Ideologies in Crisis

The Secular-Pious Cleavage and the Development of Political Party Polarization in Turkish Politics

from 1995 until 2007

photo: Bosporus, Istanbul, 2007 Ahmet Polat

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Introduction

As human beings, we often tend to insulate ourselves around like-minded people and thereby get caught in separatist tendencies. We search for people who make us feel understood, comfortable and content and who let us forget the challenges that exist out there in the big world. In demarcation to the other, we can define ourselves and become comfortable with who we are. At the same time however, we start separating. Instead of embracing and learning from each other we tend to shy away from ideas and a reality that could be confrontational to our own way of life. We place people with different ideas and interests in a different league, whose existence and reality we aim to avoid. Most of us simply do not like embracing the uncomfortable. Sometimes we also simply lose equal grounds for conversation, which makes us continue breaking apart. All this can take place on a very small scale, happening within families, between friends, or in small communities. But it can also be watched on the broader scale; in regions, counties, states and between states. So, what does it imply for a community, what does it mean to a state, when its members or citizens separate and divide on ideas and interests and as a consequence form sub-groups, which threaten to clash?

Motivated and inspired by those questions, I developed a descriptive research project, which revolves around the phenomenon of societal polarization and the clash of two distinct realities.

This topic has great contemporary relevance. About two decades ago, we entered a new era of global interdependence, whereby great migration flows generated a cultural washing machine. Since then, every single one of us finds himself confronted with the increasing existence of numerous sub-cultures within very small areas. In recent years, questions around how to deal with the threats and challenges of global migration, multi-cultural societies and polarization can be frequently found at the center of political and public debate.

The paper at hand is designed to demonstrate how societal beliefs interact with the behavior of political parties and how such an interaction relates to the phenomenon of polarization within a given society. It displays the problems of polarization to the stability of a political regime and the unity of a country at large and in sequel examines the applicability of theoretical solutions to the problem by means of the selected case of Turkey.

The religious issue dimension divides Turkish political parties into religious Islamic parties and secular parties and is therefore a salient differentiator at the national level. The opposing relationship between pious and secular Turks has a long tradition in Turkish society and is one of the most critical issues, which frequently dominates domestic politics and steers political actions. Polarization between secular versus pious Turks means in fact the polarization between "defenders of the Kemalist ideology, which is grounded in two core principles - secularism (state-control over religion) and nationalism (ethno-cultural homogeneity and territorial unity)" (Patton, 2007, p. 341) and those who have been most at odds with Kemalists over the representation of an Islamic identity. The pious Islamic group in Turkey has made religion and faith the core value of their worldview, lives and politics, so that faith is prioritized in all spheres of life. The secular forces in Turkey on the contrary define themselves for and foremost as laïcist Kemalists who follow the traditions and principles of the founding father of the secular Turkish Republic. Originally, the Turkish Republic was established on six arrows constituting the fundamental principles of the regime. Those were "republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism and revolutionism or reformism" (Altunisisk & Tür, 2005, p.21).

In the context of globalization and the transformation of the international environment, Turkish society faced once again a clash between tradition and modernity and in particular a clash between secularism and religion. This suggests Turkey as an interesting case for which to examine the applicability of theoretical propositions, dealing with the relationship between a state, its society and polarization.

My study concentrates on the level of polarization between the pious Welfare Party (RP) and respectively its successor, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), versus the secular Republican People's Party (CHP). Hereby my data analysis revolves around the question to what extent the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties changed between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics.

Many political scientists have focused on social cleavages and polarization. Two of the most prominent ones are Lipset&Rokkan (1967), who assume that in each society there exist natural

divisions or cleavages. Cleavages are built upon competing ideologies, whereby those ideologies stem from cultural norms, values and beliefs, which traditionally change slowly over time. Once that two opposing camps have developed within a given society, the potential for conflict is more or less impossible to elude. The basis for polarization – as an extreme form of social cleavages - lies in competing ideologies, which literally form two poles apart. The conflict stays below the surface most of the time and only periodically appears and manifests itself in the public sphere. That is when polarization is high and reaches a peak.

Major social conflicts are not an independent phenomenon but translate into party systems of democratic countries. According to constructivism, it is those principle cleavages that generate parties, which in turn reflect the cleavages but also shape them by linking different issue dimensions. Parties are conceptualized as "alliances in conflicts over policies and value commitments within the larger body politics" (Klingemann, Hofferbert & Budge, 1994, p.5). In their efforts to gain support, party leaders usually appeal to language, class, ethnic, or religious divisions and make citizens more aware of these differences. Like that they manifest or freeze social cleavages but at the same time increase democratic support in a given country. The latter is mainly achieved because political parties offer social groups to not only exert influence on government but instead become government themselves. Hence, through political parties, groups can articulate their interests, compete in elections for government and if successful, take control of government instead of only keeping a foot in the door of government. Political parties link state and society by letting society participate in the decision-making process (Newton & Van Deth, 2006, p.162).

If cleavages occur naturally as a result of our human nature, we do not have to think about how to prevent their formation but can focus on finding means to control them instead. This is necessary for two reasons. First of all, social cleavages can constitute a serious menace to the unity of a country, when polarized groups see each other as a threat to their own power and freedom. Secondly, deep polarization renders cooperation impossible so that it should also be considered a major challenge to democracy" (Turam, 2008, p. 492).

The political scientist Arend Lijphart (1999) argues that the open manifestation of conflict can be prevented by the application of the non-concentration of power principle. He assumes that polarized groups feel no need to start a revolt if they are all provided with power in a multi-party system. This requires a state that is responsive to divisions in society. My study introduces three political constructs – corporatism, federalism and consociationalism - as a way to balance power and further studies the importance of party organization as a means to prevent violent clashes between competing social groups. We will see that within party organization, the three factors: power resources, a party's relationship to state and society and finally, a party's ability to move largely define the likelihood of strong polarization.

In subsequent chapters, the reader is introduced to the secular-pious conflict in Turkish society and how it is reflected in domestic party politics. We will learn that theoretical propositions might grasp and understand the roots of the problem and perfectly describe the development and origins of social conflicts. However, my research findings will also reveal that the solutions, which theory has to offer, turn out to lack universal applicability to all deeply heterogeneous societies. Evidence is provided that the nature of the Turkish Republic does not allow for power balance. All three offered political constructs would at least infringe one fundamental principle of Turkey's Kemalist state ideology. This means that theoretical solutions to the problem of polarization remain theoretical in the case of Turkey, since their application would require Turkey's transition away from Kemalism or at least a reformulation of Kemalism.

My research findings further demonstrate the logical consequence that strong polarization for the pious-secular political party cleavage in Turkish society reappeared regularly between 1995 and 2007, so that I have to wonder about the prospect of power sharing and polarization in the Turkish context, given the present level of power distribution and the Turkish nature of state organization.

Research Design and Measurement

My descriptive research study starts with the observation that in recent years growing political polarization, which imposes a threat to the stability of the democratic system and society at large, could be noticed in Turkey.

Wondering about the meaning and political relevance of polarization, I decided to design a descriptive research project, which is guided by my interest in the relationship between state and society as to be examined in the interaction between societal beliefs, political parties and polarization. Further, I intend to study and observe polarization and the applicability of theoretical solutions in the real world and decided to do so for Turkey.

There are various potentially opposing relationships in Turkey and growing polarization could be watched between many social groups, like state versus society, Kurds versus Turks, Sunni Muslims versus Alevi Muslims but also secular versus pious Turks (Borges de Castro, 2009). Due to the limited length of my thesis and the complexity of the topic, my research is narrowed down to only one type of polarization; polarization between secular and pious Turks. In Turkey the religious issue dimension is a salient differentiator at the national level, dividing political parties into religious Islamist and secular parties. The opposing relationship between pious and secular Turks has a long tradition in Turkish politics and is one of the most critical issues that frequently dominates domestic politics and steers political actions.

A chapter on theory, which follows this methodology chapter provides for some general theoretical background necessary to study polarization between pious and secular circles in Turkish society. Within that chapter, my single variable of polarization is carefully conceptualized and its meaning clearly defined. Major aspects that are tackled and discussed, hereby revolve around the following questions: (1) What does polarization mean/How we can understand polarization?; (2) How does polarization evolve and develop over time?; (3) How does polarization interact with state and society and what have political parties got to do with it?; (4) Which solution does theory offer to the problems of polarization in order to ensure democratic stability and the unity of a country? (5) How can party organization or respectively the institutional set-up of parties influence and shape the level of polarization?

In my subsequent data analysis, the selected case of pious-secular polarization in Turkey is studied and observed in detail. To simplify such an examination I have first operationalized polarization and developed, on the basis of my own considerations, a general table of attributes, displaying the guiding imperatives behind group and ideology formation. The table clarifies what polarization is about and introduces the following four issue dimensions: reference point, ideas, idea-based interests and institutions. Like that, my table serves as a starting point for my study of social cleavages and polarization. It helps me to organize my data analysis and to proceed systematically by telling me what to look at when studying competing camps in a society. With this table I can, at a later stage, also reveal ideological differences between pious and secular groups in Turkish society and eventually measure power distribution by applying this general table to the situations in Turkey at different points in time. Those specific findings in turn, eventually indicate the chances for a new peak of polarization. Low power distribution increases the likelihood for strong polarization and the open manifestation of conflict in the public sphere.

Guiding Imperatives behind Group and Ideology Formation

Reference Point	Where do I derive my ideas and idea-based interests from?
Ideas	*Process of Identity formation*; how do I define myself? *Perception/understanding of identity*: - Who am I? and What am I there to do? - On which ideas do I base my identity? - What attributes/ideas do we share? What makes us us and the others the others?
Idea-based Interests	What do I want? What role do I claim for myself? How do I want a state to be organized? → Political Culture - System (How are citizens oriented towards the political system?) - Process (What is expected of the political process?) - Policy (What is the appropriate role of government?)

Institutions (framework within which individuals behave, constrain what individuals do but also what they think is possible to do)	- Constitutional arrangements and other collections of inter-related rules and routines - Parties which aggregate and articulate interests

Lipset&Rokkan (1967) assume a strong interdependence between political parties and society, thereby considering political parties as institutions, which on the one hand reflect and on the other hand influence the shape of societal beliefs. I emanate from that that the level of polarization between two antagonistic groups in society is mirrored by the relationship between their respective political parties. Taking that further, it makes sense to study polarization between domestic pious and secular political parties in order to examine the general level of pious-secular polarization in Turkish society. I developed a guiding research question for my data analysis: *To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?*

To be clearer, this research conducts a trend study, which elaborates on the development of polarization between the secular Republican People's Party (CHP) and the Islamist Welfare Party (RP) and respectively between the Republican People's Party and the pious Justice and Development Party (AKP) at different points in time and throughout my defined time span.

The year 1995 is chosen as a starting point for my analysis because after decades of system-friendly governments in Turkey, the 1995 Parliamentary elections dismantled the increasing popularity for the Islamic, anti-system Welfare Party. In 1996 the RP-leader Erbakan became the new Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic and a True Path Party-RP coalition government was formed. Consequently, 1995 constituted an important year for the development of the pious-secular cleavage in Turkish society. The results of the polls allowed for the execution of strongly Islamic policies in Turkey so that I decided to start with observations in that specific year.

The choice to only study polarization between pious and secular circles in Turkish society until 2007 is motivated by two reasons. In 2002, the moderate Islamic AK Party became the first single-party government in Turkish politics for a decade and their first term in office ended in 2007. It was especially during that first term that a huge reform process took place and that many almost revolutionary changes to the constitutional and institutional set-up of the Turkish political system have been undertaken. The second explanation for my choice that 2007 will be the last year to consider in my study is simply because developments of political party polarization in more recent years are not completely covered in books and academic articles yet. In contrast to that, the AKP's first term in office has already undergone a critical and detailed evaluation and reflection.

Throughout the fourth chapter, focus rests upon what the pious-secular conflict in Turkish society looks like and how it is reflected in party politics. I intend to find out about the roots of the conflict and about the shape and level of polarization between the secular CHP and its major Islamic opposition parties at different points in time and respectively over time. Next to that, the Data Analysis Chapter examines whether the solutions, theory offers to the problem of polarization, can be realized in Turkey and what political consequences the answer to that question has for the future of polarization and political stability in the Turkish Republic at large.

For my analysis of pious-secular party polarization I developed the following four sub-questions: (1) What do we mean by polarization between secular and pious groups in Turkey?; (2) How is the secular-pious cleavages reflected in Turkish party politics?; (3) How did polarization between the parties concerned develop over time?; and finally (4) What are the prospects of power sharing in the Turkish context given the Kemalist state ideology, the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic and the institutional set-up of political parties?

The Data Analysis Chapter is split up into two parts, whereby the second part consists of two sections. In the first part, an introduction to the evolution of the religious conflict in Europe and Turkey precedes my examination of the general ideological distance between pious and secular Turks. It is demonstrated how the conflict seeps into the political system of the country and in particular how it is reflected in Turkish party politics. This analysis allows me to come up with some first conclusions about the goodness of fit of theoretical solutions and the non-concentration of power principle in the case of Turkey.

At the end of part one, the table of guiding imperatives behind group and ideology formation is applied to my conflict of interest in Turkish society. The adapted table visualizes the ideological

distance between the two study groups by assigning clear attributes to each side of the table. This helps me at a later stage to detect polarization when it is there. It enables me to observe, which elements are present in Turkey at different points in time, so that I can draw conclusions about the distribution of power between pious and secular circles and hence the level of polarization between both camps or respectively between their political parties in different years. This is based on the assumption that there is a positive relationship between the distribution of power and the strength of polarization.

In addition, another table is introduced at the end of the first part of Chapter 4. It displays that there is a variety of ideas within the Islamic-secular issue dimension about how a state shall be organized and further gives a good overview on the specific points of debates. The second table divides the Secular-Islamic issue dimension into five categories, starting with Level -2, representing extremely secularist viewpoints, proceeding with Level -1, 0, Level 1 and finally ending with Level 2, which eventually represents extremely Islamic attitudes. In the course of my data analysis the table allows me to measure the strength of polarization at different points in time by assigning political parties to a certain category depending on their political agenda and the course of action they take. With the second table I am able to, in the second part of my data analysis, compare the ideological distance between pious and secular parties in different years and eventually come up with conclusions about the development and extent of change in polarization over the time period lasting from 1995 until 2007.

The first part of Chapter 4 allows me to understand the general ideas and roots of the conflict and to come up with some preliminary conclusions concerning the goodness of fit of theoretical propositions. That in turn, enables me to say something about the common potential for polarization in Turkish society in general but does not allow for any conclusions on the precise shape and development of polarization in the past. As a result, a second part must follow, which is much more specific and serves to answer my research question about how polarized Turkish society and in particular pious versus secular political parties were between 1995 and 2007.

According to theory, a peak in polarization is most likely when power is distributed unevenly between two antagonistic segments in society. Polarization is hence strong when one actor holds a dominant and powerful position in politics while the other weaker camps feels pushed back into the corner. Taking that assumption further, it seems crucial to study the distribution of power and the level of power sharing between two antagonistic political parties in order to say something about the strength of polarization and the extent of change between 1995 and 2007. This is what the second part of the Data Analysis Chapter aims at. It is divided into two sections, whereby each section is selected around a big and significant occurrence/development within that time period.

My first section covers the years 1995-2001. Polarization between pious and secular Turks started to increase in 1995 and resulted in a first peak in 1997 with the soft military coup, which led to the ban of the Islamic Welfare Party. After the indirect militarist intervention and the RP's closure, the moderate and conciliating Justice and Development Party was founded so that polarization severely declined around the turn of the millennium.

From 2002 onwards, parallel to the reformist momentum with its many in constitutional, legal and institutional changes, secular-pious polarization slowly increased again. From 2004 on, the political discourse started to grow even more, with the AKP's attempts to pursue a more Islamic agenda. As a result, the second part of my analysis covers the years 2002-2007, thereby focusing on the consequences and impacts of AKP governance on the growing level of political party polarization in Turkish society.

At the end of each section, the previously introduced tables are filled in for the specific situation of pious-secular polarization in 1997, 2001 and 2007 in order to summarize and highlight the most important findings and conclusions of my data analysis. I have chosen in particular those three years to measure, visualize and compare power distribution and the level of ideological distance because 1997, 2001 and 2007 displayed the most meaningful and extreme values/scores for polarization within my selected time span.

A fifth chapter sums up the most important theoretical propositions and findings of my research.

Finally, Chapter 6 concludes this study with the bottom line and a list of political implication, which can be drawn from all my research findings. Furthermore it entails a short outlook on possible future developments regarding the strength of polarization between pious and secular groups and what that

would mean for Turkey and the stability of its democratic regime at large. Eventually, the qualitative and descriptive nature of this study undergoes a critical reflection and I come up with suggestions for further scientific research.

Theory

This research study examines and describes the interaction of societal beliefs and political party behavior, thereby drawing special attention to the phenomenon of polarization, which imposes a threat to the stability of a democratic system and society at large when democratic institutions are unable to control it. Before dealing with the phenomenon of polarization between pious and secular political parties in the Turkish Republic and the strength of polarization in the years from 1995 until 2007, a clear and detailed conceptualization of polarization is provided in this theoretical part of my paper. The most important aspect of the section to come is its elaboration on the relationship between polarization, society and political parties. In a first step, a closer look is taken at society, social cleavages and polarization; followed by an analysis of the function and meaning of political parties. Finally, the first two sections are linked and the relationship between societal beliefs, polarization and parties examined.

III.I Social Cleavages and Polarization

The two political scientists Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan (1967) argue that there are mainly two types of cleavages; territorial and functional ones. Territorial cleavages revolve around the definition of a nation, so for instance clashing ideas about what the national moral should be, or the subject versus dominant culture cleavage. Functional cleavages on the contrary, are usually based on interests and often concern the industrial and economic sphere. One can think of workers versus employer or primary versus secondary economy as striking examples for functional cleavages.

Individuals are multifaceted and characterized by a repertoire of attributes, such as skin color, language, religion, class, gender and many more. Those attributes make individuals eligible for membership in certain social groups or identity categories. Hereby, it is the choice of the social actors over time whether "identity categories or social groups form around all workers, just black workers just male workers or just black male workers who are tall and who happen to be political scientists" (Roberts Clark, Golder, and Nadenickek Golder, 2009, p.565). This implies that attributes are considered as given, whereas identity categories are socially constructed. Usually, an individual places himself in a social group or is assigned to a social group by others on the basis of possessing the same attributes. This requires a shared understanding about how group membership corresponds to the possession of certain attributes. Once groups are formed, they tend to develop cultural norms that typically change slowly and hence reflect stable values (Almond, Bingham Powell Jr., Dalton & Strom, 2010, p.49). The distribution and correlation of attributes within a population strongly influences the characteristics of social cleavages within a nation. In countries where attributes tend to be uncorrelated and where the population is evenly distributed, social cleavages are usually cross-cutting in nature. An example for cross-cutting cleavages would be for instance a country with English-speaking northerners, French-speaking northerners, English-speaking southerners and French-speaking southerners, so that the whole population at least shares one attribute: either the regional one or that of a common language. Cross-cutting cleavages are hence laid across one another whereby their capacity to divide is reduced. However, it is not always the case that the population is evenly distributed within a country. In fact, it might also happen that there are only French-speaking northerners and English-speaking southerners. If that is the case, so if attributes are correlated within a country, one speaks of reinforcing cleavages, meaning that cleavages are laid one on top of the other, so that they become more potent. This might cause pillarization and the appearance of sub-cultures (Roberts Clark et al., 2009, p.567).

In my study I make use of the term polarization next to the concept of social cleavages. In fact, those terms are strongly correlated and polarization is only a special form of reinforcing cleavages. One speaks of a polarized society if a population of individuals "is grouped into significantly-sized ´clusters` in such a way that each cluster is very ´similar` in terms of the attributes of its members, but different clusters have members with very ´dissimilar` attributes" (Esteban & Ray, 1994, p.820). Polarization means hence nothing else than the existence of strong intra-group homogeneity and

substantial inter-group heterogeneity and hints at the presence of a highly polarized spectrum of political opinion. In fact, "its lateral poles are literally two poles apart, and the distance between them covers a maximum spread of opinion" (Sartori, 1976, 135). Theory suggests that three basic features must be fulfilled before one can speak of polarization. Firstly, each group must show a high degree of internal homogeneity. Secondly, across groups there must be a high degree of heterogeneity and finally, the third basic feature requires that there are only a small number of significantly sized groups since groups of insignificant size hardly carry weight (Esteban et al., 1994, p.820).

According to Esteban and Ray (1994), the concept of polarization is closely linked to the generations of different tensions but also to the possibilities of revolt and articulated rebellion. When ideological distance replaces ideological proximity and characterizes the relationship between two camps, plus if one groups feels not to be considered in the democratic decision-making process but dominated by the other group, it can have the effect of democratic instability. Polarization is hence not a closed and independent phenomenon but has broader policy implications and sometimes leads to the collapse of the political regime or causes that a whole nation falls apart.

III.II Party Politics

Political scientists over time developed a variance of theories that aim to conceptualize cleavages and explain how major social conflicts translate into party systems of democratic countries. Literature, which addresses the linkage of state and society through political parties, encapsulates three main approaches: the primordial view, which understands parties as the mere reflections of pre-existing and underlying cleavages or aggregate preferences; the instrumentalist view, which suggests that parties actively construct social cleavages and thirdly, the constructivist approach, which combines elements of the first two areas and suggests that social movements can be formative of political parties and vice versa.

One of the most recognized theories about the appearance of social cleavages and their relationship with political parties stems from Lipset&Rokkan (1967). Their theoretical perspective, also called primordial view, assumes that there exist natural divisions in each society and that those principle cleavages generate parties, which in turn reflect those cleavages. Social cleavages and politics interact, because people's ideas, beliefs and ideologies concern the political culture of a country. Each subculture has its own orientation towards a nation's political system, because citizens may have sharply different points of views on some or all political matters, such as the boundaries of a nation, the nature of the regime, or the correct ideology. A common sense of identity can bind people together and legitimate the political system. Antagonistic senses of identity in turn may disunite the country and threaten the legitimacy and hence the stability of a political system as a whole. Instable political regimes are often found in countries where citizens are, due to differences in conditions, histories or identities, sharply divided on issues concerning the legitimacy of the regime and solutions to major problems (Almond et al., 2010, p.44).

Individuals tend to form around social cleavages and at the same time develop social demands for representation. In the 18th century, political parties developed. They outgrew factions in the sense that they were not merely based on interests or affects but also, and principally, on common principle. Lipset&Rokkan (1994) conceptualize parties as "alliances in conflicts over policies and value commitments within the larger body politics" (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.5) and stress in their book *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* that the revolution of party systems is based on what they call the 'conflict-integration-dialectic'. Through this dialectic, parties serve the expression but also the negotiation of conflict, a process that takes place within the framework of national political competition (Secor, 2001, p.541).

Some political scientists criticize that the dominant primordial approach regards parties only as the mere reflections of pre-existing and underlying cleavages or aggregate preferences. They stress that such a view underestimates the autonomous role of parties in explaining various preferences, social divisions but also transformations of a given community. Critics find that the approach lacks some "theoretical space for party elites to shape and organize the cleavages, ideologies and diverse constituent demands attributed to actors on the ground" (De Leon, Desai & Tugal, 2009, 196).

On the basis of such criticism, a new theoretical approach evolved; the instrumentalist approach. It suggests that parties do not reflect social cleavages but in fact actively construct them, so that parties

are effectively collapsed into different social movements. As a result, instrumentalist supporters view parties as a central force in the constitution of the social due to the fact that they integrate disparate identities and interests into somewhat coherent sociopolitical blocs and thereby assign a specific logic to the reproduction of any social formation. The key element of the instrumentalist argumentation is that cleavages do not by nature carry a political valence but that parties can deploy such a political valence in order to aggregate majorities. (De Leon et al., 2009, p.195) Ethnicity or the existence of social divisions must hence be seen as fluid and is often unimportant until political actors start stressing ethnic differences.

A third approach called constructivist approach or framing theory, combines elements of the first two perspectives and claims that political parties "can be formative of movements and vice versa" (De Leon et al., 2009, p.198). Parties are able to bring together the various natural constituents of the social, which otherwise always threaten to come apart. Parties act in three different arenas; the cultural, the parliamentary and the non-parliamentary arena. In all those arenas it is parties, which hold religious, ethnic and class formations together and it is parties, which refashion formations as constitutive elements of hegemony. Parties are incapable of creating cleavages from scratch. Instead, cleavages occur naturally. However, parties can link those cleavages to the state, which claims to represent them, by forming political groups that articulate the interests of social formations (De Leon et al., 2009, 199). In the original sense, a political party is responsible to the people and its electorates. At some point however, parties are not only held together anymore by its general principles but also by the electoral advantage of becoming more stable and eventually stabilized in the democratic system. This leads from a responsible government to a responsive democratic government, which has to yield to demands. Eventually protoparties, which were originally internal divisions of the inner and upper circle, start to become parties in the sense of society, meaning divisions of the country at large. In their efforts to gain support, party leaders usually appeal to language, class, ethnic, or religions divisions and make citizens more aware of these differences. Like that they manifest or freeze social cleavages but at the same time increase democratic support in a given country. This is mainly because political parties offer social groups to not only exert influence on government but instead become government themselves. Hence, through political parties, groups can articulate their interests, compete in elections for government and if successful, take control of government instead of only keeping a foot in the door of government (Newton et al., 2006, 162). Political parties can link state and society by letting society participate in politics and state affairs (De Leon et al., 2009, 199).
From all three approaches, the constructivist one seems to be most feasible as it is the only theoretical approach, which acknowledges a reciprocal relationship between social cleavages and political parties. As a result, only constructivist assumptions are considered and used as the basis for my data analysis in the further course of my research.

As explained earlier, attributes are the drivers behind the formation of social cleavages. The relationship between attributes is normally the product of deep-seated historical processes, which explains why some party systems are divided primarily along class lines while others are mainly divided among ethnic or religious lines. What is typical for almost all cleavages or types of boundaries is that in different periods and different places their salience rises and falls (Roberts et al.,2009). The most common cleavages that occurred over time in various nations all over the world are socioeconomic cleavages, cultural-ethnic cleavages, urban-rural cleavages, the confessional cleavage, the secular-clerical cleavage, the class cleavage, regime support cleavages, foreign policy cleavages and the post-material cleavage (Lijphart, 1999, p.32). Over time, many societies have developed patterns of voting behavior that are strongly based on the most important historical divisions of society. Class and religion hereby continue to be major determinants of voting behavior (Newton et al., 2006, p.210).

III.III Party Organization
From previous sections we have learned that there is a strong relationship between parties and society. Having identified political parties as agents of conflict management, as instruments of integration and as institutions, which link state and society, one question still remains open; how do parties bind their voters?
The awareness of organizational differences between parties in terms of voter alignment is necessary because variations in party organization can strongly affect the level of polarization. A closer look is

hence taken at the three main types of party organization and how they precisely differ. Of the three types of party organization; elite parties, mass-integration parties, and catch-all parties, special attention is drawn to the first two forms, as they are the two most relevant types in the case of Turkey.

Before I go more into detail, let me stress here again, that my research paper is based on constructivist ideas, which assume that social movements can be formative of political parties and vice versa. The subsequent section will reveal that mass integration parties are deeply embedded in society and further possess the ability to gravitate society in a certain direction. Elite-parties on the other hand maintain a comparatively loose relationship with society while keeping strong ties with the state and state institutions. As a consequence, elite parties are stuck with a rather rigid political agenda and structural inflexibility, which hardly allows them to follow society if it gravitates into a certain direction. Like that, structural differences in party organization can contribute to a wider gap between two competing political parties and respectively between two antagonistic social groups, which eventually increases the level of polarization.

Parties have two general purposes in democracies. First of all, they need to win elections in order to gain power and secondly, they need to implement their policies once they are in power. For parties to reach both purposes, good organization is essential. Political scientists tend to distinguish between three traditional stages of organization. (Newton et al., 2006, p.222) They differ in the level of connection between party and society, so how parties align with voters and what parties claim for themselves.

Parties that fall under the first type of party organization are called caucus or elite parties. It is the oldest form of party organization and dates back to the nineteenth century, when parties were hardly more than loose alliances between like-minded people. The major characteristic of elite parties is that they are led by only very few people, who are wealthy public figures, aristocrats or respectively elite 'notables' (Newton et al., 2006, p.222). Those party leaders, the power elite, are in command of the higher party hierarchy. They claim the prerogative to run the machinery of the party and in case of being in government, also the machinery of the state. Like that, the government falls under the control of a small and unified group of more or less self-serving individuals, who execute a rather rigid policy agenda (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.10). The ruling elite hence exercises disproportionate influence of power over political decisions. Elite-parties are known for their follow the leader approach. They tend to be exclusive and aim at top-down control of society and the state. Elitist parties are based on ideologies or interests and usually do not intend to organize people inside the party structure but instead bind people through ideology, interests and labeling (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010).

The second stage of party organization produces mass integration parties. Mass parties developed in the twentieth century and are mainly characterized by their centralized, bureaucratic and hierarchical form of organization, combined with a broadened electoral appeal that strives for attracting the masses and gaining large membership (Newton et al., 2006, p.222). Mass parties provide all kinds of services and alternatives to the state to their followers. They tend to yield to demands, so that the policy stance they take is usually a response to perceived popular preferences and needs rather than being dictated by inexorable forces or by the preferences of a small group of individual power wielders. The policy agenda of a mass integration party is far less rigid than that of an elite party, since multiple choices are available to formal office holders (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.10). Mass parties collect and consolidate masses, make interests and identities of people melt together and often take a latent policy. Mass parties form a very strong and powerful group in society, which can strengthen polarization. They try to bind voters through clientele policy and by the integration of people in political processes (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010).

Like mass parties, also catch-all parties, which represent the third stage of party organization, respond to perceived popular preferences in order to secure popular support. However, catch-all parties tend to be more center-directed. They hope to attract the median voter and become the dominant party by moving to the political center. Catch-all parties came up especially in the 1970s when old traditional cleavages started to unfreeze and when political party leaders started to appeal a wider variety of interests and social groups in rainbow coalitions (Newton et al., 2006, p.222).

One of the most crucial distinctions between mass and elitist party organization is the way each party links to the state and respectively society. While mass integration parties are deeply

embedded in society, elite parties strongly link to the state and its institutions. Constructivism suggests that party interests and social interests mutually influence and shape each other. This however seems truer for a mass integration party. Weak social integrity and strong state and interest-/ideological dependency make the political agenda of an elitist party rather inflexible. In fact, elitist parties rely on state institutions in order to push through their political agenda and interest-based ideology. Mass integration parties on the contrary are strongly dependent on mass support and can either move with the masses or try to steer society into a preferred direction. As a consequence, a mass integration party is more flexible in their political agenda. It has a choice from a variety of suitable topics for gaining voter support (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010). This is a clear advantage as it provides a mass party with agenda-setting power and allows the party at the same time to follow the spirit of the time and to quickly adapt to changing hot topics within society.

The distinction in structural and organizational flexibility of parties and the distinction in a party's ability to move, clearly affects polarization. As soon as a mass integration party moves further to one side of the political spectrum, meaning further away from the ideas and idea-based interests of the elitist party, it is difficult for the elitist party to follow due to their rather rigid agenda. With its ability to gravitate society in a certain direction, mass parties can become capable of overcoming the system of non-concentration of power. As soon as they have strong popular support they can steer political decision-making into the direction they want. A strong mass integration or catch-all party hence might cause that the opposition party/parties feel pushed back into the corner, which might boost conflict and advocates that the weaker side calls the legitimacy of the political regime into question.

Now that we have established the relationship between polarization and party politics, we also need to look at possibilities how to deal with strong social divisions in order to minimize the chances that a whole nation falls apart or that the democratic system of a country collapses. The next section introduces power sharing as a means to deal with conflict societies and thereby especially discusses the three political constructs of corporatism, federalism and consociationalism as means to achieve non-distribution of power.

III.IV Non-Concentration of Power as a Solution to Conflict and Social Cleavages

If political parties link state and society it also means that social cleavages and the state are linked. The theoretical approach of pluralism therefore highlights conflict between societal divisions as the basis of each democratic regime, defined as government by and for the people. However, let me be clear here that hereby no conflict about fundamentals is meant. Such a conflict would call for internal war, which is not a basis for democracy at all.

Internationally recognized political scientists like Sartori (1976) or Lijphart (1999) agree that sharply divided societies need a democratic regime that strives towards pluralist unanimities, which minimize the likelihood that *many* parties are disruptive of *one* polity (Sartori, 1976, p.15). They need a regime that "includes rather than excludes, and that tries to maximize the size of the ruling majority instead of being satisfied with a bare majority" (Lijphart, 1999, p.33); in short, they need a consensus democracy. Consensus promotes a moderate policy and decreases the chance that any sub-society feels discriminated against and excluded by the democratic system and as a consequence loses allegiance to the regime. Summing up, the state must be a battle field for many competing groups, whereby the state acts like a referee, who uses his legitimate authority to ensure that the interests of all social groups are treated reasonably and in a fair manner.

"Consensus does not consist of the one mind postulated by the monochromatic vision of the world but evokes the endless process of adjusting many dissenting minds [and interests] into changing "coalitions" of reciprocal persuasions" (Sartori, 1976, p.16). In addition, consensus cannot be found but must be produced. In the consensus model of democracy, political parties tend to be closer to the preferences of the citizens, by letting many parties, which represent all major social groups of a nation, participate in the political process.

The solution to managing and controlling social cleavages and diverging ideas, beliefs, and interests is hence power sharing. In this paper, power sharing or respectively non-concentration of power is understood as the division of power "between different offices and bodies so that each acts as a check on the other and has its own power balanced against that of the others" (Newton et al., 2006,

p.58). As Lijphart (1995) argues in his book *Multiethnic democracy*, power sharing entails four different characteristics, which are next to the true representation of all ethnic groups, the autonomy in ethnically internal affairs, minority vetoes and proportionality.

In a consensus democracy, there are different ways to share power and to give room for social diversification and political discourse. If one understands non-concentration of power as the basic premise of the consensus model, than this can take two basic forms; sharing power or the division of power. Especially the political constructs of corporatism, federalism and consociationalism offer three different approaches how to put non-concentration of power into practice.

If one shares power, power is dispersed among political actors, which all operate together within one single political institution. Power-sharing is given in the political constructs of corporatism. Corporatism, usually refers to the organization of interest groups in the political system of a consensus democracy. It is a coordinated and compromise-oriented system and has two conceptually distinct meanings. On the one hand, corporatism refers to a system, which organizes interest groups into national, hierarchical, special and monopolistic peak organizations or as Phillipe C. Schmitter (1982) argues, corporatism is a system that coordinates a small number of interest groups, which are relatively large in size into national peak organizations. On the other hand, corporatism can be conceptualized as the "incorporation of interest groups into the process of policy formation" (Lijphart, 1999, p.171). This is also labeled as 'concertation' and refers to a regular consultation of the leaders of different peak organizations, whereby binding decisions shall be derived between political actors, interest groups and peak organizations; so-called tripartite pacts.

In contrast to that, political actors are dispersed to separate political institutions when power is divided. Hereby, federalism constitutes the most drastic method of power division because it divides power between whole levels of government. As William H Riker states, federalism can be seen as a political organization, which is divided into many regional and one central government and where each kind of government has autonomous decisive power in some activities (Lijphart, 2009, p.186). Another definition of federalism as highlighted by Elazar for instance, is that federalism can be regarded as "the fundamental distribution of power among multiple centers…., not the devolution of powers from a single center or down the pyramid" (Lijphart, 1999, p. 187). In addition, it is important to note that each single center is to be seen as important as any other in a federalist system, so that there is no importance hierarchy at all.

A third solution to managing and controlling social cleavages and conflicts is called consociationalism. This last political construct combines power sharing and the division of power principles. In his early work, Lijphart addressed consociationalism in the context of his attempt to find an explanation how democracy could remain stable even in deeply divided societies. Consociationalism always rests on a competitive party system, which seeks to build electoral support and which can be classified by the number of parties as well as the number of patterns of competition or cooperation among them. Lijphart uses the term consociational "to describe party systems in which political leaders are able to bridge the intense differences between antagonistic voters through power sharing, broad coalitions and decentralization of sensitive decisions to the separate social groups" (Almond et al., 2001, p. 91). He thereby defines a consociational democracy by four conditions: segmental authority, meaning that each segment in society has its own sphere where it has authoritative powers, either functionally or territorially; mutual vetoes; proportionality, and a grand coalition. Consociationalism can be seen as a possibility for deeply divided nations to find a way to peaceful democratic development. It requires power sharing instead of only providing incentives for it. If power cannot be shared or is not shared, for no matter what reason, we often find a conflictual party system, where "the legislature is dominated by parties, that are far apart on issues or are antagonistic toward each other and the political system" (Almond et al., 2010, p.91).

III.V Conclusion

My whole study is based on constructivism and the assumption that cleavages occur naturally and exist in almost every country in the world. From Lijphart (1999) and some of his colleagues we learned that strong social divisions do not necessarily have to be a threat to the political system and stability of a country given that they are considered and dealt with respectively. Constructivist theory taught us that political parties revolve around existing cleavages in society and freeze them but also, that parties and society mutually shape each other's interests. In addition, political parties seem to

increase the support for the legitimacy of democracy, as political parties give each actor a voice and some power in the decision-making process. Theory introduced consensus democracy as a means to successfully deal with cleavages. Emphasis hereby rests upon multi-party systems and a state, which is responsive to divisions in society, meaning that power is shared between various actors and that consensus must be produced for political decisions.

Even when social cleavages are very deep so that two groups are in fact polarized, consensus democracy seems to offer a solution to the threat of political instability and social disunity that stems from polarization. It does so by emphasizing non-concentration of power as an effective means to overcome conflict. Polarized groups are balanced if they are all provided with power so that ideally no camp feels pushed back into the corner and has reason to start a revolt.

In order to provide all important social groups with power and to solve the problems that stem from polarization, theory recommends the implementation of one of the three political constructs – corporatism, federalism or consocitationalism- for deeply divided societies.

Furthermore, theoretical propositions sought to explain the relationship between societal beliefs and the behavior of political parties and linked such interplay to the issue of polarization. We learned that three aspects have the biggest impact on the shape of polarization within the society of a nation state. Those are (1) power resources, (2) the relationship of parties to state and society, and finally (3) a party's ability to move.

The previous section demonstrated that elite parties do not rely on society resources but are in exchange very much dependent on state resources and state institutions, except for they are unreasonably wealthy. Elite parties bind their voters through common interests and ideologies or through labeling. This makes elite parties structurally inflexible and gives them little room for a shift in their political agenda. In fact, elite parties, which seek to control the state, have only very few abilities to move. Mass parties on the contrary, have resources that go beyond their control; they rely on society resources. As a result, mass parties possess a strong society-party relationship, which gives them the ability to gravitate masses into a certain direction and makes them highly flexible. It is one of the biggest strengths of a mass party that they can be responsive to social demands and yield to changing demands by adapting their political agenda accordingly. They are highly capable of moving and can follow the spirit of the time. If a mass party starts gravitating society, the party becomes more powerful and gains more voter support, while at the same time the elitist party is unable to follow due to their structural inflexibility. This has two effects on polarization. On the one hand, power between the two parties becomes highly unevenly distributed and on the other hand, the gap between the two parties' political stances broadens. Both cause growing polarization in society.

Theoretical propositions eventually made me come up with three main assumptions about the appearance and prevention of strong polarization within a given society. In the further course of this paper, those three assumptions provide the basis for my examination whether theory offers realistic and applicable solutions to the problem of polarization in Turkey.

(1) The roots for polarization lie in opposing ideologies, which rest on norms and values that typically change very slowly. As a result, conflict potential is always present, once it appeared. However, polarization itself is not a constantly present phenomenon but reappears periodically and in peaks, dependent on the concentration of power among antagonistic groups and the institutional set-up in terms of political party organization.

(2)Whenever one camp is clearly stronger, so that their interests steer political decision-making and dominate the public sphere, polarization is likely to be high and might even reach a peak.

(3) Non-concentration of power and balance of interests between two antagonistic camps on the contrary usually keeps polarization low. Power sharing hereby works best, when two conditions are fulfilled in the political system of a country. Firstly, a state with a strongly heterogeneous society is wise to apply one of the three political constructs of corporatism, federalism or consociationalism. Secondly, it is best to have only mass-integration or catch-all parties, which are deeply rooted in society and hence more flexible, so that they can either move society or move with the masses and keep the gap between society and themselves small.

Data and Analysis

IV.I The General Discourse between Pious and Secular Turks and its Political Relevance

The first part of this chapter starts with a description of the phenomenon of religious polarization and in a next step examines whether theoretical solutions to the problem can be applied in Turkey. After an introduction to the roots and characteristics of the conflict it is demonstrated how the pious-secular cleavage is reflected in the political party system and organization of the Turkish state.

My study of the political regime in Turkey will reveal that none of the three political constructs - corporatism, federalism or consociationalism - seems to offer a solution to the problems of polarization in Turkey, because the Kemalist state ideology does not allow for their application. The fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic stress ethno-cultural homogeneity, sovereignty and the territorial unity of the state and each of the three constructs of non-concentration of power would at least infringe one of those principles. In addition, this chapter will find that the CHP, as the major secular party in Turkey, is organized as an elite-party, which maintains a clearly ideology-based, leadership-oriented, top-down style of governing. As a consequence, the CHP is structurally inflexible and strongly dependent on Turkish state institutions, such as the military, in order to protect and push through their interests.

Summing up, the following sections will expose that none of the two conditions for power balance and low polarization, as outlined in my theory-based assumptions, are fulfilled in the case of Turkey. The non-implementation of corporatism, federalism or consociationalism and the presence of a secular elite party in the Turkish Republic result in a high conflict potential and risk for polarization.

IV.I.I The Origins of the Conflict in Europe and Turkey

The conflict over secular principles appeared two centuries ago in European democracies. Political competition took place merely around religious issues and primarily along a church-state axis. The conflict can be described as a conflict between the growing state, seeking to dominate the church, and the church itself, which wanted to maintain its historic corporate rights. In the context of the enlightenment period of the eighteenth century, a broader trend toward secularism could be watched. In many nations religious institutions started to retreat from the public sphere. In the early years of the twentieth century a law was passed in France, which eventually required the complete separation of church and state and which can be seen as the backbone of the current French principle of laïcité. Its basic premise is the "division between private life, where religion belongs, and public life, where religion does not" (Roberts et al., 2009, p.557). The underlying assumptions of the principle of laïcité are that attributes like religion or ethnicity might distinguish between individuals and that the state risks treating individuals in an unequal way on the basis of their religious or ethnic belonging. In order to prevent that from happening, the complete separation of church and state was introduced. Laïcism is a very rigid form of secularism, where religion is controlled by the state instead of merely privatized (Turam, 2008, p.477).

The church and some believers did not simply accept such a strict separation and argued that the Christian values like the protection of the family or charity for the poor needed protection from the corrosive effects of secularism. This eventually led to the formation of religious parties in France and many other countries.

The Ottoman Empire itself was pre-dominantly a Muslim Empire, promoting Islamic traditions and the Sultan's emphasis on his position as a Caliph. The traditional family picture was stressed and Islam was used to foster unity among Muslims in a fight against territorial disintegration (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.10).

When the Ottoman Empire collapsed however in the beginning of the 20th century, the Turkish Republic was established, which finally allowed for the realization of the Kemalist modernization project. For Kemalists nothing that was left from the Ottoman Empire was considered worth to be saved. As a result, they dedicated themselves to building a nation out of the ashes of a huge empire of the past on a much smaller territory and to Westernization as a key goal in itself (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.1). It was the young military official Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who eventually founded the Turkish Republic in 1923 and started a huge nation-building process, which included amongst others the abolition of the caliphate, industrialization, the adaption to the ideas of enlightenment, and the shaping

of a Turkish identity. The national revolution from above shunted aside Islam in favor of its new secularist regime. From that time on, Turkish citizens have found themselves in an identity struggle defined as a dualism between the West and the East. The Turkish experience shows that since the early years of the Republic, Turkish elites have adopted the West as their reference point. Modernization, which was interpreted as being identical to Westernization, included the development of close, organic relations with Europe and a commitment to Western standards not only in terms of scientific, technological or scientific development but also in terms of establishing a secular and democratic political order. In fact, for 25 years starting with the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkish citizens witnessed Turkey's ideological transformation and "top-down transition to democracy, [which] perpetuated an elite-driven conception of politics and paternalistic relationship between a 'strong state' and a 'weak society'" (Secor, 2001, p.542). Throughout that time Islam was erased from the political screen and was only able to reenter political life in the 1950s, when Turkey underwent a transition to multiparty politics.

From a historical perspective, the creation and modernization of the Turkish Republic under Atatürk created a discourse between pious and secular Turks about expectations concerning the organization of a state and what tasks shall be assigned to it. While secular circles proofed themselves to be convinced supporters of Kemalism and Westernization, Atatürk's modernization project found its opponents among pious Turks, whose reference point was not the secularist West but the Ottoman Empire with its Islamic values and traditions (Önis, 2004, p.1).

Different time periods offered different domestic contexts and environments, which either triggered or calmed down polarization but always shaped what polarization looked like in Turkish politics.

The conflict between secular and pious Turks gained political importance especially in the 1970s and 1980s. Political Islam constituted the first real threat to the Republican project that was based precisely on the state's orchestrated secularization of society. It was Necmettin Erbakan, who, for the first time, established a mass political party representing Islamic ideas and interests in 1970 under the name National Order Party (MNP) (Altunisik et al., 2005, 37). His party defended the economic interests of tradesmen and small provincial businessmen while at the same time appealing to the religious feelings of small entrepreneurs. It was vaguely social justice-oriented and promoted an anti-elitist program, which combined different pre-existing divides in Turkish society. The MNP was closed down by the secularist military in 1971 but in 1972 already, it could re-establish itself in politics again under the new name MSP. The MSP significantly rose during the 70s and 80s, so that political Islam emerged as a threat to secular Kemalist principles of the Turkish nation. Especially the political instability in Turkey during the 1970s but also the electoral success of the Welfare Party in the 1990s, form pinnacles of the Islamic threat as a mass movement (Narbone & Tocci, 2009, ca. 242).

IV.I.II Power Sharing as a Solution for Turkey?

My chapter on theory introduced the concept of power sharing in general, and the three political constructs – corporatism, federalism and consociationalism - in particular, as means to alleviate the problems that stem from polarization.

When looking at Turkey however, none of the three theoretical propositions seem to provide a realistic solution to the Kemalist state because the Turkish state ideology does not really allow for their application.

Corporatism seems unsuitable, since it would infringe the sovereignty of the Turkish nation state. Federalism cannot be applied because it would violate the fundamental principle of territorial unity. Finally, consociationalism involves the recognition of certain parties representing groups and minorities in the country, which officially do not exist due to the principle of ethno-cultural homogeneity. Hence it is no realistic option for Turkey either.

This already creates some serious obstacles and an increased likelihood for strong polarization in a country that finds itself situated at the crossroad of the Western, mainly Christian and enlightened world and the Middle East with its Islamic values and traditions (Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality: 2010).

Further problems become distinct when examining and comparing the party organization of the main parties RP, AKP and CHP, which represent the antagonistic camps in Turkish society. Before I will elaborate in detail on the problematic aspects of political party organization in Turkey, an intermediary

paragraph will first shortly introduce the three relevant political parties with their interests, roots and history.

The Turkish Welfare Party (RP) is a successor of the Islamic MSP, whose existence was brought to an end by the 1980 military coup. After the military junta, lasting until 1983, the MSP reopened again under its new name Refah Partisi. Its youth soon favored and supported the traditional radical direction and aspired the further politicization of religion, while the party center turned out to be more moderate. Such a combination caused indecisive intermittent attacks against democracy, secularism, and capitalism that were however never made programmatic. Although the RP failed to become the leader of an Islamic Revolution, they nonetheless successfully defined the terrain of Islamic politics (De Leon et al., 2009, pp.207f). One explanation for the RP's increasing success is the party's focus on redistributive social justice and its proposed socioeconomic program. In such a program morality was envisioned, which brought about immense urban support of the poor. In 1994, Erbakan's Welfare Party became the leading party in municipal elections, and only one year later also came out as the winner of the national elections. In 1997, the growing pious-secular divide in Turkish society resulted in a soft military coup, which pushed the Islamist RP first out of government and soon afterwards also out of legal existence (Capezza, 2009, n35).

Interestingly, it was the appearance of a new Muslim democrat party, which acted as one of the most powerful antidotes against Islamic mass movements. The just established Justice and Development Party was on the one hand a party with a clear Islamic background but on the other hand also a party with a mandate that looked forward to establish itself as a moderate party. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan positioned the party at the center-right of the political spectrum and like that drained the life-line of radical political Islam. By advocating neo-liberal policies and a concept of change while abstaining from any open confrontation of the secular segments in society, the AKP could successfully establish itself as a mass integration party in Turkish politics. With their conciliatory tone, the AKP attracted many voters from all sides of the ideological spectrum and even made a vast number of mildly secular and neoliberal politicians, intellectuals, and voters joining its ranks. In the 2002 national elections, which are widely referred to as a political earthquake, only two parties – the AKP and the CHP- managed to pass the 10% threshold. 34% of all votes went to the AKP. The high threshold caused a disproportionate representation so that the AKP eventually inhabited two-thirds (363) of all seats and became the first single-party government in a decade. The CHP in contrast, only won 19% of the votes, translating into a number of 178 seats in Parliament. (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.64)

While the AKP and its predecessors successfully articulated the Islamic forces of society, the Kemalists lacked an effective party that could articulate street action forces in their fight against Islamists. The main anti-Islamist Party, the CHP, was the first party in the Turkish Republic established by nobody less than the founder of the Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, himself. Until the mid-1960s, the CHP was a secular authoritarian party representing a more or less exclusive coalition of notables, bureaucrats, and professionals, including working classes, Kurds and peasants. Later however, they tried to adapt a more populist platform. The CHP was closed down in 1980 by the military coup but re-opened again in 1983 under the name Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). The SHP attempted to pursue a shift towards a more European-style social democracy, away from populism, but failed to achieve any progress on the Kurdish question. Another incident which drew negative attention to the party and which caused doubts about their credibility was the SHP's corruption at the municipality level. As a result of their disappointment with the SHP and mainly because of the party's return to the pre-1960s rigid secularist position, informal workers but also pious Turks started to join the Islamists, thereby deserting the center-left. In the course of the 1990s, the CHP eventually reopened again with the mission of advocating its original political style of authoritarian secular nationalism. It clearly took an anti-Islamic stance and was further known for their lack of any social vision, which alienated and excluded social democratic leaders (De Leon et al., 2009, p.213).

As indicated earlier, some difficulties to the problem of religious polarization can be traced back to the party organization of Turkish political parties in domestic politics. The next paragraph will focus on that and clarify this point.

Major differences between pious parties and the Kemalist party in the 1990s and early 2000s are found not only in conflictive ideologies but also in oppositional voter alignment strategies.

While the RP and the AKP experience great moral authority, where the leaders are perceived by the voters as true believers with popular origins, the CHP lacks such moral authority and trustworthy guidance. Instead, CHP voters deeply distrust their leaders. Further, the secular party fails to establish close links to civil organizations while relying heavily on the state bureaucracy. (De Leon et al., 2009, p.213) In short, the CHP faces the typical restrictions of an elite party, including the heavy reliance on state institutions and the lack of a strong anchor in society. As the major party on the left, the CHP is clearly a leader-dominated party, which focuses in a single-minded way on a narrow definition of secularism (Önis, 2007, p.257). It represents itself as an exclusive party, which aims at top-down control of society and which wants to organize society in the name of its ideology. The CHP binds voters through shared ideas and idea-based interests and is therefore more or less obliged to stick to a very rigid policy agenda, which is not open to political discussion.

In contrast to the secular elitist CHP, the two pious mass integration parties, the RP and the AKP, found or respectively find themselves well embedded in society.

The CHP's structural inflexibility and its inability to change its ideology against the RP's and AKP's flexibility in their political agendas and voter attraction leads to a certain imbalance of power between the major competing parties in Turkish domestic politics. Whenever the RP or the AKP gravitated society into a certain direction, the CHP could not follow so that polarization increased.

In this context, it is also important that the CHP's emphasis on top-down modernization and a strong leadership-oriented, authoritarian style of governing clearly does not go in line with the concept of power-sharing. The CHP did and does not advocate non-concentration of power but instead strives for hegemony. However, in recent decades it never received the popular support of the masses, which would have provided the party with the hegemonic power they wanted. This leads to a dilemma and eventually causes that the CHP needs or relies on a powerful secularist military and constitutional court in order to realize their interests and to protect Kemalism.

IV.I.III Visualization of the General Conflict on the Religious Issue Dimension

In the following, two tables will summarize and visualize the findings of previous sections.

The first table represents the underlying attributes, values and ideas upon which the pious-secular cleavage is based. In fact, it demonstrates what polarization between pious and secular circles is about on the basis of my examination of the general discourse between pious and secular segments in Turkish Society.

Guiding Imperatives behind the Pious-Secular Divide in Turkish Society

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	Ottoman Empire	The West/ Europe
Ideas	Identity defined by religion Identity of Turkey as a Muslim and Middle Eastern country	Identity defined by Kemalism, based on nationalism, secularism, enlightenment, national unity and sovereignty
Idea-based Interests	- Integration of religious and emotional issues, such as matters of faith or abortion into the political agenda - Enforcement of a strict moral code - Social agenda that includes issues, concerning as the position of the poor and social injustice - Offering ethical and moral guidance drawn from religion - Conservatism - Paternalistic state	- Push religious issues off the political agenda and avoid them (Secularism) - Modernization through Isomorphism →Enforcement of Western liberal policies, attitudes and values based on scientific views of nature and human behavior - Strong leadership-oriented, top-down government - Protection of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic

Institutions	- Caliphate - Mass-integration parties a) the RP, as a nationalist anti-regime party b) The AKP, as a moderate pro-system party	- Elite party (CHP), as the political party defender of the Kemalist state - State institutions like a) the Turkish Military, as a guarantor of Kemalism and national security b) the Constitutional Court, as a constraint on parliament and government

The second table is an extract from a table, which was developed by A.J.Secor in 2001 (p.547). It provides a spectrum of religious ideas and idea-based interests and therefore draws on the very basis of conflicting interests between pious and secular Turks. The table provides a good overview on the specific points of debate between the two opposing social groups so that I decided to include this particular part of Secor's table into my own research study.

The Various Forms of the Secular-Pious Division within Turkish Society and Politics

Dimensions	Level -2	Level -1	Level 0	Level 1	Level 2
Secularism versus Islamism	Secularism is the basis of the state. Islamist support masks economic divisions. Anti-secular activity is treason to state	Secularism is basis of state and must be defended, but appeal to religious values valid in politics	Islam is part of Turkish identity< can be used as social glue but represents threat if too popular	Islam is integral to Turkish identity. Presence of religion in public life is to be encouraged	The salvation of Turkey comes through Islamism Religion should guide politics, justice, and education

IV.II Political Polarization between Pious and Secular Turks from 1995 until 2007

The second part of my data analysis on the one hand examines what the pious-secular party conflict looked like between 1995 and 2007 and on the other hand to what extent the level of polarization between the CHP, RP and AKP changed throughout the addressed time span. It will find that polarization has not always been equally strong but reappeared periodically and in peaks.

In fact, the curve for pious-secular polarization in Turkish society undulated. From 1995-1997 and from 2002-2007, there was a rising tendency to be witnessed for the level of polarization, whereas a continuous decline can be constituted for 1997-2001. A peak in pious-secular polarization was reached in 1997.

The following sections will demonstrate that polarization has always been strongest when power was unbalanced and concentrated on the pious side of the scale and when the ideological distance between pious and secular parties and respectively the mass and the CHP was big.

IV.II.I The Development of Pious-Secular Polarization between 1995 and 2001

The 1995 Parliamentary elections in Turkey dismantled the increasing popularity for the Islamic Welfare Party. Even though the RP could not win the majority of seats in parliament nor directly get a place in a government coalition, the elections clearly dismantled a turning point in Turkish politics and society. After years of suppression, an Islamic party gained the popular support of society again. Immediately after the 1995 national elections, a coalition government between Ciller's True Path Party (DYP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP) under Mesut Yilmaz was formed. Due to some disagreements especially "over the covering up corruption allegations against Ciller" (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.56), the DYP-ANAP government was only short-lived so that in 1996 a new DYP-RP coalition government replaced the old one. The RP's leader Erbakan became Turkey's new Prime Minister. In the following, an increasing presence of Islamic symbols and Islamic dresses could be noticed and debates questioning the concepts of democracy and secularism were opened by the RP in the public arena. In addition, the Welfare Party tried to increase the number of its party members in state positions and advocated that female state officials should be allowed to wear headscarves at

work. All those actions led to huge criticism by the secular groups within Turkish society who clearly constituted the majority of the population at that time.

In February 1997, the Sincan municipality of Ankara organized a Jerusalem Night under the posters of the HAMAS and Hezbollah leaders. During the event, the invited Iranian Ambassador Bagheri called for Shari'a rule in Turkey and emphasized that they "should not be afraid to be called as fundamentalists [since] the fundamentalists are the most intelligent, most civilized and most believing people" (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.59). At the same time, Bekir Yildiz, the governor from the Welfare Party, announced that they would inject Shari'a on the Turkish secularists and if necessary by force.

With its political behavior to call fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic and the secular nature of its regime into question and to pursue a very strong Islamic and fundamentalist agenda, thereby slowly trying to change the system, the RP classifies as an anti-system party. Such a classification is used for parties that undermine the legitimacy of the regime they oppose. "An anti-system party would not change - if it could – the government but the very system of a government. Its opposition is not an opposition on issues […] but an opposition of principle" (Sartori, 1976, 133).

Theoretical propositions suggest that polarization is likely to reach a peak when power is unevenly distributed among antagonistic social groups. The strong Islamic stance that characterized RP-governance clearly demonstrated the presence of such an unequal distribution of power, so that a clash between the Islamic and the Kemalist ideology seemed inescapable.

Secular pro-system forces indeed felt pushed into the corner by the RP's politics and started to revolt. Mesut Yilmaz, the leader of the ANAP, summarized the situation of the Turkish Republic by stating that the country was currently facing three main dangers; firstly, the increasingly high amount of political corruption, secondly, the government's defiance of principle of the rule of law and thirdly, the radicalization and militarization of the Welfare Party base (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.59).

Since neither the ANAP nor the CHP found themselves in such a powerful position, which would have allowed them to effectively intervene and stop political anti-regime developments, the Turkish military, as a secular state institution, stepped in to help out. The army saw the latest developments as a clear indication that the Islam started to exert a much stronger role than was assigned to it under the Islamic-Turkish synthesis and hence as a big challenge to the Turkish Republic and the principles on which it is built. In the light of the mid-1990 developments, members of the National Security Council came together on 28 February 1997. During their meeting the military demanded the immediate implementation of policies, which would curtail the spreading of fundamentalist Islam and the increasing power of the RP. At the same time, military officials advised to the Turkish government the regulations necessary for the prevention of extremist religious people, who tried to divide the country along the lines of religion. On 28 February, the pious-secular conflict entered the open public space and became a fight about the occupation of that space. It was a fight about "who defines public space and who defines identity in Turkish politics" (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.60.) and constituted the open manifestation of the clash between the RP's Islamic ideology and the Republican-secular ideology. Polarization had reached a peak.

The soft military coup of 28 February 1997 resulted in the application of measures that strengthened the ability of the state to fight religious reactionism or euphemism for public Islam. The Chief of Staff explained such a course of action by the fact that the Turkish Republic witnessed united actions by religious and separatist groups to divide the nation and destroy the unity of the country so that the country had to fear its own dissolution. Consequences were the subordination of democratic rights to security measures in order to suppress assertions of religious identities in the public space and Erbakan's resignation as Prime Minister. Mesut Yilmaz from the ANAP became his successor. Within one year, the RP government was first out of power and eventually shut down in 1998 by the Constitutional Court on the basis of the allegation that the Welfare Party had become the headquarters action against secularism. Parallel to the RP-closure, Erbakan was banned from politics for a period of five years (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.61).

The events around the soft military coup in 1997 produced different developments within the Islamic camp. Before the Welfare Party was officially closed down, Refah officials had formed a new party to which they transferred most of their party assets. The RP's spin-off party, Virtue Party (FP), mollified Refah's hard-line position under the command of Recai Kutan. However, also the FP was closed shortly after its foundation on the grounds of its Islamist platform, which had breached the 1982 constitution.

Once again however, another spin-off party, the AKP had already been founded and was ready to take over. Its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had for long established himself as a well-known but controversial figure in Turkish politics. In 1998, the Diyarbakir court convicted Erdoğan and prohibited him from holding office for his incitation of religious hatred after he had read an Islamist poem at a political rally (Capezza, 2009, n36). This prohibition from politics was only overturned in February 2003. Despite some controversial political moves, Erdoğan was a very skilled politician. When the RP and its successor were banned from Turkish politics, Erdoğan moderated both, his own personal image but also that of his AK party, to limit the likelihood of party closure. He blurred rather than sharply defined the line between pro-Western orientation and Islamism and provided his party with plausible deniability about its goals. In fact, Erdoğan had learned the decisive lesson from the 28 February Process, namely to avoid hardened ideological positions. Since the AKP abstained "from pressing for change in open confrontation with the secular establishment" (Narbone et al., 2009, p.243), it achieved to reduce the perceived Islamist threat and opened the way for political liberalization in Turkey. Surprisingly, it was hence the establishment of a new party with clear Islamic roots, which moderated the conflict between pious and secular Turks and which, for the first time in a long period, managed to bring moderate secularists and moderate pious Turks together under one roof – the AKP – so that overall polarization between the two groups was lowered significantly. Erdoğan's vision turned into a great success and his Justice and Development Party eventually became the first single party government over a decade in the 2002 national elections. Erdoğan became the new Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic.

IV.II.I.I The Role and Influence of the European Union

The replacement of the fundamentalist Welfare Party by a far more moderate Islamic and system-friendly AKP was not the only significant consequence of the 28 February Process. By the end of the twentieth century, Turkish domestic politics were clearly influenced by the perspective of EU membership. Meeting the accession criteria as a prerequisite for Turkey's acceptance in the Union became one of the major topics and enabled the EU to exert great influence on Turkish domestic politics.

In 1997, the European Union responded indirectly to the soft military coup with its decision during the Luxembourg Summit to exclude Turkey from the list of candidate countries. Western officials view military coups, even soft ones, as antithetical to democracy so that the EU considered the open interference by the military in civilian politics as a clear expression of the country's democratic deficit and hence as a compromised fulfillment of the Copenhagen Criteria. The EU takes the stance that "greater military involvement in government politics decreases civil liberties and political rights in any given country; this infringes on a government's ability to develop democracy" (Capezza, 2009, n1). Consequently, European officials expressed their expectation that Turkey should undertake democratizing reforms towards more civilian oversight over the military.

The EU's response to domestic developments and incidents in Turkey largely influenced the CHP's and AKP's party positions and shaped their political agendas. In the context of debates concerning Turkey's entry in the European Union, a new issue dimension was added to the originally mainly religious conflict; the Europeanization and reform dimension.

For the reader it is important to understand that within Turkish society, state and party system there are "quite significant elements […], which tend to think of membership and reform as independent and unrelated categories" (Önis, 2007, p.250) so that Turkish society and Turkish political parties find themselves differentiated along the lines of 'globalists' versus 'defensive nationalists'.

The term 'globalists' refers to the support of integrationist and reformist actions. Globalists tend to hold a positive view on globalization and they consider Turkey's EU membership as a means to cope effectively with the process of globalization. Besides that, globalists consider "economic and political reforms as a necessary condition for capitalizing on the benefits of Europeanization and globalization" (Önis, 2007, p.251).

Defensive nationalists on the contrary, have a rather negative understanding of the process of globalization. They fear that growing interdependence will lead to Turkey's internal disruption, erodes national sovereignty and severely complicates the preservation of existing borders. Globalization and Europeanization are hence regarded as processes, which carry the ability to threaten and undermine the secular character and unity of Turkey. As a result, defensive nationalists are most skeptical

towards reforms and only appreciate Europeanization and constitutional changes to the extent that Kemalist principles will be preserved.

The Europeanization and reform dimension certainly has not changed polarization between pious and secular Turks in general, but is has shaped what polarization between the two camps looks like by adding another issue dimension to the conflict.

The events of 1997 led to the abundance of originally rejectionist stances on EU-integration among Islamic-minded people. In fact, one can find the AKP broadly united in its promotion and defense of EU-related reforms. This can amongst others be explained by the AKP's classification as a mass integration party, which seeks broad popular support and large membership.

Around the turn of the millennium, Turkey heavily suffered from a major economic crisis. Erdoğan capitalized on the negative impact of that crisis and responded to perceived popular preferences that favored EU-related reforms and EU-membership. By advocating a concept of change and reaping the benefits of globalization but also EU-membership and IMF disciplines, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan managed to generate the support on the part of pious Turks but also the foreign financial community and big businesses. Like that, the AKP managed to construct and sustain a broad-based electoral coalition. Two additional explanatory factors for the pro-reformist attitude of the AKP are that the EU seemed to provide an attractive space for those moderate Islamists who turned into Muslim democrats and that the EU promotes religious freedoms. EU-reforms further seemed to constitute the perfect means to protect the AKP from the establishment of secularist forces and hard-core Kemalists in society. As a result, the party eventually "constituted the strongest and most vigorous element of the globalist/pro-reform coalition within the Turkish political party spectrum" (Önis, 2007, p.252).

This stands in contrast to Kemalists, who are traditionally represented by the CHP. They are very sensitive to issues concerning secularism and national sovereignty but at the same time favor Westernization, which also constitutes one of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic. This implies that the CHP favors EU membership in general but is most uncomfortable with many of the key political reforms that are sponsored by the EU on the grounds. In recent years, the CHP has established itself "as one of the strongest elements of the defensive nationalist bloc and does not show any kind of enthusiasm for democratization reforms (Önis, 2007, p.257).

Concluding, the 28 February Process eventually linked the right-wing Islamic camp in Turkish politics with a pro-reformist and globalist dimension and the left-wing Kemalist camp with an anti-reformist and defensive-nationalist dimension.

IV.II.II Sub-Conclusion

The development of polarization between the three political parties RP, AKP and CHP between 1995 and 2001 takes the form of a bell curve.

The RP's victory in the 1995 national elections precipitated the further separation of the two antagonistic social and political groups. Radical Islamic policies of the RP regime triggered harsh reactions from the opposition. After two years, the situation became in fact so unbearable for the Kemalists that the military decided to undertake active steps against Islamic dominance. Their soft intervention in 1997 constituted a new peak in polarization.

In the aftermath of the soft military coup, the Constitutional Court closed the Refah Party and polarization started to slowly decrease again. Within a short time, a new pious party could form under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. In contrast to its predecessor, the newly established AKP claimed to be moderate and regime-friendly. It avoided hard-lined ideological positions and emphasized its respect for democratic secularism. This severely calmed down Turkish society, displayed by a comparatively low level of polarization in 2001.

In the following, three tables summarize my main conclusions on this section again.

The first table shows what polarization between pious and secular political parties in Turkish society looked like in 1997, the year of the soft military coup and the open manifestation of conflict in the public space. It demonstrates opposing ideas and interests between the Kemalist CHP and the ruling Islamist RP on the Secularism versus Islamism dimension and a great potential for conflict. The ideological distance between the two parties with Level -2 for the CHP and Level 2 for the RP could not be bigger and is literally two poles apart. Eventually, polarization reached a peak in 1997 with a soft military intervention, which led to the closure of Welfare Party in 1998.

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 1997

Dimensions	Level -2 (CHP)				Level 2 (RP)
Secularism versus Islamism	Secularism is the basis of the state. Islamist support masks economic divisions. Anti-secular activity is treason to state				The salvation of Turkey comes through Islamism Religion should guide politics, justice, and education

The second table mirrors how polarization between pious and secular groups in Turkey developed and eventually looked like in 2001. It reveals that the two competing groups in society have grown closer together, which can be mainly traced back to changes in party configuration. In 1998, the fundamentalist Refah Party was banned from politics and Erdoğan established a relatively moderate Islamic party, which did not seek to dethrone the ruling secularist elite and embraced Westernization in the form of EU-accession and democratization. The AKP further showed respect towards the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic.

While the elitist secular CHP remains, due to its structural inflexibility and inability to move, on Level -2 and hence on the very left of the political spectrum, the just recently founded and more flexible AKP established itself close to the core, somewhere between Level 0 and Level -1. Like that, the gap and ideological distance between the major secular and pious parties shrunk. Moderation and the AKP's conciliatory tone eventually even made some mildly secular voters join its ranks so that for the first time moderate parts of both social segments find themselves combined under one roof; the AKP. Consequently, pious-secular polarization in Turkey was comparatively low in 2001.

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 2001

Dimensions	Level -2 (CHP)		Level 0 (AKP)	Level 1 (AKP)	
Secularism versus Islamism	Secularism is the basis of the state. Islamist support masks economic divisions. Anti-secular activity is treason to state		Islam is part of Turkish identity< can be used as social glue but represents threat if too popular	Islam is integral to Turkish identity. Presence of religion in public life is to be encouraged	

Low polarization is also confirmed by my third table, which displays the power distribution between pious and the secular groups in Turkish society in 2001. The table points out that both sides of the camp differ in their ideas and idea-based interests, but that each group finds some of its elements established or respectively present in Turkish domestic politics, so that power is more or less non-concentrated, checked and balanced.

Power Distribution between the Pious and Secular Camp in Turkish Society in 2001

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	- Ottoman Empire - European Union	- Kemalist Modernization Project
Ideas	Identity defined by religion but combined with neo-liberal thoughts	Identity based on Kemalist principles, such as secularism, national unity and sovereignty
Idea-based Interests	- EU Membership - Turkey as a major player in the world - Maintenance of power through strong voter support - Promotion of EU-related reforms	- Protection of Turkey's fundamental principles (Kemalist principles) - Hegemonic power - Against proposed EU-reforms
Institutions	- Single party government with moderate mass integration party in power (AKP) - EU, which hugely	- Largest and only opposition party in parliament: elitist CHP - Relatively strong and powerful state institutions (Military &

	supports and encourages the AKP's political agenda	Constitutional Court)

Despite the positive low level of polarization in 2001, one must regard the AKP's ability to lower polarization through a policy appeal, which addresses both sides of the political spectrum, with caution. This has in particular two reasons. First of all, the appearance of a moderate pious party, which made even mildly secular citizens joining its ranks, resulted in the fragmentation of the CHP. While many moderate secularists left the party and joined the AKP, hard core Kemalists remained. This made the elitist CHP even more strict and inflexible in their party structure, political ideas and policy agenda, which in turn carries great potential for future clashes of society.

At the same time, my analysis revealed that the aftermath of 1997 added another issue dimension to the originally religious-based conflict; the Europeanization and reform dimension. Since the AKP and the CHP have very antagonistic views on the necessity and content of reforms, the additional dimension increased the potential for future conflicts and the reappearance of polarization. Europeanization reforms are in particular such a critical issue because they do not only constitute an area about which both camps simply have diverging opinions, but have deep territorial impacts as well. In fact, they affect the whole set-up and organization of a state. Consequently, the Europeanization dimension tackles the roots of the conflict by dealing with how a state shall look like and what its tasks shall be.

IV.II.III The Development of Pious-Secular Polarization between 2002 and 2007

Propagating a concept of change, the AKP came to power in 2002. The single party government wanted to introduce a new vision on politics and start a new era in Turkish foreign policy. Their willingness to establish very close relations with the EU through a reformist momentum, which would radically transform the domestic political system, was part of that change. The pious party promoted the integration of markets while at the same keeping the culture of Turkish values and norms. Understanding Turkey as a Muslim country, it was Prime Minister Erdoğan's intention to keep the Turkish civilization alive while transforming Turkey in the process of Europeanization. The newly-elected AKP government stuck to its promise of change so that Turkey witnessed a reformist momentum in the beginning of the 21st century.

Many changes to the Turkish constitution and laws took place entailing amongst others the enormous transformation of civil-military relations in Turkish politics. This had serious impacts on the level of and shape of polarization in the years from 2002 until 2007 so that the first part of this section draws closer attention to the scope and content of military reforms and its consequences for the pious-secular conflict in Turkey.

The next paragraph is based on the article *Democratization Reforms in Turkey, 1993-2004* by Özbudun (2007) and presents some of the most significant changes to the set-up of civil-military relations that took place in the context of the big 2002-2004 reformist momentum in Turkey. A total of nine reform packages were passed in parliament under the common frame of the so-called "harmonization laws". All those reform packages can be directly related to Turkey's attempt to become a member of the European Union. They are a consequence of the EU conditionality, which requires that a candidate country must fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria and adopt the Acquis Communitaire if it wants to become a member of the club.

The Turkish Constitution was prepared in 1982 under the military regime. As part of EU-related reforms, a so-called seventh harmonization package entered into force in 2003. With this constitutional amendment the post of the military's secretary general underwent significant restrictions in power, meaning that it was freed from most executive duties and assigned to real secretarial duties. The 2003 reform package further stipulated the abolishment of a previously existing secrecy clause in order to make the activities of the secretariat more transparent. Other changes concerned the number of annual meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), which constitutes the most important military organ, composed of an equal number of civilian and military members whenever the president of the Turkish Republic was a person of civilian background. With a reduction of annual meetings from 12 to 6, the military was left with only half as many opportunities to micromanage policy. In

addition, the Court of Accounts was authorized to supervise the financial activities of the armed forces concerning state properties. In 2004, another amendment led to the abolishment of all State Security Courts, which until then had dealt with cases involving the security of the state. In summary, civil-military reforms of 2002-2004 led to the significant elimination of most of the prerogatives and privileges that were granted to the Turkish Army by the original Constitution of 1982. In fact, the reformist momentum "has liquidated a very large part of the semi-authoritarian legacy of the NSC regime" (Özbudun, 2007, p.195) and severely weakened the power of the military in internal Turkish affairs.

Theoretical propositions earlier pointed at the dependence of elitist parties on like-minded state institutions in order to defend or install their political interests. For the relatively weaker CHP, it is especially the Turkish military, which is very important. The army helps to protect secular interests against powerful Islamic mass integration parties and acts as an important element of checks and balances in Turkey (see Appendix).

This explains why EU-related military reforms constituted such a sensitive issue for the CHP and in consequence had broader political implications on the level of polarization between the two antagonistic camps.

Throughout history, the military had always been a serious threat to the political power of pious parties and their Islamic agenda. The military's regular coups together with the Constitutional Court's little reluctance when it comes to closing down Islamic parties have clearly shown the AKP that secular non-party institutions constituted a much bigger threat to its political power than any opposition party could. As a result, the CHP worried that the AKP would only use EU reforms to shield the "party from likelihood of imminent closure […], to safeguard […] an Islamic lifestyle under the rubric of democratic freedoms; and […] [to broaden] the party's appeal to liberal-minded voters" (Patton, 2007, p.343), before pursuing their own Islamic interests. It was believed that the pious camp would later use their disproportionate power to cast aside the fundamental principles of the Republic and that the system of checks and balances risks becoming unstable without the Turkish army. From the very beginning, the CHP was hence suspicious about Erdoğan's true intention behind the reforms.

        Concluding, until the reformist momentum in Turkey, the weaker position of the elitist CHP against the strong mass integration party AKP was counterbalanced by a strong secularist military, which always stepped in when the CHP proved incapable of protecting the Kemalist principles. With the limited role of the Turkish military in controlling and influencing Turkey's domestic politics, the situation changed and the distribution of power between the two antagonistic groups in society became more unbalanced. As a consequence, suspicion and polarization between CHP and AKP started to slowly increase again parallel to the big reformist momentum.

The excessive reformation and political revolution of the Turkish political system mainly took place during the AKP's first three years in office and then slowed down perceptively in 2005 and very obviously in 2006. Parallel to a steep decline in constitutional reforms, Prime Minister Erdoğan started to advance a more Islamic agenda, which altered Turkish society and clearly expressed the AKP's Islamic background (Capezza, 2009, n42). The second part of this section hence focuses on the developments in Turkish politics after 2004, when the reformist momentum almost came to a halt.

        In 2005, Erdoğan began to argue that it should be the legal right for each Turkish woman to wear veils in schools and every other public institution. This policy was strongly rejected by traditional Kemalists on the grounds of its symbolic affront to Turkish government's secularism. Even though the veil law was not implemented, Erdoğan's support for it was taken as a clear hint for a change in the AKP's political agenda (Capezza, 2009, n41).

A second example, which displays the "AKP's attempts to roll back the separation between mosque and state" (Capezza, 2009, n42) was Erdoğan's move to equate Imam Hatip religious school degrees with those of public high schools, thereby enabling Islamic students to enter the university and qualify for government jobs without serious study of basic Western principles. When university presidents complained about growing political interference and Islamic influence in their institutions, Erdoğan ordered the police to detain the most outspoken university rector on corruption charges that later proved baseless.

In 2006, the ruling against the veil law upset one gunman that much that he stormed the Turkish Supreme Court – the Council of State – and killed one justice while shouting 'I am a soldier of God'. In the following, Prime Minister Erdoğan refused to attend the justice's funeral (Capezza, 2009, n46), which was understood as an indirect legitimization of the act of murder. As a consequence, the secularist camp immediately published two statements. The President of the Turkish Republic at that time, Ahmet Sezer, said that "'Religious fundamentalism has reached alarming proportions'" (Capezza, 2009, n46) while the chief of Turkish Staff, Yaşar Büyükanıt, warned of growing Islamic fundamentalism.

Further occurrences after the earthquake-like reforms of 2002-2004 happened in March 2005, when an excessive police force was used in order "to break up a peaceful demonstration marking International Women's Day" (Patton, 2007, p.340); an action that was defended by Erdoğan with the argumentation that the women had provoked the violence.

In addition, a new penal code that was adopted three months later fell short of protecting essential women's rights, such as rights related to virginity testing and honor killings (Patton, 2007, p.340). A short-coming in the protection of female rights might be interpreted as a clear sign of the AKP's strong commitment to a traditional and Islamic-based understanding of gender roles, which they started to promote more openly from 2005 on.

Question marks about the party's true commitment to European values, Western orientation and secularism appeared when Erdoğan started to increasingly promote figures from the AKP's core electoral base to key government posts. Those actions provided "substance to fears of creeping Islamization of Turkish society" (Önis, 2007, p.256), especially in combination with the AKP's previously introduced shift in its foreign policy agenda.

In 2002, Ankara found a new strategic, pro-active vision for Turkey, which should become the main actor in the region for all the neighboring countries (Ö.Tür, personal communication, 25 May, 2010). Closer bilateral relations with Palestine and in particular with the new Hamas government were developed without seeking for approval by the European powers first (Önis, 2007, 256). In addition, Turkey upgraded relations with the Islamic Republic Iran with regular dialogues taking place on political and security issues and a new push in economic relations leading to a bilateral trade volume of $2 billion in 2004. In the energy sector cooperation between Turkey and Iran took place concerning the Tabriz-Erzurum gas pipeline. Another example for Turkey's new pro-active and Middle-East oriented foreign policy agenda is the enormous improvement of economic and social relations with Syria, a Middle Eastern country, governed by an authoritarian military-dominated regime. A free trade agreement between the two countries was signed in 2004 and the visa regime has been abolished (Akcakoca, Fraser & Rhein, 2004, p.11).

The AKP's new moves in the foreign policy field suggest that the party feels "much more at home in the Middle East and the Islamic world, as opposed to a European-style party committed to secularism and a liberal vision of multi-culturalism" (Önis, 2007, p.256) and provide evidence for a shift in the AKP's political agenda towards more Islamic policies after the big reform period between 2002 and 2004.

IV.II.IV Conclusion

The most important conclusion to be drawn from the previous sections is that Turkish pious and secular political parties became more polarized again from 2002 on.

The reformist momentum significantly altered the distribution of power between pious and secular groups in Turkish society. EU-related reforms paved the way for the AKP to establish a dominant position in politics due to strong popular support but also due to reforms, which guaranteed power and made party closure and military interventions highly unlikely, if not impossible. With severe restrictions to the power of the Turkish Military, one had significantly reduced the CHP's power and general secular influence on Turkish politics, because the CHP had always relied upon strong secular state institutions in order to push through and defend Kemalist interests.

When the reformist momentum slowed down in 2004, the AKP began to loosen the previously clearly defined and strict church/state separation and started to pursue a more Islamic agenda. In fact, the AKP slowly stepped away from its original appearance as a regime-friendly and modest Islamic party and moved further to the right of the political spectrum, thereby taking the masses with it.

Theoretical propositions explained that elite parties, such as the CHP, are often characterized by their structural inflexibility. When the popular and society-embedded AKP started to pursue huge reforms and advocated a more Islamic, Middle East-oriented political agenda, the CHP could not follow or correspond to such a shift. As a consequence, the ideological distance between the two parties and between the majority of the Turkish population and the elitist CHP grew. This caused stronger polarization.

In fact, the developments in Turkish politics in recent years have taken a quite dangerous direction again. The big power imbalance between the AKP and the CHP and hence also between the pious and secular circles in Turkish society at large, highly increased the risk for another open manifestation of conflict. This might in the near future result in violence and for sure constitutes a threat to the unity of the country but also to the democratic political system.

Like in the previous sections, my conclusions about the development of pious-secular party polarization from 2002 until 2007 are made visible in two tables. The first table shows that in the course of the party's first term in office, the AKP moved further to the right of the political spectrum. The party applied a new Middle East- and neighbor-oriented foreign policy approach and propagated a more Islamic agenda. For polarization it meant that Turkish society witnessed growing polarization between pious and secular Turks again. While the secular CHP kept its Level -2 position on the very left of the political spectrum, the AKP moved from the core and hence Level 0/Level 1 policies further to the right of the political spectrum, thereby reaching a Level 1/Level 2-position. The result was a new breeding ground for social clashes due to the bigger gap between pious and secular political parties and respectively the two social groups, which they represent.

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 2007

Dimensions	Level -2 (CHP)			Level 1 (AKP)	Level 2 (AKP)
Secularism versus Islamism	Secularism is the basis of the state. Islamist support masks economic divisions. Anti-secular activity is treason to state			Islam is integral to Turkish identity. Presence of religion in public life is to be encouraged	The salvation of Turkey comes through Islamism Religion should guide politics, justice, and education

The second table demonstrates how power between the pious and secular camp was distributed in Turkish politics in 2007. It shows which and how many elements from each group's ideologies, ideas and idea-based interests could be found in Turkish society and domestic politics by the end of 2007. Hereby, the table displays a political power shift between the pious AKP and secular CHP from balance to imbalance in favor of the Islamic camp. The AKP gained a more dominant and powerful position to pursue its own interests. The secular CHP on the contrary, was left without strong state institutions, which could protect or push through secular interests, but also without huge popular support, which could provide the party with power to truly influence political processes in the Turkish Republic.

Power Distribution between the Pious and Secular Camp in Turkish Society in 2007

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	- Ottoman Empire	- Kemalist Modernization Project
Ideas	Identity defined by religion, Identity of Turkey as a Muslim and mainly Middle Eastern country	Identity defined by Kemalism, based on nationalism, secularism, national unity and sovereignty
Idea-based Interests	- Stronger focus and orientation to neighboring states and the Middle East - Being a world player and a powerful actor in the Middle East - Pursuing a stronger Islamic policy agenda	- Protection of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic, ➔ But secularism, national unity and sovereignty threatened by EU-related reforms and the AKP's new

	-	with attempts to loosen the strict church/state separation		foreign policy agenda
	-	Yielding to citizens' demands in order to keep dominant position and broad voter support	-	Political hegemony
			➔	But reality in 2007 reveals the opposite: little voter support, no powerful position in politics
	-	Strong AKP (single party government)	-	Relatively weak CHP
	-	Adapted Constitution, which better serves pious interests now	-	Restricted secular state institutions due to military and judicial reforms

Research Summary

In the course of this descriptive research study, I demonstrated how societal beliefs and the behavior of political parties interact and elaborated on the relationship between society, the state and polarization.

This study assumed that natural cleavages exist in every society and that those cleavages lead to the formation of sub-groups, which call for political representation and power in the decision-making process. Political parties appear as a result of cleavage formation and act as the representatives of existing social groups within a nation state. Their main task is to link state and society and ideally they do so by being responsible to their supporters and responsive to their demands. From a constructivist viewpoint, on which this study was based, political parties and social movements mutually influence each other. Parties tend to freeze existing conflicts in society but also shape them by linking various issue dimensions. In addition, popular support for democracy increases because a democratic regime integrates, through political parties, different social groups in the decision-making process.

Social groups and due to their strong party-link also their respective political parties, can suffer from polarization. The term polarization describes an extreme form of societal divisions, whereby two antagonistic camps show strong intra-group homogeneity parallel to a significant inter-group heterogeneity. In fact, two parties are polarized when their ideological distance or distance of interests covers a maximum spread of opinion, so that opponents are literally two poles apart. Such kind of tension or conflict must be watched carefully, because it carries the risk to manifest itself in the open public sphere and may result in violence, which eventually threatens the democratic stability of a country or even makes a whole nation fall apart. Polarization is not a constantly present phenomenon but reappears periodically and in peaks.

When it comes to the interaction between political parties and polarization, the three factors - power resources; relationship of parties to state and society; and finally a party's ability to move - largely determine the shape and strength of polarization. Mass parties are most flexible in their political agenda and can easily move the masses or respectively with the masses. As a result, theory promotes mass party organization as the most effective means to counter polarization.

In addition, the distribution of power between two opposed camps also highly influences what polarization looks like. Polarization is likely to peak whenever one camp is much stronger than the other, so that only the interests of one group steer political decision-making and dominate the public sphere. If power however is almost evenly distributed and balanced between two antagonistic camps polarization tends to be low. As a consequence, theory suggests corporatism, federalism or consociationalism as suitable political constructs to achieve and assure power sharing in strongly heterogeneous societies

In the first part of my data analysis, theoretical propositions were tested for their applicability to the Turkish context and findings revealed that that neither any of the three political constructs for power-sharing, nor the condition of only having mass parties competing in the domestic political system were applied in Turkey. The Turkish Republic is built on Kemalist principles, which must be preserved, and those fundamental principles do not allow for power sharing but stress territorial unity, national sovereignty, ethno-cultural homogeneity and the elitist top-down control of state and society.

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In sum, the nature of the Turkish Republic and the organization of its political parties give little room to the concept of power sharing, so that the conflict potential and risk for polarization in such a diverse and heterogeneous society, as Turkey is, becomes in evidently high.

The second part of my data analysis then dealt with the overall research question: *To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?*

From 1995 until 1998, there was a high level of polarization between the Islamic RP and the secularist CHP. The main reason for strong polarization can be found in power concentration, favoring the pious side, due to the RP- regime in government. This changed however with the soft military coup of 1997, which caused the ban of the Refah Party and meant the end of radical Islamic policies in Turkey.

Eventually, polarization declined so that Turkish society witnessed a relatively low or modest level of polarization in the years from 1998 to 2001. Decreasing polarization was further influenced by the appearance of a new Islamic but regime-friendly AK Party under the leadership of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The modest AKP promoted a neo-liberal policy agenda in combination with Islamic values and traditions. It stressed its respect for the secular nature of the Turkish Republic and could successfully mobilize the masses, so that even some modest secularists joined its ranks.

In the 2002 national elections, the AKP could win the absolute majority of seats in parliament, which in principle provided the party with strong agenda-setting power and allowed for steering the political directions of the country. However, at that point in time, the AKP still faced some restrictions concerning the shape of its political agenda because it had to fear a military intervention or its party closure, as soon as it would cross the line and touch the secular nature of the country. But those restrictions should not last long. Backed up by EU and broad domestic support, Erdoğan quickly started an almost revolutionary reformist momentum leading to severe constitutional and institutional changes and to limitations in power for secular state institutions, such as the Constitutional Court and the Turkish Military.

That however triggered growing polarization, since the elitist CHP, which heavily relies on strong state institutions to back up and protect secular interests, lost significant assets to influence politics. What was the loss of the one, was the benefit for the other. For the AKP, the reformist momentum meant the elimination of more or less all threats to its political power and brought about strong power imbalance in favor of the Islamic camp. This enabled the pious AKP to exert disproportionate influence over the direction of Turkish politics and eventually ushered in a new era of profound Islamic policies from 2005 on.

In the course of the years, Turkish society witnessed the growing presence of Islamic ideas and interests in domestic and foreign politics so that secular circles started to fear that the fundamental secular principles of the Turkish Republic and hence their own ideas and interests would no longer be sufficiently protected. This increased once again the threat of national disruption.

Conclusion, Limits of My Study and Suggestions for Further Scientific Research

One of the most obvious conclusion to be drawn from my study is perhaps, that we have to realize that theory and praxis sometimes represent two separate worlds and that the real world often requires different and problem-specific methods of resolution.

In the case of Turkey we have seen that the Kemalist state ideology does not easily allow for the realization of power sharing, which theory proposed as suitable means to alleviate problems and to create stability.

The obligation to preserve the national sovereignty of the Turkish state prohibits the implementation of corporatism, whereas federalism would infringe the principle of territorial unity. Finally, consociationalism cannot be realized because of its violation of the principle of ethno-cultural homogeneity. Kemalism further promotes the top-down control of state and society and hegemonic ruling instead of compromise seeking. As a result, the Kemalist CHP is organized as an elite and ideology-based party, which adheres a highly inflexible policy agenda and is hardly able to move.

Summing up, my findings suggest that it is the concept of Kemalism itself, which constitutes the biggest obstacle to the realization of power sharing in the Turkish political system and to the CHP to become an equally powerful player in domestic politics.

Knowing that, it becomes interesting for future scientific research to examine whether the center-right party AKP has irreversible run away with the train of society, meaning that society can never be retrieved at the center or even at the center-left of the political spectrum.

This would eventually imply or require the reformulation of Kemalism in order for the CHP to become a competitive player in Turkish domestic politics again. The party simply has to dismiss its rigid policy agenda and become more flexible in order to regain societal support and hence influential power in the decision-making process. This would also be beneficial for the Turkish country as a whole as it would eliminate or decrease the threat of polarization and hence the danger to political stability and the unity of the country. A reformulation of Kemalism might even strengthen and preserve Kemalist values. When polarization can be controlled, the territorial unity and national sovereignty of the country are much better protected.

It is definitely interesting for future research to examine and study the extent to what the CHP manages to change its party's ideology and Kemalism itself in order to fight the party's limited influence on political developments in Turkey. It is difficult to prophesy what will happen in Turkey in the future. We have to wait and see whether the secular camp will try to counter with harsh, perhaps even violent responses and attempts to regain power, or whether they opt for the alternative; the reformulation of Kemalism.

Ideally, the CHP should try to get rid of its elitist party structure and develop into a catch-all party in order to become more flexible, move with the masses and re-establish some balance of power between the AKP and themselves. The transformation into a catch-all party would require an organizational change, whereby the CHP must redefine itself and search for a new political agenda and new means to attract voters.

Interestingly, Turkish party politics so far lack the presence of a European-style democratic party with a mass following. The CHP could make use of such a shortcoming and start committing itself to a social agenda and the promotion of social justice. If it would manage to come closer to what one calls a social-democrat party, the party might have the chance to gain a more powerful position again and to compete with the AKP at the same level.

Obstacles to such a transformation are however that the CHP would first need to get rid of their dependency on the military and the Constitutional Court. This seems to be quite risky, because the CHP would then first be left with nothing.

Another interesting suggestion for further scientific research, which emanates from my study, is the examination of the EU's and the US' responses to the AKP's recent shift towards a more Islamic and Middle East-oriented policy agenda. The CHP might hope for a more skeptical and suspicious reaction from the West and less foreign support for the AKP regime. It might also hope for the CHP's better recognition by the West so that its position in Turkish society and domestic politics strengthens again.

Throughout the whole paper, I have stressed that my study is based on constructivism, which assumes that a party's and society's ideas and idea-based interests mutually influence and shape each other. During my analysis of Turkish politics I found that the AKP, together with the majority of the Turkish population, moved further to the right of the political spectrum in recent years, making the execution of a more Islamic-based and Middle East-oriented policy approach possible. Given that the constructivist assumptions are true, my findings bring up the chicken-egg question, wondering what came first. Was it society, which made the AKP pursue a more Islamic approach or was it the AKP which gravitated society into its preferred direction, more towards the right of the political center? Who was in fact responsible for the increasing influence of Islamic and Middle Eastern values and traditions in Turkish politics?

In this study, polarization was thoroughly measured and observed but there are some limits to my descriptive research design as well.

It lacks for instance an examination of any causal relationship through hypothesis testing. I assumed that the fundamental principles, on which the Turkish Republic is built, do not allow for corporatism, federalism or consociationalism as models for power sharing and secondly, I regarded the elitist party

organization of the CHP as an explanatory factor for power imbalance and peaks in polarization. However, I did not test those hypotheses and cannot rule out alternative explanations, as I did not study any counterfactual interferences

A second limit of my study is that my research findings for Turkey are not suitable for generalizations to other countries. Turkey is a very unique country because of its geographic location at the crossroads of human history between Europe and Asia. It is also unique for its combination of a Muslim population with democracy and a secular political tradition.

Although my descriptive research study lacks to unravel and identify with certainty the exact relationship between causes and effects of power concentration and polarization, and although my findings do not allow for generalizations, this paper still has scientific relevance. In fact, my study provides a good starting point for further scientific research and suggests some interesting exploratory and explanatory research questions.

My findings prompt to assume for instance that the EU has underestimated the role of the national army as an element of checks and balances in Turkish politics. The European alliance required constitutional changes to the set-up of civil-military relations in order to strengthen the quality of democracy. Those reforms however, extensively weakened the only opposition party with seats in the Turkish National Assembly and allowed for pious dominance and the increasing presence of Islamic ideas and symbols in Turkish politics.

This brings up the interesting question, whether EU-demands might have backfired in the case of Turkey, as reforms have resulted in less checks and balances and growing polarization between the pious and secular camps, so that eventually the democratic stability was threatened instead of strengthened.

Appendix
VII.I The Turkish Military

The Turkish Military has deep roots in society and its influence actually predates the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. In modern Turkish history the security dimension and the concept of national security has been a central theme not only in the domains of the military but also in the social, economic and political domains. In the 1920s, Turkey suffered from Greek military occupation. This eventually triggered military resistance under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in the following War of Independence. The military's victory led to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 and the military "came to affirm itself as the guardian of the normative foundations, the national security and the territorial integrity of the republic" (Narbone et al., 2009, p.242). Hence the military's role was to guarantee the protection of Kemalist principles. Throughout the 20th century the military every once in a while intervened in domestic politics through military coups, whenever they felt that basic tenets of the republic were mistreated or ignored by national politicians. The military understands itself as the strong protectionist of democratic secularism and hence constitutes an important component in the system of checks and balances, which protect Turkish democracy (Borges de Castro, 2010). History has shown that the Turkish political system, which is much more dynamic and allows for competition among a wider rank of political philosophies and stand points than most European democracies, has not always worked well. Clear examples are for instance the events that led to the 1960 military coup. Different "politicians consolidating disproportionate control have appeared ready to cast aside the fundamental principles of Turkish democracy" (Capezza, 2009, n51) back then. At other times, for instance in 1971 and 1980 parliamentary fractiousness made coalition formation and the establishment of an effective government impossible so that the political stalemate of those years could not be resolved by ordinary democratic processes. As a result, the military stepped in whenever the CHP could not effectively protect and preserve the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic; hence whenever the CHP was not strong enough to stand in as the political party defender of the Kemalist state.

The Turkish army works as an anchor in society for many secular Turks. The inability of the leftist party to truly protect and guarantee the secular principles of the Republic hence effects that the secular camp within Turkish society believes that only the military can effectively preserve and protect the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic or at least that the CHP is in the need of the military to reach their aims. This explains why there is not only a linkage between polarization and party systems but how polarization seeps into non-party institutions- in this case the military- as well. The elitist party CHP, which refuses power-sharing and seeks to become a hegemonic power while lacking strong popular support, needs the military in order to reach its aims of organizing and penetrating society according to its Kemalist ideology.

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