with such essential social services as health care and basic infrastructure projects including roads and sewage systems creating in practice a parallel sector of social services provision (Verges, 1997; Zoubir, 1998). In the case of Southern Lebanon, Hezbollah's involvement in welfare provision and various development projects has become so extensive that "Lebanese Muslims perceive fundamentalist groups as more legitimate than the national government" (Kashan, 1998, p.221).

The appeal of the Islamist movement to the marginalized sections of society has also to do with the vision of a just and egalitarian society that constitutes an integral part of the political Islamist ideology. In fact, Islamic economic doctrine has a claim to transcend both state capitalist and free market economic models by reembedding economics in Islamic social relations, and in this way to bring about full employment, widespread prosperity and social harmony (Pfeifer, 1997). Accordingly, the ideal Islamic state, as it appears in the works of prominent Islamist thinkers such as Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb, is defined in terms of its capacity to guarantee social justice and equality as much as its guardianship of the moral fabric of society (Hammoud, 1998).

A third argument that connects political Islam to economic distress concentrates on the psychological needs of individuals experiencing economic deprivation, downward social mobility and cultural alienation in the face of rapid socio-economic change (Pipes, 2001). According to this line of thinking, reminiscent of the classical Marxist position regarding religion, today many Muslims resort to religion and seek solace in the supernatural due to desperation resulting from their prolonged experience of economic and political marginalization. Yet, it should be noted that this argument fails to explain the passage from increased religiosity to supporting an integralist movement which is by no means automatic. For instance, two nation-wide surveys carried out by Carkoglu & Binnaz (2000; 2006) revealed a significant increase in religio-conservative attitudes among Turkish voters from 1999 to 2006. However, they also found that in the same period public support for an Islamic state fell sharply notwithstanding the increase in religiosity.

As the above discussion attempted to illustrate, the potential linkages between political Islam and poverty are manifold. Historically speaking, radical Islamist groups have flourished in countries where Islamist solidarity networks have successfully combined the alleviation of spiritual distress with that of material hardship through charitable activities in a context characterized by the secular establishment's incapacity to reach developmental goals. On the ideological terrain, political Islam with its highly egalitarian social message filled in the political vacuum created by the historical decline of socialist and social democratic political movements as the principle representatives of lower class concerns on the political terrain.

If poverty is the main socio-economic condition conducive to the success of radical Islamist forces, would it be possible to fight it by improving the living conditions of Muslims through economic growth? More precisely, is it possible to observe a decrease in the appeal of political Islamist ideology as constituencies get wealthier? And if yes, what is the mechanism underlying this change in voter preferences?

These are two distinct, but closely related questions addressed by a growing literature on the socio-economic basis of Islamist moderation. Drawing mainly on the Turkish case, a growing group of scholars maintain that the moderation of political Islam is closely connected to the enrichment of the Islamist constituency, as evident in the birth and emergence of an authentic Muslim bourgeoisie class in the context of post-1980 economic liberalization policies (Demiralp, 2009, 2010; Gumuscu, 2010; Insel, 2003; Onis, 2006a; Somer, 2004; Yavuz, 2006a, 2009). This line of analysis suggests that the right place to look for the social origins of the Islamists' moderation is the growing ideological dominance of pro-democratic middle classes inside the Islamist constituency. This conclusion is drawn based on an implicit comparison of the social bases of previous National Outlook-affiliated Islamist parties and that of the moderate JDP, where the former's ideological radicalism is associated with the political values of lower-class constituencies upon which it relied on for electoral success and the latter's moderate and pragmatic outlook with the political preferences of new conservative middle classes. In other words, if the JDP is a non-Islamist and pro-democracy party now, it is because it is no longer a party of marginalized masses ever-ready for anti-systemic manipulation, but of, by definition, politically moderate and risk-averse middle classes.

### **3. SOCIAL BASES OF TURKISH ISLAMIST PARTIES COMPARED**

The two Islamist parties of the pre-1980 period, the NOP (1970-1971) and its successor NSP (1973-1980), appear to have driven their electoral strength from three social cleavages: center-periphery, secularism-Islam and the intra-capital conflict between the big business and provincial entrepreneurial class. The first one, i.e. centre-periphery cleavage, is the broadest and has widely been considered as the principle social cleavage that underlies the Turkish multi-party system since its origins in the late 1940s (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009). With deep-running roots into the social organization of the Ottoman Empire, the two sides of this cleavage are the military-bureaucratic state elites, which embarked upon a project of Westernization in line with their secularist-nationalist ideology, and the rest of the society, which only partially internalized the values promoted by the centre and hence remained wired in a complex web of traditional-religious identities that counteracted the homogenizing influences of the centre (Mardin, 1973). The second one, the secularism-Islam cleavage pits the state-imposed political and cultural secularization process against its religious opponents, and represents yet another important fault line that has given shape to the Turkish multi-party political system. Principally an identity-based cleavage, it overlaps with the centre-periphery cleavage in many respects due to the particularities of the Turkish modernization process even though it is hard reducible to it (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009).

Until the birth of the first explicitly religious party on the Turkish political scene, religio-conservative forces in general allied themselves with the centre-right political tradition by forming factions first inside the DP (1946-1960) and later on its ideological heir, the JP (1961-1980), both of which more often than not politicized religion in order to gain the upper hand within the context of multi-party electoral competition (Dodd, 1983; Toprak, 1981). Yet, the decision to leave the ranks of centre-right parties and found an independent political party on the part of Islamists came only after the crystallization of another social cleavage that originated in the differential effects of the ISI-based developmental policies on different sectors of the entrepreneurial class.

In the late 1960s, a growing portion of the traditional middle classes such as shopkeepers, artisans and small traders began to experience social and economic decline as the Turkish economy went through a period of rapid industrialization and

urbanization. Concentrated mostly in the provincial cities of the Anatolian hinterland, these old middle classes resented the privileged position of big industrialists in the allocation of state resources and the determination of national economic policies in accordance with the dominant economic model at the time, i.e. import-substitution based industrialization, as much as they opposed the strictly secular orientation of the republic (Alkan, 1984; Saribay, 2004). In an effort to voice their concerns, they backed up Necmettin Erbakan's candidacy to the presidency of the Union of Chambers of Commerce. Erbakan at the time was leading the conservative faction within the JP, and based his campaign for presidency on the adversities faced by small and medium-sized businesses:

The economic mechanisms function to the benefit of the big city tradesmen while the Anatolian merchants feel themselves as step-children. The largest share of import quotas is allocated to the businessmen coming from 3-4 cities at most...The Anatolian people deposit all the money in the Anatolian banks, but this money is then given to big city tradesmen in the form of credits...The Union of Chambers is working as an instrument of a comprador-mason minority. The entire organization is under the control of comprador trade and industry. So, we said let's first enter the administrative board, and turn the Union of Chambers into a servant of also the Anatolian merchants and industrialists (Erbakan quoted in Saribay, 2004, p. 576, my translation).

The JP, on the other hand, was no longer willing to accommodate the Islamists among its ranks especially in view of the growing popularity of Erbakan and of rumours that he had intentions to take over the party leadership (Cakir, 2004). In order to sap the growing power of Erbakan, first, the JP's minister of commerce, under pressure from big businesses, vetoed Erbakan's presidency of the Union of Chambers of Commerce to which he was elected with the backing of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and forced him to resign. Second, when Erbakan wanted to contest the 1969 general election under the JP ticket, the JP's general-secretary Suleyman Demiral vetoed his candidacy. Erbakan entered and won the elections as an independent candidate in the conservative province of Konya, and formed the NOP in 1970 with two other conservative parliamentarians that defected from the JP.



All in all, the NSP had successfully capitalized on the simmering intra-capital conflict between the big industrialists and the peripheral elements of the business class throughout its political career. In this respect, the principal social force forming its electoral backbone in the period before the 1980 military intervention was the provincial entrepreneurial classes (Alkan, 1984; Gulalp, 2001; Mardin, 1973; Ozbudun, 1987; Saribay, 2004). Despite its strong message of social justice and equality, inspired not only by Islamic precepts but by the arguments of the dependency school popular in the developing world at the time, the party was by and large unsuccessful in obtaining lower class support to the Islamist cause as it had to compete with socialist and social democratic parties going through a period of intellectual and electoral boom in the turbulent and highly-polarized –along the left-right axis- political atmosphere of the 1970s.

Following the 1980 military intervention, the Welfare Party (1983-1998) replaced the NSP as the main representative of political Islamist constituencies. Starting with a humble 4.4% voter support in the 1984 local elections, the WP enlarged its electoral base at every subsequent election reaching an all-time record in 1995 by garnering 21.4% of the valid votes cast.

How could a religious political movement that was supported only by a small section of the electorate and was continuing to lose blood at the polls<sup>38</sup> until the 1980s could make such a strong comeback within the span of a decade or so? After all, this was against the expectations of many observers of Turkish politics, foreign and Turkish alike, who saw the NSP as a temporary aberration in the forward march of Turkey towards a modern, democratic and most importantly secular polity where religious attachments would no longer play a role in politics.

Many students of the Islamist movement in Turkey argue that it is not possible to make sense of the growing electoral appeal of political Islam in the context of early 1990s without taking into account the impact of the liberalization of the Turkish economy following the 1980 *coup d'état* (Bugra, 2002a, 2002b; Onis, 1997; Yavuz, 2006a). Starting from the January 1980 austerity package, Turkish economy has gradually been liberalized dismantling in the process the import substitution-based

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<sup>38</sup> At the 1977 general election, the NSP's electoral base shrank approximately by one fourth from %11.9 to %8.6.

developmental model of the previous two decades.<sup>39</sup> These structural reforms had the short-term goal of taking Turkey out of the debilitating balance-of-payments and foreign exchange crisis of the late 1970s and the long-term objective of creating a free market-oriented, export-driven economy. In addition to the policies directed towards shrinking the public sector's involvement in the economy and deregularizing the financial markets, several measures have been taken to expand the export capacity of the economy such as the removal of protectionist trade barriers, the depreciation of the currency and generous subsidies to exporting companies in the form of preferential credits, tax rebates and foreign-exchange allocation schemes.<sup>40</sup> These measures have proved highly effective in promoting the country's export capacity: the share of exports in the national economy rose from 2.6% in 1979 to 8.6% in 1990 and further up to 20% in 2005 (Pamuk, 2008).

The peripheral elements of the business class, i.e. the conservative small and medium sized enterprises of the Anatolian hinterland, proved to be the major, if not the only, beneficiaries of this new export orientation of the Turkish economy in the context of global economic trends towards post-Fordist and flexible modes of production. First, exports meant new opportunities for making business and accumulating capital without relying exclusively on particularistic relations with the secular state for contracts, credits, or cheap raw materials (Demir, 2004; Yavuz, 2006a). Second, the legalization of interest-free banking shortly after the passage to civilian rule as well as the steady flow of worker's remittances from abroad, overseen by Islamic solidarity networks, resolved to a great extent the chronic problem of accessing investment funds (Demir, 2004). Third, the global economic trends were also on the side of the peripheral middle classes because of the renewed importance of outsourcing and subcontracting operations as well as craft production in a global drive to downsize and decentralize big firms according to the logic of flexible production. It is also worth noting that, in the process, these businesses successfully turned their Islamic identity from a liability into an asset in the form of a "network resource" that helped them create trust and solidarity among Islamic businesses, connect a vast array of economic actors at various nodes of the production and distribution chain at home

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<sup>39</sup> For more on the application of the ISI-based developmental model in Turkey see Keyder (1987).

<sup>40</sup> For a comprehensive account of the post-1980 economic reforms in Turkey see Aricanli & Rodrik (1990) and Onis & Webb (1992).

and abroad and enter niche markets such as consumer products conforming to Islamic rules (Bugra, 2002b).

Nevertheless, the peripheral elements of the business class constituted only a part, and a relatively small part at that, of the ever-expanding electoral base of political Islam. Many students of the WP note that behind the Islamic resurgence of the post-1980 era was the party's success in constructing a cross-class alliance around the Islamist cause. In this respect, the real basis of the numeric strength of the movement laid in an ever-growing group of lower class voters, especially the urban poor, which constituted the losing side of the post-1980 economic liberalization policies (Bakirezer & Demirer, 2009; Gulalp, 2001; Onis, 1997).

Available survey data on WP voters lend further support to this argument. For instance, a 1996 survey conducted by TUSES (*Türkiye Sosyal Ekonomik ve Siyasal Araştırmalar Vakfı* – Turkish Social, Economic and Political Research Foundation) found that lower-middle and lower status groups were overrepresented inside the WP's voter base while the reverse was true for middle and upper-middle classes (p. 115). In terms of occupational groups, the same study found that the small farmers, small traders/artisans and blue-collar workers were overrepresented among WP supporters as opposed to white-collar workers, professionals and employers that were all underrepresented (TUSES, 1996, p. 115).

On the whole, the WP appeared to have driven its electoral strength from a multi-class coalition unified in their integralist opposition to the secular and democratic principles of the Republican establishment in the context of early 1990s. In the words of Onis (1997), this coalition included both the “losers” and “winners” of economic liberalization even though the bulk of political Islam's supporters were of lower-class origin. In fact, the WP had to walk a tight rope in the formulation of its socio-economic vision, which placed a good deal of emphasis on social justice and equality, in order not to alienate the socially ascendant sections of the Islamist constituency, the fledgling Muslim bourgeoisie, from the Islamic cause. In fact, this group, especially towards the end of the 1990s, began to show clear signs of unease with the WP's confrontational political rhetoric both vis-à-vis the secular state and the West, particularly with the prospect of cutting Turkey's ties with the Western world, with which they had expansive commercial relations (Cakir, 2004). Hence, when the opportunity rose after the dissolution of the WP by the constitutional court and the subsequent surfacing of the traditionalist-reformist schism inside the Islamist

movement, they quickly grabbed it. They took side with the reformist faction inside the VP and provided them with both financial and ideological support in their struggle against the hardliners for party leadership. After the closing of the VP and the subsequent split of the Islamist movement in the early 2000s, the Muslim bourgeoisie deserted the Islamist movement altogether and aligned itself fully with the conservative democratic JDP on the political arena.

As was the case with the WP, many students of the moderate JDP have characterized it a cross-class alliance “encompassing a large part of the rural population, artisans and small traders in the cities, urban slum dwellers, and the rapidly rising Islamic bourgeoisie” (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009, p. 38). In terms of their capacity to influence party politics, the Muslim bourgeoisie has been identified as the dominant element in this multi-class coalition (Insel, 2003; Yavuz, 2006). Numerically speaking though, lower classes still constitute the majority.

In earlier studies of the JDP’s voter profile, JDP’s constituency had been found to have lower levels of income, education and occupational status in comparison to other political parties, especially its main secular rival, the RPP (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009). In the 2007 general election, 62 percent of the JDP voters came from the lowest two income quintiles as opposed to the small proportion of voters (10%) from the highest two quintiles.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the proportion of university graduates among JDP voters was a meagre 4.7% in contrast to the bulk of its electorate (76.7%), who has middle school diploma or lower levels of educational attainment.<sup>42</sup> A separate poll conducted by Dalmis & Aydin (2008) just before the 2002 general election yielded very similar results: about 10% of the JDP supporters had a university degree or higher while 60% had secondary school diplomas or lower.

Occupational, regional and settlement data also corroborate the finding that the overwhelming majority of JDP supporters belong to lower socio-economic status groups. The JDP is more likely to be supported by workers, farmers and housewives as opposed to public and private sector employees, professionals, retirees and students. In the same vein, there is a higher concentration of JDP votes in the less developed regions of the Anatolian hinterland, in the countryside in general and in the poorer districts of urban centres (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009).

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<sup>41</sup> The corresponding values for the RPP are 38.1 % and 26.3% respectively.

<sup>42</sup> The corresponding values for the RPP are 20.3 % and 49.1% respectively

A rather interesting picture comes out of the above comparison of the social bases of Islamist parties in Turkey (see Table 4.1 below). First of all, this picture shows that support for political Islam has never strictly been a lower class phenomenon in the Turkish context. On the contrary, the movement drove its electoral strength from different socio-economic groups in different historical periods, including the poor as well as the middle classes, both old and new, as well as from both downwardly and upwardly social groups.

**Table 4.1 - Historical Comparison of the Socio-economic Bases of Turkish Islamist Parties**

<i>Party</i>	<i>NOP, NSP</i>	<i>WP, VP</i>	<i>JDP</i>
<b>Social classes supporting the party</b>	Old middle classes	Multi-class (Lower classes + New middle classes)	Multi-class (Lower classes + New middle classes)
<b>Ideological orientation</b>	Moderate Islamist	Moderate Islamist	Non-Islamist conservative

Nevertheless, it should also be noted that the Islamist movement's transformation into a major political force, the so-called Islamic resurgence, coincides with the WP years, during which lower classes were successfully incorporated into the movement's social base. This incorporation was achieved through an extensive grassroots organization that reached out to the disadvantaged social sectors such as the unemployed, women and the elderly as well as with the help of Islamist solidarity networks which alleviated the economic vulnerability of the lower class followers of political Islam by giving them basic social services such as health care and education (Cakir 1994a; Yavuz, 2003). As was the case in the rest of the Muslim world, the WP also benefitted from the post-1980 weakness of the leftist movement in its bit for the hearts and minds of the poorer sections of Turkish society.

Yet, the poor did not desert the ranks of Islamist parties also after the movement's ideological moderation. In this respect, the JDP still draws a considerable part of its electoral strength from lower socio-economic social groups. Besides, it still maintains a multi-class political appeal like its Islamist forebear WP.

#### 4. DATA AND MODEL SPECIFICATION

The above historical comparison of the socio-economic characteristics of Islamist parties in Turkey has revealed the presence of a causal relationship between economic deprivation and political Islam. Yet, this relationship cannot be generalized to all Islamist parties, and in this sense, it doesn't represent a universal association but a historically determined one. It has as much to do with the concrete organizational and electoral strategies adopted by the political Islamist movement to reach out to the poor as the conjectural weakness of other contenders of the lower class votes in the context of post-1980 Turkey. It has also been aided by the activities of Islamic solidarity networks that flourished both in the private and voluntary sectors, and proved a working alternative to the retreat of the public sector from welfare provision.

Yet, historical comparisons suffer from a number of weaknesses, the most prominent of which is the limited number of cases on which its inferences rely. In order to overcome this weakness, it might be useful to adopt a strategy of empirical triangulation by subjecting the poverty-radical Islam thesis to a statistical test to see whether the same conclusions can be reached by using quantitative evidence.

Survey data on the socio-economic profile of Islamist party supporters is available only for a subset of the parties examined in this analysis, namely the WP and the JDP.<sup>43</sup> In the absence of individual-level data, the present analysis utilizes aggregate data at the provincial level. Besides, in order to increase the number of observations necessary for such an analysis, I have pursued a strategy of within-case variation, and a longitudinal dataset has been constructed including all the electoral results obtained by Turkish Islamist parties (NSP, WP, VP and FP) at the provincial level until the year 2007 (a total of 8 general elections) (N=536).

If poverty is causally related to political Islam, then the following analysis should reveal a statistically significant association between the constituency's well-being and the appeal of Islamist parties. Moreover, we also expect the direction of this association to be negative in that the poorer the constituency the higher should be its likelihood to vote for the Islamist party.

In order to assess the impact of the constituency's well-being on the electoral appeal of Islamist parties, I employ an ordinary least squares (OLS) based linear regression model, and, since the dataset is time-series cross-sectional, I estimate an

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<sup>43</sup> For the WP, see TUSES (1996; 2002), and for the JDP, Aydin & Dalmis (2007) and Hale & Ozbudun (2009)

OLS model with PCSEs (correlated panels corrected standard errors).<sup>44</sup> In the first step, I estimate a bivariate model that regresses the income level of the constituency on the vote share of Islamist parties. In the second step, I propose a multivariate model that incorporates three control variables including educational attainment, urbanization levels and Kurdish ethnic identity as other socio-economic factors that have been taken into consideration in standard accounts of the Islamist political mobilization.<sup>45</sup>

The dependent variable, party electoral appeal, is operationalized as the party's vote share in a given administrative province. The source of provincial-level electoral results is the online database of Turkish election results created by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Foundation (2002) in cooperation with Belgenet. The principle explanatory variable, the province's economic well-being, is operationalized as the province's per capita gross domestic product (GDP) as measured in millions of Turkish Liras. Provincial-level GDP per capita values between 1975 and 1986 are taken from a previous study by Karaca (2004), and those belonging to the 1987-2000 period from the official publications of the State Planning Institute (DPT - *Devlet Planlama Enstitüsü*).<sup>46</sup> For the last two general elections examined in this study (2002 and 2007 general elections), the GDP per capita values have been extrapolated from 2000 values based on official economic growth rates.<sup>47</sup>

As far as the control variables are concerned, the principle source of data are official population censuses conducted since 1965, the results of which are available on the Turkish Statistical Institute's (TurkSat) website.<sup>48</sup> In order to measure educational attainment, an index value corresponding to the average years of schooling per capita has been calculated for all the provinces and for all of the election years studied.<sup>49</sup> The urbanization level of the constituency is measured by the proportion of urban dwellers to the total population of the province, a ratio calculated based on official census results. Finally, the ethnic identity of the province is

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<sup>44</sup> For a detailed discussion of the relative weaknesses and strengths of the OLS model with PCSEs in comparison to another commonly used technique in longitudinal data analysis, the generalized least squares (GLS) model, see Beck & Katz (1995).

<sup>45</sup> While occupational status is an important socio-economic indicator that factors in the formation of political preferences, it has been omitted for lack of appropriate time-series data.

<sup>46</sup> The original datasets can be retrieved from <http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/bolgesel/gosterge/1999/09.xls> and <http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr/bolgesel/gosterge/2002/t08.xls>

<sup>47</sup> See Appendix A, for more on the extrapolation procedure.

<sup>48</sup> Official census results are available at <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/nufusmenuapp/menu.zul> (1965-2000) and <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/adnksdagitapp/adnks.zul> (2000-present)

<sup>49</sup> See Appendix A, for more on the arithmetic procedure followed to construct the schooling index.

operationalized as a dichotomous variable that sets apart provinces with a sizeable Kurdish minority (over %10) from others without such a minority.

## **5. EMPIRICAL RESULTS**

The primary finding that comes out of the application of the model is the existence of a statistically significant and negative association between a province's GDP per capita values and the Islamists' vote percentage at the 0.05 significance level (see Table 4.2 below). In other words, as a province's per capita income level decreases the vote share of the Islamist parties increases. In this respect, the first bivariate model predicts a 2.71% decrease in the vote share of Islamist parties when there is one standard deviation increase in the GDP per capita. The negative impact of income on Islamists' vote share remains unaltered even after the incorporation of three additional control variables in a second multivariate model (see Table 4.2 below). This model predicts a 2.41% decrease in the vote share of Islamist parties when there is one standard deviation increase in the GDP per capita. The only other independent variable that exerts a significant effect on the Islamist votes is the ethnic character of the province: Islamist parties competing in provinces where the Kurdish minority constitutes more than 10% of the population gain 2.91% more votes compared to non-Kurdish provinces. On the whole, the analysis reveals that, considered all together, the Turkish Islamist parties have tended to perform better in poorer and Kurdish provinces. Therefore, the empirical evidence coming from the Turkish case confirms the principal claim of the poverty-radical Islamism thesis that economic deprivation is a factor that increases radical Islamists' electoral appeal.



**Table 4.2 – Determinants of Islamist parties’ electoral performance (NSP, WP, VP and FP) from 1973 until 2007**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-3.51*** (1.25)	-3.12** (1.35)
<b>Schooling</b>		1.369 (1.790)
<b>Urban</b>		-7.309 (6.995)
<b>Kurdish</b>		2.957** (1.507)
<b>Constant</b>	15.76*** (3.180)	12.17* (7.039)
<b>Observations</b>	536	536
<b>R-squared</b>	0.081	0.108
<b>Wald chi2</b>	7.82	15.38
<b>Number of Provinces</b>	67	67

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses**

**Vote share:** Vote percentage of the Islamist party in the province

**GDP per capita:** GDP per capita of the province

**Schooling:** Average years of schooling per capita in the province

**Urban:** Urbanization level of the province

**Kurdish:** Ethnic identity of the province (1: Kurdish, 0: non-Kurdish)

The same model can also be used to explore the differences between the social bases of individual Islamist parties. As can be remembered, the previous comparison of the social profiles of the supporters of National Outlook parties have pointed to the WP years as the historical period in which the association between economic deprivation and political Islamism has been established, and accordingly sought for intervening variables that might account for this outcome. Can this finding be corroborated using statistical methods?

When the present model is applied to subsets of longitudinal data coming from separate Islamist parties, we fail to observe a significant correlation between the GDP per capita and Islamists’ vote percentage in all subsets, but the WP. In the case of the NSP (1973-1980) the first bivariate model predicts a 2.37% decrease in this party’s vote share when there is one standard deviation increase in the GDP per capita of the province (see Table 4.3 below). Yet, when the effects of education, urbanization and

Kurdishness are controlled for in the second, multivariate model, the GDP per capita loses its explanatory power in favor of educational attainment and ethnic identity while urbanization level turn out to be a statistically insignificant factor (see Table 4.3 below). The model predicts a 2.89% increase in the vote share of the NSP, when there is one standard deviation decrease in the average years of schooling per capita. In addition to uneducated provinces, the NSP appears to have fared significantly better in Kurdish provinces, where, according to the model, it gets 3.46% more votes compared to non-Kurdish provinces.

**Table 4.3 – Determinants of the NSP’s electoral performance (1973 – 1977)**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-5.03*** (0.638)	-0.129 (0.674)
<b>Schooling</b>		-4.054*** (1.501)
<b>Urban</b>		6.376 (4.181)
<b>Kurdish</b>		3.456** (1.429)
<b>Constant</b>	15.90*** (0.441)	17.83*** (1.579)
<b>Observations</b>	134	134
<b>R-squared</b>	0.118	0.289
<b>Wald chi2</b>	62.16	99.86
<b>Number of provinces</b>	67	67

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses**

The results of the application of the model to the NSP’s successor WP (1983-1997), reveal that, unlike the NSP, the party’s electoral performance correlates negatively with provincial income levels (see Table 4.4 below). To begin with, the first bivariate model predicts a 2.46% decrease in this party’s vote share when there is one standard deviation increase in the GDP per capita of the province. In the second multivariate model introducing control variables, the impact of income on the WP’s electoral performance appears even more accentuated: the model predicts a %3.62 decrease in the party’s vote share when there is one standard deviation increase in the GDP per

capita of the province. In contrast to income, both education and Kurdishness correlate positively with the WP's vote share: the model predicts a 4.85% increase in the vote share of the NSP, when there is one standard deviation increase in the average years of schooling per capita. Likewise, the WP receives 6.5% more votes in provinces with more than 10% Kurdish minority. As is the case with the NSP, urbanization level of the province does not appear to play a significant role in the vote share of the WP.

**Table 4.4 – Determinants of the WP's electoral performance (1987 – 1995)**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-3.74*** (0.929)	-5.51*** (1.51)
<b>Schooling</b>		7.090** (2.810)
<b>Urban</b>		3.020 (2.282)
<b>Kurdish</b>		6.499*** (2.150)
<b>Constant</b>	20.53*** (4.178)	-13.89 (12.67)
<b>Observations</b>	201	201
<b>R-squared</b>	0.054	0.241
<b>Wald chi2</b>	16.19	344.88
<b>Number of provinces</b>	67	67

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses**

The VP (1998-2001), the successor of the WP, could only participate in one general election in 1999 in its rather short political life. Therefore, in the case of this party, the dataset is only cross-sectional. Consequently, I have employed an OLS regression analysis without PCSEs (see Table 4.5 below). In its bivariate form, the model shows the existence of a statistically significant and negative correlation between the VP's vote share and the income level of the province: when the GDP per capita increases by one standard deviation, the model predicts a 2.27% decrease in the party's vote share. However, after the introduction of control variables into the analysis, GDP ceases to be a significant factor in accounting for the VP's electoral success at the

provincial level. Whereas neither education nor the ethnic character of the city appear to factor in its vote share, the model predicts a 1.95% increase in VP votes for a standard deviation increase in the urbanization level of the province.

**Table 4.5 – Determinants of the VP’s electoral performance (1999)**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-3.26** (1.60)	-3.38 (2.65)
<b>Schooling</b>		-2.344 (2.483)
<b>Urban</b>		17.36** (7.763)
<b>Kurdish</b>		-0.691 (3.281)
<b>Constant</b>	19.28*** (2.278)	22.67* (11.54)
<b>Observations</b>	67	67
<b>R-squared</b>	0.101	0.160

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Standard errors in parentheses**

Finally, in the case of the FP (2001-present), the party’s electoral performance has been found to be independent of all the indicators included in the current model (see Table 4.6 below). Most notably, the statistical analysis fails to detect a statistically significant correlation between the FP’s vote share and the GDP per capita, considered both on its own and in conjunction with other control variables.

**Table 4.6 – Determinants of the FP’s electoral performance (2002 – 2007)**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-0.00786 (0.264)	0.0647 (0.0914)
<b>Schooling</b>		0.0848 (0.363)
<b>Urban</b>		-0.0125 (0.609)
<b>Kurdish</b>		0.470 (0.663)
<b>Constant</b>	2.423*** (0.566)	1.755 (1.626)
<b>Observations</b>	134	134
<b>R-squared</b>	0.000	0.009
<b>Wald chi2</b>	0.00	0.57
<b>Number of provinces</b>	67	67

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

**Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses**

These findings corroborate the conclusion drawn from the earlier examination of the social bases of Islamist parties by showing that the negative association between economic well-being and political Islam is specific to the WP period. Moreover, as we move from the WP to the VP and from the VP to the FP we observe that socio-economic indicators become increasingly irrelevant in accounting for the party’s electoral appeal. In fact, in the case of the FP, neither the main explanatory variable nor the control variables exert a statistically significant effect on the party’s vote share.

So far the analysis has focused on the differences and similarities among radical Islamist parties in terms of the role of socio-economic factors in the formation of their electoral base. However, we still don’t know if and to what extent the moderate JDP’s electoral base has differed from its radical Islamist counterparts, particularly from that of the WP. As noted earlier, the proponents of the bourgeoisie-moderation thesis maintain that the Islamist constituency has undergone a major transformation in socio-economic terms from the WP to the JDP years, and that the ideological moderation of the political Islamist movement took place as a result of the emergence and growth of an authentic bourgeoisie class, supposedly with a strong

commitment to liberal and democratic values. Yet, there is very little evidence in the existing studies of these parties' electoral base showing that such a transformation has actually taken place. On the contrary, previous studies of the JDP's electoral base point to a general parallelism between the WP and the JDP's electoral bases. First, both parties are said to be multi-class coalitions. Second, lower classes are said to constitute the majority in both cases.

I contend that it would be both analytically premature and unjustified to take these parallelisms at face value, and conclude that the electoral bases of radical and moderate Islam are more or less identical in terms of their social make-up. To begin with, voters of former Islamist parties account for only a small part (approximately one fourth) of the JDP's electoral base. According to a poll conducted after the 1999 general election, only 59.2% of those who voted for the WP in 1995 voted for the VP in 1999 (ANAR, 1999). Out of those who voted for the VP in 1999 only 57% expressed their intention to vote for the JDP in the 2002 general election, and ex-VP voters constituted only 27.4% of the JDP's voter base in 2002 (TUSES, 2002). The remaining three thirds consisted mainly of new voters and former voters of centre-right and right-wing parties. Second, although the Islamic bourgeoisie's emergence as an organized interest group dates back to the WP period, several scholars argue that it is only with the JDP that they have assumed a leading position in the multi-class coalition backing up Islamist movement (Insel, 2003; Yavuz, 2006). Therefore, the difference between the WP's and JDP's voter bases appears to be related to the increased political clout of middle classes in the determination of party policies, which may or may not be accompanied by an increase in their numbers.

Finally, most of the previous quantitative studies have been carried out with descriptive rather inferential purposes, and their principal aim is to give a snapshot of the party's voter base at a certain point in time instead of explaining the factors that increase or decrease the likelihood of voting for moderate and/or radical Islamists. Besides, their self-declared goal is comparing Islamist parties' voter base with their secular opponents synchronically, not exploring the differences between radical and moderate instances of political Islam, which would have required a diachronic research design.

In view of the points raised above, I propose to extend the multivariate regression analysis to the election results obtained by the JDP at the provincial level. If there is no difference between the social bases of political Islam and the JDP in

terms of income, then we expect that the JDP's vote share correlate negatively with the constituency's income level like the National Outlook parties examined earlier.

The results of this last statistical test do not uphold the view that economic deprivation is causally related to the electoral success of moderated Islamism (see Table 4.7 below). The GDP per capita fails to exert a significant impact on the JDP's vote share at the 0.05 significance level neither in the first bivariate model, nor in the second multivariate one. To put it differently, all income groups appear to have found representation in the JDP's voter base at levels more or less commensurate with their national percentages, and the survey finding that the majority of JDP's voter base consists of lower income groups is simply a reflection of the trend in the general population, a point raised also by Aydin & Dalmis (2007). Considered in conjunction with the earlier finding that lower income groups were overrepresented inside the WP's voter base, we can safely conclude that the middle class component of the JDP's multi-class electoral coalition is larger than that of the WP, but it is not large enough to turn the party into a truly class-based political formation as the latter would presuppose the existence of a strong positive correlation between income levels and vote shares.

**Table 4.7 – Determinants of the JDP's electoral performance (2002 – 2007)**

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>Model 1 Vote share</b>	<b>Model 2 Vote share</b>
<b>GDP per capita</b>	-0.981 (2.35)	-1.92 (2.79)
<b>Schooling</b>		-10.13* (5.174)
<b>Urban</b>		33.44*** (6.315)
<b>Kurdish</b>		-14.61*** (3.088)
<b>Constant</b>	42.23*** (8.331)	79.32*** (21.13)
<b>Observations</b>	134	134
<b>R-squared</b>	0.004	0.173
<b>Wald chi2</b>	0.17	38.64
<b>Number of provinces</b>	67	67

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1 (Panel corrected standard errors in parentheses)

As far as the control variables are concerned, we find that the JDP has performed better in less educated, more urbanized and non-Kurdish provinces. In this respect, a standard deviation increase in schooling scores is predicted to reduce the vote share of the party by 8.25% while a similar increase in the urbanization level leads to a 4.19% increase in JDP votes. In addition, when the party competes in provinces where the Kurds constitute less than 10% of the population, it obtains, on average, 14.6% more votes. So, the differences between the social bases of National Outlook parties and the JDP appear to concern not only income levels but also the other socio-economic indicators included in the model. In clear contrast to the former's stronger electoral presence in Kurdish provinces, the JDP tends to perform better in Turkish provinces. Besides, the preceding analysis has shown that education and urbanization levels have been rather inconsistent predictors of Islamists' electoral performance as far as the individual Islamist parties are concerned. In contrast, the JDP in general obtains more votes in less educated and more urbanized provinces. All in all, the Turkish case lends further evidence to the thesis that the social bases of moderate and radical forms of political Islam are substantially different in spite of the cross-class appeal of both ideologies.

The rest of the chapter turns its attention from issues of correlation to that of causation by problematizing the democratic agency of middle classes in general and that of the Turkish conservative middle classes in particular. As mentioned earlier, the emergence and expansion of authentic middle classes inside the Islamist constituency has been identified as the principle socio-economic factor that brought about the moderation of Turkish political Islam. On the one hand, this causal statement is empirically well-founded in that there is sufficient empirical evidence that confirms the contribution of conservative businesses to Islamist moderation both by supporting the moderate-reformist wing against hardliners and by providing blueprints on the political identity of a future splinter party.

On the other hand, though, this line of thinking overlooks an initial period in which the Turkish conservative middle classes were staunch supporters of political Islam. In the same vein, it fails to observe the historical simultaneity of the conservative bourgeoisie's conversion to the cause of democracy promotion and that of the Islamist political actors. In other words, the explanatory factor it posits is not actually antecedent to the outcome of Islamist moderation.



I contend that the above analytical problem, by and large, results from a general tendency to assume away the middle classes' commitment to democratic norms and institutions as a natural trait of this social class. The roots of this assumption can be found in the modernization theory, which in an effort to account for economic development's contribution to political progress -read democratization- highlighted the agency of middle classes. In fact, the middle classes' supposed role in the moderation of political Islam can be seen as a transposition of the well-known bourgeoisie-democracy thesis to the realm of religious political mobilization.

Accordingly, the second part of the present chapter starts out by examining the links established in the modernization literature between middle classes and democratic regimes. It then presents an empirically-informed theoretical critique of its main assumptions based on the work of a number of comparativist scholars. These scholars argue that democracy promotion can at best be seen as a political strategy on the part of middle classes as opposed to the mainstream view that it is the natural political preference of this social class. Following this theoretical discussion, it examines the evolution of the Turkish conservative bourgeoisie's approach to democracy by focusing on the case of MUSIAD.

## **6. CONSERVATIVE MIDDLE CLASSES AND ISLAMIST MODERATION**

### ***6a. Bourgeoisie and Democracy: Modernization Theory Revisited***

The scholarly interest in the relationship between economic and political development dates back to the classical modernization theory (Huber, Rueschemeyer, & Stephens, 1993; Landman, 2003; Clark, Golder, & Golder, 2008). The modernization theory argued that traditional societies would eventually become modern ones as a result of technological and economic progress, replicating the historical trajectory of the Western nations (Valenzuela & Valenzuela, 1978). It also suggested that their political structures would undergo a similar transformation from primitive to more complex forms. Then, from this perspective, democracy appears as a natural end-product of (capitalist) economic development (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997).<sup>50</sup>

This contention has inspired several cross-national quantitative studies exploring the linkages between levels of economic and political development

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<sup>50</sup> For a general overview of the economic as well as cultural determinants of democracy see Clark *et al.* (2008) and Lipset (1994).

(Przeworski & Limongi, 1997).<sup>51</sup> Most of these studies have found a significant, yet imperfect, correlation between the two processes (Huber *et al.*, 1993, Landman, 2003). Could this finding be safely accepted as an empirical validation of the modernization theory's claim that economic development also triggers political progress towards democracy? Highlighting the problematic nature of inferring causation from correlation, critics have argued that the statistical association in question could at most be accepted as an empirical generalization, and therefore should be "unpacked" to discover the underlying causal mechanisms through careful examination of deviant cases and historical sequences. Guided by these concerns, macro-historical comparative research has pointed to the bourgeoisie, the dominant class created by the advance of the capitalist mode of production, as the missing link between economic development and democracy.<sup>52</sup>

In this respect, one of the earliest and most influential works on the role of the bourgeoisie as the principal agent of democratization belongs to Barrington Moore (1966). Moore (1966) has argued that the emergence of democracy depends on a unique constellation of historical factors. The presence of a strong bourgeois class is one such factor distinguishing the historical trajectory of democratic countries from those that took the fascist and communist routes to modernity. For a country to be able to take the democratic route to modernity, the bourgeoisie had to be strong so that it did not need to ally itself with the crown and/or the upper landed classes against the interests of subordinate classes such as peasants and workers.<sup>53</sup>

The question exactly how economic progress contributed to a country's transition to democracy intrigued not only Moore, but also a number of prominent scholars writing from within the modernization paradigm who reached similar conclusions. In earlier versions of the modernization theory, no social actors were identified to mediate between economic and political development. The resulting picture was highly deterministic due to the predominance of systemic dynamics that

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<sup>51</sup> See, for instance, Bollen (1979), Helliwell (1994), Lipset (1959), and Przeworski *et al.* (2000) for cross-national statistical evidence on the positive association between economic development and democracy. For contrasting results, see Landman (1999).

<sup>52</sup> Other intervening variables identified by historical-comparative analyses of the emergence of democracies included the timing and character of economic development, the nature of the state and its relation to social forces, and international factors such as wars and crises (Landman, 2003).

<sup>53</sup> In addition to a strong bourgeoisie, Moore (1966) has argued that the presence of a revolutionary break with past political institutions distinguishes France, Britain, and the US from the fascist and communist states in his study.

were supposed to conspire in such a way that democracy would emerge naturally in a teleological fashion (Przeworski & Limongi, 1997).

A new variant of the modernization theory responded to these criticisms by focusing on the structural changes taking place in the early modernizing economies of Western Europe (North & Weingast, 1989). A new commercially-oriented class with mobile assets emerged in these polities, and the Crown came to rely on tax revenues generated by this class to finance its activities. In contrast to the traditional land-owning upper classes, this class could escape the predatory actions of the Crown with relative ease by hiding or redeploying its assets, should it suspect the credibility of the Crown's commitment to paying back its debt. The Crown, fearing the realization of the exit option available to its commercial creditors, chose to empower the representative institutions and to delimit its own powers to sooth their worries.

Yet, the findings of a new line of historical-comparative research have challenged this cross-paradigm consensus on the centrality of the bourgeoisie as a social class to the emergence of democratic regimes (Bellin, 2000; Harris, 1987; Huber, Rueschemeyer & Stephens, 1997; Huber & Stephens, 1997; Rueschemeyer, Stephens, & Stephens, 1992; Therborn, 1977). These scholars do concur with Moore that democratization could not be understood without taking into account the changes brought about by economic development in the class structures of modern societies. However, in contrast to Moore (1966), they argue that it is not the emergence and expansion of middle classes, but the organizational empowerment of subordinate classes through urbanization, factory production, and improvements in communication and transportation that constitutes the most significant of those changes (Rueschemeyer *et al.*, 1992; Therborn, 1977). In other words, they maintain that the internal contradictions of capitalism rather than its natural tendencies, such as the birth of a bourgeois class, are the key to understanding the linkages between economic and political development (Therborn, 1977).

Available historical evidence from both industrialized and developing countries also challenges the view that the bourgeoisie characteristically sides with democratic forces in modernizing societies. Huber & Stephens (1997), for instance, have found that in pre-WWII Europe, large sections of the bourgeoisie opposed the extension of democracy beyond parliamentary government. In fact, for the leading liberal thinkers of the time, mass democracy was inherently incompatible with capitalism due to the dangers it posed to elite interests (Therborn, 1977). Therefore,

what ensured the support of the propertied classes for democracy after WWII, instead, was a class compromise. As part of this compromise, labor organizations abandoned their revolutionary ideals, and the business elites adapted themselves to a high-wage economy underwritten by state welfare policies (Huber & Stephens, 1997).

One encounters a similar picture in the developing world, too. O'Donnell (1973), for instance, mentions at length the support given by the Latin American bourgeoisie to the establishment of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes in the region. Likewise, Perthes (1994) notes that the fledgling bourgeoisies of the Arab Middle East have shown very little enthusiasm for the liberalization of authoritarian state structures on which they came to depend for secure markets and high profit levels. Bellin (2000), too, observes in his study of democratization in late-developing countries that the private sector on the whole has displayed a highly inconsistent attitude towards democratization over the years ranging from full acquiescence in authoritarian state practices to vocal endorsement of democratic reforms.

On the whole, these studies have contributed to our understanding of the role of social classes and class relations in the birth and development of democratic regimes by showing the absence of a natural disposition on the part of the bourgeoisie towards democratic ideals. They have done this by unearthing the great variation in middle classes' support for democracy both in different countries and across different historical periods. This variation appears to result principally from diverging ways in which democratic reforms factor in the bourgeoisie's calculations of economic and political interests (Bellin, 2000; Huber & Stephens, 1997). These interests in return are never pre-given; they crystallize at the intersection of a number of factors that relate to the distribution of power in a particular society in a particular historical period.

#### ***6b. Ideological Journey of MUSIAD: from Political Islam to Conservative Democracy***

MUSIAD was established by a small group of businessmen in May 1990. Its membership basis expanded quickly, from 12 in 1990 to 1153 in 1997<sup>54</sup>, parallel to the rise of the political Islamist movement in Turkey. The Association continued to grow in the 2000s, with the arrival of new members and the opening of new local

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<sup>54</sup> For the Association's membership figures between 1990 and 2004, see "AKP'nin Ampulunu" (2004).

branches both at home and abroad. According to its website, MUSIAD currently has more than 3000 members representing approximately 15,000 enterprises. By 2006, the members' contribution to the gross national income reached almost 10%.<sup>55</sup>

In contrast to the *Türkiye Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği* (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association, TUSIAD), representing mainly the large-scale businesses, most MUSIAD members are small and medium-sized enterprises despite the growing number of large business conglomerates inside the association.<sup>56</sup> MUSIAD's geographical reach is also much wider than its secular counterpart, which is mostly concentrated in Istanbul and the adjacent Marmara region.

MUSIAD excluded democracy promotion from its agenda for approximately the first decade of its existence. Until the publication of the "Constitutional Reform and Democratization of Government" report in 2000, it hardly ever mentioned, let alone promoted, democracy and human rights. On the contrary, it considered liberal democracy a Western imposition (Onis, 1997), and fiercely opposed Turkey's EU bid on the basis of the pressures exerted by the EU on Turkey "towards so-called more democratization, some sort of political solution to the problem in the South eastern Anatolia, etc. [sic]" in addition to possible concessions regarding the Cyprus issue (MUSIAD, 1995, p.50). Not surprisingly, the only democratic rights that were defended by the association were the freedoms of religion and expression in line with the rest of the Islamist opposition to the secularist regime at the time (Onis, 1997).

Although the Association never partnered with the Islamist WP officially, its proximity to the WP circles was widely known.<sup>57</sup> During the short-lived coalition government of the WP and TPP (1996-1997), member businesses became regular participants in Premier Necmettin Erbakan's visits to Islamic countries, reportedly making official commitments regarding Turkish foreign trade policy ("MUSIAD Uzakdogu'da", 1996). There were even rumors that the coalition government was

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<sup>55</sup> The contribution by the rival TÜSİAD to gross national income was around 35% in 2006 (Berberoglu, 2006).

<sup>56</sup> As of 2010, 90% of MUSIAD members were small and medium sized enterprises ("MUSIAD 20", 2010).

<sup>57</sup> In a mini-poll conducted by the daily *Milliyet* in 1996, only 25% of MUSIAD members said they supported the RP, while 50% indicated no party affiliation. In the same vein, Erol Yarar, the founding president of MUSIAD, in response to poll results stated that MUSIAD cannot be considered as an organization under the RP umbrella even though a significant part of its members support the party ("Onlar Refah'ı", 1996).

giving preferential treatment to MUSIAD members in the allocation of IMF loans (Buğra as cited in Cam, 2006).

The “February 28 process”, that began with the National Security Council meeting of February 28, 1997, constitutes a turning point in the transformation of MUSIAD’s approach to democracy. In contrast to the earlier episodes of state repression of political Islam, this crackdown did not remain limited to Islamist political actors and groups affiliated with the WP. Rather, it represented an orchestrated effort on the part of the secular establishment to uproot the social bases of Islamic radicalism by targeting all the perceived nodes of Islamist activity in civil society including Islamic businesses. In this respect, it involved, among others, the publication of the names of companies allegedly supporting political Islamist networks and the exclusion of such companies from public tenders. Likewise, two consecutive presidents of MUSIAD were tried by State Security Courts on charges of religious reactionaryism.<sup>58</sup> MUSIAD, too, at one point risked closure at the hands of these courts on similar charges. All in all, the February 28 process inflicted serious harm on Islamic businesses in general and MUSIAD in particular (which lost 600 members in less than two years), in addition to leading to the collapse of the WP-TPP coalition government and subsequent closure of the WP (“İş dünyasında,” 1999).

In reaction to the harsh anti-Islamist measures of the February 28 period, MUSIAD adopted a strategy of disassociating itself from political Islam. To this end, it tried to underplay the importance of Islamic solidarity in the founding philosophy of MUSIAD at every occasion by suggesting that money had no religion. Likewise, it initiated an internal investigation process on some of its members allegedly involved in the mismanagement of the financial contributions of religious Turkish workers abroad. Meanwhile, the February 28 measures gave rise to an internal feud inside the VP, the successor of the banned WP.<sup>59</sup> As mentioned earlier, against hardliner Erbakan loyalists the Association sided with the reformist wing led by Recep Tayyip

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<sup>58</sup> In addition to the 1st and 2nd presidents of MUSIAD, Erol Yazar and Ali Bayramoglu respectively, several other MUSIAD member businesses were tried before the State Security Courts for financing illegal Islamist networks. Both Yazar and Bayramoglu were found guilty, in 1999 and 2000 respectively, under article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code for “publicly inciting hatred and hostility among people by pointing to differences in religious beliefs,” and received one year prison sentences.

<sup>59</sup> Internal factions formed within the political Islamist movement before the onset of the February 28 process. Yet, the RP’s highly hierarchical organizational structure dominated by Erbakan’s charismatic leadership managed to keep a tap on these earlier factional struggles. For more on this point, see Cakir (2004).

Erdogan and his close associates, Abdullah Gul and Bulent Arinc.<sup>60</sup> This reformist faction, unable to seize party leadership after a number of unsuccessful attempts, split and created the JDP immediately denouncing the goal of the establishment of a Sharia-based state and adopting “conservative democracy” as its official ideology.<sup>61</sup>

It was precisely in this repressive atmosphere that MUSIAD (2000) took its first public stance on democratization by publishing the report “Constitutional Reform and Democratization of Government.”<sup>62</sup> A cursory look at these proposed reforms reveals that they are an amalgamation of neoliberal themes such as a smaller and less bureaucratic state, rule of law, a stronger civil society, and administrative decentralization with other proposals such as the elimination of military influence over civilian politics and full guarantees for individual rights and freedoms. Through a more careful reading, however, one can easily identify the heavy impact of the conflict between the Turkish state and Islamist businesses (which reached its climax during the February 28 process), on the content and scope of MUSIAD’s proposals.

First, the secularist establishment appears to form the principle target of the majority of reform proposals that call for the reduction of the powers of the military, the presidency, high courts, and the *Yuksekk Ogretim Kurumu* (Higher Education Council, YOK), all bastions of secular Republican principles. Second, the report is rather selective in terms of rights that should be better protected by the state. The highest priority is still given to the prevention of the violations of the freedom of belief and the right to education in conformity with the Islamist oppositional discourse of the time. Third, the report covertly accuses the state of taking sides with the big capital, at the expense of smaller enterprises. More specifically, it holds the “monopolist and pro-closed economy capital” responsible for state’s restrictions of the freedom of enterprise and the right to private property, suggesting that they do not want to share the country’s economic resources with Anatolian entrepreneurs (MUSIAD, 2000, p.27).

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<sup>60</sup> Erol Yazar, then president of MUSIAD, was involved in the internal affairs of the RP to such an extent that there were rumours in late 1997 that he would candidate himself for the leadership of the new party to be established by reformists with a “Muslim democrat” identity (“Refah icin”, 1997). To retaliate MUSIAD’s siding with internal dissidents, Erbakan commissioned the establishment of a rival business association, ASKON, in November 1998 hoping to attract the members of MUSIAD once the State Security Court dissolved the Association (“MUSIAD’i tasfiye”, 1998).

<sup>61</sup> For more on the concept of “conservative democracy” by a prominent AKP ideologue, see Akdogan (2006).

<sup>62</sup> MUSIAD published a second research report on the subject matter in 2008, titled “Opinions and Suggestions for a New Constitution” expressing ideas similar to the ones included in the 2000 version in terms of legal and institutional reforms necessary for Turkey’s further democratization.

The conservative bourgeoisie owed its existence both to the Turkish state's increased political tolerance towards Islamic networks and to its adoption of export-oriented growth strategies in the post-1980 era. Yet, unlike the secular bourgeoisie they have never come to consider the state as a natural ally to their cause of further capital accumulation regardless of the latter's strong post-1980 commitment to free market capitalism. On the contrary and very much like their pre-1980 counterparts, they have regarded the Turkish state's economic policies -in terms of subsidies, access to credits and public contracts, and tax reductions – highly discriminatory and inimical to the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises constituting the bulk of conservative business activity.<sup>63</sup>

In this regard, the Muslim bourgeoisie's desire to achieve political power commensurate with its growing economic presence seems to be the principle reason behind its u-turn from religious integralism to democracy promotion in the late 1990s. Until then, conservative middle classes had hoped to achieve this goal by allying themselves with the WP, which would have positively discriminated against Muslim businesses once in power. However, after the February 28 process these businesses, along with the rest of the political Islamist movement, forcibly came to the conclusion that “challenging the secular state in Turkey is a dead-end” (Özbudun, 2006a, p.547), and subsequently abandoned political Islam in favor of a subtler strategy of curbing down the secular establishment's power through democratic reforms.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

In his introduction to the edited volume *The Emergence of a New Turkey: Democracy and the AK Party*, Yavuz (2006a) describes Islamic entrepreneurs as “those pious individuals who identify Islam as their identity and formulate their everyday cognitive map by using Islamic ideas and history to vernacularize (Islamicize) modern economic relations that promote the market forces and cherish neoliberal projects” (p.4). Thus, its capacity to mix and mesh religious devotion with a commitment to free-market capitalism constitutes the main defining characteristic of the newly emerging Muslim bourgeoisie of Turkey.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> This is a recurrent theme in annual economy reports published by MUSIAD since its inception.

<sup>64</sup> From a more critical perspective, Cosar & Ozman (2004) describe this mixture as “neoliberalism with a Muslim face.”



This chapter attempted to explore the implications of this mixture for democracy, and thereby reassess the Islamic bourgeoisie's potential as an agent of democratization drawing on the empirical evidence coming from the Turkish case. With this purpose in mind, the chapter began with a historical comparison of the electoral bases of religiously-oriented parties in Turkey, including both historical and current cases, drawing on the previous studies of the social bases of Islamist parties. This comparison revealed that, (a) poverty has played an important role in the electoral growth of political Islam in Turkey (b) yet, this role was contingent upon other contextual factors such as the retreat of the welfare state and the debilitation of the Left; and that (c) the ideological moderation of the movement rendered it more attractive to conservative middle classes without altering its multi-class nature.

Following a strategy of empirical triangulation, these conclusions have been, subsequently, subjected to a statistical test using time-series cross-sectional data on Islamist vote shares and select socio-economic indicators covering a period of 26 years. This analysis has shown that (a) overall, Islamist parties have tended to perform better at the polls in income poor provinces, and that (b) the poverty-political Islam connection has been the strongest in the WP years, while for other Islamist parties income has been a weak predictor of their electoral appeal. As far as the JDP is concerned, the analysis has demonstrated (c) the absence of a positive association between income levels and the JDP's vote share. Therefore, as Turkish Islamism moderated its ideological discourse the empirical connection between poverty and Islamism has disappeared as predicted by the bourgeoisie-moderation thesis. Moreover, the JDP's electoral base differs from the traditional support base of political Islam also in other respects including levels of instruction and urbanization as well as ethnic make-up.

Yet, the bourgeoisie-moderation thesis claims not only that political Islam's moderation in Turkey paralleled the emergence and expansion of conservative middle classes, but that these middle classes are the main reason why the movement eventually embraced democratic principles and institutions as ends in themselves by publicly denouncing the goal of the establishment of a theocratic state in Turkey. In order to assess the validity of this second claim based ultimately on the assumption that the bourgeoisie, by its very nature, constitutes a pro-democratic social force, the second part of the chapter has examined in detail the evolution of the political discourse of the Turkish conservative bourgeoisie with a particular focus on the issues

of democratization and constitutional reform. This examination has revealed that this sub-section of the Turkish bourgeoisie had remained firmly dedicated to the Islamist political project until the February 28 decisions altered their political calculations along with the rest of the Islamist movement.

In the light of this evidence, I contend that the ideological transformation of political Islam at the party level and the changes taking place in Islamist constituency values were by and large simultaneous processes with a common cause: the February 28 measures. Unlike earlier instances of state repression, the secularist establishment this time preferred to target political and economic elites of the Islamist movement simultaneously. This strengthened the hand of dissidents inside the party led by the ex-mayor of Istanbul, R. T. Erdogan, with whom the Islamist entrepreneurs had already entertained close relations. In fact, as noted earlier, Muslim entrepreneurs had begun to question the rigidity of the WP's ideology before becoming an open target for state repression in the late 1990s. Yet, their concerns did not actually concern the undemocratic aspects of the WP's religious integralism, but rather the damage that its statist and anti-Western economic vision can cause to their business interests.

All in all, one is hard-pressed to find in the Turkish context the "elective affinity" that supposedly ties Islamist middle classes to democratic politics in a fashion that predates Islamist moderation. This means, among others, that absent antagonistic relations with the state, the expansion of pious middle classes as a result of economic liberalization is no guarantee that Islamic radicalism would be abandoned in favor of religiously conservative, yet pro-democratic political platforms. On the contrary, economic liberalization may end up creating an economic counter-elite, as it did in Turkey, eager to support far-right populist movements such as political Islam so long as its calculations are altered by historical ruptures such as the February 28 process in stark contrast to the well-behaved conceptualizations of their middle class identity as a wellspring of democratic energies.

## **APPENDIX A: CONSTRUCTION OF THE DATASET**

Two main problems have been encountered in the construction of the dataset. The first one has to do with the increase in the number of administrative provinces from 67 to 81 in the historical period covered by the analysis (1973-2007). Starting from the year 1989, 14 new provinces have been created on top of the original set of 67 by dividing existing provinces (Aksaray, Bayburt, Karaman and Kirikkale in 1989; Batman and Sirnak in 1990; Bartin in 1991; Ardahan and Igdirdir in 1992; Yalova, Kilis and Karabuk in 1995; Osmaniye in 1996; and Duzce in 1999). The second problem has to do with the lack of one-to-one correspondence between the years in which the general elections have been held (1973, 1977, 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, 2002 and 2007) and the years of official population censuses (1970, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995, 2000 and 2008) except for the year 1995.

In order to overcome the first problem, the values belonging to the newly established provinces have been merged with the provinces from which they got separated starting from the 1991 general election. In the case of vote percentages, this calculation has been done by weighting the values according to the number of votes cast valid in the province of interest and in its splinter(s). In the case of explanatory variables, the weighting procedure has been carried out based on the population census data. In this way, the number of observations over the 1973-2007 time period has been standardized according to the original 67 administrative provinces.

The second problem concerns the data coming from population censuses, namely the schooling indices and urbanization ratios. Since general election years and census years do not coincide, an interpolation procedure has been carried out based on the assumption that these values changed linearly between two consecutive censuses. To illustrate, schooling and urbanization values belonging to the year 1973 have been estimated by calculating the slope of the line that connects the values coming from 1970 and 1975 censuses. This calculation has been carried out for all the provinces.

In addition to these general issues, certain other manipulations of data had to be carried out in the case of the main explanatory variable, GDP per capita. The first general election year analyzed in this study is 1973 while the earliest data available on the GDP per capita at the provincial level dates back only to 1975 (Karaca, 2004). This time-series dataset consists of annual GDP per capita levels of Turkish administrative provinces between the years 1975 and 2000 standardized according to 1987 prices in Turkish Liras. In the absence of GDP per capita data belonging to the

years 1973, 2002 and 2007, first, 1975 figures have been substituted for the year 1973. Second, the GDP per capita figures of 2002 and 2007 have been extrapolated from the last available year (2000) based on the real GDP growth ratios of Turkish economy as reported by the OECD (2010) (see Table 4.8 below).

**Table 4.8 - Annual Real GDP Growth of Turkey**

<b>Year</b>	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
<b>GDP growth rate</b>	-5.7	6.2	5.3	9.4	8.4	6.9	4.7	0.9

**Source:** OECD Country Statistical Profiles: Turkey

As noted earlier, educational and urbanization statistics are taken from nation-wide censuses conducted every 5 years from 1970 until 2000. In the case of educational statistics, an index has been created by adding up the years of elementary school (5), junior high school (3), high school (3) and university instruction (4), all weighted according the percentage of graduates in a given province. In this way, an educational score that reflects the average years of schooling per capita has been calculated for all provinces and for all of the election years studied. The urbanization ratios, on the other hand, are calculated by dividing the number of city dwellers in a province by its total population.

Unlike the rest of indicators, the ethnic identity of the province is operationalized as a dichotomous variable, as a part of which cities with more than 10% Kurdish population are coded as 1 (Kurdish province) and the others as 0 (non-Kurdish provinces) based on a previous study conducted by Kocher (2002). Unfortunately, this classification had to be based on the 1965 census results as it is the last population census where respondents were asked about their ethnic identities through a question on their mother tongues. Consequently, the values of this control variable vary only according to the province.

## CHAPTER 5

### ISLAMIST MODERATION AND STATE REPRESSION

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The empirical puzzle that drives the discussion in the following chapter concerns the role played by the strict state secularism exercised in Turkey on the moderation of political Islam. That the radical ideological transformation of the National Outlook-affiliated parties began immediately after the crushing of Islamist networks through the infamous February 28 decisions culminating in the closure of the WP indicates that the “extra-democratic” constraints exercised by Turkey’s secularist institutions did play a role in the moderation of Turkish political Islam. Yet, many analysts that point to such a connection have failed to mention the fact that this was not the first time an Islamist party was being shut down by the Turkish state. To be precise, it was the third time that the Turkish state outlawed an Islamist party for its anti-secular activities based on the constitutional provisions that proscribe the use of religion for political purposes and consider actions taken against the principle of secularism as sufficient grounds for party closure. However, in none of these previous instances of state crackdown, the Islamist party established after the closure (the NSP after the NOP, and the WP after the NSP) showed signs of ideological moderation, leaving aside an initial period of self-imposed prudence in public pronouncements.<sup>65</sup>

This state of affairs can be interpreted in two alternative ways. First, it might be a sign of the spuriousness of the causal relationship established between secularist state pressure and Islamist moderation as such pressure, epitomized by the act of proscribing a legally-operating political party, failed to produce the predicted effect in the cases of the NSP and WP. The second possibility is that there might be a qualitative difference between these three incidences of state suppression in terms of their longer term consequences for the viability and support base of political Islam in society. In this respect, the following chapter aims to provide an empirical

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<sup>65</sup> Both Ahmad (2003) and Calmuk (2004) observe that every time an Islamist party was shut down by the Turkish state, the party established in its place claimed to be more moderate. Calmuk (2004) relates this state of affairs to Erbakan’s and National Outlook movement’s commitment to party politics as the only legitimate way to seize political power as opposed to extra-parliamentary and/or subversive methods. See, for an example of post-closure prudence, the interview of E. Colasan with the ex-WP leader Ahmet Tekdal (Colasan, 1985).

investigation of the closure processes of the three parties in question by focusing on two different levels of Islam-state interaction in Turkey.

The first level is the interaction between the secularist state institutions, most prominently the military and the judiciary, and Islamist parties belonging to the National Outlook movement. The second level concerns the broader relationship between the official ideology of the Turkish Republic and Islamic ideology. This relationship has taken several forms from mutual antagonism and repression to accommodation and tolerance throughout the Republican history, and consequently has influenced the fortunes of political Islam both in terms of its public legitimacy and electoral viability.

The following discussion begins with an examination of the legal-constitutional framework in Turkey that enables party closures based on charges of anti-secularism. It continues with a detailed empirical account of the closure cases brought against the NOP, NSP and WP in chronological order. The empirical discussion of each one of these cases is complimented by an examination of the shape of state-Islam relations in the specific period under discussion. The chapter closes with an overall assessment of the similarities and differences between these three periods of state persecution of political Islam by focusing on the two levels indicated earlier.

## **2. THE SECULAR STATE AND ISLAMIST PARTIES**

### ***2a. The Legal Framework of Islamist Party Closures***

After the passage to multi-party politics in 1946, the Republican establishment has several times resorted to party closures as a punitive measure against political movements considered as a threat, among others, to the secular-democratic nature of the Turkish state.<sup>66</sup> A total of 26 political parties were shut down by the Turkish state since then excluding the period of military rule between 1980 and 1983 during which all the existing parties were dissolved (“Turkiye’de 26”, 2008).<sup>67</sup> The parties shut down directly by the military junta, on the other hand, constitute approximately 10

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<sup>66</sup> Ethnic/Kurdish separatism and extreme left are the two other major ideological orientations that provided justifications for party closures.

<sup>67</sup> To be sure, not all the 26 parties in question have been dissolved on ideological grounds. Some, such as the Green Party of Turkey (1988-1994), had to terminate their activities for their failure to respect certain technical provisions of the Political Parties Law.

percent of all the parties that had to terminate their activities for various reasons since the establishment of the Republic. On the whole, direct state involvement in party closures currently stays at roughly 30 percent of all the closure cases (Kaynar, 2007). State's indirect contribution to party closures through disincentivization of certain political actors, however, appears to be higher than this figure. In this respect, around 100 parties out of a total 178 have ceased their activities during or immediately after a military intervention (Kaynar, 2007).

The Constitutional Court, since its establishment in 1963, has been in charge of seeing party closure cases, and is responsible for twenty four party closures out of the twenty six that took place in the multi-party period.<sup>68</sup> The conditions under which a party closure case can be initiated are specified in the articles 68 and 69 of the Turkish Constitution relating to the establishment and operations of political parties. In this respect, the fourth paragraph of the article 68 of the 1982 constitution reads as follows:

Statutes and programs of political parties may not be in conflict with the indivisible integrity of the State with its territory and nation, human rights, national sovereignty, and the principles of the democratic and secular Republic, or aim to defend or establish the dictatorship of any class or group, or any other kind of dictatorship, or encourage commitment of any crime.

According to the article 69 on the principles to be observed by political parties, a political party can be dissolved permanently if it is found to be in contravention of the provisions of the above paragraph. Moreover, a political party can face public prosecution if it receives funds from abroad or its bylaw and program violates the Political Parties Law. In addition to the 68th and 69th articles of the Constitution, the clause 101 of the Political Parties Law No. 2820 dated 1983 further regulates the conditions under which a party closure case can be initiated. According to a subsequent clause added to the 101st in 2002, depending on the gravity of the deeds mentioned in the indictment, the Constitutional Court may opt for an at least fifty percent cut in state's annual financial assistance to a party instead of permanent closure.

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<sup>68</sup> As of 2006, the total number of parties that had been subject of a closure case stood at 39 (Kaynar, 2007).

Leaving aside the NSP that was directly shut down by the 1980 junta, all the parties belonging to the political Islamist movement (NOP in 1971, WP in 1997, and VP in 2001) were dissolved by the decisions of the Constitutional Court under the relevant provisions of the Turkish Constitution. Notably, the Court's decisions in all of these three cases came during periods of indirect military interventions as exemplified by the memorandums of 1971 (NOP) and 1997 (WP in 1998 and later on VP in 2001). The JDP also faced a closure case in 2008 for its anti-secular activities. Even though the Court did not acquit the party from charges of religious obscurantism, it nevertheless abstained from dissolving it in view of the political crisis likely to be triggered by the closure of a party in power with around 40 percent public support. Instead, it ordered a 50 percent cut of the treasury funds allocated to the JDP as a punitive measure. The FP, on the other hand, has so far not been prosecuted by the Constitutional Court although it has been ideologically much closer to political Islamism than the other offshoot of the VP, the JDP.

## ***2b. 1971 Memorandum and NOP's Closure***

### ***2b1. The Process of NOP's Closure***

The NOP had to terminate its political activities in less than two years after its foundation as a result of a closure case brought against it by the Constitutional Court during the period of indirect military rule (1971-1973) that began with the military's memorandum to civilian politicians on March 12, 1971. The chief public prosecutor brought the case against the NOP before the Constitutional Court on March 5, 1971 accusing the party of engaging in anti-secular activities in violation of the relevant provisions of the Constitution and the Political Parties Law No. 648 (Prosecutor's Indictment, 1971).<sup>69</sup> The court announced its final decision on May 20, 1971 finding the NOP guilty of anti-secularism and hence calling for its dissolution. No punitive measures were taken against party leaders, including Erbakan who chose to stay in Switzerland for the next couple of years in self-imposed exile.

The series of events that took place during the process of the NOP's closure and Erbakan's self-imposed exile in Switzerland in its immediate aftermath create a rather ambiguous picture. Consequently, they render it rather difficult to come to a

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<sup>69</sup> Political Parties Law No.648 was replaced by Law No.2820 following the 1980 military intervention.



conclusion as to whether or not the secularist establishment truly wanted to strike a blow to Erbakan's political fortunes in particular and those of Islamists in general by shutting down the NOP.

For one thing, there was a remarkable difference in the Kemalist regime's treatment of the NOP and the WPT (Workers Party of Turkey - *Turkiye Isci Partisi*), the only other party shut down by the Constitutional Court in the aftermath of the 1971 memorandum. Not only did the Court order WPT's closure on the grounds that the party defended communism and Kurdish separatism at its 4th congress, but sentenced its leaders to prison terms varying between 8 to 16 years. In contrast, no punitive action was taken against NOP leading cadres following their party's closure. Moreover, in the two years following the memorandum, the state forces spared no effort to crack down on WPT-affiliated civil societal organizations, such as university clubs and workers' associations, and in this way crippled the leftist movement in such a way that no similar party would be able to enter the parliament again. In contrast, no comparable action was taken against neither the Islamist politicians nor their sympathizers in civil society. On the contrary, Erbakan, despite the 5 year ban from political activity that he received as a result of his party's closure, turned back to Turkey in less than 2 years and participated in the preparations for the establishment of the NSP much to everybody's surprise. Initially hesitant to assume a too visible role in the NSP's affairs, he was able to take the helms of the party once again in October 1973 right before the general elections to take place the same month.

Second, the political rumours of the time had it that two generals from the Turkish Armed Forces, the air force commander Muhsin Batur and general Turgut Sunalp, paid a visit to Erbakan in Switzerland, and asked him to come back to the country to take part once again in active politics (Turan, 1996; Sevimay, 2001). What the generals had in mind was probably to further weaken the centre-right JP of Demirel, which they ousted from power with the 1971 memorandum, by exploiting the factions within the right.<sup>70</sup> The generals, at least some of them, held the incumbent government of Demirel responsible for the increasing political instability and class-based polarization of the late 1970s, and blamed the party for its inefficacy in dealing with the growing political violence. Besides, they held an a priori suspicion towards

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<sup>70</sup> The Prime Minister Demirel of the JP in an interview he gave to the daily *Milliyet* in 1985 stated that "Erbakan was brought back" from Switzerland to weaken the JP without specifying by whom (Arzik, 1985).

the JP due to its semi-official status as the heir to the DP's throne (Democrat Party – *Demokrat Parti*) (1946-1960), the primary target of the 1960 military intervention (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996). On top of this came Demirel's recent attempts to steer Turkish foreign policy away from American priorities, a move which caused considerable resentment in the Armed Forces (Cem, 1973). In retrospect, this strategy may be said to have achieved its original goal of debilitating the JP: in the first general election it entered in 1973, the NSP managed to garner 11.8% of the votes cast while the Democratic Party (*Demokratik Parti*) (1970-1980), another recent offshoot of the JP (not to be mistaken with the pre-1960 DP), made an equally strong showing by obtaining 11.9%. The JP, instead, registered a big loss in the same election, from 46.55% in 1969 to 29.8% in 1973.<sup>71</sup>

Another attempt to convict Erbakan and his associates in the same time period went mysteriously down the drain when the military prosecutor sent a request to the parliament for the suspension of their immunity shield. The purpose of the waiver was to try the NSP parliamentarians under the now-defunct article 163 of the Turkish Penal Code which criminalized anti-secular activities.<sup>72</sup> The prosecution request was buried in the parliamentary commission where it came before its placement on the parliamentary agenda (Turan, 1996).

## **2b2. State-Islam Relations in the Early 1970s**

The rather privileged treatment that Erbakan and his associates received from state authorities in the process of the closure of the NOP and of the establishment of the NSP makes more sense if the broader political context is taken into consideration with an eye on the state-Islam relations. Both the NOP and the NSP are the parties of the historical period between the military interventions of May 27, 1960 and September 12, 1980. This is a period in which a reassertion of official secularism on the part of the bureaucratic-military elite went in hand with a certain level of unofficial tolerance towards Islam and its public manifestations both in society and politics. In order to better understand the conditions that brought about such a change in state-Islam

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<sup>71</sup> The daily *Milliyet* conducted a pre-electoral poll a week before the 1973 elections, and predicted the total percentage of electors likely to shift from the JP to the NSP and DP at less than 6%. Yet, this prediction appears to be rather conservative in view of the newspapers' other prediction that the JP would have at least garnered 40.5% of the votes cast, thereby registering a maximum of 6% loss with respect to the 1969 elections ("Secim-1973", 1973). Instead, the JP ended up losing approximately 17% of the total votes cast.

<sup>72</sup> This article was annulled in 1991 by the centre-right government of Turgut Ozal's Motherland Party.

relations, it is first necessary to overview, however briefly, the basic determinants of the Islam-state relations in the early Republican period.

The official secularism of the Early Republic (1923-1946) displayed several militant characteristics. The Kemalist elite that founded it singled out the Islamic nature of the Ottoman state and society as the principle reason behind the fall of the Empire from its former grandeur and its eventual subservience to Western powers. Besides, in view of the central role that Islam played in the legitimization, reproduction and, in its final days, in the defence of the old regime against its republican opponents, the founding elite of the Republic approached Islamic social movements with a high level of suspicion, and sometimes animosity, due to their potential to turn into hotbeds of pro-monarchical reactionary activity. Hence, they considered the reduction of the political and social influence of Islamic values as a first necessary step in the implementation of their far-reaching modernization project which aspired to create a modern nation-state along Western lines.

This reduction was to be achieved through a series of radical reforms aimed at the extensive secularization of both state institutions and cultural symbols in a top-down fashion. First came the abolition of the Caliphate, a title held by Ottoman rulers since the 16th century. This was followed by the abolition of the office of the *Seyh-ul Islam*, the highest religious authority in the Ottoman state that provided Islamic opinion (*fetva*) on the decisions of the kings. Strict laws were enacted to prevent the use of religion for political purposes including the establishment of religious political parties. In the educational and juridical fields that functioned previously under the strict guidance of Islamic principles, full institutional secularization was achieved through the abolition of *medreses*, Islamic higher education institutions, and their replacement with a state-controlled secular school system. Likewise, the Ottoman system of religious courts was abandoned in favour of a fully secular legal system based on the existing European examples.<sup>73</sup> The cultural reforms, on the other hand, were an attempt to purge the most powerful symbols of Islam from the public sphere. They included, among others, the replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin, of the lunar Muslim calendar with the Gregorian, and of Friday with Sunday as the day of public holiday. Outfits such as *fez* and veil, traditional costumes of the Ottoman Muslim community, were outlawed. Unorthodox Sufi brotherhoods

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<sup>73</sup> In this respect, the new regime replaced the Islam-based Ottoman legal system by adopting the civil code from Switzerland, the penal code from Italy and the commercial code from Germany.

(*tarikats*), the main locus of folk Islam during the Ottoman Empire, and of their places of worship were prohibited. Finally, Islam as the state religion was taken out of the constitution in 1924, and the principle of secularism was inserted in 1937.<sup>74</sup>

The early Republican secularism, though, went one step beyond the classical definition of the term, the separation of the state and religion, with the establishment the Directorate of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet Isleri Baskanligi* - DRA) in 1924. The Directorate turned all the religious clerics in the country into paid employees of the state, and became the principal venue through which a reformed understanding of Islam as a private religion came to be disseminated, among others, through regular sermons at the mosques. In this way, religion's subordination to state through a mechanism of bureaucratic control, "the state of controlled secularity" in the words of Tank (2005), became a remarkable feature of official secularism in Turkey as it would be exercised in the years to come (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996; Toprak, 1995).

The beginning of competitive politics with the passage to multi-party democracy in 1946 brought about certain changes in the official secularist doctrine towards a more liberal interpretation. Behind this change was the challenge posed by the necessity to attract the rural voters that constituted at the time the bulk of the electorate (Toprak, 1981). For approximately two decades after the proclamation of the Republic, the Turkish countryside remained as politically isolated and apathetic as it was during the Ottoman times largely due to its negligence by the single party regime of the RPP. The RPP's main preoccupation during the formative years of the Republican regime, was to create a modern and secular city-based ruling elite that would have sustained the top-down Republican reforms without much regard for both the continuing economic backwardness and cultural traditionalism of the rural population. Yet, the spectre of competitive elections forced both the incumbent RPP and its main competitor DP (1946-1960) to take the rural vote seriously. Both parties, in this respect, decided to exploit traditional power structures such as local notables, of whose mediatory role between the centre and the periphery dates back to Ottoman times, as well as the religious values still constituting the dominant value system in the countryside to mobilize the rural population.

Notwithstanding its strict stance on the issue of secularism, the RPP took the

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<sup>74</sup> For a comprehensive overview of the Early Republican reforms for secularization, see Toprak (1981) Chapter Three, and Berkes (1998).

lead in the politicisation of Islam in the lead-up to the 1950 elections in order to preempt a potential DP victory. It introduced an elective religious course into primary schools, set up Prayer Leader and Preacher courses (*Imam-Hatip kurslari*), and reordered the opening of sacred tombs (*turbe*).<sup>75</sup> The DP, too, used religious themes in its electoral campaign while going on to great efforts to prove its allegiance to the secular principles of the Republic in the face of the RPP's accusations that it was exploiting religion for political purposes. Yet, once in power following its victory in the 1950 election, the party began to slowly change its tone on the protection of the radical Kemalist secularism, and gave signals that it would bring it in line with the electorate's conservative values. Among the reforms it took in this direction were the turning of elective religious classes in primary schools to compulsory courses, the expansion of the budget of the DRA and the opening of Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools (*Imam-Hatip Okullari*). Moreover, during the DP rule (1950-1960), the mosque constructions boomed, religious brotherhoods and fundamentalist groups stepped up their activities, and the number of religious associations increased (Toprak, 1981).

On the whole, though, the DP could hardly be defined as a confessional party with a reactionary agenda (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996; Toprak, 1981). Except for a brief period in the late 1950s during which the party adopted a political discourse more and more concentrated on religious issues to underplay the importance of a general economic downturn that hit the countryside in those years, it stayed carefully away from measures that would have altered the secular character of the state. Toprak (1981), instead, suggests that the DP's legacy in state-Islam relations can be better understood in terms of the politization of the centre-periphery cleavage, which expressed itself on the cultural plane as the clash of the secular worldview of the Kemalist elite and the Islamicly-oriented traditional masses, in the crucial phase of the emergence of multi-party competition. As a result, religion came to play "an important role in the structuring of party policies and political loyalties after 1950" (Toprak, 1981, p.91).<sup>76</sup>

Even though the DP was not a religious party, the makers of the 1960 *coup*

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<sup>75</sup> During this period, the RPP also enacted the Article 163 of the penal code that criminalizes anti-secular activities. This article had provided the primary legal basis for the conviction of Islamist political actors until 1991, the year it was abolished.

<sup>76</sup> For more on the original formulation of the "freezing of cleavages" thesis, see Lipset & Rokkan (1967).

*d'état* took issue with the DP's politicization of religion as much as with its gradual slide towards authoritarianism and growing intolerance towards the opposition. As a result, when a commission consisting of prominent academics and intellectuals was gathered by the junta to write down the new constitution of the republic, they introduced the prohibition of the use of religion for political purposes as a constitutional provision for the first time in the Republican history. Yet, this was only the tip of the iceberg. The parties of the post-1960 era, both new and old, were now aware of the electoral value of appeasing the conservative voters. So, both during the military-ordained coalitions of the 1960-65 period, and during the ensuing fully civilian governments of both the right and the left until the 1980 intervention, mosque constructions continued, and more Quran courses and Prayer Leader and Preacher schools were opened by the state.

Electoral pragmatism, though it played a significant role, was only part of the story of the new rapprochement taking place between the Turkish state and Islamic political actors in the post-1960 period. Arguably, the most important external determinant of this rapprochement was the Cold War:<sup>77</sup>

Policymakers in Washington had been alarmed by the rise of nationalism in the Middle East and Asia and concluded that nationalism was as great a threat to Western interests as communism. Consequently, in November 1958, the US government issued an internal document - National Security Agency document 5820/1 - arguing that Islam could be used as an antidote to nationalism and communism (Ahmad, 2003, p.128).

The role accorded to Islam in the global fight against communism positively altered the perception of Islam at the state level as Islam acquired yet another utility in the eyes of the Turkish military-bureaucratic elite. In support of this point Calmuk (2004) reports that

the National Security Council general secretary Rafet Guneralp was objecting to the campaign for the NOP's closure. National Intelligence Service member Nuri Emre stated that general Rafet Guneralp was worried about the rise of left-wing anarchism and that in order to prevent it there was a need to emphasize religious education. He [Guneralp] attempted even to block the

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<sup>77</sup> See also Cakir (1990) for the influence of American foreign policy on the application of official secularism in Turkey.

passage of a negative resolution on religious education by sending a powerful orator to the Education Council (my translation, p.560).

The founders of the Republic had previously resorted to religious appeals to mobilize the inert peasant population of Anatolia against European invasion during the war of independence (1919-1922) notwithstanding their subsequent hawkish policies. Almost half a century later, Islam reappeared on the agenda of state elites as a potential remedy to counter the growing influence of leftist ideologies on the Turkish population, which were all lumped together as varieties of communism. Notable in this respect was the establishment of “Associations for the Fight against Communism” in 1962, which consequently turned into magnets for the Islamist-nationalist youth and played a significant role in the harassment of left-wing groups in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s.

The official perception that the Left’s power had been growing and needed to be counteracted had a lot to do with the establishment of the first class-based political party of the Republic in 1962, the Worker’s Party of Turkey, and its entry into the parliament in 1965 with 15 parliamentarians. The significance of the establishment of the WPT, enabled largely by the liberal provisions of the 1961 constitution, laid principally in the chain effect it created on the Turkish political arena by politicizing class differences and by pushing other parties to take a stance on the subject matter. The socialist left’s presence in the parliament was complimented by its growing popularity among the youth and workers that were using the rights to assembly and strike recognized by the 1961 constitution at full speed in the late 1960s by organizing numerous demonstrations, factory occupations and wildcat strikes.

In this respect, the real motive behind the military’s 1971 memorandum had little to do with the threat of Islamic resurgence but with this rise of leftist ideologies (Tachau & Heper, 1983; Ahmad, 2003). The memorandum made neither explicit nor implicit references to the threat of political Islam while listing the reasons behind the army’s decision to intervene. Instead, it singled out the incumbent government of the JP for its inefficacy in dealing with the growing social unrest of the late 1960s characterized by widespread labour militancy, student protests, and the terrorist activities of militant groups from both sides of the political spectrum. In reality, with this memorandum the generals were simply taking matters into their own hands blaming the civilian government of the JP for its inability to put a cap on left-wing

activism. As is also aptly observed by Tachau & Heper (1983), in this context, the NOP's closure appeared to make more sense as an attempt to create the appearance of impartiality with regards to political extremism than as a sign of outright hostility towards political Islam on the part of the state apparatus.

## ***2c. 1980 Military Intervention and NSP's closure***

### ***2c1. The Process of NSP's Closure***

The NSP is the only National Outlook-affiliated party that is not shut down by a verdict of the Constitutional Court. The party's activities were suspended immediately after the September 12, 1980 military intervention along with all the parties operating in Turkey at the time. Then came the dissolution of all pre-1980 parties by the military junta in October 1981 with the purpose of creating a political "clean slate". The NSP was among the 18 parties that were shut down including the JP and the RPP, the biggest parties of the centre-right and centre-left. A few days later, a ten year political ban was declared for all the leaders of the defunct parties including Erbakan and his associates. This ban was to remain in effect until September 6, 1987, the date it was removed by a referendum organized by the Motherland Party, the party who won the first general elections in October 1983 after the passage to civilian rule.

The makers of the 1980 *coup d'etat* did not target any particular political party or group -at least explicitly-, but the civilian political order as a whole. They considered civilian politicians inept, corrupt and self-indulged, and blamed them for the political violence that was claiming several lives a day and for the worsening economic situation of the late 1970s.<sup>78</sup> Consequently, the National Security Council (NSC), composed of the chief of staff Kenan Evren and other commanders, embarked on a deep-seated restructuring of the Turkish political life both in terms of institutions and cadres. The parliament and cabinet were disbanded; political parties and their leaders were banned; civic associations and trade unions were suspended and shut down in some cases. The 1961 constitution, which the Turkish Armed Forces regarded too liberal and hence unsuitable to Turkey's conditions,<sup>79</sup> was first

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<sup>78</sup> For more on the reasons behind the 1980 military intervention, see Ahmad (1993, 2003), and Zurcher (2005). For more on the economic crisis of the late 1970s and its role in the intervention, see Keyder (1987).

<sup>79</sup> 1961 constitution was previously amended and became more restrictive after the 1971 memorandum at the instigation of the Armed Forces.



suspended, and then replaced by a very restrictive one in November 1982 after its approval by a referendum. During the interim military rule of 1980-1983, the only state institution that was allowed to operate outside military control was the judiciary.

Even though all political actors of the pre-1980 Turkey bore the brunt of the intervention to some extent, it was the radical Left (acting as extra-parliamentary opposition after the closure of the WPT back in 1972), the ultra-nationalist NAP, and finally the Islamist NSP that received the lion's share of state persecution. First, Erbakan, along with the JP's leader Suleyman Demirel, the RPP's leader Bulent Ecevit and NAP's leader Alparslan Turkes, was taken into state custody in the immediate aftermath of the coup. In the meantime, the attorney general of the martial law court began an investigation on Erbakan and other leading MSP members on allegations of anti-secularism in violation of the article 163 of the Turkish Penal Code (TPC).<sup>80</sup> This investigation led to Erbakan and four other NSP members' imprisonment in October 1980.<sup>81</sup> In February 1981, the investigation turned into a lawsuit against Erbakan and 33 MSP members on charges of anti-secularism, public act of animosity towards Ataturk and pro-*Sharia* state activities with the attorney general's request of 4 to 36 years of imprisonment for the defendants.<sup>82</sup> Even though Erbakan denied all the charges during his defence, in February 1983, the military court found him guilty and sentenced to four years in prison.<sup>83</sup> This decision was appealed at the Military Court of Appeals, and finally in February 1985, Erbakan had been acquitted for "lack of evidence" and "imperfect investigation."<sup>84</sup> In addition to the charges of anti-secularism, Erbakan had been prosecuted several times in the above-mentioned period for violating the law on meetings and political rallies for the speeches he delivered in several party rallies in the mid 1970s.<sup>85</sup>

Several sources note that during the several trials that MSP leaders had gone through between 1980 and 1985 they have been treated with sympathy by some of the military judges (Sevimay, 2001; Turan, 1996). That Erbakan and his associates had been released and rearrested several times during the lengthy court proceedings,

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<sup>80</sup> See, "Erbakan'in birakilmasina" (1980).

<sup>81</sup> See, "Erbakan tutuklandi" (1980).

<sup>82</sup> See, "Erbakan icin" (1981).

<sup>83</sup> The prison sentences of other convicted members of the NSP varied between 2-3 years ("Erbakan 4", 1983).

<sup>84</sup> See, "MSP'ye beraat" (1985).

<sup>85</sup> At least in one of these lawsuits, he had been convicted and sentenced to 2 months in prison ("Turkes ve Erbakan", 1980).

sometimes within the span of only a few days,<sup>86</sup> lend support to the existence of such sympathy, albeit at a personal level, as was also the case during the process of the closure of the NOP in the early 1970s.

### *2c2. The Redefinition of State Secularism after the 1980 Coup*

"It is the Turkish state, not the initiative and self-sustenance of grassroots Islam, that has been the most important determinant of the political role of Islam and its relevance in politics throughout the republic" (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996, p.231). The post-1980 period was no exception in this respect. More precisely, 1980 intervention may be said to represent an institutional turning point in terms of state-Islam relations in Turkey by leading to a redefinition of official secularism (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996). On the one hand, the military-bureaucratic elite grew increasingly concerned about the growing power of political Islam throughout the 1970s, and consequently wanted to reassert the primacy of Ataturk reforms, especially of secularism, when they took the helms of power in 1980. On the other hand, though, they also wanted to exploit the mobilizational power of Islam in order to create consent to the new regime in the making as evidenced by general Kenan Evren's, the leader of the junta and the president of the Republic between 1982-1987, ubiquitous references to Islam and Islamic values during his public speeches between 1980 and 1983. In addition to the creation of consent, the military had a strong desire to depoliticize new generations in general and to pre-empt the re-emergence of radical ideological movements in particular (Cizre-Sakallioglu, 1996).

The need for depolitization was especially urgent in view of the social dislocations that would be created by the deep-seated economic reforms put in action starting from January 1980 (Cam, 2006; Cosar & Yegenoglu, 2009; Onis, 1997).<sup>87</sup> These reforms aimed at rolling back the overgrown state sector dominating the Turkish economy within the context of import-substitution based industrialization of

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<sup>86</sup> Some MSP leaders including Erbakan first been released on the 12th of October, 1980 only to be rearrested on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October ("Erbakan tutuklandi", 1980). A similar episode took place at the end of July, the next year, during which Erbakan with 9 other MSP members were released from prison once more ("Erbakan ve 9", 1981). On October 6, 1981, Erbakan was sent back to prison yet by another court decision only to be released again 10 days later ("Erbakan tahliye", 1981).

<sup>87</sup> In the first phase of the structural adjustment (1981-1988), real wages gradually declined due to the exclusion of organized labour from industrial bargaining processes. Then came a brief period in which real wages recovered thanks to the populist economic policies pursued by governments in power, but that only lasted until the 1994 economic crisis (Balkan & Yeldan, 2001; Boratav, Yeldan, & Köse, 2000). In addition, the proportion of the total labour force as a fraction of the working age population decreased from two-thirds to less than one half from 1978 to 2004 (Cam, 2006).

the last two decades, and replacing it with an export-oriented free market economy with the state playing only a regulatory role. Turkey's competitiveness in the world market depended both on political stability, one of the primary objectives of the coup makers, and on a more docile labour force willing to accept the curbing down of labour rights and ensuing wage cuts to achieve global competitiveness. In fact, Turgut Ozal, the technocrat who masterminded the January 1980 economic package, had asked the military a 5 year respite from party politics to carry out the reform package, and in September the same year he obtained more than what he asked for thanks to a military intervention that followed the footprints of the 1973 intervention in Chile (Ahmad, 1993).

The "Turkish-Islamic Synthesis" (TIS - *Türk-Islam Sentezi*) is the ideological construct that constituted the main pillar of the military-sponsored redefinition of state secularism in the post-1980 period. The idea was born in the early 1970s in a conservative-nationalist intellectual circle called the "Heart of Intellectuals", and consisted of a new conceptualization of the Turkish identity as a combination of Muslimhood, as the religion most compatible with national characteristics, and Turkishness, defined strictly in ethnic terms. The TIS's incorporation into the official ideology of the Turkish state was accompanied by its widespread dissemination through the educational system via changes in the school curricula.<sup>88</sup> Another major institutional change was the introduction of compulsory religion classes into primary and secondary schools as a constitutional provision, announced for the first time in July 1981 by the junta leader Kenan Evren in order to demonstrate that "secularism is not atheism".<sup>89</sup> This development is particularly important in terms of understanding the scope of the change in state-Islam relations following the coup if one takes into consideration the fact that back in 1971 calling for compulsory religious classes was one of the reasons behind the Constitutional Court's decision to shut down the NOP. To this list of institutional transformations, one should also add the legalization of interest-free banking in 1983 in order to attract the savings of conservative sections of the society into the formal banking system.

The formal-legal changes mentioned earlier were accompanied by an

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<sup>88</sup> For a detailed account of the TIS's dissemination through the educational system, see Kaplan (2002, 2005).

<sup>89</sup> See, "Evren" (1981). The relevant paragraph of the article 24 of the 1982 constitution reads as follows: "Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under State supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools."

unofficial policy of tolerance towards religious brotherhoods, which have been technically banned since 1925, throughout the 1980s. In fact, Turgut Ozal's (first the prime minister and then the president of the Republic between 1983 and 1991) closeness to the Naksibendi order was an open secret. In this respect, the state adopted an accommodating stance towards many of the social and economic activities of these brotherhoods ranging from unofficial Quran courses to religious publications, where the strategies for the establishment of an Islamic state in Turkey were openly discussed.

On the whole, as the above discussion demonstrates, the establishment forces treated the NSP more harshly than its precursor NOP during the 1980 intervention. Yet, as one moves from the level of state-Islamist party interaction up to that of state-Islam relations, the two cases begin to show striking similarities. In both cases, state persecution of political Islamists coincided with a growing tendency on the part of the state elite to control and use the public influence of Islam for "reasons of state" ranging from the fight against communism and manipulation of civilian politics to mass depolitization and creation of consent. In other words, the Turkish state, rather than fully excluding Islam from the public sphere as the closure and persecution of Islamist parties might suggest, was attempting to include it, yet strictly on its own terms.

The harsher treatment that the NSP received from the secularist establishment can also be approached from this angle in the sense that it was not the Turkish state becoming stricter in terms of secularism, but the National Outlook politicians becoming more outspoken in terms of their desire for an Islamic state, and hence needed to be disciplined. Mostly as a result of the self-confidence gained through participation in three coalition governments as well as the encouragement of the Iranian revolution, the NSP increasingly adopted a more confrontational tone towards the secular regime in the late 1970s (Alkan, 1984). Notable in this respect were Erbakan's interview with a Dubai-based journal in February 1980 in which he endorsed the Sharia state,<sup>90</sup> his comments on the possibility of a transformation in Turkey like that of Iran in May 1980,<sup>91</sup> as well as the Jerusalem Rally organized by the NSP in the province of Konya just a week before the September 12 intervention

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<sup>90</sup> See, "Savcilik, Erbakan" (1980).

<sup>91</sup> See, "Erbakan: 'Beni'" (1980).

featuring several pro-Sharia slogans.<sup>92</sup> That the military was closely monitoring NSP's activities became all the more clear when the then chief-of-staff Kenan Evren rebuked Erbakan by asking him whether "he was for or against August 30 [festivities]" for his failure to show up at the official ceremonies for the anniversary of the victory of the War of Independence.<sup>93</sup>

Therefore, the military's decision to shut down the NSP should be seen as an act of "teaching a lesson" to those who mistook the relaxation of secularist policies for licence to subvert the secularist regime. Yet, this reassertion of control over political Islam contradicted powerfully with the broader rapprochement taking place between the Turkish state and Islamic actors at the ideological level not only in 1971, but also in 1980. In other words, political delegitimation of Islam was counteracted in both cases by state policies that increased Islam's public visibility and legitimacy. As a result, these policies laid the fertile grounds for the re-flourishing of political Islam in society once the civilian politics resumed. Hence, the unintentional rise of the emergence and rising to power of another political Islamist party, the WP, out of the ashes of the NSP.

## ***2d. February 28 "Post-modern" coup d'état and WP's closure***

### ***2d1. The Process of WP's Closure***

Arguably, the most critical political development of the early 1990s in Turkey was the growing power and public visibility of political Islam represented at the party level by the WP under the leadership of the veteran Islamist Erbakan. With the resumption of civilian politics in 1983, the NSP cadres turned back to the political scene by forming the Welfare Party. Since the party's founding member list was vetoed by the military junta, the WP did not have enough time to organize and participate in the first elections held in 1983. Nevertheless, the party managed to overcome the military-imposed bureaucratic hurdles before the 1984 local elections at which it obtained a non-impressive 4.4%. Erbakan, himself, had to wait until 1987, the year in which the political bans imposed on pre-1980 party leaders were removed through a referendum, to reassume the party leadership.

The 1991 general election went somewhat better for the WP thanks to a pre-

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<sup>92</sup> See, "MSP'nin Kudus'u" (1980).

<sup>93</sup> See, "Evren:'Erbakan'" (1980).

electoral coalition it formed with two other right-wing parties. The coalition obtained 16.88% of the votes and sent to the national assembly a total of 62 parliamentarians. Yet, it was the 1994 local elections that proved to be the first real electoral victory for the WP: the party obtained 19.1% the votes in addition to capturing the municipalities of both Ankara and Istanbul – which remained to this day in the hands of National Outlook-affiliated parties (first WP, then VP and finally JDP).

The results of the 1995 general election represented the peak electoral point reached by the Turkish Islamists since their debut on the Turkish political scene back in 1971. The WP came out of the elections as the first party with 21.4% voter support and 158 seats, closely followed by the centre-right Motherland and True Path parties (19.7 and 19.2% respectively). The long bargaining process between the parties first resulted in a Motherland-True Path coalition which fell in about 3 months. In the meantime, Erbakan stepped up its anti-secularist agitations in addition to blackmailing Tansu Ciller, the leader of the TPP, for corruption allegations. With the fall of the coalition, Erbakan brought the allegations to the parliamentary agenda, and forced the TPP into a coalition government with the WP in return for the suspension of investigations about its leader (Ahmad, 2003).

The one year that the WP stayed in power as the senior partner of the coalition with the TPP (June 1996-June 1997) witnessed several political controversies that involved not only state and party actors but the civil society at large. In this period, the WP was torn in between two powerful forces (Ahmad, 2003; Cakir, 2004). On the one hand, Erbakan along with the other leading members of the WP wanted to strike a compromise with the secular establishment in order not to let go the benefits of being in power in terms of both political legitimacy and access to state largesse, a crucial factor in enlarging WP's support base. To this end, Erbakan continuously denied that he was trying to reshape Turkish foreign policy away from the West towards the Muslim world arguing that he was only pursuing an independent foreign policy. He even sent a minister to the US "in order to make ourselves better understood by our friend, America" as Americans were showing unmistakable signs of unease about his close relations with Iran (as cited in Ahmad, 2003, p.171). In addition, he bowed down to the pressure of the generals in the NSC for the improvement of relations with Israel, a difficult decision by any measure for an Islamist politician who had seen Israeli conspiracy behind all the evils plaguing the Muslim world. Erbakan's desire to get along well with the secular state reached such extents that he even paid a visit to

Ataturk's mausoleum in Ankara in an attempt to underline his commitment to secularism. Needless to say, the pre-electoral promises made by the WP such as the abolition of interest, severing of the relations with Israel and the EC also fell completely out of the party's agenda once in power (Zurcher, 2005).

Yet, the willingness for compromise on the part of the WP elite was powerfully counteracted by the party grassroots' growing economic dissatisfaction and radicalism. Erbakan took a number of steps during his premiership that both dwarfed his attempts to draw a moderate image for the party and prepared the fertile grounds for the military crackdown on Islamists that was to take place in February 1997. To count a few, he hosted meetings with the leaders of officially proscribed religious brotherhoods in the capacity of prime minister. He organized several visits to Islamic countries including Libya during which he was humiliated by general Gaddafi who publicly criticized Turkey's policies towards the Kurds. He also established links with radical Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt and the Islamic Salvation Front of Algeria (Tank, 2005).

Ironically enough, it was another "Jerusalem Day" that brought the rise of the WP to an end by triggering the February 28 process. The Islamist mayor of Sincan, a town near Ankara, organized a protest meeting in support of the Palestinian cause on January 31, 1997. The meeting quickly degenerated into an Islamist show of strength with slogans in support of Hamas and Hezbollah, with the Iranian ambassador criticizing the Turkish secular regime and the West as a guest speaker and with many participants in explicit Islamic outwear. The military, already disgruntled by the policies of the coalition, responded by organizing a march of armed personnel carriers through the town of Sincan on the 4th of February that they claimed was part of regular training activities. This was followed by the announcement of the establishment of a special task force (*Bati Calisma Grubu* – Task Force West) inside the Naval Forces charged with monitoring the Islamist threat to the state (Zurcher, 2005), and of a new National Security Concept that placed Islamic fundamentalism on a par with Kurdish separatism as the top internal security treats in the country (Tank, 2005).

The tension between the WP and the armed forces reached its peak point at the February 28, 1997 meeting of the National Security Council, during which the generals handed down a list of 18 measures to the government to be carried out with emergency to counter the Islamic fundamentalist threat (see Appendix B at the end of

the chapter for the full list of the measures). The 18 measures represented an all-out attack on the perceived nodes of fundamentalist activity both in society and politics. They ranged from the prevention of the infiltration of reactionary forces into the state apparatus to the measures against the pro-Islamist press, from the extension of the compulsory education from five to eight years –to stop prayer leader and preacher school graduates from entering secular professions- to the careful monitoring of the clandestine activities of religious brotherhoods. They also lamented the abolition of the article 163 of the TPC in 1991, which criminalized anti-secular activities, and called for the enactment of new laws to fill in the vacuum created by its absence.

Erbakan resisted undersigning the “advices” of the NSC until March 13 for the measures directly targeted the Welfare’s constituency. Even after their official approval by the cabinet, not much was done to implement the decisions, a move which led to the issuing of another ultimatum like warning by the NSC in less than two months time (Zurcher, 2005). Then came the closure case against the WP, which was brought before the Constitutional Court on May 21, 1997 by the chief public prosecutor on the grounds that the party became a “focal point of anti-secularist activities”.<sup>94</sup> In the meantime, the military stepped up its pressure on the cabinet while several civic associations including trade unions, business associations and NGOs joined in the anti-fundamentalist row against the government. Finally, on June 18, 1997, Erbakan had to step down from premiership following the defection of some TPP ministers from the cabinet.

The Constitutional Court found the WP guilty of anti-secular activities on January 16, 1998. The party was shut down and Erbakan received a five year ban from politics, which was subsequently turned into a life-long ban. All the parliamentarians of the now defunct WP switched to the newly established VP, and remained in opposition in the remainder of the parliamentary term. Meanwhile, MUSIAD, as the principal business association representing conservative enterprises, and many other Islamic businesses were subjected to a campaign of negative public exposure and legal prosecution.<sup>95</sup> Moreover, several lawsuits were brought against WP-affiliated mayors and municipalities from corruption charges to anti-secular activities. The most infamous of these lawsuits was the conviction of R.T. Erdogan,

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<sup>94</sup> For the full texts of the prosecutor’s indictment, Welfare’s defence, and the Court’s verdict with legal justification, see “Refah Partisi” (1998).

<sup>95</sup> See Chapter 4 for more on the subject.



then the mayor of Istanbul, and his imprisonment for ten months on charges of inciting religious hatred among the public during a speech he delivered at an election rally.

*2d2. State-Islam Relations after the February 28 Decisions: From Mutual Accommodation to Open Confrontation*

February 28 “post-modern” *coup d’etat* was both substantially and formally different from the previous two interventions that resulted in NOP’s and NSP’s closures. To begin with, its unique and declared target was political Islam. In other words, it left no question marks in the minds of political actors as to the true intentions of coup makers. Second, it did not delimit itself to cracking down on Islam at the political party level while continuing to accommodate its expressions in civil society as was the case in both 1971 and 1980. On the contrary, its aim appeared to be purging the public sphere from all expressions of Islam once and for all (Yavuz, 2000). More remarkably, many of the decisions, such as those against religious brotherhoods and prayer and preacher leader schools, were in effect reversing the post-1980 policies of unofficial tolerance towards public expressions of Islam.

Third, the campaign against political Islam did not remain as a conflict between the state apparatus and the WP, but expanded to the society at large when large sections of the media, trade unions, business organizations and civil societal organizations got mobilized against the fundamentalist threat. Fourth, the process of persecution triggered by the infamous meeting of the NSC had a determining role in the political viability of not only the WP, but its successor the VP (1998-2001) that was destined to be shut down by the Constitutional Court in less than 3 years. It might even be argued that the February 28 measures provided the ideological impetus behind the unsuccessful closure case brought against the JDP in 2008.

In terms of its broader impact on state-Islam relations, the February 28 decisions constitute a point of rupture from the post-1980 official policies. In the words of Cizre & Cinar (2003):

the February 28 process [sought] to usher back the republic's radical secularism. That represents a complete reversal from the republican pattern of state-Islam relations that, in the past, allowed for negotiation, compromise, and reconciliation between Turkey's political Islamists and the establishment (p.312).

On the whole, taken together with the broader shift that took place in Islam-state relations, the WP's closure appears to have constituted a real "external shock", *a la* Harmel & Janda (1994), for the National Outlook movement thereby pushing it to reconsider and revise its ideological platform in view of the irreparable damage inflicted upon the appeal of the Islamist cause. In fact, until the establishment of the JDP, the movement appeared to be on a course of marginalization due to the shrinking of its constituency at both the local and national levels, a trend that also continued throughout the 2000s.

### **3. CONCLUSION**

To go back to the original question that underlies the present chapter, whether or not the pressure of the secularist state caused the ideological moderation of political Islam in Turkey, the answer is a yes, in the light of the empirical investigation conducted above. However, this is a yes with important qualifications.

As the earlier comparison of the three closure cases has demonstrated, the previous two cases of state persecution of political Islam, namely that of the NOP and NSP, did not have much of an impact on the ideological position of successor parties in terms of their advocacy of an Islamic political order to replace the current secular democratic order in Turkey. In contrast, the VP, which was yet another reincarnation of a permanently shut down Islamist party, went on to great efforts to shed off its Islamist outlook through such public gestures as declaration of the party's commitment to the fundamental principles of the Republic and endorsement of Turkey's EU membership bid. With the advantage of hindsight, we see that the ideological mutation of political Islam had begun, but was still incomplete during the VP experience in the sense that the party hardliners were reportedly planning to go back to the old-school Islamism once the February 28 atmosphere dissipated (Cizre & Cinar, 2003). Yet, the closure of also the VP, despite its moderate appearance if not substance, seems to have confirmed in the minds of Islamist politicians that unless

they truly reconsidered their pro-Sharia political platform the establishment forces would attempt to exclude them from formal political life also in the future.

On the whole, state persecution alone does not appear to lead to Islamist party moderation unless it is congruent with the broader policy orientation of the state regarding the desired role of Islam in politics and society. In the cases of the NOP and NSP, the broader framework of secular, yet Islam-friendly state policies both ameliorated the sense of insecurity on the part of Islamist political actors, and helped enlarge political Islam's social base in the medium and long run, albeit unintentionally, by increasing Islam's public visibility and legitimacy. In the case of the WP, however, state persecution of an Islamist party coincided with a return back to hawkish secularist policies targeting not only the political expression, but the whole social base of political Islam. With very little room left to manoeuvre, the political Islamists responded by stepping back from their three-decade long ideological rigidity and anti-systemic discourse, and by accepting the secular democratic framework of the Republic as the outer limit of their political activity.

**APPENDIX B: NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL DECISIONS DATED FEBRUARY 28, 1997 (adopted from Kuru, 2009, pp. 261-262)**

(1) There shall be no compromise to the antiregime activities that target the Turkish Republic, which is a democratic, secular, social, and law-based state. The Revolution Laws defended by article 174 of the constitution should be implemented without a compromise. It is the government's duty to make its policies compatible with the Revolution Laws.

(2) The public attorneys should act against violation of the Revolution Laws. The tariqa lodges that violate the Revolution Laws should be closed down.

(3) It is observed that wearing *sarik* (turban) and cloak is encouraged. Those whose dresses contradict the Revolution Laws should not be honored

(4) The abolishment of article 163 of the constitution created a legal vacuum, and that resulted in the strengthening of reactionary movements and antiseccular attitudes. There should be new legal regulations to fill this vacuum.

(5) The education policies should again be compatible with the spirit of the Law on the Unification of Education.

(6) Obligatory education should increase to eight years.

(7) The Imam-Hatip schools were open to satisfy a societal need [of imams]. The Imam-Hatip schools that are beyond this need should be converted to vocational schools. Additionally, the reactionary groups' Qur'an courses should be closed down, and their schools should be regulated by the ministry of education.

(8) There is an ongoing fundamentalist infiltration into the state bureaucracy and municipalities. The government should stop this infiltration.

(9) All actions that aim to abuse religious issues (such as mosque construction) for political purposes should be ended.

(10) The pump rifles should be taken under control and, if it is necessary, the sales of the pump rifles should be banned.

(11) Iran's attempts that aim to destabilize the regime in Turkey should be closely watched. There should be policies to prevent Iran from intervening in Turkey's domestic affairs.

(12) The regulations, which maintain effective working of the military, guarantee judicial independence, and protect it from the activities of the government, should immediately be created.

(13) Recently, there has been a big increase of provocations that target the

members of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF). These provocations have resulted in discontent in the TAF.

(14) The officers and petty officers expelled from the TAF because of their involvement to reactionary activities have been hired by the municipalities. That should be prevented.

(15) The speeches and behaviors of parties' mayors, regional chairmen, and town chairmen should be accountable by the Law on Political Parties.

(16) The tariqas' economic strengthening through their financial institutions and foundations should be carefully monitored.

(17) The messages transmitted by TV channels and particularly the radio stations, which have antiseccular attitudes, should be carefully monitored and these broadcastings should adapt to the constitution.

(18) The illegal money transfers of the Milli Gorus Foundation to some municipalities should be stopped.



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, MODERATION AND INTRA-PARTY POLITICS**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Many students of political Islam today uphold the idea that one of the principle reasons behind the rise of radical Islamist groups in the Muslim world is the exclusionary attitude of undemocratic and authoritarian regimes under which they emerged and developed (Burgat, 1997; Schwedler, 2006). In many Muslim-majority countries, Islamists have historically constituted the largest and most powerful opposition groups to the ruling regimes. Yet, in many cases they were not even allowed to form legal political parties not to mention the various repressive measures, from imprisonment to torture and executions, they have been subjected to in the process. These repressive measures, in return, is said to have pushed Islamist political actors to the underground radicalizing them even further while rendering the idea of a pristine and original Islamic order based on Sharia rules within which nothing but justice rules an even more attractive ideal.

Consequently, it has been argued that the moderation of Islamist movements can only take place only if certain democratic reforms are undertaken to allow for the participation of Islamist political actors into the political processes. The following chapter aims to test the validity of the causal connection established between political participation and ideological moderation based on the empirical evidence coming from Turkish case. It starts out by an overview of the current theoretical debate on the contribution of participation to religious party moderation. After delineating the general contours of this debate which features two rival analytical approaches, i.e. moderation through strategic adaptation vs. through value transformation, it provides a brief summary of how the participation-moderation thesis have been applied to the Turkish case so far, and identifies certain problematic aspects regarding the issues of selection bias and the failure to explain the timing of moderation.

The second part of the chapter proposes a comparative analysis of Turkish Islamist parties from the NOP/NSP up to the JDP. In order to address the issue of timing, the analysis focuses its attention on the shifts taking place in the internal

distribution of power of these parties taking clue from previous theoretical studies that identify changes in party leadership and/or the dominant faction as the endogenous sources of party change.

## **2. PARTICIPATION-MODERATION NEXUS: THEORETICAL OVERVIEW**

It is possible to identify two different analytical approaches in comparative studies that deal with the contribution of political participation to the ideological moderation of Islamist political actors: strategic adaptation and value transformation approaches (see Table 1 for an overview). The differences for the large part pertain to the nature of and causal mechanisms underlying this type of ideological repositioning. First, the strategic approach conceptualizes party moderation as an instance of strategic adaptation under institutional constraints (Kalyvas, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2003; Sanchez-Cuenca, 1999, 2004). From a value transformation perspective, instead, Islamist moderation refers to a form of identity transformation that reflects a change in the actors' values and preferences towards a more liberal, pluralistic and democratic direction in addition to changes in political behavior (Wickham, 2004, 2006; Marshall, 2005; Scwedler, 2006).

Second, while both approaches consider the inclusion of religious political actors into political processes as a necessary precondition for their eventual moderation, they disagree on the actual causal mechanisms at work. In this respect, the strategic adaptation approach starts from the assumption that extremist politicians can start behaving as moderates without necessarily undergoing a major transformation in their ideological convictions. The disincentives as well as incentives emanating from democratic institutions and practices, more often than not, prove to be sufficient to induce change in their behavior by presenting moderation as the optimum solution to a number of problems they face such as political repression and electoral marginalization.

As to the contribution of democratic participation to the ideological moderation of Islamist parties from a strategic point of view, there are a number of alternative explanations in circulation. One such explanation is based on the vote maximization drive inherent in electoral competition processes, and inspired principally by the theoretical studies that examined the evolution of European left-



wing parties.<sup>96</sup> In this respect, both Berman (2008) and Fuller (2002) argue that the “median voter”<sup>97</sup> in Muslim countries is already a moderate that eschews violence and prefers a milder reading of Islam.<sup>98</sup> Thus, Islamist parties closer to his/her moderate values stand a better chance of being successful in the elections if they are allowed to compete. Yet, in many Middle Eastern countries, the political arena has usually been polarized between secular authoritarian regimes and their integralist opponents, and in the absence of democratic competition for power, the result of this polarization is the stifling of the voices of this already-existing, moderate “silent Muslim majority”. Therefore, in order to make this moderate thrust surface, they claim, it is first necessary to give a chance to Islamists to participate in elections (Berman, 2008; Fuller, 2002).

In a similar fashion, Kalyvas (2003) notes that the main incentive for moderation in competitive political systems is “the possibility of access to power” (p.309). In such systems, parties can have access to executive power only after winning elections, and in order to win the elections extremist political movements usually have to tone down their rhetoric so that they can appeal to larger sections of society. Kalyvas’s arguments on religious party moderation run, in large part, parallel to the strategic explanations of the gradual adoption by European revolutionary left-wing parties of reformist and pro-democratic programmes throughout the 20th century. However, Kalyvas (1996) builds his rather elaborate theory of religious party moderation on a detailed examination of the birth and rise of Christian democracy in Europe rather than on European socialism. He pays particular attention to the case of Belgium who witnessed at the end of the 19th century the evolution of a strong catholic confessional movement, intent on seizing power and abolishing the country’s liberal constitution, into a Christian democratic party fully integrated into the liberal-secular political order (Kalyvas, 1998). By comparing the Belgian case with more recent instances of religious mobilization in Algeria (Kalyvas, 2000) as well as in India (Kalyvas 2003), he posits a number of alternative pathways to moderation in competitive political systems regardless of the specific religion that underlies the confessional reaction.

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<sup>96</sup> Among the influential studies that highlighted the role of electoral constraints in the moderation of revolutionary left-wing parties are Kirchheimer (1990), Michels (1962), Neumann (1990), Przeworski & Sprague (1986), and Schumpeter (1975).

<sup>97</sup> For the original formulation of the concept, see Downs’ (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*.

<sup>98</sup> Fuller (2002) does not provide any empirical evidence in support of his assumptions about the average Muslim voter.

First, when the religious challengers to the regime are strong enough to win a governing mandate in elections and when the incumbents fear that such a victory might lead to regime subversion –as in the cases of Belgium and Algeria - the success of the political integration process depends usually on the credibility of religious political actors’ avowed commitment to democratic principles and procedures once they seize political power (Kalyvas, 2000). The solution of the credibility problem, otherwise known as the “one man, one vote, one time” dilemma<sup>99</sup>, lies, in turn, in the capacity of the religious party to send credible ex-ante signals to the regime forces reassuring them that moderates are in firm control of the party, and consequently the party will not renege on their promises once in power. According to Kalyvas (2000), here the crucial factor is the structure of religious institutions. When this structure is highly hierarchical as in the case of Christianity, it is easier for moderate leaders to reign in the radical demands coming from the grassroots. When religious authority is not centralized and hierarchical as is the case with Islam, it is much more difficult for moderates to silence the radicals inside party. Consequently, the integration of Islamist parties governing an electoral majority into representative processes might fail due to a regime backlash resulting from the perception of Islamist parties by the incumbent elite as Trojan horses.<sup>100</sup>

When confessional parties are strong enough to enter the parliament but not to form majority governments, which is very often the case, moderation results from the necessity to negotiate and strike deals with other opposition parties (Kalyvas, 2003). The religious party, responding to the lure of holding executive power, will have to smoothen the sharp edges of its ideology and make programmatic compromises in order to participate in a potential coalition government.

Another argument carried from the European context of socialist radical movements to the Middle Eastern context of radical Islamist mobilization is the moderating impact of the bureaucratic organizational structure of modern political parties (Michels, 1962). In this respect, borrowing directly from Michels (1962),

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<sup>99</sup> This phrase was coined by the ex-U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Edward Djerejian in his comments regarding the political repercussions of an Islamist victory at the polls in 1992. See Djerejian (1992) for the full text of the speech he delivered.

<sup>100</sup> In those rare cases, where electoral majorities are attained, Islamists are allowed to rule, and begin to impose religious principles, Kalyvas (2003) points to the importance of non-electoral, and in fact non-democratic, constraints especially when liberal constitutional safeguards are not in place to prevent the imposition of the will of the majority over minorities. Examples of such non-electoral constraints include the presence of secular institutional forces such as the military and the judiciary ready to intervene in such an eventuality.

Berman (2008) suggests that when Islamist opposition groups are allowed to operate as legal political parties, they become exposed to the same organizational pressures that revolutionary socialist groups once faced in Europe. To ensure their electoral viability as well as to improve their competitiveness, the movements in question devote increasing time and energy to building a functional and effective party organization, recruiting able politicians, and devising concrete policy programs at the expense of traditional revolutionary activities such as running underground cells and promoting Islamic principles.<sup>101</sup>

The strategic benefits of ideological moderation, however, are not limited to the lure of office-holding in an already-democratic, at least in procedural terms, political system. In liberalizing, yet still authoritarian regimes like that of Egypt, Islamist actors have increasingly been taking part in democratic coalitions formed against incumbent regimes mainly because violent encounters with regime forces and sporadic revolutionary upheavals have yielded no results except for even more severe periods of repression (Wickham, 2006). In other words, democratization now appears to be the only way to overhaul authoritarian rulers who otherwise have all sorts of tools, coercive and non-coercive, at their disposal to continue indefinitely with their grip over political power. At the same time, competing in the elections of professional associations, having representatives in local or national assemblies or engaging in similar pseudo-democratic activities usually improve Islamist groups' public standing and political legitimacy. In this way, they gain some degree of protection from authoritarian measures as incumbent leaders do not want to appear too undemocratic by contradicting their own rhetoric which are typically embellished with overtures to democratic principles (Wickham, 2004; Hamzawy & Brown, 2008). Moreover, pro-democratic moderation seems to have become a prerequisite for the Islamist opposition to strengthen its hand against the ruling regime as it facilitates the establishment of domestic and international alliances thanks to the pervasiveness and moral superiority currently enjoyed by democratic norms all around the world (Wickham, 2006).

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<sup>101</sup> In contrast to Berman (2008), both Kalyvas (2003) and Masood (2008) argue that Islamist parties have proved rather competent in taking care of the practical needs of the people and in preaching a Sharia based vision of good life all at the same time. Kalyvas (2003) goes further, and argues that modern Islamist parties represent precisely that: a curious mixture of a concrete "critique of the existing regime with a utopian project" (p. 306).

All in all, despite diverging views as to the precise mechanism that brings about moderation, from a strategic perspective, it is perfectly conceivable to witness the flourishing of democratic practices in the absence of committed democrats.<sup>102</sup> Inversely, democratic institutions, once in place, may create democrats by structuring the actors' utility expectations (Kalyvas, 1998). Certainly, this argument does not rule out the possibility that religious actors' cultural predispositions and political preferences can change along the process. What is being suggested, instead, is that behavioral change usually precedes ideological transformation which may - or may not - take place in the long run as a consequence of mechanisms such as iterated interaction or cognitive dissonance.

In contrast to the strategic adaptation view, the value transformation approach claims that Islamist parties participating in democratic processes have a tendency to soften their rhetoric in favor of a more pluralist line not simply because it is convenient to do so from a cost-analysis perspective, but also because democratic participation is capable of shaping the very values these actors hold in a pro-democracy direction. More concretely, preference change on the part of Islamist political actors is said to result from a "complex learning" process "in which not just the means but also and more fundamentally the ends of the Islamic movement are being questioned and revised" (Wickham, 2006, par.?). According to Wickham (2006) who constructs her argument on the moderate offspring of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, namely the Wasat Party, this learning process is closely connected to the experience of "strategic interactions of Islamist leaders with regime officials and rival opposition groups in various arenas of public life" (par.?) that expose the former to alternative viewpoints and hence encourage them to reconsider and potentially revise their rather rigid worldview.<sup>103</sup>

Therefore, according to Wickman (2004, 2006), the growing adoption of a democracy and human rights discourse among Islamist groups signifies a normative shift that cannot simply be reduced to strategic adaptation. Given the varying levels

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<sup>102</sup> Rustow (1970) was one of the first scholars to argue that no cultural – as well as economic – requisites are needed for the emergence of democracies. Similar arguments were put forward later on by Przeworski (1988, 1991) and Kalyvas (1998) writing from a rational choice perspective, and Waterbury (1994, 1997) emphasizing the element of contingency in democratic transitions.

<sup>103</sup> For an empirical critique of cross-partisan cooperation's contribution to ideological moderation, see Clark's (2006) case study of Jordan. For Wickham's answer to Clark's critique in which she qualifies her earlier argument by introducing four more variables see Barsalau (2005).

and depth of such discursive change among several Islamist movements in the Muslim world, Wickham (2004, 2006) hypothesizes that not only the amount of such intra-movement and cross-partisan interaction, but also its quality, whether or not genuine deliberation is taking place, has a decisive effect on this variation. Besides, intra-organizational structure of these religious political movements, i.e. whether or not there is a plurality of outlooks as well as the level at which such plurality is tolerated, plays its part in transforming initial strategic adaptation to long-run ideational change.

An alternative version of the value transformation perspective is provided by Schwedler (2006) who has undertaken a comparative study of Jordan's IAF (Islamic Action Front) Party and Yemen's Islah Party in order to explain the different levels of ideological moderation underwent by these Islamist parties despite their similar levels of political participation. Like Wickham (2004), Schwedler (2006) believes that Islamist moderation can take place in a political context of limited and even stalled liberalization/democratization like that of Jordan or Yemen in the 1990s; that is, in a context of weak and even non-existent democratic institutional constraints on Islamist behavior. However, unlike Wickham, Schwedler (2006) argues that the main underlying causal mechanism is not political learning, but a process she refers to as the "shifting boundaries of justifiable action". At the risk of simplifying her rather elaborate argument, the scholar states that political participation is not very much likely to bring about substantial ideological moderation unless it is accompanied by a discursive process through which religious actors begin to defend and justify their pseudo-democratic practices with reference to Islamic precepts. This discursive process is triggered by regime-led political openings that, despite falling considerably short of a meaningful democratic transition, manage to restructure the public political space such that pluralist practices emerge and take root in society and polity. An additional factor that facilitates Islamist party moderation, Wickham (2006) argues, is the party organizational structure. If the distribution of power and internal decision-making procedures are organized along democratic lines, the Islamist party is more likely to embrace and internalize moderate viewpoints.

Despite disagreement over actual moderating mechanisms at work, most proponents of the value transformation approach recognize the strategic element in party moderation especially in its earlier stages. Rather than a complete denial of the role of tactical concerns, they take issue with the element of skepticism vis-à-vis

Islamist political actors contained in strategic arguments popularized by the motto “*one man, one vote, one time*”. Hence, the title of Schwedler’s (2006) work: *Faith in Moderation*. Equally important is their decoupling of Islamist moderation from democratic institutions and mechanisms that constrain the choices made by radical politicians and incentivize them to be less ideological and more pragmatic. Starting from the observation that in many Middle Eastern countries such an antecedent institutional factor is either non-existent or at best very weak, but reformist Islamist parties have emerged nevertheless, they seem to claim that it is possible to have “democrats without democracy”.

### **3. EXTANT APPLICATIONS TO THE TURKISH CASE**

Broadly speaking, the debate on the role played by political participation in the moderation of Turkish political Islam have followed analytical lines similar to those that appear in the comparative studies (see Table 1 for an overview). While some scholars have interpreted the developments largely from a strategic perspective (Cosar & Ozman, 2004; Meecham, 2004; Nasr, 2005; Onis, 2006a, 2006b, 2001; Ozbudun 2006a, 2006b; Robins, 2007; Somer, 2004; Taniyici, 2003), others have argued that interests alone cannot explain the Islamist movement’s ideological repositioning without taking into consideration the pro-democratic evolution of the political preferences of Islamists (Cinar, 2006; Cizre & Cinar, 2003; Dagi, 2005, 2006; Tezcur, 2010a, 2010b; Yavuz, 2009; Yilmaz, 2009).

In strategic accounts, three aspects of the domestic and international institutional context around the time the JDP was born have been emphasized. The first one is the strict adherence of the key institutions of the Republic, the most prominent among which are the military and judiciary, to the principle of secularism (Meecham, 2004; Nasr, 2005; Somer, 2004). The readiness with which these institutions have resorted to oppressive measures to clamp down on Islamist parties since the early 1970s, including the February 28 process, is said to have transformed moderation into a matter of life and death for Turkish Islamists who subsequently abandoned their radical demands to ensure their survival.<sup>104</sup>

The institutional context in Turkey is claimed to have encouraged ideological moderation not only through the prospect of eventual annihilation but also through the

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<sup>104</sup> I examine the connection between state repression and Islamist moderation in a separate chapter as the former constitutes an extra-democratic institutional constraint on the behavior of political parties.

potential reward of holding office. In this respect, it has been argued that in the late 1990s the Turkish Islamists were facing strong electoral incentives to abandon their radical platform as it began to affect negatively their electoral fortunes since the closure of the WP (Meecham, 2004).<sup>105</sup> The same point is alternatively articulated as the positive impact of participation in competitive democratic processes that by their very nature reward political pragmatism rather than ideological rigidity (Nasr, 2005). The vote maximization argument emphasizes the centre-right's privileged position among voter preferences in Turkey at least since the transition to multi-party politics back in the early fifties, and in this respect interprets JDP's move to the right of the center as a calculated step to enlarge its political base by appealing to a larger segment of the Turkish society including moderate Islamist, moderate nationalist, and economically liberal constituents (Cosar & Ozman, 2004; Ozbudun 2006a, 2006b; Somer, 2004). The crisis of the established parties of the centre-right in the late 1990s as a result of both their bad performance in office and corruption scandals, and the resulting political vacuum in the centre is cited as an additional contextual factor that rendered this ideological repositioning even more rational from a vote maximization perspective.<sup>106</sup>

Finally, it has been argued that Turkish Islamist have strategically moderated their political discourse to gain external support in their struggle against the strictly secularist establishment. In other words, the long-term goal of reining in the authoritarian and exclusionary tendencies of the Turkish state required on the part of the JDP something more than acquiescence in the political status quo, a parliamentary democracy with several deficiencies. At this point, the EU anchor is suggested to be another key element of the strategic environment that influenced the direction of Turkish Islamists' ideological metamorphosis by creating a window of opportunity (Onis, 2001, 2006a, 2006b; Robins, 2007; Somer, 2004; Taniyici, 2003). According to this argument, the initial pro-EU ideological shift on the part of political Islamists resulted from a calculation that only if the EU was recruited as an external ally to the Islamist cause of strengthening and deepening of human rights legislation and the

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<sup>105</sup> The WP's successor VP managed to garner around 15% of the votes cast in the 1999 general election in contrast to the WP's 21% voter support in 1995.

<sup>106</sup> In retrospect, it may be argued that this electoral strategy was a successful one. According to 2002 election survey results, except for those voters who for the first time voted in 2002, only 27.4 of the ex-FP voters voted for the AKP, while the rest of AKP voters had either voted for the True Path Party, the Motherland Party (both of which are centre-right parties), the Nationalist Action Party, (ultra-nationalist) or the Democratic Left Party (centre-left) in the 1999 general elections (Cosar & Ozman, 2004).

parallel delimitation and eventual elimination of the Turkish Armed Forces' influence on civilian politics, could there be a chance of eventual success over domestic secularist forces. On the other hand, however, gaining recognition and support from the EU required serious ideological concessions on the part of Islamists. The EU, in fact, had previously given clear signals as to the tolerable levels of confessional politics in a candidate country when the ECHR condoned the decision of the Turkish Constitutional Court on the closure of the WP.

Again in line with the broader debate in the comparative literature, the strategic arguments examined above have been countered by those who have claimed that the JDP's commitment to liberal democratic values is not merely tactical, but representative of a true identity transformation on the part of Turkish Islamists (Cinar, 2006; Cizre & Cinar, 2003; Dagi, 2005, 2006; Tezcur, 2010a, 2010b; Yavuz, 2009; Yilmaz, 2009). Following Wickham (2004), Yavuz (2009) have posited that political learning resulting from exposure to and interaction with alternative worldviews as a result of democratic participation is the causal dynamic behind Islamists' ideological moderation (Yavuz, 2009).<sup>107</sup> It has also been argued that the Islamists, particularly its reformist wing, have reflected upon and hence drawn lessons from the negative consequences of the WP's confrontational and non-democratic political platform as well as from their own experience of Kemalist state oppression, and that, as a consequence, came to truly appreciate the virtues of liberal democracy beyond a shrewd calculation of related costs and benefits (Cinar, 2006; Cizre & Cinar, 2003).

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<sup>107</sup> Note that Yavuz (2009), along with Dagi (2005) and Cizre & Cinar (2003), concur with the strategic interpretations of Islamist moderation in reference to the VP period during which the Islamists were pushed to the opposition following the 28 February decisions.



**Table 6.1 – Participation-Moderation Nexus: Rival Perspectives**

	<b>STRATEGIC ADAPTATION</b>	<b>IDEATIONAL TRANSFORMATION</b>
<b>Precondition</b>	Political participation	Political participation
<b>Nature of moderation</b>	Behavioral adaptation	Value change/ identity transformation
<b>Causes of Moderation</b>	Institutional constraints such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political survival - Regime oppression</li> <li>- Electoral viability - Vote maximization</li> <li>- Forging coalitions - Both in opposition and in government</li> </ul>	Ideational processes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political learning - Cross-partisan interaction</li> <li>- Discursive shifts in the justification of democratic practices</li> </ul>
<b>Applications to the Turkish Case</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Persecution by secularist institutions of the Republic</li> <li>- Desire to capture the centre right votes</li> <li>- Recruiting the EU to the Islamist cause</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Political learning resulting from long exposure to secular worldviews and,</li> <li>- from self-reflection upon past mistakes/experience of oppression</li> </ul>

#### **4. TURKISH ISLAMIST PARTIES IN THE DEMOCRATIC GAME**

##### ***4a. The Empirical Puzzle***

As the above overview of case studies focusing on the ideological trajectory of political Islam in Turkey tried to demonstrate, the Turkish case, at least at a first glance, appears to provide further empirical evidence in support of the participation-moderation thesis, i.e. integration of Islamist parties into the orbit of legitimate politics brings about the moderation of their party ideologies. Yet, the reliability of this conclusion is open to question since the majority of the studies applying this theoretical framework to explain Islamist party moderation in Turkey have drawn their causal inferences from a single case, namely the JDP. This party, in return, is selected on the basis of the dependent variable, that is, the occurrence of the outcome of ideological moderation.<sup>108</sup>

In an effort to overcome the distorting effects of selection bias on causal inferences, I propose an alternative research design that allows for the possibility of

<sup>108</sup> For more on the potential inferential distortions created by selection bias, see Geddes (1990).

some variation on the dependent variable via the inclusion of observations that did not moderate despite political participation. Keeping in line with the general methodological strategy employed in this dissertation, i.e. within-case variation, observations to be analyzed will be multiplied along the time dimension. When approached from a historical perspective, the Turkish case allows for such a variation because the Islamist parties that came before the JDP failed to denounce their integralist goals notwithstanding their long-term and multi-faceted participation in democratic political life including contesting local and national elections, sending representatives to local and national assemblies (see Tables 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 below for national, local and senate elections respectively) as well as government formation (see Table 6.5 below).

**Table 6.2 – General Elections Participated by Islamist Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Election year</b>	<b>Votes obtained</b>	<b>Percentage-votes</b>	<b>Seats in parliament</b>	<b>Percentage-seats</b>
<b>NSP</b>	1973	1,265,726	11.8	48	10.66
<b>NSP</b>	1977	1,269,918	8.57	24	5.33
<b>WP</b>	1987	1,717,425	7.16	- **	-
<b>WP *</b>	1991	4,121,355	16.88	40 (62- 22)	8.89
<b>WP</b>	1995	6,012,450	21,38	158	35.11
<b>VP</b>	1999	4,805,384	15,41	111	20.18
<b>FP</b>	2002	784,087	2.49	- **	-
<b>FP</b>	2007	820.299	2.34	- **	-
<b>JDP</b>	2002	10,848,704	34.43	365	66.36
<b>JDP</b>	2007	16,307,291	46.58	341	62.00

\*The party entered the election as part of a pre-electoral coalition it formed with the NAP (Nationalist Action Party - *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*) and the RDP (Reformist Democracy Party - *Islahatçı Demokrasi Partisi*).

\*\* The party could not obtain any seats in parliament since it failed to pass the 10% national electoral threshold.

**Table 6.3 – Local Elections Participated by Islamist Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Local election</b>	<b>Votes obtained</b>	<b>Percentage-votes</b>
NSP	1973	196,962	3.89
NSP	1977	332,353	4.76
WP	1984	374,577	3.75
WP	1989	1,174,454	8,74
WP	1994	3,784,356	19.07
VP	1999	4,301,538	18.40
SP	2004	1,123,736	4.77
JDP	2004	9,347,949	39.64
SP	2009	1,174,610	5,44
JDP	2009	12,460,804	38.85

**Table 6.4 – Senate Elections Participated by Islamist Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Election Year</b>	<b>Seats obtained</b>	<b>Percentage-seats</b>
NSP	1973	3	5.8
NSP	1975	2	3.7
NSP	1977	1	2
NSP	1979	4	8

**Table 6.5 – Coalition Governments Participated by Islamist Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Coalition partner(s)</b>	<b>Position in Coalition</b>
NSP	1974	RPP (centre-left)	Junior partner
NSP	1975-77	JP (centre-right), NAP (extreme right), RRP (centre)	Junior partner
NSP	1977-78	JP (centre-right), NAP (extreme right)	Junior partner
WP	1996-1997	TPP (centre-right)	Senior partner

To begin with, the NSP (1973-1980) participated in two general elections for the lower legislative chamber, four senate elections<sup>109</sup> and two local elections throughout the 1970s in addition to participating in the formation of three coalition governments with other secular parties covering the ideological spectrum from centre-left (RPP) to ultra-nationalist right (NAP). Yet, at the end of this almost a decade long and multi-faceted participation in almost all principal aspects of democratic political life, the party appeared as ideologically rigid as it was in the beginning not to mention its

<sup>109</sup> According to the 1961 Constitution which remained in effect until the 1980 military intervention, the legislative branch of the Turkish state was organized as a two-chamber assembly consisting of a lower chamber (Turkish Grand National Assembly) and the senate.

increased self-confidence due to its participation in several coalition governments. Moreover, it was even possible to observe a fair amount of radicalization in the party's discourse with regard to the issue of the transformation of Turkey into an Islamic state governed under Islamic rules. In this respect, the content analysis of the semi-official party newspaper *Milli Gazete* conducted by Alkan (1984) have found that support for Islamic fundamentalism became more pronounced in articles written by Erbakan and other party ideologues as the 1970s drew to a close. Especially following the declaration of a Sharia regime in Pakistan by Ziya ul Hakk in 1977 and the Iranian revolution in 1979, the NSP ideologues started openly discussing the possibility of such a change including concrete proposals to initiate it leaving aside their characteristic prudence regarding the issue.

The NSP's post-1980 reincarnation, the WP (1983-1998) contested three general and three local elections in addition to forming a coalition government with the centre-right TPP in 1996 as a senior coalition partner. The party increased its vote share at every subsequent election until it reached a peak point in the 1995 general election garnering 21% of the votes cast and the greatest number of seats in the national parliament. Yet, significantly enough the expansion of the Islamists' electoral appeal did not actually come about as a result of a conscious strategy of diluting its ideological platform in the name of electoral pragmatism. On the contrary, the WP, instead of getting closer to the political mainstream throughout the process, followed a distinct strategy of stressing its anti-systemic qualities vis-à-vis its political rivals to the extent that it lumped together all other political parties, under the label "*batıl*" (against God's wishes) ("Turkiye'de kimlik", 2011).

With the establishment of the VP, the first signs of ideological moderation began to emerge in the Islamist movement. The party, which could participate in one local and one national election until it was shut down in 2001, began to endorse Turkey's EU membership bid and to frame its opposition to the secular establishment in terms of a call for further democratization rather than Islamization. Yet, the party's ideological transformation appeared more tactical than substantial as the democratic discourse of the party appeared blatantly self-serving. In fact, many observers noted that Erbakan was planning to bring the party back to its previous ideological stance once the repressive atmosphere of the February 28 decisions disappeared (Cizre & Cinar, 2003).

On the whole, the Islamist parties before the JDP had been fully immersed in nearly all aspects of democratic political life spanning a period of almost three decades. However, why did the Islamists wait for so long (until the late 1990s) to undertake a fundamental revision of their political goals? Does this state of affairs, the failure to explain the timing of moderation, render the causal claims of the participation-moderation thesis less valid? Or are there other factors that intervene between political participation and the outcome of moderation, and hence can possibly shed light on the variation in the outcome of ideological moderation among Turkish Islamist parties?

***4b. Internal Dynamics of Party Transformation: Changes in Leadership and Dominant Faction(s)***

Schwedler (2006, p.13) identifies four distinct propositions inside the inclusion-moderation thesis regarding the impact of inclusion on the moderation of Islamist political actors:

- Inclusion may transform radicals into moderates. This might mean, in practice, either the emergence of radical and moderate ideological factions inside a movement previously united or, if such factions already exist, a relative reduction in the number of radicals in favor of moderates.
- It might convince undecided Islamists (fence-sitters) to choose the moderate faction at the expense of the radicals.
- It might push already-existing moderates towards further moderation, and/or
- Without influencing the proportion of moderates and radicals inside the movement, it might strengthen the hand of the former vis-à-vis the latter by creating opportunities for increased visibility and efficacy.

If Schwedler's (2006) scheme on the actual impact of inclusion on religious actors is correct, then at the level of political actors the moderating impact of the participation in democratic practices should manifest itself first in the emergence of and/or the shifting balance of power between rival ideological factions inside the movement. That the factions do matter in explaining ideological shifts of political parties as much as external stimuli for change is a point raised powerfully also in the works of Harmel & Janda (1994). Harmel & Janda (1994) identify leadership change and/or a change in

dominant faction as the principle endogenous factor explaining the occurrence of ideological repositioning at the level of political actors. Admittedly, their inspiration comes from a previous study on the subject matter by Panebianco (1988). Panebianco (1988), after comparing and contrasting the alternative views on the sources of party change in the literature, i.e. externally vs. internally-induced notions, reaches the conclusion that change comes about usually when external factors work in ways to accentuate internal pressures to shift the distribution of power inside the party. This is the case because political parties, as forms of political organization, cannot be expected to respond to environmental stimuli in an automatic and predictable fashion. Rather, these stimuli are first processed by willful and rational organizational actors, themselves part of the intra-party power struggle, who then formulate the best way to adapt to environmental changes by taking into consideration the consequences of such adaptive behavior for their position inside the party. In other words, political parties usually try to influence their environment as much as they are influenced by it, and accordingly party politicians may choose to resist change, instead of being carried away by it, agreeing to pay the consequences of such behavior (Deschouwer, 1992; Kalyvas, 2003). In fact, if the built-in pressures for electoral pragmatism and moderation in democratic processes could actually determine the course of ideological change regardless of how they are perceived and interpreted by political actors, there wouldn't be any radical parties left, religious or non-religious alike, in democratic political systems.

Therefore, once the agency of politicians is included in the discussion of party ideological change in the form of intra-party factional politics and the accompanying power struggle, it becomes increasingly difficult to infer both the occurrence and the direction of ideological change from environmental pressures alone. When this theoretical insight is carried to the discussion of Islamist moderation, the fact that religious parties participating in electoral competition, trying to strike a programmatic compromise with a potential secular coalition partner or engaging in sustained cross-partisan interaction face strong pressures for moderation, does not necessarily mean that such moderation will actually take place, absent an internal faction that chooses to positively respond to these exogenous pressures in the context of its power struggle against the dominant faction.

In the context of intra-party politics, factions refer to “any intra-party combination, clique, or grouping whose members share a sense of the common

identity and common purpose and are organized to act collectively – as a distinct bloc within the party – to achieve their goals” (Zariski, 1960, p.33). Factions may come into being for different reasons (Zariski, 1960; Belloni & Beller, 1976). First and foremost, they may result from disagreements over ideological issues and strategic choices among party members. An equally common base for factionalism is “affinity based on common material interests, common origins, or common functions” such as regional, generational and pressure group-based groupings (Zariski, 1960, p.35). Likewise, factions may represent the members’ party of origin if there has been a merger in the party history (Belloni & Beller, 1978). Finally, factions may form around personal and local cliques trying to accrue benefits of party and/or public offices to a limited portion of the party’s constituency.

Factions may seek to control the central organs of the party organization including leadership cadres and nominees for public office, and in this way have access to office spoils (Janda, 1980, Sartori, 1976; Zariski, 1960). They may have an interest in influencing the party’s concrete strategies both inside and outside the legislative (Janda, 1980; Zariski, 1960). Another goal pursued by factions is acquiring influence over party policies regarding specific issues often in line with the positions expressed by pressure groups outside the party (Janda, 1980; Zariski, 1960). Finally, factions may act with ideological motivations. That is, they may seek to promote certain values and principles inside the party, and influence the party’s location on the political spectrum (Janda, 1980; Sartori 1976, Zariski, 1960).

Factionalism has been shown to play an important role in explaining many important attributes of modern party politics. To begin with, the presence of intra-party factions seems to be directly connected to the capacity of parties to act cohesively in legislatures (Janda, 1993).<sup>110</sup> Second, factions and factionalism have begun to occupy an important place in coalition theory.<sup>111</sup> In this respect, in contrast to earlier works characterized by a tendency to consider parties as unitary actors, more recent research in this field has turned its attention to diverging preferences inside the party as a potential explanatory factor in accounting for several aspects of coalitions such as coalition bargaining (Debus & Bräuninger, 2009; Laver & Shepsle, 1990), likelihood of participation in government (Bäck, 2009) and cabinet duration

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<sup>110</sup> For a general theoretical and conceptual overview of studies of legislative behavior focused on parties and factions, see Brady & Bullock (1983) as well as Giannetti & Benoit (2009b).

<sup>111</sup> See, for instance, the edited volume by Giannetti & Benoit (2009a).

(Chambers, 2008; Druckman, 1996; Saalfeld, 2009). In the same vein, factions appear to exert a significant influence on the allocation of ministerial portfolios inside a given party (Ceron, 2012) in addition to its impact on the determination of the party platform (Ceron, 2011).

More importantly, however, for the purposes of this chapter, is that factional conflict has been shown to constitute an important dimension of party change along with changes in leadership cadres (Harmel & Janda, 1994; Harmel, Heo, Tan & Janda, 1995; Harmel & Tan, 2003; Ignazi, 1992 as cited in Harmel & Tan, 2003; Panebianco, 1988; Wilson, 1989). In this respect, Harmel & Janda, (1994) has put forward a multi-causal theoretical model in an attempt to explain changes underwent by competitive political parties integrating both external stimuli for change, including but not limited to poor electoral performance, and internal factors consisting of both change in leadership and change in the dominant faction<sup>112</sup>. Subjecting the hypotheses drawn from this integrated theory to empirical tests in subsequent studies (see Harmel *et al*, 1995 and Harmel & Tan, 2003), they have reached the conclusion that while each one of these factors can potentially, but not necessarily, trigger change by itself, the magnitude of change will be greater when all of the above-said factors are present in a particular instance of party change. In other words, their effect is cumulative. More specifically, they have posited that

the *combination* of leadership and factional change – whether coincidental or sequential – creates opportunities for change that are greater than what either event would accomplish alone. And even in those cases where the factional change is completely attributable to a leadership change, it may be that the factional change was absolutely essential in order for the leader to accomplish party change (emphasis in the original, Harmel *et al.*, 1995, p.17).

The ideological moderation of political Islam in Turkey was preceded by a fierce internal struggle between two factions inside the movement, popularly known as the “traditionalists” (*gelenekciler*) and the “innovationists” (*yenilikciler*). This factional struggle is frequently mentioned in the existing accounts of Islamist moderation in Turkey, yet with little, if any, analytical clout since the factional struggle in question

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<sup>112</sup> Dominant faction refers to the faction that controls the central decision-making organs of the party.



is usually interpreted as a *symptom* of party change, rather than a necessary precondition. This mainstream interpretation is based on a particular reconstruction of the history of the conflict between these rival factions as the unfolding of an ideological struggle between Islamist radicals controlling the movement and their opponents, who supposedly became more moderate as a result of their previous exposure to institutional constraints and/or alternative worldviews. Yet, available historical data on the emergence and development of rival factions inside the National Outlook movement, as will be examined shortly in more detail, challenge this popular perception by showing that the conflict between the traditionalists and the innovationists had very little, if anything, to do with the latter's critique of the former's ideological rigidity. Therefore, as far as the Turkish Islamist movement is concerned, the emergence of competing internal factions did not take place as a result of ideational transformation underwent by a sub-section of Islamist politicians as a result of democratic participation. On the contrary, the birth and development of party factions and ideological moderation were by and large independent processes. Hence, analytically speaking, the former cannot be reduced to the latter.

This last point brings the present discussion to the main analytical claim of the following chapter. First, I contend that the intra-party power struggle, reflected in the emergence and consolidation of rival factions and/or leadership candidates, is the key to understanding if and how democratic institutional constraints have shaped the ideological trajectory of Islamist parties in Turkey. More concretely, based on the Turkish case, I argue that democratic participation is unlikely to work its moderating magic, regardless of its duration, scope and intensity, unless it is accompanied by the existence of rival political factions inside the religious movement that are not only aware of these incentives, but also willing to capitalize on them in their struggle to shift the internal balance of power in their favor. Moreover, I argue that the moderation of the Turkish political Islam lends further support to the multi-causal perspective on party change presented above combining both externally and internally-induced notions of party ideological repositioning. In order to substantiate this contention, the remainder of the chapter investigates the organizational transformation of the National Outlook parties over the years with a particular

emphasis on its impact on the leadership structure and the power distribution of the Islamist movement.<sup>113</sup>

#### ***4c. The Organizational Evolution and Changing Power Structures of Turkish Islamist Parties***

In terms of their principle organizational characteristics, the NSP, like its short-lived predecessor NOP, fell under the category of an ideologically-oriented cadre party.<sup>114</sup> The party's organizational structure was very loose, party local branches remained essentially inactive in between the elections and the party's support base was mainly sustained through close relations with various semi-secret religious orders. Recruitment of new members usually took the form of "briefings" (*teblig*) during which people were lectured in detail about the merits of an alternative social and political order based on Islamic principles, and invited to join the party in order to further the Islamist cause by spreading the message to other believers.

At the top of the party hierarchy stood Necmettin Erbakan (1926-2011), the founder and historical leader of the National Outlook movement. He continued to lead all the political parties affiliated with the movement in the capacity of general secretary or, when he was politically banned, through his aides until his death in 2011. His leadership style was highly personalistic and visibly authoritarian as evident in the emphasis he placed on vertical organization, respect for the chain of command, obedience and unconditional dedication to the leader in the management of party affairs (Calmuk, 2004). The ruling cadre of the NSP was rather compact and composed mainly of Erbakan's close associates, who himself hand-picked on the basis of their personal loyalty.

The highly hierarchical and leader-dominated organizational structure of the NSP as well as the personal efforts of Erbakan to impose strict party discipline made sure that no open factions could develop inside the NSP in a position to challenge the power of Erbakan. The only threat to his iron-fist rule came from outside the party, namely from the *Kadiri* and *Nurcu* religious brotherhoods which resented their

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<sup>113</sup> For more on the impact of the party's organizational structure on the formation of factions, see Zariski (1960).

<sup>114</sup> The distinction between cadre and mass parties was first introduced by Duverger (1954) in his seminal work *The Political Parties*. Cadre parties are also referred to as "elite-based" or "parties of individual representation" in the literature (Neumann, 1956).

exclusion from the central decision-making organs of the NSP in favor of *Naksibendi* members.

In spite of being a *Naksibendi* himself, Erbakan always tried to maintain the NSP's autonomy from various semi-secret religious brotherhoods and orders forming the electoral backbone of the party. For instance, religious knowledge and personal piety was widely respected and appreciated inside the NSP, but upward mobility was based on evaluations of not one's expertise in Islamic issues and/or position in the religious hierarchy, but his actual performance in party affairs (Cakir, 1994a). In the same vein, when the orders of the brotherhood leaders contradicted with the directives of NSP officials, members were expected to be loyal to the party instead of the brotherhood (Cakir, 1994a). In fact, Erbakan as an Islamist leader stood out in the Muslim world as he had always considered the party as the core of the political struggle he conducted against the secular regime.<sup>115</sup>

Needless to say, brotherhood leaders, especially the *Nurcu* and *Kadiri* brotherhoods, resented Erbakan's moves as attempts to monopolize the Islamist movement by undermining their traditional authority over the religious segments of society. On more than one occasion, they tried to topple Erbakan by mobilizing NSP delegates belonging to their brotherhoods against him at the general party congress. Unable to succeed, 16 NSP deputies began not to attend the meetings of the NSP's parliamentary group in 1976, and then signed a petition in which they accused Erbakan of, among others, relying on the "contemptible ways of politics instead of theological studies that would support the hegemony of our mentality" (Yalcin, 2008). Erbakan responded by saying that he shared their concerns and criticisms, but in practice did very little to soothe them. Eventually, the dissident deputies resigned shortly before the early general elections held in June 1977, and founded the Order

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<sup>115</sup> Haqqani & Fradkin (2008) note that it has been quite difficult for a great many Islamists in the Muslim world to come to terms with the idea of an Islamist political party, at least initially. The difficulty resulted from the fact that such a party had to automatically presuppose a pluralistic notion of society, within which the religious identities in general, and the Muslim identity in particular, are treated on an equal par with other identities expressed on the political plane such as class and ethnicity. In this respect, they paralleled the initial objection of the Catholic Church to the establishment of confessional parties in Europe on the grounds that they were "not just another interest group" (Kalyvas, 1996). In contrast, Erbakan and his fellow Islamists appear to have had very few, if any, ideological qualms about the necessity and desirability of organizing themselves into a political party during the establishment process of the NOP. Moreover, they did not lose their faith in this "intra-systemic" form of political organization even under duress as illustrated by their determination to resurrect the party after every closure decision under different names.

Party (*Nizam Partisi*). This splinter party performed poorly in the elections, and disappeared after the 1980 military intervention.

The cadre party organizational form of the NSP was abandoned in the post-1980 period in favor of a very elaborate and extensive extra-parliamentary party organization that led some students of Turkish politics to describe the WP the only real mass-based party of Turkish Republican history (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009). In contrast to the closed organizational structure of the NSP, the WP quickly built a sizable membership base thanks to an ever-expanding army of party activists who were working for the party on a 365 day basis to gain new sympathizers. The WP activists relied principally upon door-to-door campaigning techniques and face-to-face contacts. Another novelty was the inclusion of Islamist, mostly veiled women in the WP's grassroots organization.<sup>116</sup> The party capitalized mostly on the efforts of its female activists to reach out to unprivileged social sectors such as the women and the elderly despite failing to nominate them for higher positions inside the party.

The WP's provincial organizations were active throughout the year, and consisted of nested organizational units under which each voting district, street and even building was placed under the responsibility of individual party members, who then reported to neighborhood and polling booth district organizations working under the party provincial committees (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009). Party members, in addition to running educational seminars, courses and discussion groups, mobilized the electorate by participating in myriad social activities such as weddings, funerals and charities. The party's grassroots presence and popularity was enhanced also thanks to the activities of Islamic solidarity networks with arms both in the private and voluntary sectors such as publishing houses, hospitals, schools and holding companies. These networks strengthened the bonds between the sympathizers and the movement, and facilitated their socialization into the Islamist sub-culture by helping resolve their practical problems such as education, healthcare and employment (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009).

What is striking about this picture is that in an age when other parties were increasingly utilizing capital-intensive campaigning tools and underplaying the role of grassroots activism, the WP was going against the current and refashioning itself as an

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<sup>116</sup> For more on the issue of Islamic veiling and veiled women in Turkey, see Ozdalga (1998).

ideological mass party.<sup>117</sup> More importantly, the WP's organizational strategy went against the expectations of the Turkish Armed Forces, which redesigned the institutional architecture of the Turkish democracy after the 1980 intervention so as to prevent the resurfacing of radical political parties, including the religious right, which they held responsible for the political polarization and violence of the 1970s. In order to inject more stability into the political system, they introduced, among others, a new electoral system designed to reward larger parties at the expense of smaller ones. The new electoral system modified the d'Hondt version of proportional representation (PR), in effect prior to the 1980 military intervention, with the addition of a 10% national electoral threshold.<sup>118</sup>

That meant, above all, that the WP could no longer afford to overlook electoral failures in the name of ideological purity as the NSP did in the past in the context of a PR electoral system, which allowed the party to enter the parliament and even to participate in coalitions despite the modesty of its electoral results (11.8% in 1973 and 8.6% in 1977). However, as is clear from the earlier discussion of the party's post-1980 organizational evolution, the WP leaders did not take the bait of the military rulers. Instead of diluting the ideological character of the party, they went on to reshape the voter preferences by creating an impressive grassroots organization. So, from the perspective of WP's ruling cadres, in the Turkey of the early 1990s, "there [were] two types of people: Welfare's members and those who [were] waiting to become Welfare's members" (Erbakan as quoted in Cakir, 1994b).

Even though the WP transformed itself from a cadre to a denominational mass party in the post-1980 period, the leader-dominated and hierarchical structure of the party organization remained largely unaltered. Erbakan with his close associates continued

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<sup>117</sup> Islamists took most of their inspiration from the left-wing activists of the 1970s who managed to create electoral strongholds in poor neighborhoods of ever-expanding cities using similar methods.

<sup>118</sup> In the first decade of multi-party politics in Turkey, elections were held according to the simple plurality system. Following the 1960 military intervention, the simple plurality system was abandoned in favor of a d'Hondt PR with constituency barrages to prevent too much concentration of executive power in a single party. This was overhauled in 1965 in favor of a national remainder system that further curbed down the inherent bias for larger parties, but readopted in 1968 without the constituency barrage. It has been generally recognized that various versions of the PR electoral system adopted after the 1960 military intervention had played a certain part in the proliferation of political parties in the 1960s and 1970s at the least by incentivizing intra-party dissidents inside the two major parties of the period, the centre-right JP and centre-left RPP, to form splinter parties (Hale, 1980). While it is grossly incorrect to reduce the emergence of the NOP to electoral calculations alone, Cakir (2004) reports that the NOP's founding elite's positive expectations regarding the electoral viability of an independent Islamist party played a crucial role in their decision to party ways with the centre-right political tradition in Turkey in the late 1960s.

to dominate the party where the dissidents were quickly silenced while the new comers were accepted on the condition that they wouldn't form factions. Yet, with the movement's expansion as well as aging, a certain generational cleavage, that pitted the party's top leaders against its mid-level executives, began to surface. As long as Erbakan remained at the helms of the WP, this cleavage remained latent. Yet, with his forced departure in 1998 from party leadership due to the political ban he incurred, the friction between the National Outlook's traditional ruling cadres and its home-grown young Islamist leaders transformed itself into a fully blown power struggle for party leadership that plagued the WP's successor VP all along and led to the split of the movement after its closure. The following paragraphs will take a closer look at the dynamics lying behind the emergence and development of this factional struggle.

As of early 1990s, the WP consisted of three generational groups (Cakir, 1994a). The party's top leaders, consisting of Erbakan and his close associates, belonged to the oldest generational group. As the founding fathers of the National Outlook movement, they enjoyed unquestioned authority inside the party in addition to occupying the top positions in the organizational hierarchy as members of the party central organization or members of the parliament. Their *de facto* life tenure ended solely because of ill health or when they fell into disagreement among themselves.

The party's mid-level leaders, instead, consisted generally of second-generation Islamists who typically began their political career in the Islamist youth organizations of the 1970s affiliated with the National Outlook movement. As of early 1990s, most of them were placed in charge of the WP's provincial and local divisions and affiliated municipalities as mid-level executives. The most famous name among them was R.T. Erdogan that many –both from inside and outside the WP- considered at the time as the party's future leader thanks to his outstanding performance as the president of the WP's Istanbul branch.<sup>119</sup> The final as well as the most numerous age group consisted of party members and activists who met political Islam in the post-1980 period. Forming the WP's rank and file, they almost had no say in the determination of party politics.

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<sup>119</sup> The WP entered the 1994 local elections in Istanbul under Erdogan's leadership, and obtained an impressive victory. In addition to the metropolitan municipality, it captured 17 district municipalities. More importantly, however, for the first time in party's history, the WP's vote share in Istanbul, which traditionally was more or less commensurate with its national average, exceeded the party's national average by almost 7% (Cakir, 1994c).

While both the top and mid-level leaders of the WP agreed on the necessity of expanding the party's electoral base through a strong grassroots presence, they disagreed on the precise methods to be employed for this purpose. Erbakan, his close associates and many of the WP's provincial branches in Anatolian towns were part of the traditionalist camp. As was the case during the NSP years, they wanted to mobilize solely the religious voters and hence to keep the WP's electoral campaign focused exclusively on conservative-religious sections of society. In contrast, the innovationist wing, led by Erdogan and supported mostly by the party's divisions in big cities, argued that the doors of the party should be opened to people from all walks of life regardless of their religiosity, and that the electorate's religious preferences did not really matter because people could also be Islamized within the party (Cakir, 1994c).

Here, it is important to underline the fact that at the time the differences between the traditionalist and innovationist Islamists inside the WP did not really concern the ideological core of Islamist politics, but its methods and style (Cakir, 1994a, 2004). In other words, the labels 'hardliners' and 'moderates' that are often used in the literature to refer to the traditionalist and innovationist factions are attached to these factions retrospectively, and in this sense they are misleading as far as their almost immediate ideological connotations are concerned. For instance, when the activists belonging to innovationist party organizations such as those in Istanbul and Ankara went to bars to ask for votes, they did not say that alcohol consumption would be banned as the traditionalists would have said. Yet, they did not promise to leave it to personal choice, either, as an ideologically moderate, pluralist Islamist would supposedly have done. Rather, they gave a carefully crafted message to the electorate on this contentious issue arguing that in a future Islamic society the adverse conditions that lead people to drink would be absent; therefore, people would no longer feel the need to drink (Cakir, 1994a, 2004).

Moreover, the innovationists proved to be much less ideologically flexible than the traditionalists on several occasions. At times, they even appeared to adhere to a stricter version of political Islam than Erbakan and his cadre. For instance, the innovationists, along with the Islamist press, fiercely criticized the compromises made by Erbakan to the secular regime during the coalition negotiations he conducted in 1995 as well as during the *Refahyol* coalition government (Cakir, 2004; Calmuk,

2000).<sup>120</sup> Similarly, it wasn't the WP's old guard, but the innovationists who brushed off the calls of the leading liberal Islamist intellectuals of the time for a major overhaul of the WP's ideology to include such ideals as pluralism and civil society on the grounds that they were engaged in a futile intellectual exercise (Cakir, 1994a, p.84-85). The radical image projected by the innovationists was also complemented by the public utterances of its leaders. Erdogan himself declared in an interview he gave to the daily *Milliyet* on July 14, 1996 that he considered democracy as a means rather than an end ("Demokrasi bizim", 1996).<sup>121</sup> In the same interview, he answered the question whether or not the laws that contradicted with their worldview could be abrogated in the following way: "Of course, also the laws are made by humans". His close associate Abdullah Gul, too, responded affirmatively to a similar question in another interview stating that there would remain no laws against Islamic principles if the WP came to power ("Ustsuzler ne", 1995).

The tactical disagreement between the WP's traditionalists and innovationist constituted the outer facade of a deeper power struggle shaping up throughout the 1990s in the Islamist movement between its top and mid-level leaders in general and between Erbakan and Erdogan in particular. The first episode of this struggle took place in the wake of the 1994 local elections. Erbakan in order to rehabilitate the WP's relations with the state apparatus invited a number of important right-wing politicians to join the party in exchange for important party posts and candidatures in major cities including Istanbul for whose mayorship Erdogan was the strongest candidate at the time. This decision caused a great deal of discomfort in the party ranks, especially among the innovationists who criticized the decision as an instance of "injustice" done to Erdogan in particular and to other successful young leaders in general who were aspiring for the same posts ("Refah'ta kimlik", 1993). The transfers

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<sup>120</sup> At the 1995 general election, the WP obtained a victory, but a relatively modest one as 21% of the votes did not allow Erbakan to form a majority government. He first contacted the centre-right ANAP and during the negotiations agreed to alternate the office of the prime minister between himself and ANAP's leader in addition to accepting the party's programmatic promises. After this first attempt which failed, he managed to forge a coalition with the other principle force of the centre-right, the TPP. During this short-lived coalition under Erbakan's premiership, the WP did not denounce, yet almost completely shelved its well-known animosity to Turkey's EU membership bid. It also bowed down to the pressures of the military to extend both the Martial Law in the Kurdish regions and the mandate of the international Combined Task Force deployed in Turkey after the end of the first Gulf War in clear contradiction to the party's previous position regarding the issue. Moreover, Erbakan undersigned the dismissals of some Turkish Armed Forces personnel on the basis of their "reactionary" activities again under the pressure of the secular establishment. The Innovationists, as well as the radical party rank and file supporting them, considered all of these moves as unacceptable deviations from the Islamist cause (Cakir, 2004; Calmuk, 2004).

<sup>121</sup> Erdogan later on denied that he made such a statement during the interview (Uyar, 2005). Yet, he



never took place, but Erbakan blocked the promotions of important innovationist names once again later during the same year in favor of his close associates at the interim parliamentary elections of December 1994 (“RP vitrininde”, 1994).

In fact, the innovationists in time extended their critique of the traditional campaigning methods promoted by Erbakan to his near absolute authority over the WP and the lack of intra-party democracy. Their voices began to be heard even more powerfully during the *Refahyol* coalition as the innovationists were worried that Erbakan’s compromises to the secular establishment while in power would alienate the religious core of the WP’s constituency, and hence the WP would have to pay a dear price at the polls (Asik, 1996; Dogan, 1996).

After the WP’s closure, the innovationists began the preparations of a new party under the leadership of Erdogan. However, in the meantime a court case brought against Erdogan for “inciting hostility and hatred in public on religious and racial grounds” due to a poem he recited in a meeting in Siirt on December 12, 1997 came to a close, and Erdogan received a 4-month prison sentence in addition to being removed from his post as the mayor of Istanbul. Temporarily shelving their plans for the new party, the innovationists stepped up their efforts to topple Recai Kutan, hand-picked by Erbakan, from the VP’s leadership. They participated in the 14 May 2000 VP party congress with their own candidate, Abdullah Gul, who lost with a small margin to Kutan thanks to the immense pressure exerted by Erbakan on party delegates as well as to the last minute changes made in party bylaws in favor of the incumbent leadership (Hale & Ozbudun, 2009). Following the closure of the VP by a Constitutional Court decision in June 2001 on charges of anti-secularism, the two factions completely parted ways. 48 of the ex-VP deputies joined in the FP, established by Erbakan loyalists, while the remaining 51 chose the JDP, established by the innovationists under Erdogan’s leadership.

All in all, internal factions were notoriously absent from the National Outlook movement until the early 1990s, that is, both during the NOP/NSP years and the first half of the WP’s lifetime. Yet, in the early 1990s, there began to emerge a schism between the older and younger generations of Islamist politicians first along tactical lines which in time transformed itself into a conflict concerning the distribution of power inside the party. As long as Necmettin Erbakan remained at the helms of the party, this schism could not develop into a full-fledged factional struggle that could

threaten the internal integrity of the movement by removing the dominant faction, the traditionalists, from power.

With the establishment of the VP, the leadership of the party changed hands. Yet, the leadership change appeared more nominal than real as the new leader of the party, Recai Kutan, belonged to the traditionalist clique, and was installed by Erbakan into that position as a care-taker leader until his political bans were to be removed. Consequently, in terms of the dominant faction ruling the party the VP was still in continuity with its predecessor WP notwithstanding the attempts of the innovationists to capture the party's ruling cadres.

The domination of Erbakan loyalists over the Islamist movement finally came to an end with the establishment of the JDP, and following this change in both the party leadership and the dominant faction the Islamists could completely and credibly leave behind the ideological luggage that they carried all the way from the emergence of the movement in the early 1970s (see Table 6.6 below).

**Table 6.6 – Historical Comparison of Leadership and Factional Structures of National Outlook-affiliated Parties**

<b>Party</b>	<b>NOP/NSP (1970-1980)</b>	<b>WP (1983-1998)</b>	<b>VP (1997-2001)</b>	<b>JDP (2001-present)</b>
<b>Party leader</b>	N. Erbakan	N. Erbakan	R..Kutan	R.T.Erdogan
<b>Dominant faction</b>	Traditionalists	Traditionalists	Traditionalists	Innovationists
<b>Ideological orientation</b>	Moderate Islamist	Moderate Islamist	Moderate Islamist	Non-Islamist Conservative

## 5. CONCLUSION

The Turkish Islamist movement stands out among its counterparts in the Muslim world in terms of its long history of participation in democratic processes. The extent of this participation, despite the exclusionary reflexes of the secularist establishment such as party closures, was such that not only did the Turkish Islamist parties get represented in the legislative branch of the state, but also took part in government formation several times. However, until the foundation of the JDP, these parties had failed to come to terms with the secular democratic principles underlying the Turkish Republic while, to their credit, staying carefully away from a strategy of revolutionary armed struggle.

The preceding chapter was an attempt to solve this empirical puzzle through the identification of factors that potentially mediate between Islamists' political participation and their ideological moderation. Drawing on previous theoretical studies on the endogenous sources of party change, the chapter has suggested that the key to this puzzle might lie in the organizational changes that the Islamist movement underwent throughout the years, and how these changes affected the internal distribution of power inside the National Outlook-affiliated parties. More precisely, it has been shown that the ideological transformation of the movement was a multi-dimensional process triggered by external factors, yet at the same time closely related to the changes in leadership and the dominant faction that took place in the second half of the 1990s. The external stimulus for change came from outside the party in the form of an indirect *coup d'état* staged by the Turkish Armed Forces on February 28, 1997 and the following party closure case brought against the WP. This "external shock" (Harmel & Janda, 1994), in addition to threatening the very survival of the WP, had a direct impact on the distribution of power inside the party as it forcefully removed the movement's charismatic leader Erbakan from power.

Erbakan tried to fill in the power vacuum created by his departure by installing a caretaker name, Kutan, as the leader of the VP, until his political bans were to be removed. Yet, this move proved to be rather ineffective in ensuring the movement's internal cohesion and loyalty to Erbakan in his absence. With Erbakan's departure, the intra-generational tension accumulating since the early 1990s turned into a full-fledged factional battle between the traditionalist wing loyal to Erbakan and the innovationist wing consisting of young Islamist leaders.

Despite the continuous efforts of the latter, Erbakan loyalists managed to stay at the helms of the VP. Therefore, from the WP to the VP the party leadership has changed hands, but the dominant faction remained the same. This set limits on the magnitude of party change that took place from the WP to the VP as evident in many ambiguities characterizing both the ideological platform and actual practices of the VP.

The secularist establishment, rather inadvertently, removed this last barrier before the Islamists' full-scale ideological transformation when it decided to shut down the VP. After the closure of the VP, the innovationists refused to join the FP, the party established by the dominant faction inside the VP, and went ahead to establish the JDP. While the FP quickly retreated back the National Outlook's

traditional anti-Western religiously-inspired political rhetoric, the JDP has successfully embraced a new conservative centre-right political identity with a strong commitment to democratization.

Regarding the question whether or not political moderation results from a true transformation in the Islamist actors' core values, the preceding historical investigation has shown that the young Islamist political cadres that established the JDP in August 2001 were not actually ideologically more moderate than the older generation of Islamist politicians that they replaced. Interestingly enough, we see the leaders of the innovationist wing continuing to pay homage to the National Outlook principles as late as May 2000 while addressing the VP's first party congress during which they tried to topple the traditionalist leadership of the party. All in all, in the case of the Turkish Islamist movement, there is very little evidence supporting the argument that the Islamists' political moderation has been preceded by a deeper preference change on the part of reformist Islamist politicians that founded the JDP.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Islamist movement in Turkey has a long history. It was born in the period of decline of the Ottoman Empire as an attempt to save it from collapse in the face of growing Western power by reasserting the Islamic character of the Ottoman rule. It continued to play an important role in the political life of the Turkish Republic where centre-periphery and Islam-secularism cleavages has constituted the main fault lines of democratic politics. In the republican period, religiously conservative voters had initially been courted by right-wing parties which integrated elements of the Islamist oppositional rhetoric into their ideological platforms in addition to giving Islamists, however limited, influence over public policies when in power. Yet, the religious right decided to part ways with the mainstream right-wing politics as the 1960s drew to a close. In 1970, the first explicitly Islamist party, the NOP, was established.

The political Islamist National Outlook movement from which the NOP sprang gave birth to five more parties within the span of almost three decades. Needless to say, the programmatic commitments of these parties evolved over time especially in the economic field in reflection of the rapid socio-economic transformation underwent by Turkish society in the above-mentioned period. Yet, as far as the political objectives of the successive political Islamist parties are concerned, there was more continuity than change. In this respect, the common denominator among all the parties of the National Outlook movement was their overarching desire to initiate an Islamic transformation of Turkish state and society in line with Sharia principles.

This state of affairs changed with the emergence of the JDP in 2001. Founded by the younger Islamist leaders inside the Islamist movement, the party publicly disassociated itself from the National Outlook tradition, denounced the goal of the establishment of a Sharia state, and embraced liberal democratic values and institutions as its guiding principles along with Turkey's bid for EU membership. On the political spectrum, it repositioned itself inside the centre-right and absorbed their electoral base in a rather short period of time with the help of its "conservative democratic" party identity. The concomitant rise of Islamic radicalism in the Muslim world, which culminated most infamously in the terroristic attacks against the twin towers in September 2001 by Al Qaida, made sure that the birth and rise of the

moderate JDP would not simply remain a domestic affair. As policy makers in the West and democratic reformers in the Muslim world were trying to tackle the question of Islamic radicalism, they increasingly turned to the example set by the JDP in terms of reconciliation of Islam and democratic politics as a concrete model to prescribe and emulate in the Middle East which appeared to lag behind all the developing regions in terms of political development indicators. This turned the JDP's charismatic leader R.T. Erdogan "into a central and vital figure in the global evolution of political Islam" rendering the party of "great relevance to other Muslim states, despite the differing conditions in every country" (Fuller, 2005, p.23).

The present thesis was an attempt to make sense of the conditions that brought about the moderation of the Turkish political Islam from a historical comparative perspective. More specifically, in this study I tried to shed light upon the domestic factors that prepared the grounds for the ideological moderation of the movement in the late 1990s by looking at the changes that took place in the Islamist parties' voter base, at their relationship with the secularist establishment and at the incentives emanating from the multi-party democratic institutional framework.

This research endeavor has produced many interesting results regarding the conditions of the ideological repositioning of Islamist parties. First, regarding the socio-economic basis of this transformation, it demonstrated that the electoral base of the JDP and that of the Islamist parties that came before (the NOP, NSP, WP, VP) and after it (the FP) were significantly different in terms of their socio-economic characteristics. While the latter relied heavily upon the support of lower class voters, especially in the case of the WP, the JDP made important headways into the middle classes, traditionally attached to mainstream centrist parties, constructing a true cross-class alliance around its political platform.

These conservative middle classes were mostly a by-product of the post-1980 liberalization policies. Contrary to what has been argued by the proponents of the "embourgeoisement-moderation" argument though, their support for the moderate and pro-democratic JDP was not a natural outcome of their middle class character. Unlike the traditional middle classes that formed the backbone of the Islamist movement in the pre-1980 period, their economic activity was heavily tilted towards external trade with a growing proportion of Western markets. Therefore, their material interests lied in the continuation of the integration of the Turkey both into the global economy and into the European Economic Community, and in this sense they were not very

enthusiastic about the anti-Western and anti-liberal features of the Islamic economic doctrine. Yet, in the domestic arena they considered the Turkish state as the greatest hindrance to their business interests due to its discriminatory attitude towards small and medium-sized businesses of the Anatolian hinterland both on cultural and policy grounds. Therefore, these businesses initially filled in the ranks of the WP hoping to end their exclusion from the political and economic elite of the Republic. In this way, they desired to translate their growing economic power into political leverage as a potential Islamist government would positively discriminate against the Islamic business sector.

Yet, the “post-modern” *coup d'état* of February 28, 1997 caused a sea change in the political calculations of this sub-section of the Turkish bourgeoisie. Turning into explicit targets of state repression for the first time in history along with the rest of Islamist opposition, the conservative bourgeoisie realized that challenging the secular state structures was a futile and counterproductive exercise, and consequently began to promote democratization and human rights.<sup>122</sup> Along the process, they began to back up the internal dissidents inside the VP, which would have established the JDP in less than a few years time, by providing financial support as well as ideological blueprints. On the whole, it is impossible to deny to contribution of the rise and expansion of an authentic middle class inside the Islamist constituency in the eventual moderation of the movement. However, this contribution was historically dependent upon the presence of antagonistic relations with the state apparatus in the absence of which the conservative middle classes would have found it too risky to challenge the Turkish state's authoritarian policies.

The February 28 intervention constituted a turning point also for the relations between Islamist political actors and the secular establishment. The latter had cracked down on Islamist politicians also in the past following the 1971 and 1980 interventions by shutting down the NOP and NSP. Yet, in each one of these cases, the secularist state acted in ways to improve the public legitimacy of Islamic politics after the initial repressive atmosphere dissipated. It spared the Islamists from the harsh treatment received by other radical groups, particularly the revolutionary Left,

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<sup>122</sup> In addition to antagonistic relations with the state, the conservative bourgeoisie's u-turn from religious integralism was also influenced by the changing balance of power between working classes and the business sector -to the disadvantage of the former-, and by the near unanimous support given by key international actors to democratic governance as the best political environment for the healthy functioning of free markets in the context of 1990s. For more on this point see, Yilmaz (2012).

allowed them to return to active politics in a relatively short period of time, and hardly ever touched their arms in civil society. Cognizant of their semi-official role as bulwarks against the communist threat and as tools of de-politization of the masses polarized along the left-right axis, Erbakan and his close associates characteristically preferred to cool down their rhetoric in the immediate aftermath of state persecution, yet harked back to their Islamist discourse when they felt secure again. In fact, this seems to be what Erbakan had in mind also during the February 28 process. As the officials of the TAF were issuing anti-Islamist declarations one after another in the months leading to this open confrontation, he continued to deny the existence of a tension between his party and the TAF claiming that the WP performed much better in constituencies where the soldiers were the majority (Calmuk, 2000).

Yet, this time things were to turn out different than his expectations, because unlike the previous instances of state repression, the 1997 intervention represented a new wave of radicalization of the Turkish official secularism as a part of which Islamic reactionaryism was defined as one of the principle internal security threats by the military. Unlike the past and in reflection of the growing assertiveness of state secularism, this military intervention claimed the life of not only the WP, but also its successor the VP that drew a much more moderate image, yet could not escape closure. That meant, among others, without undertaking a radical revision of their substantial objectives, the Islamists stood very little chance of remaining inside the formal political arena. In sum, state repression against Islamist parties can bring about their moderation on the condition that it is not accompanied by broader Islam-friendly official policies that improve, albeit inadvertently, the public standing and legitimacy of political Islam.

As far as the moderating impact of the integration of Islamist parties into the mainstream competitive politics is concerned, the present study demonstrated that this impact is hardly automatic. In other words, democratic institutional constraints such as the necessity to maximize votes to come to power, to construct broad-based alliances both inside and outside the parliament, or to form coalition governments all had a crucial impact on the political behavior of political Islamists. Yet, this impact was mediated by the agency of Islamist politicians who, under the leadership of Erbakan, had been rather resourceful in circumventing the moderating influences emanating from the basic institutional arrangements of parliamentary democracy. Only after an intra-party power conflict emerged between the old school Islamists led



by Erbakan and young Islamist leaders led by Erdogan, and damaged the internal cohesion of the movement, these pro-moderation influences began to factor in the political calculations of Islamists.

The latter group, the so-called “innovationists”, staged a critique of Erbakan’s dominant faction first on tactical, then on democratic grounds calling for an end to the highly hierarchical decision-making structures inside the National Outlook parties, which perpetuated the historical dominance of Erbakan and his close associates. The WP’s closure in 1998 and the subsequent political ban on Erbakan removed the first barrier before their political ambitions. More importantly, however, this change in leadership was accompanied by a change also in the ideological outlook of the next Islamist party in the pipeline, the VP, which drew a much more moderate image with respect to its predecessor. However, the VP was still under the control of Erbakan loyalists, and would have probably retreated back to the WP line once Erbakan reassumed the party leadership arresting the ideological moderation of the movement. After all, this was what happened also in the past after the closures of the NOP in 1971 and the NSP in 1980.

In the meantime, the innovationists were stepping up their efforts to topple Erbakan loyalists from the VP’s leadership, yet were unable to do so despite growing support from the party grassroots. This time, too, the help would come from the most unlikely place. The Constitutional Court disbanded the VP in 2001 after which the innovationists refused to join the FP, the party established by Erbakan loyalists, and founded the JDP. In this way, Erbakan loyalists, which constituted the last barrier before a full-scale ideological transformation, were removed from out of the way of innovationists. On the whole, in the case of the Turkish Islamist movement the first impetus for moderation came from outside the party in the form of a *coup d’état*. The transformative impact of this external shock was amplified with the departure of Erbakan from party leadership. Finally, when the Erbakanist faction lost the control of the movement after the closure of the VP, the JDP as a moderate and non-Islamist, yet conservative party rose on the Turkish political scene.

I believe that the present study has contributed to the literature on religious party moderation in general, and Islamist party moderation in particular, in several ways. First, it has proposed a novel research strategy, novel in the context of Islamist political parties, to analyze the phenomenon of religious party moderation. Even though the literature is abound with several case studies as well as cross-national

comparisons on the subject matter, the present study is the only one that addresses this political phenomenon through a focused and longitudinal comparison of all the Islamist political parties that appeared on the Turkish political scene. Second, thanks to its empirical orientation and historical depth, the present study has managed to identify certain intervening variables hitherto overlooked in the literature. In this way, it refined and complimented the conclusions drawn from earlier studies of Islamist moderation.

Third, it has brought into the field of Islamist moderation, heavily influenced by the modernization theory in terms of the necessary socio-economic conditions for such a transformation, the insights of the critiques of the bourgeoisie-democracy thesis as well as the analysts of abrupt instances of party change that focus on intra-party power conflicts. Finally, the present thesis has offered a multi-casual reading of Islamist moderation in order to shed light upon the sources of this transformation both in society and polity.

The new explanatory factors identified in this work should certainly be tested in other countries as well as in different time periods in order to probe their “plausibility” in non-Turkish contexts (Eckstein, 1975). In this respect, I believe that the addition of a cross-national dimension to the analysis in future studies would certainly add to the strength of its causal inferences.

Moreover, the evolution of political Islam in Turkey cannot be considered in isolation from the role played by international actors, particularly the US and the EU. As one of the principle American allies in the Middle East, Turkey’s domestic politics has always been influenced by this country’s strategic interests and priorities in the region. In this respect, the JDP seems to have benefitted greatly from the US’s backing of moderate Islamist actors in the Muslim world as potential domestic interlocutors and allies as part of its post-9/11 foreign policy doctrine. Likewise, without the “EU anchor”, the JDP would have faced significant difficulties in putting into action its deep-seated democratization program which targeted, first and foremost, the institutional power of the military over civilian politics. And the construction of this alliance would not have been possible if the party had not given the EU credible signals as to the democratic nature of its political objectives in its formative years. As a result of the domestic focus of the present study as well as due to time and space limitations, I have mentioned the EU’s and US’s contribution to the moderation process of political Islam only in the passing. Therefore, I believe that, as

a next step, these international factors can be integrated into the explanatory model proposed here in order to arrive at a more comprehensive understanding of Islamist moderation.



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