

Coup-Proofing in Turkey

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Abstract

Is the traditional civil-military relations changing in Turkey? Does Turkey have a new generation of political elites equipped with the capacity of coup-proofing? In the past, the army easily ousted political elites with no coup-proofing ability. However, today, the government can react to the military intervention; full generals are arrested by civil courts. The government's reaction to the army's 2007 memorandum and the ensuing investigations of officers by prosecutors proves that political elites have gained the needed instruments of coup-proofing. In line with recent developments, the major contribution of the article is to demonstrate the complex nature of coup-proofing in Turkey, an overlooked aspect of civil-military relations.

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Introduction

On 27 April 2007, the Turkish army intervened by memorandum into the politics once again and strongly criticized the political elites for their grave mistake of violation of principle of secularism they made particularly in the election of the President. The memorandum also criticized the candidacy of Abdullah Gül, a deputy of the Justice and Development Party government (JDP). Yet, the memorandum reminded that the army would not refrain in stepping forward if needed. Rather than the memorandum, surprising was the reaction of the government. Unlike the previous governments which resigned facing a military intervention, the JDP government declared that the memorandum was unacceptable and reminded that the army was constitutionally under their control. Several months after the memorandum, in 2008, upon the demand of a prosecutor, several high-level retired military officers including full generals were arrested for being involved in illegal activities against the government. In ensuing process, many active officers including military cadets were also arrested or detained. Similar to the government's reaction to the memorandum, the prosecution of soldiers is also an extraordinary case

These developments bring serious questions: Is the traditional civil-military relations changing in Turkey? Does Turkey have a new generation of political elites equipped with the capacity of coup-proofing? In the past, the army easily ousted political elites with no coup-proofing ability. However, today, the government can react to the military intervention; full generals are arrested by civil courts. Symbolizing this change verbally, R. Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish premier, declared that in case of a military intervention, "I will not leave the office as some former politicians did before, instead I will react." (TRT Interview: 2009)

The government's reaction to the army's 2007 memorandum and the ensuing investigations of officers by prosecutors proves that political elites have gained the needed instruments of coup-proofing. In line with recent developments, the major contribution of the article is to demonstrate the complex nature of coup-proofing in Turkey, an overlooked aspect of civil-military relations.

Coup-Proofing

Despite having structural coup risks and lacking the needed infrastructural instruments of civil rule, some coup-prone states have the ability of preventing coups which is called coup-proofing. Coup-proofing is "the set of actions a regime takes to prevent a military coup." Accordingly, the essence of coup-proofing is the creation of structures that minimize the possibility of a coup (Quinlivan 1999: 133). Coup-proofing

aims to silence the structural causes that prevail in a society by employing several means. "Silencing" does not mean eliminating structural causes. To a large extent, the main strategy in coup-proofing is to manipulate triggering causes, which are short-term factors that precipitate a coup, lest they do not activate the structural ones. Also, coup-proofing helps us to understand how non-democratic societies' elites can prevent military interventions. For instance, the coup risk is very low in the US because civilian institutions, the rule of law, the freedom of press and other similar factors are very strong in this country (Belkin ve E. Schofer 2003: 597). However, despite lacking such institutions, the Syrian political elites, like their counterparts in Saudi Arabia or Libya, have prevented a coup thanks to coup-proofing strategies.

Actors may follow different coup-proofing strategies such as the exploitation of family, ethnic and religious loyalties, the creation of an armed force parallel to the regular military, the development of multiple internal security institutions, the fostering of expertness in the military and the financing of such measures (Quinlivan 1999:133), party penetration, the use of intelligence, civilian command structures, divided command authority, and geographic dispersion, maintaining rival security organizations, satisfying corporate concerns and even allowing for military participation in politics (Danapolulos 1992: 15)

All coup-proofing strategies are various reflections of different actors' capacity to mobilize and finance their strategies which require having needed number of people with certain qualifications to realize certain strategies, having the political ability to realize all mobilization without any unwanted halt, and finally having the needed financial resources.

The Difficulty of Studying the Turkish Case

The study of coup-proofing in Turkey is difficult for two major reasons. First, despite a vast literature on civil-military relations, there is almost no study which specifically examines coup-proofing. The impenetrable nature of coup-proofing as a political incident explains this paucity. As set of secret business, the nature of coup-proofing obstructs collecting the needed data.

The second difficulty originates from the Turkey's political system which has fabricated a fuzzy coup-proofing model. Normally, the study of coup-proofing in totalitarian states is easy as the power holders as a homogenized group follow usual strategies such as creating alternative intelligent units or implementing sectarianism. However, in the Turkish case, thanks to the division of labor between state and political elites, which will be analyzed below, the analysis of coup-proofing takes

place in a highly blurred procedure. Since 1950 Turkey, except the short term military regimes, has never been ruled by a highly homogenized group with the ultimate capacity of employing strict coup-proofing agendas. There has always been intra-state tensions, bargains in the state machinery originating from ideological differences. As the division of labor between political and state elites impedes the ultimate domination of state machinery by any group, the analysis of the actors of coup-proofing and their agendas is a complex work. The authoritarian characteristics of Turkish politics has made coup-proofing a complex process in which it is difficult to clarify agents and their strategies.

The division of labor between state and political elites, which is the foundation of Turkey's idiosyncratic coup-proofing strategies, is thus the first subject to be analyzed to highlight in what conditions actors employ their strategies.

Theorizing the Turkish Model

The early Kemalist regime which ruled Turkey since 1923 faced several important challenges in the late 40s that caused serious reforms. The first shake came out during the Republican regimes' attempts to try multiparty elections. In each attempt, opposition parties won an unexpected support (Emrence 2006: 101). The second came from the international system. To escape from the threats posed by the Soviets, Turkey asked for American protection, which ended up with serious consequences. Turkey was asked to realize several reforms at least to improve its dictatorial appearance in the West (Erhan 2001: 537). Challenged by domestic and international developments, the ultimate question to the Kemalist elites was how to reconcile the need for reform to guarantee Turkey's position in the Western camp and how to protect the Kemalist nature of the state. As a solution, the Republican elites kept the Kemalist tradition but at the same time permitted the rise of several intermediary institutions. Consequently, Turkey transformed into a post-totalitarian state in the post-1946 period in which "institutional pluralism is exercised within the party-state or within the newly tolerated parallel culture" (Linz and Stepan 1996: 46). It was a kind of hybrid regime in which several limited intermediary corridors and institutions were injected into the strict Kemalist model.

In this model, pluralism, rather than social, is treated as institutional, enabling state elites having capacity to intervene legally. State elites through those institutions declared themselves as having the responsibility of safeguarding the long-term interests (Heper 1991: 40). The state elites' authority was not derived from those of the political elites. The Republican elites, schooled in the Atatürk-İnönü tradition and

located in the universities and the upper reaches of the civil service (Heper 1996: 487) including the army, present themselves as the intrepid guardians of the Kemalist regime. They control the political game through several ways such as autonomous bodies i.e. civil and military bureaucracy, legal codes, and manipulating the public. Political elites are responsible for representing particular interests. With the model, the state elites became the major actors to dictate to the politicians the general guidelines of the political game (Heper 1996: 484-485). It was mainly the parliamentary system that provides corridors of manipulation to the state establishment. It is a system of state and society relations in which organized social groups are segregated from each other and segmentalized; the state exercises power of close supervision over each segment (Sunar 1988: 82). At the end, a mixed system was invented in which sovereignty is divided between the state elites and political elites.

The model was then constitutionalized after the 1960 coup. The 1960 intervention was the reaction of state elites against the 'unhealthy' autonomization of economic and political groups at the expense of the Kemalist contract, mainly during the rule of Democrat Party between 1950-60 (Karabelios 1999: 141). Having defeated the opposition, the Republican elites realized that there was no nation waiting their prescriptions. Read carefully both domestic and international dynamics, they adopted a more rationalist agenda which paved the way for a new system in which certain institutional restraints would always guarantee the Republican elites' corporate interests. The 1961 Constitution thus is a masterpiece of this intention since it introduced a new understanding of sovereignty, totally different compared with that of the 1920s. The principle of national sovereignty was kept but it was constitutionally declared that "the nation exercises its sovereignty through the authorized agencies in accordance with the principle laid down in the Constitution." The clear intention of this sentence was to put an end to the supremacy of Parliament. With the 1961 Constitution, the Grand National Assembly ceased to be the sole organ with the power to exercise sovereignty on behalf of the nation (Aybay 1977: 23). By introducing several institutions with the capacity of sharing the use of sovereignty with the nation, the Republican elites secured their positions. Yet, the judiciary was given a considerable share in the exercise of sovereignty. A Constitutional Court was founded which was expected to counterbalance political institutions, which had provided 'ample proof in recent history of their tendency to abuse their powers' (Aybay 1977: 24).

The tension between state and elites thanks to Turkey's mixed system laid the foundations for a complicated coup-proofing model. Unlike for instance with typical cases like Syria or Saudi Arabia where political elites can carry out radical coup-proofing strategies, Turkey has no capacity to carry such strict strategies like creating

a parallel army. Since political elites have never had the capacity to control all state mechanism, they could never initiate traditional coup-proofing strategies. Instead, the bargain with the state elites has forced them to follow a low profile and intricate tactics.

1923-1950: Coup-Proofing in a Totalitarian System

In this period, it was the ruling Republican elites as harmonized and united group that were the main agents of coup-proofing. The Republican elites also formed coalitions with other actors such as city intellectuals and the traditional class of notables in the countryside, including landowners (Sherwood 1967: 56). As an integrated group, their major strategy was to prevent any attempt to overthrow the new regime. The first fear was a popular uprising for religious or ethnic reasons. The Kurdish uprising in Eastern Anatolia in 1925, the Dersim rebellion in 1937 created major concerns. The second risk was a mutiny of various officers as some were keeping their reservations about Atatürk's leadership. However, they were purged in various ways with no serious difficulty.

In this period, the Republican elites did not implement other typical coup-proofing strategies such as creating parallel institutions thanks to self-reliance and incapacity of the peripheral actors to move to the center. Instead, they tried to construct a highly central bureaucratic structure. In 1923 a totally new model was founded. The Republican elites had all opportunities to model a new state according to their choices. Thus, the elite recruitment can be studied as the most sophisticated coup-proofing strategy of this period. All phases of recruitment and education were under the strict control of the Kemalist bureaucracy and its sterile recruitment and indoctrination procedures were totally closed to alternative actors. The new regime through certain radical laws annihilated major traditional corridors that used to bring peripheral actors to the center. In 1924, the unification of education law was declared and traditional schools were closed. In 1928, the Arabic alphabet was replaced with the Latin. It was a radical challenge to the traditional elites. With this, they lost their ability to bring their ideas to the centre. A new law made the use of surnames as compulsory in 1934 which was a big threat to the traditional networks in the rural annihilating the mythos of tribe and large family (İpşirli 2009: Personal interview). In 1925, religious lodges were also banned. With these reforms, the traditional elites lost their corridors to become part of the political game. The only legitimate corridor was the Kemalist socialization. Since they had no chance to operate through their traditional values and institutions, the peripheral actors could move to the centre only as naked. (Huntington 1969: 196)

1950-2000: The Rise of Contending Coup-Proofing Strategies

The era was radically different than the previous term, regarding that who sought coup-proofing has changed in it. The republican elites employed coup-proofing strategies towards peripheral actors during 1923-1950. However, after 1950, they were political elites who tried some techniques and strategies towards central actors. Democrat Party (DP) came to the power in 1950. The DP elites became the main agents of coup-proofing by 1950. However, DP, mainly because of the power share with the state elites, could not implement a coup-proofing technique save various personal contacts with the high level military officers. Surrounded by a highly consolidated Kemalist bureaucracy, political elites' capacity was very limited.

However, various policies of DP should be seen as structural advancements which contributed to the long-term coup-proofing capacity of political elites. By definition, DP was not an anti-Kemalist party, instead including its founders many of whom were from the Republican tradition. However, DP is radically different in various fields. DP had a more liberal agenda. Yet, the social basis it represented was different. Sociologically, DP, like its successor Justice Party (AP) in the 60s, was supported by the small-holder peasants, who were emerging from poverty. They are allied with expanding, but still small, commercial, industrial, urban labor groups and newly wealthy farmers. These groups represent the sociological phenomenon of rising social groups in competition with the older elite (Sherwood 1967: 55). As expected the coalition with the DP and those groups facilitated the transfer of peripheral values to the centre. Peripheral and religious groups saw DP as an actor to stop the ultra secularization process. Indeed, DP invited religion back to the public and politics. It abandoned Atatürk's prohibition of the Arabic call to prayer. Religious groups who had been excluded since 1923, found a more liberal atmosphere with the DP.

The critical question was that how the traditional elites would react to DP, which was certainly a risk for the Kemalist establishment. The Republican elites presented DP as a threat to the Kemalist order. For them, DP was destructing the basic pillars of Kemalism such as secularism and statism. Truly, the policies of DP were weakening the temple of Kemalism which had been protected with high elitist walls. DP launched huge projects in which it became almost impossible to keep the elitist nature of the regime. Compared with the former 27 years Republican People Party's rule, DP was very successful in extending various public services such as infrastructure, education, communication to the periphery, almost quadrupling the number of villages with public utility service. The area of irrigated lands was doubled. By opening four new universities, DP increased the number of university students from 20 to 65 thousand (Milliyet 2008). As expected, the path-dependent nature of such policies created major

risks to the elitist-Kemalist order. DP policies produced new corridors for peripheral actors through which the survival of the elitist Kemalist regime became difficult. Republican elites were critical of DP rule for its unhealthy autonomization of different groups. Confirming this, the major rationale of the 1960 coup was the annihilation the DP and the new groups they had created (Karpas 1964:62).

As stated, due to the enormous power of state elites, DP elites had no capacity to carry out any coup-proofing strategy. They were deprived of required mobilization and financing capacity which should be seen as the substance of all types of coup-proofing strategy. Instead, they had to accept a cohabitation model with them who had the absolute control of state bureaucracy including army, intelligence, judiciary, university. Political elites were strong in the parliament and other second degree political offices. This model was the characteristic of this period up until 2000s. In 1960 government was overthrown and the Prime minister was executed. In 1971, the army intervened by memorandum and the government resigned. In 1980, the governments along with all civil institutions such as syndicates, political parties were shut down. In all cases, civil actors were either jailed or excluded from politics. Thus, as a major characteristic of this period, political elites were weak and had very limited capacity of coup-proofing strategy. Asked why he quickly gave up, Süleyman Demirel, a politician who was ousted two times by the army replied as follows: "who was going to be behind us if we had opposed to the coup?" (Yaprak 2008: 35).

The only option was following a lower caliber of simple coup-proofing strategies such as developing personal good contacts with generals, not threatening the corporate interest of officers or co-opting several people from the Republican elites. In this period, political elites tried to rule Turkey while they were isolated by Kemalist bureaucratic military and civil elites which were not cooperative to the government. For instance, the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MİT) never informed the political elites. To give an example, having no information from MİT, headed by a military general, in 1971 Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel was sending his wife to family visits to the officers' families to gather intelligence about ongoing developments in the army. Demirel once said "MİT brings all detailed information about Angola or Syria. But MİT never helped to the governments before a military coup." (Birand, Dündar Çaplı: 2002: 199) Another famous case was the arrest of Celal Bayar, the third president of the Republic, by his presidential guardians in 1960 coup. Such cases confirmed that political elites were not supported even by the closest bureaucrats. The government's helplessness against the bureaucratic elite never allowed to initiate any structural coup-proofing strategy.

Thus, rather than coup proofing agendas, the transformative policies of political elites in this period should be analyzed in detail. Especially the AP, the successor of DP in the period between 1960 and 1980, played a critical role. Through the AP's policies, the representation of peripheral actors increased. To begin with, AP –following DP– expanded the spatial boundaries of modernization. Led by Süleyman Demirel, AP governments paid enormous attention to the development of villages and little cities. Like DP, AP created new opportunity corridors for peripheral actors. Among them, the issue of *Imam Hatip Schools* - a high school with lessons about religion opened to train *imam*- should be cited. During his different terms Demirel opened more than three hundred such schools (Milliyet 2004). These schools quickly became the major corridor that brought country men with their values to the upper echelons of bureaucracy. Critical of the radical secular nature of the Kemalist education, masses devotedly embraced those schools by donating the construction of more than 66% of all these schools (Adam 2004: 164). Secondly, Demirel quickly became the symbol of conservative masses. His simple citations of Quranic verses created a huge enthusiasm. Conservative groups including religious orders supported him which opened certain low level bureaucratic positions to those groups. Thirdly, Demirel emerged as the undisputed representative of the nascent Anatolian bourgeoisie (Ahmad 1980: 20) To conclude, AP policies contributed to the rise of peripheral actors in politics.

In this vein, another actor was Turgut Özal. Actually, Özal can be read as the continuation of the DP-AP tradition. To begin with, Özal decreased the role of state in economy which ended up with the rise of market actors. The first major privatization programs were realized in his era. Secondly, Özal challenged state-centric political discourse. For instance on the Kurdish issues in a taboo breaking way he declared that “even we should debate about creating a federation with the Kurds” (Referans 2007). Also on Islam he declared “individuals cannot be laic, it is state that should be laic” (Hürriyet 2007). Though symbolic, the discursive immunity of the Republican elites was challenged in this way. He enlarged the discursive area which is vital for civil actors. Thirdly, Özal increased the level of interdependence between Turkey and the West. (Aral 2001: 85). Turkey was following a pro-Western foreign policy since the late 40s. However, Turkey's relations with the West were highly securitized and had limited affect on domestic politics. Özal attempted to use relations with the international community as leverage in counterbalancing the state elites at home. In 1987 Turkey applied to the European Community, in the same year the government adopted personal application to the European Court of Human Rights. Similarly, he contributed to de-securitization of Turkish foreign policy by prioritizing the economy. Businessmen flying with Özal during foreign visits became the symbolic face of this change. Özal

with such policies attempted to construct a functional corridor between international community and Turkey according to which Turkey was expected to adapt itself to the norms of contemporary world politics.

In the second period, to sum up, parties coming from the DP-AP tradition attempted to enlarge the boundaries of politics. Indeed, those policies created a more heterogeneous political culture. And in the long term, those policies strengthened political actors' capacity of creating mobilization and financial leverage. But still, led by army the bureaucratic elites had the final say. After 17 years, the government was forced to resign in 1997. All military interventions from 1960 to 1997 took place without any major opposition. Still as an isolated actor, governments could not employ any coup-proofing strategy.

Returning back to the division of labor between state and political elites, the former also followed a special strategy in order to limit the political elites lest they would transform the Kemalist state. Reminding Quinlivan's definition, state elites in Turkey created certain mechanism and strategies sharing major similarities with the essence of coup-proofing. It was state elites' priority to preclude political elites in changing the Kemalist nature of bureaucracy. Firstly, as a product of the 1961 constitution, an autonomous body of civil and military bureaucratic corps was created. The Turkish system depends on a very ideological system in bureaucracy. The government has very limited power in electing the bureaucratic cadre. There are also many autonomous bureaucratic bodies which are free from governmental influence. Expected from political elites were to respect those bureaucratic decisions. When state elites felt that political elites were threatening their autonomy; high courts immediately intervened against the political elites. Any political decision be it appointing a new governor or making a new regulation about the teachers, if felt risky, were immediately brought to the high courts. Thus, the Turkish judiciary emerged another autonomous bureaucratic agent which plays a critical role in the state elites' struggle with political elites. With a mission of protecting the *status quo*, it is very normal to see frequent tensions between the high courts and the political elites. For example, in the past the council of state underlined that the primary mission of Turkish universities is to educate young Kemalists (Radikal 2006). Also, they frequently issue press communiqués reflecting the importance of Kemalism and the need to be cautious against threats to the secular system.

Secondly, a strong presidency was created as a guaranteeing mechanism. The presidency was created to form the autonomous higher bureaucracy according to the state elites' priorities. Yet, any appointment decree for other posts by the government must be signed by the president. By creating such a strong presidency, it was planned

to guarantee the regime against unwanted developments. Since the presidency holds such importance, the election of presidents has always come with political crisis. Thus, civil actors, with very few exceptions, were not permitted to elect their candidates even though they had parliamentary majority. Therefore, it has been a normal practice to elect several non-political but loyal figures for the presidential post. For example, all Turkish presidents between 1961 and 1989 were former chiefs of staff.

2000-2009: The Rise of Coup-Proofing Political Elites

Political elites in this period have capacity to implement various coup-proofing strategies. Structural developments that now enable them in coup-proofing can be analyzed under two titles: Firstly, political elites have gained a capacity to mobilize man power in state bureaucracy. With this capacity, through recruitment, they can transform the Kemalist characteristics of the bureaucratic elites. In other words, unlike the previous periods, today, political elites are in alliance with a large group of bureaucrats in major units of state machinery. Thus, they are in coalition with intellectuals, professors, judges, prosecutors, police, businessmen and journalists. The rise of educated alternative elites is mainly the product of complex social developments such as the expansion of modern education institutions and the efforts of religious movements in educational sphere. The state elites could not keep the sterile Kemalist nature of nucleus bureaucracy. In the end, the undiluted Kemalist core of bureaucracy is mixed with those new elites coming from the periphery (Gülay 2007: 39, see also Yilmaz 2005 and Yilmaz 2009).

Secondly, to realize such strategies, political elites have also gained financing capacity. The rise of new middle class in Anatolian towns ended the monopoly of state-centric capital which had always been with the Kemalist elites. Political elites, particularly in the case of the JDP, are backed by a complex conservative proto-bourgeoisie. The rise of new industrial centers in Anatolia such as Kayseri and Gaziantep, the volume of exports for each is not less than 1.5 billions US dollars a year, increased the competence of political elites. Traditional Anatolian bourgeoisie, the backbone of conservative political elites like the JDP, became a significant element of the political equation. Consequently, political elites, almost as a unique case, are capable of mobilizing man and financial power against the Republican elites.

Therefore, various coup-proofing techniques analyzed below should be seen as the products of the complex social transformation summarized above.

The 'fall' of Presidency: Since the presidency was created to protect the contract between the state and political elites, the worse thing to the Republican elites is to lose presidency. When the JDP attempted to elect Abdullah Gül in 2007, it quickly became a state crisis. The Constitutional Court, after a highly controversial decision, invalidated the early rounds of the elections, the army intervened by memorandum. The crisis obliged early elections. Despite the political chaos, Gül was elected as the eleventh president of the republic. With the election of Gül, political elites gained an unprecedented instrument which may play a significant role in coup-proofing. In other words, with Gül's presidency, political elites captured the nucleus of the state machinery. Gül himself is a typical peripheral actor which has no Republican elite origin. Coming from a religious tradition and served in several previous religious parties, Gül was certainly a deviation from the traditional Republican line.

In terms of coup-proofing, the first issue is the military aspect. Gül is now the commander of the armed forces. First of all, any high level military appointment requires his consent. All major military appointments and promotions also require his official endorsement. Yet, the traditional alliance between the president and the army against the government was dissolved. In the past, the corridor between the army and the president worked so far as an instrument of influence over the political elites. The formula "army plus the president", to remind six of the former presidents were generals, put the government into a restricted zone. Thus, by the fall of presidency, the officers lost a very important historical corridor that kept them legally in the political game. Now, putting aside a third costly option they should either obey the president or stop. Ironically, as a result of this situation, weekly meetings are scheduled between the prime minister and chief of staff as no routine tête-à-tête meeting ever took place before. The lack of such a regular meeting in the past was basically the army's autonomous position. Gül's presidency, a man out of the traditional Kemalist quota, weaken the traditional role of army *vis a vis* political elites.

Secondly, with regards to Turkish politics, the president has a huge influence on the system. First, any governmental decision or appointment requires the president's consent. For example, even an appointment of a governor or an ambassador requires the president's endorsement. However, as the second, more important is the appointment of higher bureaucrats and judges. Most of the higher bureaucrats and judges, such as the members of the Constitutional Court, university presidents are appointed by the president. The mixed system in Turkey in order to keep those high level positions independent of political elites' influence had made the president the key actor in forming them. The original expectation was that the post would always be

fulfilled by Kemalists. The president, who is the key actor in protecting the state elites' autonomy against the political elites, is now from the quota of political elites.

As expected, Gül, by his appointments to different important posts is changing the statist nature of the higher bureaucracy. In so doing, Gül carries out the most efficient coup-proofing strategy as no name appointed by him comes from the orthodox Kemalist tradition. A typical sample is the transformation of higher university bureaucracy which was completely changed by Gül within two years. For example, in 2003, it was possible to see that university professors joined by their rectors holding a poster bearing messages inviting the army to protect the regime against the government (Akşam 2003). However, less than two years, the ideological structure of the university system with regard to rectors and member of Higher Council of Education (YÖK) was changed by Gül. More as president Gül has appointed many university rectors which also paved the way to more complicated changes in all university mechanism in Turkey. The presidential influence is not limited with appointments. For example, Gül did not endorse the appointment of professors to YÖK, for his personal reservations, even though the election of professors was conducted upon the legal procedure. Interestingly, the Turkish legal system does not say anything concerning the President's *ex officio* acts, even such as not appointing a professor who is elected legally. The role of the academics should not be underestimated remembered their role as legitimacy sustaining actors in the previous coups. Thus, the traditional cooperation between the army and the universities was weakened after Gül's appointments. Instead, after Gül's appointments, many universities have sided with the JDP government even on critical issues such as the Kurdish problem.

The case of university appointments is an important sample to illustrate how the president is influential in transforming the higher echelons of Turkish bureaucracy. To conclude, with the 'fall' of presidency, political elites gained the most important instrument in employing full scale coup-proofing strategy that is capacity to transform the nucleus of the state elites. To paraphrase the Kemalist fear, President Gül may dramatically change the structure of the Turkish high bureaucracy by his appointments during his term up until 2014.

More dramatic is the recent amendment of the election process of the President with a referendum in 2007. Despite the strong criticism of Kemalist elites, the JDP amended the constitution with a referendum. Accordingly, from now on, the president will be elected by a direct and popular vote, which virtually ended the leverage of the Republican elites. By conveying the right of president to the people, the Kemalist tradition faced an unprecedented blow since all other bureaucratic and autonomous units are dependent on the presidency.

Strengthening Police Intelligence: The problem of intelligence gathering forced political elites to create an alternative mechanism. However, political elites' impotence in creating a specific parallel intelligent service drive them strengthening an existing intelligence unit within the police: *Emniyet İstihbarat* (Eİ). It quickly became the most important intelligence unit that is used by political elites in chasing various activisms within the army as a small unit which works under the general directorate of police. But, it has always been under the control of governments. Historically, Eİ can be traced back to the 30s. In 1937, a special unit was founded for private missions. In 1951, it was turned into a "private bureau". In 1958, small units after special courses were sent to major cities. The creation of small intelligent units was important development in terms of expanding the civilian intelligent. As expected, the military regime in 1960 abolished those units. It was in 1975, the intelligent unit was rehabilitated as an independent branch within the police. It was after the 80s, the role of this in coup-proofing strategies became more distinctive. In 1983, the government decided to create police intelligent units in all provinces with a new law. With a new regulation in 1985, Eİ was given the authority of making intelligence activities across the country.

Eİ has a very well trained staff working with high-tech that makes it more functional than others. Additionally, the governments gradually strengthen its authority by legal regulations. Those regulations gave extra-ordinary authority to Eİ including surveillance and monitoring. For example, with the approval of a court, Eİ can even monitor private phone calls.

Today, Eİ is an influential organization in coup-proofing strategies of the political elites. It is equipped with all technical and legal capacity to follow illegal attempts even among the military officers, a key factor in coup-proofing. The acts are reported and disseminated via media that pose a legitimacy question for the military elites and work as a further coup-proofing technique. In 2008, several generals, as a unique case, were arrested based on Eİ reports. As another unique case, a prosecutor demanded the trial of several generals depending on serious Eİ intelligence reports. To give some samples these reports include very noteworthy cases: Meetings of generals to organize a coup against the government, several military attempts to influence the Turkish constitutional court, how soldiers try to stop the government in recognizing the Annan plan in Cyprus (Radikal 2008). Likewise, Eİ, after analyzing an arrested journalist's computer, published detailed notes of several meetings in which army generals met to decide how to topple down the government (Sabah 2009). The arrest of Levent Ersöz, a retired fugitive general, is another sample that displays how Eİ operates. Ersöz escaped to Russia upon an arrest order by a court for involving illegal affairs against the government. Ersöz came back to Turkey in secret ways. However,

he was arrested by police in hospital while accompanied by non-commissioned officer (Sabah 2009). To conclude, Eİ, a unit which gathers detailed information even about the most secret meetings of the military elites, has become an effective coup-proofing instrument in the hands of political elites. Unsurprisingly, it is the most bothersome organization for the military and bureaucratic elites and blamed for being under the control of several religious orders (Radikal 2009).

Strengthening Police: The police's manpower is around 190 000, approximately one third of the army's manpower. As a highly professional organization, the Turkish police deserve to be labeled as one of the most high-tech corps. Yet, as a professional unit, it has a chance to choose and train young citizens for long years. Also, the police have several highly professional and trained units such as *Özel Harekat Dairesi* (Special Forces Unit). Organized in 48 provinces, *Özel Harekat Dairesi* is like a small army with heavy weapons.

In a Weberian sense, the police have been the most important agent to the central governments in realizing a full authority. Unlike many other units, the police have always been under the civilian control. It has been the most loyal bureaucratic unit. Moreover, most of the police force is from the peripheral and low-income earning parts of the society. Students which are accepted to police colleges mainly come from small villages (Çağlar 2004: 348-364). Sociologically, the police is a peripheral organization which is unlike the army more open to traditional and religious patterns. Especially center-right parties have paid much attention to the police recruitment in order to create a loyalist force. Thus, the Turkish police have been an organization with conservative or center-right worldview.

Part of coup-proofing strategy, political elites have been the champion of strengthening the police. In this vein, they created special units within the police. Secondly, sophisticated weaponry was bought for these units. Even during the civil-military tension in the late 90s, the army demanded the confiscation of the heavy weaponry possessed by the police. The list of heavy weapons included rockets, special machine guns and anti-aircraft rockets (Star 2008). However, political elites in the 2000s resumed strengthening the police's armed capacity. The Turkish police today have a very sophisticated armed power including Skorsky helicopters. The rise of police with such armored instruments has always been a concern for the military elites.

Since police directly symbolizes the political elites' authority, frequent problems with the army take place. For example, the army demanded *Özel Harekat Dairesi* leave the South Eastern Anatolia. In 2008, after eleven years, special police forces

were invited back due to the frequent raids of PKK. Similarly, frequent tensions are very normal between the police and the gendarmerie. Gendarmerie controls more than 90 percent of the Turkish territory, virtually all rural areas. Police face serious difficulties in terms of intelligence gathering in these areas (Yenişafak 2001). Disputes between the police and the gendarmerie over several issues such as controlling various strategic points such as ports are also frequent (Zaman 2008). Political elites naturally want to strengthen police and decrease the role of gendarmerie. Another point to be underlined in this vein is the army's rejection of exempting military service for the policemen. And finally, it should be reminded that after each military intervention, intelligence units of police were abolished yet heavy weaponry were transferred to the army. Actually, the tug of war between the police and the army is the reflection of disputes among the civilians and the army. The civilians, in that way, isolated themselves against the direct, harsh effects of the military.

The Transformation of MIT: Coups are illegal therefore they are matured under secret conditions (Needler 1966: 617). Thus, for governments, intelligence is critically important in coup-proofing. In Turkey, MIT is the central institution given the responsibility of gathering intelligence concerning national security at all levels. However, MIT in the past was a more military organization. The first civilian director to MIT was appointed by Adnan Menderes in 1957. But, after the 1960 coup, MIT was militarized quickly and a general was appointed as the director. More, important officers who played major roles in coups have MIT origin. For instance, Major General Naci Aşkun who ruled MIT after the 1960 coup was an important military officer who was among the first soldiers planned a coup against the Menderes government. Similarly, a leading name of the 1980 coup, Nurettin Ersin ruled MIT in 1971-1973, appointed by the junta leaders of the 1971 intervention (Zaman 1998). To keep MIT under the military control, no full general was appointed as a director. The directors of MIT were all been lieutenant or major generals who still had some expectations of promotions in the army hierarchy which kept them loyal to the army (Sabah 2007). An appointment of a full general was perceived risky. The military characteristic was dominant so much so that in the early 1990s, the number of soldiers working in the MIT was less than 4%; however the number of military rulers was 35% (Sabah 2007).

The dominance of military officers created two major problems: First, they never cooperated with the governments. They always worked with the army. Even MIT became a military instrument chasing the civilians. Different junta seeking generals used MIT in chasing the parliamentarians, the prime minister and even the rival soldiers. MIT was used by the Republican elites as an instrument in controlling

risky actors. Consequently, with some exceptional cases, the governments ruled Turkey without any proper intelligence. Secondly, due to the military characteristics, MİT was not very professional and successful. In 1972, thirty officers led by Hiram Abas wrote a letter to the directorate, criticizing the major problems of MİT, emphasizing the need for professional reform (Zaman 1998).

Political elites dreamed a civilian MİT which is under their control. Thus strengthening the civilian control over the MİT has been a major coup-proofing strategy in Turkey. For example, Turgut Özal attempted to appoint Abas part of his reform program. However, Abas was assassinated (Radikal 1998, Milliyet 2001). Finally, in 1992, Sönmez Köksal, a former ambassador, was appointed as a civil director. Köksal launched a complex reform agenda. MİT started employing the graduates of leading universities. Also, as a first time, instead of the former secret process, MİT published advertisements in popular newspapers. Recruitment process became more transparent. Köksal also in this vein promoted retirement process in order to purge the older officers (Aksiyon 1995).

Naturally, civil cadres transformed MİT into a different organization. Part of this, the former military discourse was abandoned. MİT started to credit new approaches with regard to political problems such as the Kurdish issue or civil-military relations. For example how Cevat Öneş, the former assistant director of MİT, commented on those issues are important proofs in this vein. According to Öneş, the official policies employed towards the Kurdish issue have failed. He believes that Turkey committed grave mistakes in the past. How Öneş as a former director of MİT, interpreted the PKK is itself striking case to confirm the transformation: "I appreciate the discourse which is defended by PKK which underlines the need for solution within Turkey's integrity" (Milliyet 2007). As another case, Sönmez Köksal as a former director of MİT, argued that Turkey's capacity of intelligence gathering should be criticized. To him, unlike many states such as the US and Germany reformed their intelligence organizations after the Cold War era, whereas Turkey failed in this task (Milliyet 2002). Finally, Emre Taner's, the incumbent director, policies display the radical transformation of MİT. Taner defends a completely different perspective on major issues of Turkey such as the Kurdish problem (Yenişafak 2007). Under Taner's administration MİT became an important bureaucratic unit which helps the government in initiating a civilian agenda on the Kurdish issue.

The transformation of MİT contributed to coup-proofing capacity of political elites in two major ways. The first, as stated above, was the emergence of a civilian discourse in approaching several problems such as the Kurdish issue. MİT, in so doing, contributed also the de-securitization of domestic politics which automatically

increase the leverage of political actors. Secondly, and more importantly, MİT after the transformation, became a governmental agent which even chased the military officers. For example, in 2005, MİT opened a file on twenty officers in the army and informed the prime minister and chief of staff. According to the MİT report several officers formed an illegal organization with an agenda of an anti-government action. *Akşam's*, a newspaper, heading summarizes the significance of the event: "Historic inquiry!" (Akşam 2008). In 2003, it was later learnt that, MİT had presented a secret file to the prime minister about the several developments in the army. The rise of MİT with this role even chasing the military officers for illegal actions is indeed a new development. MİT becomes an organization that informs the government even about the secret plots in the army. Murat Yetkin eloquently summarized this as follows (Radikal 2008):

MİT, an organization which had been criticized for not informing the government about the illegal affairs in the army during the 1960, 1971 and 1980 coup periods, is now chasing all illegal activities even in the army and informing the government.

Intra-Army Factionalism: Officers of the armed forces are not dominated by a single political viewpoint (Maniruzzaman 1992: 741). Similarly, despite a strict recruitment process and the dominance of a Kemalist ideology, there are contending political viewpoints in the army. Historically, the Turkish army has had a divided corpus of generals, yet, the division has played major roles in all historical events from Balkan Wars to the military interventions in the republican era.

The 1960 coup itself was a brilliant example proving the divided nature of the army. For example, the 1960 coup was a surprise for the incumbent government. The Chief of Staff and more than fifteen high level generals confirmed their loyalty to the Prime Minister just before the coup (Yeşilbursa 2005: 126). Paradoxically, the coup was carried out by a group of colonels and it was humiliating for an army, boasted for its strict hierarchy (Heper 2005: 36). Factionalism among the junta leaders of the 1960 coup was itself a built-in stabilizer for further coups in army. For instance, soon after the coup, in 1961, a group of officers defended that another intervention was needed. A protocol was signed named "9 February" aiming another coup which also failed due to factionalism. One needs a long list to detail all factions in this period: 21 May Coup attempt, 11 Air Force Officer Group, 14 February Process Officers, 22 February Process officers... (Kayalı 2005: 75-112).

The 1971 military intervention was by far the most divided as "different juntas at work, one within another and sometimes independent of one another" (Michaud-Emin

2008: 28-29). Actually, it was also a coup against the radical left officers who were planning a coup in the following weeks. The period before the intervention was even worse. Tens of groups existed with different targets. Of all, Talat Aydemir, the commander of military academy, deserves special attention who attempted three coups. Even in 1963, Aydemir, as a retired general, had an influence over the officers. In 1963, during the coup attempt of Aydemir, the 1st Division of the Air Forces operated against the Aydemir faction reminding a domestic war. To display the dimension of factionalism, military airplanes flew over the *Military Academy* and a general even ordered shooting 'insurgent officers' (Batur 1983: 117).

Reminding the previous samples, the politicization of the army in the late 90s again supported the rise of intra-army factionalism. Roughly, the period that had its inception in 1995 which continues today is an exceptional period in which the army is highly politicized in a continuous format. As expected the continuous politicization of the army increased the political competition among officers which strengthens political elites coup-proofing capacity.

Three major potential types of divisions can be used to analyze the Turkish army: The first is the difference between the old and young officers. On 23 May 2003, *Cumhuriyet*, a Kemalist newspaper, published a headline: "Young Officers Distressed" (Cumhuriyet 2003). Accordingly, young officers were unhappy about the JDP government's policies for challenging Kemalism. The young officers' phenomenon is frequently used in the civil-military relations. However, the problem is quite complex as it is not clear what the young officers' political position is. Different from *Cumhuriyet*, some others argue that young officers, different than the older ones, are not coup-seeking actors. For instance, Salim Dervişoğlu, a retired commander of the navy, argued that the presentation of young officers as coup-seeking actors is not correct (Yenişafak 2009). Similarly, Hilmi Özkök, a former chief of staff, argued that the young generation in the army are more democratic (Today's Zaman 2009). Thus, the phenomenon of old and young is explanatory in analyzing the behavior of military officers. The second is ideological differences which have always played important role among the officers. Ideological difference here refers to various type of intellectual positioning such as being communist or liberal. More precisely, the corpus of the officers in the army embraces different officers with different ideological orientations. There are officers with various political ideas such as left-leaning, communist, anti-American, pro-Russian, anti-EU, liberal, pro-EU, conservative. For example, Muhsin Batur, a former general commander of the Turkish Air Forces, noted in his biography that many officers were reading the books of leading Turkish communists in the late 70s (Batur 1983: 139). To give how officers may differ in foreign

policy today, Tuncer Kılınç, full general and the last military Secretary of the MGK, while he was in office, declared that “Turkey should have closer relations with Russia and Iran as an alternative to the EU.” However, he was quickly criticized by several other generals (Milliyet 2002). But, the idea of close contacts with Iran, remembering the traditional military discourse on this state, displays how military officers are divided deeply. The third divisive point is the contending ideas on how to protect corporate interests of the officers. Along with radical officers who always believe coup is normal when it is necessary, there are moderate officers who argue that coup is not the only option to protect their corporate interests. As expected, the competition of different approaches is important. For example, in 2003, a meeting organized at the headquarters of the army to decide how the army would react to the government’s policies. In the meeting, the commander of the navy, Yener Karahanoğlu urged for a plan, Aytaç Yalman, commander of the land troops, suggested a memorandum, Ibrahim Fırtına, the commander of the air forces, demanded closure of parliament. However, Hilmi Özkök, the chief of staff, emphasized that anti-democratic measures were not logical (Star 2009).

The analysis of factionalism is beyond the scope of this article (Özdağ 2004: 75-205). Important is how factionalism contributes to the political elites’ capacity of coup-proofing. To begin with, political elites form loose alliance with the moderate generals. The cooperation with Erdoğan government and the Chief of Staff Hilmi Özkök is a good example of such alliances. Özkök played a critical role during his tenure particularly disapproving radical officers’ intervention plans (Heper 2005: 217). Such alliances play significant role especially when the governments come up with reform demands. The political elites have an unprecedented capacity to make various bargains with generals mainly due to the intra-army factionalism. Secondly, intra-officer tensions helped political elites in discovering several plots. Officers who are unhappy about the radical officers’ plans do not refrain from revealing the information they have. They send even the official documents to reveal various clandestine organizations in the army. For example, recently, an officer sent a letter and informed prosecutors about illegal attempts in the army against the government which ended up with the arrest of an officer (Radikal 2009). Seeing that the government backed by prosecutors makes use of such documents, officers in different factions become more cooperative in revealing their information. Unsurprisingly, the discord of officers prevents them in creating strong and effective coalition against the government. Recent revelations of official documents proves that there is a considerable number of officers who disagree with the army headquarters and behave independently. Finally, intra-army factionalism wakens the social prestige of the army which in the long run paradoxically help the

political elites in coup-proofing. For example, thanks to the information revealed part of the factional rivalry among officers, the army became almost a kind of transparent institution whose even secret files can be seen on newspaper pages.

Creating a New Media: In the past, the Turkish media *in unison* supported the army. Military declarations were published as flash news without any substantial criticism. No mainstream newspaper criticized major military interventions. In general, for long years what are meant by the mainstream media were nationalist, Kemalist and secular newspapers. However political elites particularly during the JDP era have been successful in breaking Kemalist monopoly in the media. The rise of a critical media in line with the political elites has become an efficient coup-proofing strategy.

To begin with, alternative media organs, which used to be labeled for long years as marginal, have come to the fore as strong actors. Having their origins in the 80s, in this vein, conservative newspapers rose as major actors in the 2000s. Several newspapers such as *Zaman*, *Türkiye* and *Yenişafak* became leading newspapers with mass circulations. They are all owned by conservative groups with somehow Islamic-leaning worldviews. Unlike the mainstream newspapers, they are very critical of the army. The public influence of those conservative newspapers is very effective so much so that the army has already lost its previous untouchable position. Secondly, with the help of the JDP government, various newspapers were passed into other hands. Several major newspapers such as *Sabah*, *Star* and *Bugün* were bought by mainly conservative groups, dramatically changing the general appearance of the media. *Sabah*, which is known for its pro-army line during the 1997 military activism, has now a totally different policy. A paper which supported military activism in the late 90s reacted to the army's intervention by memorandum in 2007 with a radical headline which deserved to be labeled as the first of this type: "No more coups!" (Sabah 2007). Similarly, other papers which changed hands such as *Star* and *Bugün* have a highly critical position on the army's political policies. Thirdly, newspapers were founded with a radically anti-army publishing line such as *Taraf*. Papers like *Taraf* as independent publish the utmost criticism about the army. It is very normal to read some news, also supported by several leaked out records from the army, in such papers about the corruption scandals in the army. As expected, the cited transformation of the media in Turkey was paralleled by the similar developments in other branches such as TV channels, radios and internet media.

New Judiciary Elites: Despite all sorts of political activity of soldiers are illegal in the law, the Turkish junta leaders enjoy a highly immune environment. Rare attempts such as prosecutor Sacit Kayasu, who attempted to judge the leaders of the 1980 junta, was quickly stopped and even the prosecutors were dismissed from the profession. However, the picture changed dramatically in 2007. Part of a legal prosecution which is named as *Ergenekon*, upon the public prosecutor's demand, the court arrested several full generals among which there was the former general commander of gendarmerie. Part of the same prosecution, the former military secretary of the MGK was also taken into custody and brought to the court. More importantly, the court ordered the arrest of several active officers and even military cadets for involving illegal actions against the government. It was also later learnt that part of the same process, many retired and active soldiers were already being chased by various intelligent services with a court approval.

The legal activity against the military officers, which should be seen as another coup-proofing strategy, is the product of several developments. First, the JDP has been ruling Turkey since 2002 with a huge majority in the parliament. Unlike the previous weak or coalition governments, the JDP's political elites are more organized and strong against the state elites. Second, again as a result of long reign of seven years, where an average government continues less than two years, the JDP through his appointments is the most transformative party in terms of changing the formation of bureaucracy. Not surprisingly, like in other fields, the JDP government's appointments changed the composition of the judiciary elite. Third, the JDP government has brought several cases to the courts which are related to the illegal anti-government affairs in the army. For instance after a Turkish newspaper published a news that said that a group of officers were involved in the preparation of document to topple down the JDP government, the government immediately brought the case to the public prosecutor and demanded the punishment of those involved. As expected, the government's avidity in activating legal mechanism against the officers enhanced the ability of prosecutors in dealing with such cases. Finally, the government publicly declares its support to prosecutors who open files against military officers who are blamed for being in illegal affair against the government. For instance, once the Supreme Board of Prosecutors and Judges (HSYK) attempted to remove the judges and prosecutors who initiated the *Ergenekon* case, the JDP government's minister of justice boycotted the HSYK as in his absence no decision can be made. More, the government including Prime Minister Erdoğan publicly declared their support to the prosecutors in the *Ergenekon* case. To conclude, the political support and immunity behind the prosecutors in their litigations concerning the illegal affairs of military officers paved

the way for another significant coup-proofing strategy: The use of judiciary mechanism against the suspected soldiers.

Conclusion

Political elites in Turkey owed a special debt to the previous political leaders who created the basis of mobilization for peripheral actors which worked as the historical coup-proofing machinery. The history of coup-proofing in Turkey reveals that it is no longer possible to create certain sterile structures due to serious domestic and international dynamics. The traditional Kemalist model has no chance to survive upon the rise of new official and civil institutions that dynamically keep coup attempts at bay. The Turkish state machinery is no longer a homogenized chorus. Politics in Turkey now is under the effect of complex social formations such as conservatives and Kurds along with the conservative elites.

Given the development of several transformative dynamics such as civil society and market economy, political elites' coup-proofing capacity is likely to improve. The rise of new social groups and elites representing those created a real rationale for a contractualist model to replace the former one. Equally important is the recognition of citizenship as the organizing principle of politics. So far, citizenship has forgotten on paper and instead various ideological, religious and ethnic communal 'citizenships' have substituted citizenship. Thus, the rise of coup-proofing elites is a structural dynamic that provokes the consolidation of modern citizenship in Turkey.

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