

The Militarization of Secular Opposition in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Turkey under the pro-Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) government has represented an opportunity to go beyond the Orientalist modernization framework and produce “value” by countering the culturalist arguments that foreclose the possibilities of democratization in modernizing Muslim countries. The secular opposition, however, has reproduced the logic of the February 28 process and has therefore immobilized and forced the AKP into a struggle to survive, both as a political party and as the elected government of the country. It is this power struggle that has come to epitomize the democratization debate and the democratization process in Turkey. In this context of an impoverished democratization debate, it remains to be seen whether and to what extent the AKP can accomplish the task of revitalizing the constitutive capacities of politics in Turkey.

If one of the phenomenal developments in recent Turkish politics is the extent to which Islamism has been transformed by the politics of democratization, as illustrated by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule since 2002, the other is the revelation of the overzealousness of Turkey’s established/centrist political actors and institutions in resisting further democratization and denying the constitutive capacity of politics. The seeming consensus on the need for further democratization and Europeanization has apparently faded in the post-2002 politics of Turkey. While the AKP governments have regularly, albeit incoherently, employed a democratizing discourse and agenda, the ‘secular’ opposition willingly defended an Orientalist understanding of modernization and reproduced the trade off between democracy and secularism. As such, the post-2002 opposition left the claim to democratization to the AKP only, and

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None of the neo-Islamist movements in Muslim countries have abandoned the Islamic framework and embraced the logic of liberal democracy to the extent that the Turkish AKP has

thereby, foreclosed the possibilities of revealing the shortcomings and deficiencies of the AKP's democratizing agenda and discourse.

This paper will focus on the secular opposition, which is represented by the secular establishment comprising a military friendly network of the main opposition Republican People's Party (RPP),

the former President of the Republic Ahmet Necdet Sezer, top echelons of the judiciary and academia, the old centrist parties, older middle/professional classes, and military-friendly NGOs and think-tanks.¹ It suggests that the secular opposition has effectively reproduced the logic of the February 28 process in the post-2002 period. First, a brief discussion of the significance of the transformation of Islamism in Turkey is in order.

The AKP: An Opportunity for Modernization Beyond Orientalism

Unlike its predecessor, the Welfare Party (WP –1983-1998), the AKP does not equate itself with religion and does not want to instrumentalize the current *il-liberal* institutional structure, originally set up to contain Islam, for imposing a top-down Islamization process.² Moreover, comparatively speaking, none of the neo-Islamist movements in Muslim countries have abandoned the Islamic framework and embraced the logic of liberal democracy to the extent that the Turkish AKP has. Unlike the younger generation of Islamist movements elsewhere, the AKP does not speak from within Islam and does not assign the state with the task of building an Islamic community.³ Islamic modernism upholds the idea that Islam is a total way of life and devises arguments for a fuller understanding of it under modern conditions. It claims the compatibility of an Islamic system with democracy, or possibility of an Islamic system under a democratic regime. The AKP does not endorse an agenda for Islamic modernism.

What the AKP stands for is a very loose redefinition of secularism in a way that accommodates Islamic public visibility in Turkey. In this respect, it is a secular party representing the claims of Islamic identity by employing the language of negative liberties. Its political stance incorporates human rights, democracy and rule of law as universal values⁴ and engages these principles within a liberal frame. What's more, the AKP has shouldered an important Europeanization/democratization process in its first years, making Turkey "an ever greater source of

inspiration for all those liberal minded people in the Islamic world who want more freedom and democracy.”⁵

Against this background, especially by virtue of its Islamist pedigree, the AKP represents a challenge to the Orientalist modernization paradigm which reifies Islam as an inherently political and thus dysfunctional religion for democracy and modernity.⁶ Such reification inevitably leads to an illiberal practice of secularism that controls and contains Islam and that restricts the range of options in a Muslim society to either illiberal Islamism or illiberal modernization/secularism. The domestic and international proponents of Orientalist modernization fear that democratization in a Muslim country would inevitably lead to an anti-western Islamist takeover. They, thus, argue in favour of a trade off between secularism and democracy; and display a willingness to turn a blind eye to the political role of the military on the pretext of protecting secularism.⁷ As such, the proponents of an Orientalist modernization for Turkey seem to be content with a second-rate democracy. The AKP’s challenge to Orientalist modernization, thus, represents an opportunity for a full-fledged democracy in Turkey.

The Logic of the February 28 Process Perpetuated

Originally, the February 28 process was initiated by the military in 1997 to oust the Islamist WP from power, to eradicate Turkey’s growing Islamism, and to redesign the political sphere along Kemalist lines without taking over power directly.⁸ The February 28 process was named so after a National Security Council (NSC) meeting on that date. In the actual meeting, the military handed down a list of measures, which asked the then Islamist WP-led coalition government for example to close the Prayer Leader and Preacher Schools. The WP could not implement such measures and was forced to resign. The following governments were obligated to implement most of the measures at the expense of their popular appeal. Consequently, in the 2002 elections, Turkey’s pro-state centrist parties were packed off to oblivion. The military, however, continued to guide and steer secularist opposition against the AKP in the post-2002 period. The secular opposition to the AKP, therefore, reproduced all three features of the February 28 process, namely a political party-like military, essentialist assumptions about the AKP, and militaristic methods in dealing with Islamism.

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A Political-Party Like Military

In the February 28 process, the military aimed at manipulating and mobilizing the top echelons of the judiciary, the bureaucracy, academia, the media, and the general public against the Islamist WP-led coalition government. This type of intervention marked the beginning of a military transforming itself more into a political party format.⁹ In the post-2002 period, the military continued to act like a political party.¹⁰ It has repeatedly advanced the opinion that the reactionist elements are continuing with their anti-secular activities and that the level of threat has never been so high in the history of the Turkish Republic.¹¹ The military has also undermined and embarrassed the AKP government by obstructing its policy initiatives¹² and by supporting the pro-secular nationalist “Republic Rallies” in the spring of 2007, which were organized to prevent the AKP from nominating its own candidate as the President of the Republic.

The controversial document leaked to the Istanbul Daily *Taraf*, entitled “Information Support Activity Plan,” the content of which was not denied by the office of the Chief of Staff of the Turkish military, suggests that “the central and local administrations [dominated by the AKP] are preparing a legal ground for reactionism and the spread of the Islamic life style.”¹³ The plan aimed at bringing the judiciary, the media and public opinion over to the military’s side on matters the military considered within its realm of interest. Carrying out smear campaigns against “anti-military” artists and authors, creating tensions in the Kurdish South-east, and getting artists to produce work promoting the opinions advanced by the military were among the policy instruments mentioned in the plan. As part of this grand design, the military has classified the dailies, journalists and intellectuals in pro and anti military terms, and encouraged the establishment and development of “friendly” NGOs rallying behind it.¹⁴ Hence, civil society organizations, mass media outlets, professional associations, think tanks, and societal platforms led or counselled by a retired general or a civilian aligned with the military’s political line have mushroomed.¹⁵ These organizations have a democratic status, but their political stance and style are not compatible with a democratic outlook, for they expect a uniform subscription to official ideology, associate political diversity with undermining the unitary state structure and the secular regime, and portray those who call for the military’s compliance with the principles of transparency and accountability as traitors conspiring with foreign forces.

Essentialism and the Emergence of ad hominem Politics

The second feature of the February 28 process was essentialism in conceptualizing, “understanding” and approaching Islamism. This is illustrated in one of the

Reports of the Western Study Group, which was established during the process to provide the military with the necessary intelligence about growing Islamism in Turkey.¹⁶ Submitted in 1998, in the immediate aftermath of the departure of the Islamist WP-led coalition government, the report states that reactionist Islamist elements have been hoping to survive by setting up special places to commemorate Atatürk - called Atatürk corners - in their schools, by forcing headscarfed teachers to remove their headscarfs, by organizing arts and sports activities in order to appear as sincere Muslims loyal to the secular regime. Hence, the report not only suggested that the reactionist elements had been masking their identity, but also implied a belief in the maxim “once an Islamist, always an Islamist.”

The underlying Orientalist paradigm is restated in the verdicts of the Constitutional Court on the closure cases against the Welfare Party (1998) and the AKP (2008).¹⁷ In both cases, the Court practically upheld that *the nature of Islam dictates that secularism in Turkey cannot be practiced as in Western countries*. This is a view also endorsed by centre-right politicians like Mesut Yılmaz, former Prime Minister and leader of the Motherland Party.¹⁸ In this way, Islam becomes a pretext for an authoritarian practice of secularism that denies the possibility and legitimacy of “individual” religiosity and different practices of religion. Therefore, the words of the EU commissioner Olli Rehn did not make sense for the proponents of Turkey’s current practice of secularism, “if one is respecting democratic principles and at the same time attached to religious beliefs, this overlaps with the European culture and heritage.”¹⁹ In fact, any argument contrary to the current practice of secularism is seen, at best, as well-intended but naïve, if not as a sign of conspiracy against Turkey.²⁰

Rejecting the possibility of a change in the political intentions of the Islamists, a certain Orientalist essentialism resulted in condemnation of the AKP for being born with the original sin of Islamism, running counter to the AKP founders’ expectation that the secular establishment would respect non-ostentatious religiosity, which avoids overtness and exaggeration.²¹ Hence, in the eyes of the secular establishment, regardless of the content of its policy proposals, the AKP represented Islamic reactionism by virtue of their headscarf-wearing wives and their Islamist pedigree.

The secular establishment’s essentialist approach gave way to what could best be called *ad hominem*²² politics, which focuses exclusively on who proposes policies rather than their content. *Ad hominem* politics not only renders the AKP increasingly insecure, but also curtails the regenerative capacities of Turkish politics. For example, the promulgation of a new constitution to replace the current one

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promulgated by the 1980 coup administration has been a “staple” reform topic advocated by almost all political persuasions in Turkey. However, since the election of the AKP, the idea of constitutional reform has been rejected by the members of the secular establishment on the grounds that the AKP is concealing an

Islamist agenda. The opposition party RPP went as far as dismissing the idea of a civilian and democratic constitution as a pretext for establishing a religious republic and took the AKP’s intention to promulgate a new constitution as an illustration of its willingness to invalidate the principle of secularism.²³ Advocating the view that the members of the parliament are not elected to draft a new constitution but to implement the existing one, the RPP leader, Baykal, stated that only those who establish a new state or those who stage a coup can legislate a new constitution.²⁴

Focusing on the personal traits of those who can be entrusted with power, *ad hominem* politics averted Turkish public’s attention away from the establishment of liberal democratic mechanisms like accountability and transparency. Distrust for institutions and values of democracy have been a natural companion to *ad hominem* politics. The net result of this situation has been a style of politics without any meaningful utility and an unruly power struggle without any binding norm or concept of “normal and reasonable.” The Constitutional Court’s verdict altering the ground rules of the game in presidential elections is an illustration of this disruptive political struggle. Although the constitution does not define a specific quorum for presidential elections and despite the fact that a quorum of two thirds majority has never been required in previous presidential elections, the Constitutional Court, upon the petition of the RPP, decided that a quorum of two thirds majority (367) was necessary for a round of voting to be valid. The court, thereby, tried to force the AKP to reach a consensus with the secular establishment’s parliamentary extension, the RPP, by redefining the rules of the game in accordance with the conjectural interests of the secular establishment.

That the basic democratic concepts such as the rule of law, rights and liberties, and checks and balances have been twisted by the secular establishment is a fact of life in Turkey. The secular establishment believes that the principle of secularism can only be interpreted by the Constitutional Court. Any attempt at opening a political debate on secularism is, therefore, portrayed as being against the rule of law and separation of powers. Similarly, the Turkish Courts repeatedly ratify the ban on headscarf on the grounds that it threatens the rights and liberties of

those who do not wear it. They portray the political criticism of the ban on wearing headscarf on university campuses as an act against individual liberties as well as secularism. Hence, such statements as “my dream is a Turkey in which veiled and unveiled girls will go to campus hand in hand” was used as an evidence of the AKP’s anti-secular activities in the closure case filed against it just six months after it received 47% of the votes in the general elections. In sum, *ad hominem* politics not only prevented the establishment of new institutions, but also eroded the existing ones and stripped Turkish politics of “normalcy.”

Militarism in Approaching the Conservative Constituency of the AKP

The third feature of the February 28 process was the establishment of a trade off between democracy and stability via quasi-militaristic methods in the fight against Islamism. It is true that the military wanted civil society, the judiciary, academia, the bureaucracy, and politicians to deal with Islamism, but only in a manner defined by the military’s conceptual framework. This involves categorizing a group of citizens because of their system of beliefs as the internal *enemies* of the Turkish Republic and disregarding the principles of inalienable rights and liberties, human dignity, and the rule of law.

The tensions between the civilian governments and the military over the course of the February 28 process were illustrative of the militaristic intentions and methods in dealing with Islamism. After the forced resignation of the Islamist WP-led coalition government, both Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz clashed with the military on the correct method of fighting against Islamism on more than one occasion. That the February 28 process involved not only an extra-political but also an extra-legal struggle against the Islamist threat became obvious when Prime Minister Yilmaz openly stated he could not fight against Islamism through extra-legal ways, if that was what was asked of him.²⁵ Similarly, Ecevit complained that “if, as some circles claim, reactionism is growing even after the closure of the WP and banning of its top political leaders, then there are serious mistakes in the methods used to protect the state and prevent the growth of reactionism. The first among these mistakes is to turn the concern about the reactionist threat into a nightmare and make people think that reactionism cannot be prevented through democracy.”²⁶ The AKP Prime Minister

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Photo: AA, Sinan Örmüş

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Recep Tayyip Erdogan too has drawn attention to similar divergences and ensuing tensions between militaristic and civilian approaches to the issue of reactionism when he emphasized the importance of dealing with reactionism within a democratic framework of law and order.²⁷

The post-2002 militarism in engaging with the AKP is best illustrated in a recently popularized saying: “if the homeland is at stake, all the rest is detail” (*vatan elden gidiyorsa, gerisi teferruattır*). This alarmist saying has been turned into a maxim by some of the previously mentioned quasi-civil society organizations, politicians, academics, students, and university administrators, indicating a willingness to resort to coercion-politics. The application of this approach has been used to bar the headscarf-wearing women from attending the award ceremonies of their husbands, the graduation ceremonies of their children, and in some instances even appearing in courtrooms.²⁸ Certain prominent centre-right political figures lend support to such measures by declaring, for example, that headscarf-wearing students should “go to Saudi Arabia” since Turkey, as a secular country, cannot tolerate their “religious” lifestyles. What’s more, such practices have started to be “legalized” by the Turkish courts. A Council of State Court, which monitors administrative decisions and practices, found no wrong-doing in the

administration's rejection to promote a teacher because of his headscarf-wearing wife.²⁹ The removal of the ban on headscarf in universities and in areas of public service is rejected by the courts' often-repeated argument that it will put the secular lifestyles at risk. This argumentation provides the grounds for what might be called "pre-emptive intolerance" of one sector of society by another, which can be summarised as, "we are afraid that you will not respect our lifestyle, that's why we suppress yours."

Why the Secular Opposition Embraced the Logic of the February 28 Process

Let us address the question why Turkey's secular opposition has so willingly adopted an approach that fails to "understand" a societal movement and address it using democratic means. Part of the answer to this question is that in Turkey, the political role and prestige of the military is taken for granted.³⁰ The following positions taken by Turkey's elite illustrate the dual approach to the rule of law, democracy, and human rights. Turkey's established elite (judiciary, academia, media, and politics), on the one hand, failed to condemn a retired officer who explicitly confessed that he had detonated bombs to intimidate judges and prosecutors in the southeast of Turkey, while on the other hand, they found a link between political criticism of the ban on wearing headscarf on university campuses and the murder of a judge in the Council of the State by an alleged Islamist perpetrator. Similarly, this elite finds a link between the massacres of missionaries in Malatya and a pastor in Trabzon and the AKP government's alleged abuse of religion for political purposes. However, it turns a blind eye to the fact that missionary activities were previously defined as a threat to the Republican regime by the military-dominated NSC in 2001. Moreover, it was not the "Islamist" AKP leader Erdogan, but the "leftist" Democratic Left Party's leader, Bulent Ecevit, who considered that the Christian missionary activities undermined the unity of the nation.

There are, however, other interlinked factors that can help us account for the effective monopolization of the secular opposition by the military. First, centrist political parties in Turkey have effectively subcontracted the issue of secularism/secular regime to the military and have all ultimately endorsed the military-defined concept of secularism.³¹ In fact, not engaging with the issue of secularism in any serious manner has been a precondition for a political party to be counted as centrist.

Secondly, and more importantly, the secular establishment, as the contemporary guardians and proponents of the original cultural modernization,³² reject

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making compromises and sharing power. The secular establishment considers themselves to be the guardians and messengers of a “non-political” common good. Their position of power is based on an anti-political foundation, which has the effect of rendering them disinterested in societal developments with political outcomes.³³ This is because un-

derstanding societal developments has the potential to transform one’s political identity and approach to power. Hence, the secular establishment understands neither the AKP, nor the societal dynamics that produced and brought it to power by an overwhelming majority only 14 months after its establishment. Rather, it reflects the suspicion elites have on the capacities of the ordinary people to make rational decisions. Thus, the elite dismissed the electoral results as “irrational.”³⁴ Similarly, in the eyes of the many members of the establishment, the AKP is not the outcome but the cause of certain societal issues such as the very existence of female students wearing headscarfs. The same logic applies to other key issues like the Kurdish issue, which is seen as not the cause, but the effect of PKK terrorism.

Revitalization of the Constitutive Capacities of Politics?

The AKP has been mired in *ad hominem* politics and preoccupied by resisting the militarist opposition in order to survive politically. The AKP’s resistance to the militarist methods bolstered the AKP’s image as a democratic and democratizing force. In fact, judging by the results of the 2007 elections, in which the AKP received the overwhelming majority of votes, it could be suggested that the secularist opposition misunderstood the political playing field. The famous Ergenekon investigation, which started a few months before the 2007 elections and gained momentum in its aftermath, basically declared the logic of the February 28 process illegal and submitted this logic to the rule of law for the first time in Turkish political history. In this respect, the investigation may indicate that the AKP is overcoming its own insecurity. Coupled with the AKP’s electoral victory, the Ergenekon investigation also provided an opportunity for revitalizing the constitutive and regenerative capacities of politics by taking initiatives in many other problematic areas, such as the Kurdish issue, constitutional reform, and minority rights.

However, the establishment continued their attempt to render the AKP impotent, insecure, and fearful. If the closure case filed against the AKP just six

months after the elections is one illustration, the other is a series of High Court decisions that limit the ability of the AKP to revitalize the constitutive capacities of politics. For example, the Constitutional Court has *de facto* abolished the AKP-dominated Parliament's right to make and amend the constitution by annulling a constitutional amendment. Moreover, a pattern emerging from the High Court decisions practically compels the AKP to prevent the opposition party, RPP, from filing cases against the government's policy initiatives. In other words, if it is to escape from judicial setbacks, the AKP has to seek the blessing of a partisan opposition. There are also at least two plans that indicate the radicalization of some groups within the military after the AKP's survival in the closure case and the 2007 elections. The Action Plan for the Struggle against Islamic Reactionism Plan (*İrtica ile Mücadele Eylem Planı*) and the Cage (*Kafes*) Plan, both publicized by the Istanbul daily *Taraf*, reveal the willingness and intention of junta groups to use political violence against minorities and to fabricate a violent Islamic movement in Turkey to destabilize, and eventually topple the AKP government. The parliamentary and non-parliamentary secular opposition dismisses such plans as conspiracies of the AKP government, disapproves, obstructs, and undermines their investigations, and thus, implicitly fails to reject categorically the military interventions into the political sphere.

There is, thus, an anti-political opposition among Turkey's secular elite that prefers administration to politics, resorts to militarism in dealing with societal problems and adversaries, and rejects the idea that other and better forms of societal existence are possible through human creativity. This elite seeks to reproduce the traditionalist conceptualization of time and history as a degeneration of a past golden age, defined as the single party rule in the early Republican era. The AKP's intention to produce 'political' solutions to Turkey's age old problems like the Kurdish and Alevi issues are brave and valuable precisely because of this challenging political context more than because of the content of its policy proposals.

Since the announcement of the AKP's "Kurdish Initiative" in July 2009, the RPP charged the AKP with separatism, cowing to the goals of the terrorist PKK, violating the Constitution, causing fratricide and/or ethnic polarization between Kurds and Turks, being an agent of foreign states, and even betraying the country

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(*hiyanet*).³⁵ It is interesting to note that the RPP leaders acknowledged that neither the content nor the extent of the AKP's Kurdish initiative is clear. The RPP staunchly defended the status quo on the Kurdish issue either out of its Kemalist/statist fear that even the tiniest "concession" towards Kurdish identity would eventually lead to separation or out of its suspicion that the AKP is not a trustworthy partner. Either way, the RPP's growing feeling of insecurity is apparent as well as their impression that they will lose political control, and thus, may not be able to influence politics if it engages in the political process with the AKP. Hence, the RPP has vacated the political arena and given itself to the embrace of the conservative secular establishment by indefinitely deferring from taking up the pressing Kurdish issue. In doing so, it does not risk losing a Kurdish constituency, because the RPP has lost such a constituency as a result of its increasingly ultra-nationalist discourse in the course of the last eight years. The RPP's conservative stance on the AKP government's "Alevi opening," however, can be explained by its concern to maintain one of its major electoral bases. Without altering or questioning the Sunni ideology of the state, the RPP extended protection and favours to Alevi in exchange for their electoral support and loyalty. A possible alteration of the Sunni ideology of the state, however, could result in a relative autonomy for the Alevi community and in the eventual dissolution of the RPP's patronage over Alevi.

Conclusion

Turkey under the AKP governments has represented an opportunity to go beyond the Orientalist modernization framework and produce "value" by countering the culturalist arguments that foreclose the possibilities of democratization in modernizing Muslim countries. The secular opposition, however, has defended the Orientalist modernization by reproducing the logic of the February 28 process that holds "once an Islamist, always an Islamist." This essentialist argument provides the ground to deny the AKP's democratic legitimacy as the constitutionally elected government of the country. It has also resulted in *ad hominem* politics, which in turn, caused a distrust for the institutions and values of democracy, and in a willingness to bend the rules of the game in accordance with the conjectural interests of the establishment, and thus, in an unruly power struggle without any binding norm, or concept of normalcy. Also, a certain readiness to resort to militarist means in the struggle against the AKP was always displayed. Consequently, the AKP was immobilized and forced to a struggle to survive, both as a political party and as the elected government of the country. It is this power struggle that has defined the parameters of Turkish politics ever since the lull in the EU accession process in 2005. This very struggle epitomized the democratization debate

and democratization process in Turkey. In this context of an impoverished democratization debate, the AKP became the “democrat” by default. Still, the fact that the AKP attempted to generate political solutions to Turkey’s age-old problems is positive. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether and to what extent the AKP can accomplish the task of revitalizing the constitutive capacities of politics in Turkey.

Endnotes

1. A more comprehensive version of this article with a critical assessment of the AKP’s politics will be published in Marlies Cassier and Joost Jongerden (eds.), *Nationalisms and Political Islam in Turkey* (London: Routledge, forthcoming in 2010). The author is grateful to Ms. Elaine Populias, the Director of Kokkalis Program at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, for the logistical support she provided during his research in Boston on a TUBITAK BIDEB-2219 grant.

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4. Burhanettin Duran, “The Justice and Development Party’s ‘New Politics’: Steering Toward Conservative Democracy, a Revised Islamic Agenda or Management of New Crises?,” in Umit Cizre (ed.) *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 87.

5. British Foreign Secretary David Miliband cited in *Milliyet*, May 24, 2008. Similar comments can be found in some Arab dailies as well, see for example, Abdurrahman Errasid “AKP Arap İslamcilarından Çok Daha Uygur,” *Sark ul-Asvat* (London daily), September 3, 2007, translated and reprinted in *Radikal*, September 6, 2007.

6. Menderes Çınar, “From Shadow-Boxing to Critical Understanding: Some Theoretical Notes on Islamism as a ‘Political Question,’” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 3, 1 (Summer, 2002), pp. 35-57.

7. Exemplary statements of Orientalism can be found in the writings of Bernard Lewis and Basam Tibi. For an Orientalism-informed-analysis of recent Turkish politics see, David Capezza, “Turkey’s Military is a Catalyst for Reform,” *Middle East Quarterly*, 16, 3 (Summer, 2009), pp. 13-23. See also the speech delivered at the Hudson Institute by Roberto de Mattei of Cassino University, Italy, cited in Elçin Poyrazlar, “Stratejisi İslamlastırmak,” *Cumhuriyet* (Istanbul daily), October 5, 2007.

8. Umit Cizre, and Menderes Çınar, “Turkey 2002: Kemalism, Islamism and Politics in the Light of the February 28 Process,” *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 102, 2/3 (Spring/Summer, 2003), pp. 309-332.

9. Umit Cizre, "Politics and the Military in Turkey into the 21st Century," European University Institute Working Papers, RSC 2000/24 (2000).

10. Umit Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military: Recreating the Past After Reforming It," in Idem (ed), *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party* (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 132-171.

11. For an exemplary statement by the Chief of Staff General Yaşar Büyükanıt see "İrticai Faaliyet Suruyor," *Milliyet*, April 5, 2008.

12. For example, the Chief of the Staff publicly diverged from the government's policy line, *inter alia*, on Cyprus issue. See, Fikret Bila, "Orgeneral Buyukanıt: Adımlar Eszamanlı Atılmalı," *Milliyet*, January 7, 2007. Similarly, the military stalled Prime Minister Erdogan's meeting with the Kurdish leaders of Northern Iraq when the Chief of Staff General Buyukanıt declared that he would not talk to them because they support the PKK, see "Genelkurmay'dan Kurumsal Tepki," *Radikal*, March 2, 2007.

13. "TSK'nin Acil Eylem Planı," *Taraf* (Istanbul daily), June 20, 2008.

14. *Nokta*, 5-11 April 2007; "Askerin Medya Notları," *Radikal*, March 8, 2007.

15. "Al Sana 'Sivil' Toplum," *Radikal*, February 17, 2007; "Emekli Pasaların Kurtlarla Dansı," *Radikal*, March 18, 2007.

16. "İrtica Kendini Gizledi," *Yeni Yüzyıl* (Istanbul daily), July 22, 1998.

17. The verdicts of the Court can be found at <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/eskisite/KARARLAR/SPK/K1998/K1998-01.htm> and <http://www.anayasa.gov.tr/eskisite/KARARLAR/SPK/K2008/K-2008-2SPK.htm>

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19. "Demokrasi ve Laikligin Garantisi AB'dir," *Radikal*, September 19, 2007.

20. "AKP'nin Yabancı Oyuncusu Sahaya İndi," *Radikal*, May 6, 2008.

21. Ahmet Tasgetiren, "Ankara'da Yenilikçiler," *Yeni Safak* (Istanbul daily), July 19, 2001.

22. Jon R. Stone's *Latin for Illiterati* (New York: Routledge, 1996) defines *ad hominem* as "an argument which appeals to personal prejudice and emotions rather than reason."

23. "Baykal: Karsilikli Anlasma Serefsizlikse," *Radikal*, January 9, 2008; "Baykal'dan Din Devleti Resti," *Hurriyet* (Istanbul daily), December 13, 2007.

24. "Baykal: Yeni Bir Anayasa İçin İdami Goze Almak Gerekir," *Radikal*, February 7, 2008.

25. "Yılmaz'dan Askere Sinir," *Radikal*, July 11, 1998.

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32. Assuming that "the reasons behind the Western advancement could be located precisely in the Western practices," the Turkish modernization aimed at changing the "regressive" culture

of society, and more specifically targeted religion as the most important determinant of culture. See, Bobby Sayyid, "Sign O'Times: Kaffirs and Infidels Fighting the Ninth Crusade," in *Making of Political Identities* ed., Ernesto Laclau (London: Verso, 1994), p. 269; and Şerif Mardin, "Ideology and Religion in the Turkish Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2, (1971), pp. 197-211.

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34. Onur Öymen, Deputy Chair of the RPP, claimed that there must be non-rational causes of the increased electoral share of the governing AKP in 2007 elections. *Zaman*, July 23, 2007.

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Public Perception of the Kurdish Question in Turkey

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