

Subverting Civilian Control: Security Sector Reform and Autocratisation in Turkey (2002–2017)

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Table of contents

Acknowledgements	iii
List of figures	iv
List of abbreviations	v
1 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Research approach	6
1.2 Contribution to the literature and aims of the study	16
1.3 Plan of the study.....	19
2 Theoretical framework.....	22
2.1 Civil-military relations and democracy.....	23
2.2 Turkish civil-military relations	27
2.3 Historical institutionalism	30
2.4 Autocratisation and competitive authoritarianism	37
2.5 Securitisation.....	42
3 Methodology.....	47
3.1 Process-tracing: Less Hume more Holmes.....	47
3.1.1 Explaining-outcome variant	54
3.1.2 Single case study and validity questions: a trade-off.....	57
3.2 Data and evidence	61
3.3 Conceptualisation and attributions	64
4 Contextual conditions.....	67
4.1 Imperial history.....	70
4.1.1 A state-centric absolutist monarchy with an early bloomer military	70
4.1.2 Legacy	74
4.2 A revolution from above.....	81
4.2.1 A war to win	81
4.2.2 Legacy	86
4.3 Guardianship and its institutions	94
4.3.1 “The god of all policies”	94
4.3.2 Legacy	100
4.4 Conclusion.....	104
5 Security sector mechanism: Part I (2002–2008).....	107
5.1 Explanatory variables.....	107
5.1.1 Failed elites and crisis of hegemony	108
5.1.2 An outside political entity: EU as an anchor and populist tool	111
5.1.3 A subaltern group to take over.....	114

5.1.4	An elite alliance	118
5.2	The critical juncture: beginning and end	122
5.3	Reaction of the old hegemony	132
5.4	Defiance, agitation, and victory.....	139
5.5	Conclusion	147
6	Security sector mechanism: Part II (2009–2017).....	150
6.1	Emboldened government, intensified reforms	150
6.2	Broken alliances, centralised power	161
6.3	Old partners strike: The 2016 coup.....	173
6.4	Full takeover of the security sector.....	178
6.5	Conclusion	186
7	The auxiliary mechanism: Control over economy and socio-political domains	189
7.1	Increased control over the economy	189
7.1.1	Security expenditures: politicised, high, unaccountable.....	189
7.1.2	Executive level economic decision-making.....	196
7.1.2.1	The battle over controlling the security sector finances.....	206
7.1.3	Securitised wealth.....	209
7.2	Increased control over the socio-political domain.....	216
7.2.1	Old hegemony’s extra-parliamentary ways	216
7.2.2	Uprising, new discourses, new enemies	225
7.2.3	Securitised dissent	233
7.3	Conclusion	246
8	Conclusion	249
8.1	Summary of the study.....	251
8.2	Evaluating an alternative scenario: a counterfactual exercise.....	261
8.3	Limits of the study and avenues for further research.....	266
8.4	Future prospects	268
9	Bibliography	273

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List of figures

Figure 1. The security sector mechanism	4
Figure 2. First auxiliary mechanism: increased control over the economy	5
Figure 3. Second auxiliary mechanism: increased control over the socio-political domain.....	5
Figure 4. Critical juncture in 2002.....	123
Figure 5. Expenditures of security institutions as percentage of government expenditure	193
Figure 6. Number of police officers of all ranks between 2004–2019	195
Figure 7. Discretionary funds between 2003–2017 in million Euro	214

List of abbreviations

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – <i>Justice and Development Party</i>
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi – <i>Republican People’s Party</i>
DP	Demokrat Parti – <i>Democrat Party</i>
DTP	Demokratik Toplum Partisi – <i>Democratic Society Party</i>
DYP	Doğru Yol Partisi – <i>True Path Party</i>
EGM	Emniyet Genel Müdürlüğü – <i>General Directorate of Security</i>
EU	European Union
FETO	Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü – <i>Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation</i>
GP	Genç Parti – <i>Young Party</i>
HDP	Halkların Demokratik Partisi – <i>Peoples’ Democratic Party</i>
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
KKV	King, Keohane and Verba
MGK	Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – <i>National Security Council</i>
MIT	Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı – <i>National Intelligence Agency</i>
MSP	Milli Selamet Partisi – <i>National Salvation Party</i>
MUSIAD	Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği – <i>Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association</i>
OYAK	Ordu Yardımlaşma Kurumu – <i>Armed Forces Pension Fund</i>
PKK	Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê – <i>Kurdistan Workers’ Party</i>
POH	Polis Özel Harekat – <i>Police Special Forces</i>
POMEM	Polis Meslek Eğitim Merkezi – <i>Police Vocational Education Centre</i>
PVSK	Polis Vazife ve Salahiyet Kanunu – <i>Police Duty and Authorisation Law</i>
RTUK	Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu – <i>Radio and Television High Council</i>
SP	Saadet Partisi – <i>Felicity Party</i>
SSDF	Savunma Sanayi Destekleme Fonu – <i>Defence Industry Support Fund</i>
SSM	Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarlığı – <i>Undersecretariat of Defence Industry</i>
TBMM	Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi – <i>Turkish Grand National Assembly</i>
TMSF	Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu – <i>Security Deposit Insurance Fund</i>
TOKİ	Toplu Konut İdaresi – <i>Mass Housing Development Administration</i>
TSK	Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – <i>Turkish Armed Forces</i>
TUSIAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği – <i>Turkish Industry and Business Association</i>
YAS	Yüksek Askeri Şura – <i>Military High Council</i>
YOK	Yükseköğretim Kurulu – <i>Council of Higher Education</i>

1 Introduction

The failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016 put the military back at the centre of Turkish politics. As the government quickly gained control of the events, regular police and police special forces were deployed, arresting privates and officers who took part, and confiscating weapons and military vehicles used by them. Ordinary citizens were flocking onto the streets trying to stop the tanks from advancing. It was a public confrontation of the people and the police versus the military – although not the entire command. The eventual defeat of the rogue officers' attempt demonstrated that the Recep Tayyip Erdogan-led government's decisive policies to recalibrate civil-military relations prevented a genuine takeover by the army. The head-on approach of Turks in an effort to stop the military advancing by blocking the roads was praised as the ultimate change in the mentality embedded in the social psyche. At the same time, however, the putsch itself and the government's policy actions in the aftermath further proved the premature state of democracy in Turkey. At the end of the 15th of July, paradoxically, democracy was celebrated in a country which has a problematic relationship with democracy, ruled by a government that is evidently anti-democratic.

Ninety years after consolidating state authority, completing secular development and achieving relatively high levels of industrialisation since its establishment, Turkey could be expected to consolidate democracy and undertake a major democratisation plan. Modernisation theories suggesting that good economic records increase the probability of survival of democracy fail to explain Turkey's sharp autocratic turn. Living through three direct and one indirect military coups and short-lived military regimes could give the country the necessary incentive to democratise its socio-political structure. While, however, the army's powers have been curbed, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – henceforth AKP) government is becoming increasingly despotic and repressive. In literature, Turkey is now classified as competitive authoritarian (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Stelgias 2015; Ozbudun 2015; Arbatli 2014; Akkoyunlu 2017).

Competitive authoritarianism can be fundamentally described as a hybrid political system in which formal democratic institutions, such as elections, exist but in which incumbents' abuse of the power of the office and accompanying state mechanisms places them at a significant advantage against their opponents (Levitsky and Way 2010, 5).

It is the aim of this thesis to explain why the acclaimed civilianisation project of the AKP government did not achieve meaningful democratisation in Turkey. The key question of this research, therefore, is as follows: *Why did democratisation not follow political demilitarisation under AKP rule in Turkey and why have the civil-military reforms contributed to autocratisation and the emergence of a competitive authoritarian setup?*

Following the main research question above, the thesis will attempt to tackle these secondary questions:

1- In what ways has political demilitarisation, which is a concept that denotes the gradual disappearance of political power of the Turkish Armed Forces, taken place while the power of the police, the intelligence agency, and the paramilitary has increased?

2- In what ways has the AKP government restructured the economic and socio-political order in parallel with the restructuring of the security sector?

3- How has the restructuring of the security sector, in parallel with restructuring the economic and socio-political order, under specific historical conditions, resulted in competitive authoritarianism in Turkey?

This thesis will answer these questions through building up one main and two auxiliary causal mechanisms covering the full period from the takeover of the government by the AKP in 2002 until the end of 2017. At the end, it aims to reveal a process of political demilitarisation that turned into autocratisation where a new coercive structure has been forged, together with the rebuilding of the socio-political domain in the form of securitisation of dissent, and the rebuilding of the economic domain in the form of securitisation of wealth. This 15-year process happens under the country's specific institutional and historical circumstances, which will be referred to as contextual conditions and are crucial in explaining the outcome, Turkey's competitive authoritarianism, the thesis intends to confront.

Autocratisation can be described a process of regime change towards autocracy, and admittedly is a complex process with varying causes (Casani and Tomini 2019). This study will focus on the restructuring of the security sector as the key mechanism generating autocratisation. Broadly, this thesis attempts to re-evaluate the political demilitarisation and autocratisation process in Turkey. Using a historical institutionalist approach, it studies causal processes bringing about change while paying attention to the temporal ordering of events at hand. It argues that the nature of the state formation of Turkey and the way in which its economy was institutionalised and expanded already has an impact on any existing or future democratisation projects. In addition, it claims that the way in which the AKP took power away from the old bloc and its repressive apparatus (the army) while creating their own security complex (with mainly the police) reinforces the obstruction of meaningful democratisation in Turkey. The study intends to explain how and why the political demilitarisation agenda failed to produce expected outcomes through building up a chain of causal events in each of the three elements (transformation of the security sector, economy, and socio-political life) which then come together to form the competitive authoritarian setup.

The core argument of this study is as follows: under the country's unique contextual conditions, a political demilitarisation agenda in Turkey, generated predominantly by a crisis of old hegemony, leads towards a mostly reactionary chain of events and "institution-grabbing" by the civilian AKP government of prime minister, then president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. As a result, the state and its coercive arms have been through a restructuring process where the military lost its historical prerogatives and institutional reach while the police, the intelligence services and the paramilitary gained significant power and space. As the government broke old alliances and centralised its new power, the security sector was fully and fundamentally transformed (Figure 1).

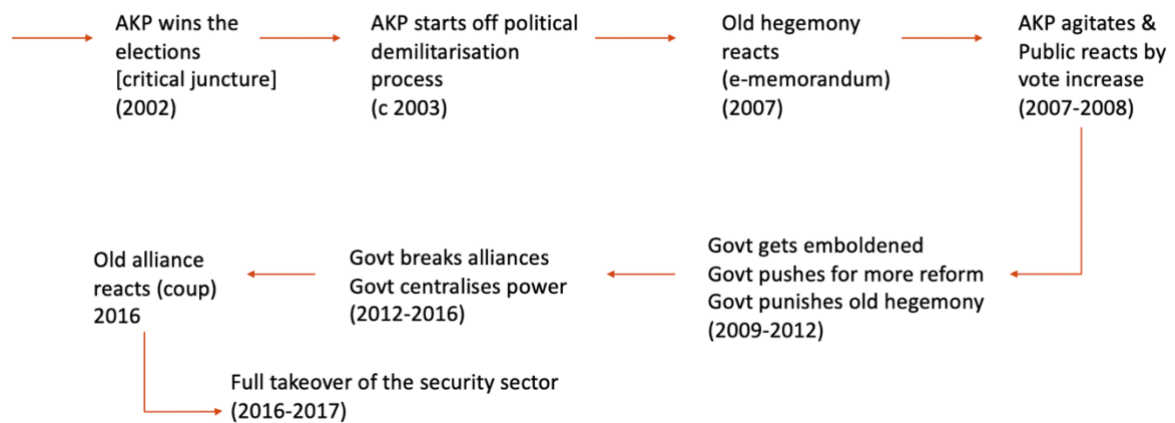


Figure 1. The security sector mechanism

The contextual conditions are the imperial history of Turkey, a revolution from above in 1923, and the guardianship of the military with all its associated institutions. These conditions are the backdrop of the causal mechanisms, giving motivation to the relevant actors to (not) act. Moreover, there are several explanatory variables that initially led to the trigger event (AKP's election victory in 2002) and then continued to drive the causal mechanisms until the outcome (emergence and solidification of competitive authoritarianism). According to this model, there needs to be a crisis of hegemony in the form of economic and political failure of elites and concomitant expectation of change; an outside entity/actor linked to the polity, such as the EU; a repressed group to take advantage of the crisis; and lastly, elite alliances bringing traditional, non-traditional, and fringe actors together. In the Turkish case, these variables came together, triggered the election of Erdogan's party, and started off the causal mechanisms.

To be able to fully explain how competitive authoritarianism emerged, two additional mechanisms are built. These demonstrate that through the autocratisation process, politically, the patriarch of the motherland changes face. The new patriarch, with the notion of personality cult heavily present, creates a new modernity where the concept of security plays a significant role in the social domain, any counter-hegemonic movement is pacified and securitised in the political domain, and wealth is taken over and securitised in the economic domain. These two auxiliary mechanisms simultaneously started to operate around 2007 when the AKP first made visible its reactionary

relationship with the old hegemony. At the end, the main security sector mechanism and the auxiliary mechanisms come together, the democratisation project ignited by political demilitarisation ultimately fails, and authoritarianism starts to appear (Figures 2 and 3). These three mechanisms are separately necessary and become sufficient when they operate together.

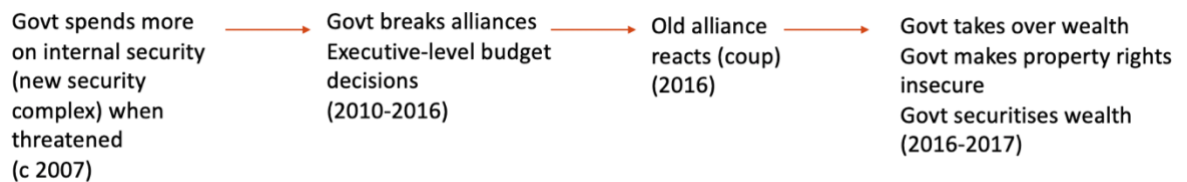


Figure 2. First auxiliary mechanism: increased control over the economy

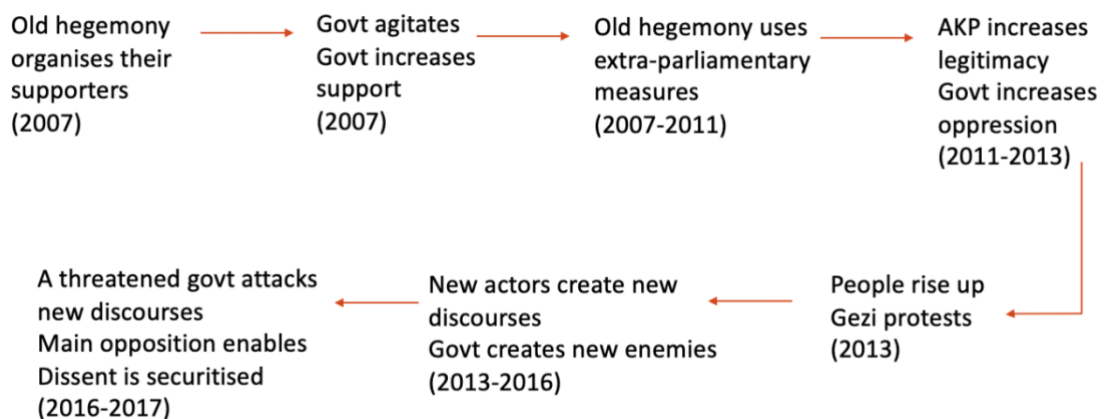


Figure 3. Second auxiliary mechanism: increased control over the socio-political domain

The term “political demilitarisation” in this study refers to the power the Turkish Armed Forces had in Turkish politics and its gradual disappearance. Since 2002, it has been possible to see the economic and political decline in the Turkish military’s power, influence and institutional reach. The established status of the armed forces as the guardian and the patriarch of the motherland is getting less and less palpable while their decision-making abilities have been carefully restricted to military-related matters. Turkey is politically demilitarised but not democratic, even though it briefly showed signs of democratic transformation when the AKP was first elected in 2002 through

unprecedentedly inclusive language aiming to appeal to all repressed groups in society. This wind of reform inside Turkey did not take long, only a few years, although it took a while, all the way to 2013, for the outside world to catch on to the realities of what is happening on the ground in Turkey.

1.1 Research approach

Pinpointing the causal mechanisms, using a case-centric explaining-outcome variant process-tracing, shaping Turkish politics over the past 15 years, starting from the AKP's first election victory, will show how power changed hands through the new ruling elite chipping away the old elite's political, economic and symbolic resources and means of power. At the same time, it will demonstrate shifts in the economic and socio-political domains, revealing how these spaces were securitised in several ways; by increasing spending on internal security at the expense of other areas, expanding the mechanisms of unaccountable spending by political elites, increased investment in the private defence sector, weakened property rights, coercive takeover of assets through law (economic domain), and by delegitimising dissent, expanding the notions of "terrorism" and "security", increasing social control, and crushing freedoms (socio-political domain). As these shifts are taking place, the new and old economic elites consistently re-orient themselves in the power centre, becoming defenders of the status quo rather than change. The established group of (non-AKP) political elites behave under the pressure of ensuring political survival, resulting in them pushing out new opposition discourses from smaller groups of political elites and preventing these ideas from finding general support.

Historical institutionalism as the theory, and the process-tracing as the method, will be complementary in this study as both put significant emphasis on the temporal dimensions of political phenomena or outcomes. Historical institutionalism's efforts to understand social processes as consisting of long-term sequences creating change will be one of the fundamentals of this study. Turning to history and looking at democracy in Turkey from a temporal angle showing episodes of change/recurrence in institutions and structure will give the answer to the main question of this study and support its claim that history has a lot to do with the rising authoritarianism in Turkey.

Emphasis will be given to the period between 2002 and 2017 to demonstrate how parallel causal mechanisms, generated by the crisis of hegemony of 2000–2001 among other explanatory causes, manifested at first by the “trigger” event of AKP’s initial electoral victory and the consequent demilitarisation agenda, led to the outcome of rising authoritarianism under the particular contextual conditions. If the trigger was the first electoral victory of the AKP and the outcome is competitive authoritarianism in Turkey, then the chain of events that happened in between will be explained through causal mechanisms including the start of the civil-military reforms, the old bloc’s power loss, and a parallel rise of other coercive agents. This causal mechanism is tied together with two other mechanisms, securitised economics and socio-politics, which involve restructuring political and social order, completing and reforming the capitalist economic agenda initiated by the army, a consequent war on all opposition, and reproduction of all these forces through newly built institutional and coercive machinery. These mechanisms are all affected or actively aided by conditions determined in the past, even after the AKP’s split from the established path. The end of the chain finally leads to the concrete manifestation of the outcome that this study aims to explain via the process-tracing method, the emerging competitive authoritarianism.

Causal mechanisms are analytical constructs which make it possible to tie causes to outcomes and deeply peer into what happened in between, improving the inferential power of an explanation (George and Bennett 2015, 137; Hedström and Swedberg 1998, 13). The aim of this study is to generate a minimally sufficient explanation of the emergence and solidification of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey by picking apart the reactionary chain of events, having an inherent, sequential logic and explaining each step (what/why/how) with an abundance of evidence and theory. This is why each step of the causal mechanisms is hypothesised pinpointing an actor/entity engaging in an activity, and the task is to confirm them.

The existence of contextual conditions in which causal mechanisms play out will not be presented as a way to generalise the core argument or theorise it by suggesting that in settings where these conditions are sufficiently similar, the outcome of competitive authoritarianism would emerge by default. They will rather act as the root that produces properties which allow the entities (e.g.

the government, the army, the elites, Erdogan) to engage in activities bringing about change (Machamer et al. 2000, 5). Social complexity considered, explaining an outcome does not automatically translate into applicability across all past, present and future cases but it would still prove to be of use in understanding other similar political instances and drawing lessons. But as it stands, considering the many contextual conditions and explanatory variables operating to produce the outcome, it does not seem entirely possible to compare Turkey with another case to see if the same type of mechanisms can be observed.

The Turkish political scene has been undoubtedly changing at an unprecedented rate over the past 15 years. After garnering political and economic power, and taking the means of authority away from the army and its associated power bloc, the AKP government contrived to create a security complex that would fill in the coercive apparatus vacuum. In conjunction with the political changes, certain institutions have become essential elements of the new security sector the AKP has been carefully building. The police force is the one of the fundamental components of this complex. Turkish police, under the command of the Ministry of Interior, has been accumulating more material power and becoming militarised as a consequence of the continuous and generous support they receive from the government. At the same time, the Turkish army's paramilitary arm, the Gendarmerie, has been gradually pulled away from the army's command towards the civilian government's reach. In addition, the influence of the intelligence services (Milli İstihbarat Teşkilatı – MIT), under the command of the Prime Ministry, has been growing in Turkish politics with its increasingly close relationship with Erdogan and his core political circle.

A decrease in the power of the army significantly shifted the power balance in favour of the civilian government, giving it more room to manoeuvre. This development resulted in the government – and Erdogan himself – becoming dominant enough to create a new security complex by repositioning institutional arrangements to set up their own repressive apparatuses. The government, “the civilians”, have become the sole political decision makers, both on paper and in practice, with the police, intelligence, and a subdued army by their side. This could be presented as how a security

sector should operate, with civilians taking all decisions, but it proves problematic in the Turkish context precisely because the power has not been dispersed throughout different segments of society and because the new security structure is employed to consolidate state power through restructuring it. The system is indeed civilian controlled but also shows the intricacies of civilian oversight. The re-organisation goes hand in hand with an erosion of rights and freedoms in the country, an over-stretched notion of “security” embedded into daily life, personalist economic policies, and dominant rhetoric blending sentiments of nationalism with Islamism, which demonstrates how security sector reform can indirectly result in a failed democratisation project.

Within historical institutionalism theory, permanence of institutions and policies over time is discussed through the concept of “path dependence” explaining the tendency of relevant political actors or structures to stay on the already established path, as the cost of reversal is usually very high (Pierson 2004; Tilly 1984; Peters 1999; Keating 2008; Levi 1997). Path-dependent stability, however, also brings the possibility of brief phases of fluidity, times when momentous change becomes more conceivable, which are dubbed “critical junctures” (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007). The AKP’s initial electoral victory in 2002 was a critical juncture, making certain political and institutional arrangements more probable and imaginable in comparison with the pre-AKP era. This event will also be referred to as the trigger leading to the outcome, as per the process-tracing methodology.

In 2002, the AKP, still a very young political player albeit formed by experienced politicians, won the general elections. Its core cadre was known to consist of die-hard conservatives. Anxiety about Turkey turning into Iran swept through the Turkish liberals and republican Kemalists. AKP members did everything they could in the initial months after their election victory to convince the public that they were going to be loyal to the secular identity of the republic, and push for Turkey’s European Union (EU) candidacy and the concomitant reform agenda put in motion by their predecessor coalition government.

Hence it was not surprising that, as a key part of its EU reform package, AKP declared the civilianisation of Turkish civil-military relations as one of its

democracy goals. Considering the troublesome history of Turkish civil-military relations, the Turkish left, neo-liberals, civil society, and the international community applauded the decision and the direction in which the AKP was heading. According to the EU, Turkey had made “determined efforts and significant progress” regarding political reforms, including re-aligning civil-military relations, and the changes were happening so swiftly that the process was seen as a “quiet revolution” (European Commission 2003; Financial Times 2003). Interestingly, the subject of civil-military relations is in fact a relatively minor EU requirement that is not extensively dealt with in the EU’s main policy documents.

Civilianisation of politics and oversight of the army by “the civilians” is indisputably crucial and necessary for the workings of democracy to function properly (Pion-Berlin 1992; Trinkunas 2005; Croissant et al. 2013; Agüero 1995; Desch 1999; Feaver 2003) The civilianisation project, put forward as part of the bigger democratisation agenda, was rigorously applied, even when the momentum was lost with regards to EU accession talks. This reform process was the most crucial part of destructing the symbiotic bond between the old bloc of Kemalist hegemony and its coercive agent, the army, in an attempt to gain political autonomy.

What explains the Kemalist hegemony and the status of the army as the guardian of Turkey? The establishment of modern Turkey followed a socio-political revolution led by military-bureaucratic state elites taking advantage of the post-WWI state crisis and ending the absolutist regime. Consequently, the modern Turkish state formation after the Ottoman Empire and the institutionalisation of capitalism in the 1920s following the establishment of the new state can be regarded as an exemplary case of revolution from above (Trimberger 1978). This revolution from above also created a ruling group consisting of political and economic elites devoted to Kemalist principles and backed by key institutions. The state-led capitalist transformation did not stand as a force for the ruling class to reform the state towards a more liberal regime, but took an opposite stand, defending conservatism and privilege (Duzgun 2012). This can in fact be traced back to the patrimonial Ottoman legacy where resources had always been centralised around the state.

From 2002, through the political demilitarisation process, the old

ruling class started to lose its power while the AKP presented itself as an influential political actor seemingly bringing different sections of society together. The party's initial electoral victory in 2002 and its subsequent victories, which resulted in increasing shares of the vote, caused the old bloc and its networks to further lose their authority. The organic bond between the Kemalist class and the army as its coercive agent was damaged.

Capitalising on the expectation of change among the public that came with the deep political and economic crisis of 2001, the AKP managed to generate unprecedented elite alliances, bringing non-traditional groups together. While it managed to attract devout groups to its voter ranks, it also incorporated more radical Islamists into the party's overarching "moderate Islam" camp (Tugal 2009). In addition, it brokered an alliance with the so-called Hizmet movement (or Cemaat) which is led by the self-exiled preacher Fethullah Gulen whose following is thought to be in the millions in Turkey and abroad. Through this quid pro quo relationship, the AKP secured a solid voter base. In return, it enabled the Gulenists' rising influence over politics and made concessions with regards to the movement's aim to hold key positions in the country's institutional layout, which would eventually end up in a full-blown political war.

By curbing the power of the army and securing a strong support base among both the general public and also the new elites, while both controlling and appeasing the old, the AKP managed to ensure the political and economic backing needed to gain further autonomy vis-à-vis the old Kemalist class. This, however, also resulted in a gap in the circle of social forces required; the problem of overseeing a coercive agent. Initially, as with every government elected in Turkey, the AKP faced the problem of how to handle the military. At first, the military had had the upper hand in this power play. Being the "pragmatic offspring" of its predecessor Islamist parties, the AKP was cautious not to antagonise the army (Cizre 2011, 57). Erdogan held meetings to soothe the army's concerns over the party's Islamic identity (Cook 2007, 104). However, very soon after, using the EU accession talks as a tool, the AKP had the required legitimacy to start the civilianisation process. Handling the army would mean relinquishing a degree of power, which the AKP had no intention of approving. When the decision was made not to work with the army but to

economically, symbolically and politically subdue it, the AKP then had to create a security complex that would reinforce the party's hegemony, reproduce order, and maintain social control.

Following the critical juncture of 2002, a causal mechanism was triggered. This juncture, ended when the political demilitarisation officially started, made the security sector takeover structurally possible. As the reforms were taking root, the old hegemony reacted in 2007 with the military announcing a memorandum aiming to impede the rise of the AKP, causing significant stir and insecurity among the government ranks. As a counter move, the government agitated to arouse public reaction to the hegemony's act, rather than dealing with it at a parliamentary level, appealing to public emotions as a tactic. The public's response manifested itself as an increase in votes for the AKP and the government's legitimacy. With this, the government gradually started to build up its own security sector by gently tweaking the penal code and police laws.

Historically, the Turkish police underwent major reforms following the 1980 military takeover. The military government re-organised the institution, expanding and militarising it (Berksoy 2010, 137). New units were established – such as the Rapid Action unit and Special Operations unit – and its weaponry was modernised. The police's status was strengthened within the legal framework. Paradoxically, the AKP government continued and further expanded the legacy of this military-era reform process. In parallel with the civilianisation project, the police gradually increased their authority and reach. Erdogan has started to personally praise the police regularly, bolstering loyalty in the institution. In his usually similar speeches, he says: “An issue for the police is an issue for myself”, that the police should “act knowing that the president is behind you”, and emphasises that “Our police and army have the right and authority to shoot anybody, any terrorist, pointing a gun at them” and “I'm talking to all our security forces, do not hesitate to use all your authority to the full extent” (Polis Dergisi 2016; CNN Turk 2015).

The events around 2010 mark the point at which the AKP government became increasingly emboldened and pushed for intensified security sector reforms. To break the bond between the old hegemony and the military to its furthest, and also to punish it, the AKP government, together with its allies,

started off the Ergenekon trials, where high-level staff members were tried for aiming to overthrow the government, which witnessed the total collapse of the military's moral authority (Soyler 2016, 2017). As the old hegemony lost influence, power recentralised around the AKP, giving it sufficient resources and motivation to break the alliances which had brought the party to power. Police reforms also intensified and together with the Gendarmerie and the intelligence services, they become the coercive elements of the government, often acting as an extension of AKP's will, suppressing dissent indiscriminately on a mass scale while becoming gradually more immune to public scrutiny via enacted laws. When the resources of the AKP's old partner, the Hizmet movement, was taken away, it reacted in a way it thought it could do the most damage in the most structured way, via a military coup. As the Gulenist cadres, however, had neither elite backing nor the necessary military unity, they were defeated (Gursoy 2017, 197). The victor of the fight of allies was clearly the AKP government, further reinforcing the power distribution that significantly benefits the party. The victory gave the government the necessary incentive to control the entirety of the agenda-making process and consequently take over the security sector while taming the military through executive level law-making.

In line with rebuilding a new security complex, two auxiliary mechanisms started to operate around the time the old hegemony tried to gain back a degree of influence in 2007. These two mechanisms, covering socio-political life and the economy, put in motion a process whereby these domains were restructured. These two mechanisms complement the main security sector mechanism and at the end all three conjoin to reveal the outcome of competitive authoritarian state setup. The two processes demonstrate the erosion of rights and securitisation of wealth in a step by step fashion.

Resting confidently on its high share of votes and the entities it has managed to either subdue, redesign or create, the AKP government has become more confrontational and coercive in its dealings with segments of society voicing democratic demands. The socio-political domain was restructured to increase oppression, delegitimise new political discourses and securitise dissent. This mechanism started off around 2007 when the old hegemony organised its supporters to take to the streets under the banner of

the so-called Republic March, to which the government responded by agitating their constituency against the march and increasing the AKP's share of votes. As a reaction, because it did not have the required parliamentary force to challenge the party's rise, the old hegemony used extra-parliamentary tools and judicial activism (Ciddi and Esen 2014, 422). As these tactics failed, the government increased both its legitimacy and oppression, using its newly structured security setup.

As a response, among other issues, to increasing social control and oppression, the Gezi Park uprising, first in Istanbul then nationwide, was ignited in 2013. The uprising, which was brutally crushed and showed the new security complex at work, also led to the emergence of new socio-political discourses – an a-la-Turca amalgam of green politics, gender equality and civil rights – to be discussed as part of a necessary new deal that needs to be reached with the government. Certain political actors, such as the pro-Kurdish party, took advantage of the desire for such a deal and ran on this platform. In the meantime, the AKP created new enemies out of the uprising, the protestors and their real and imaginary supporters.

Following the Gezi uprising, the idea of “national security”, or security in general, has become dominant in politics as well as in the social sphere, with any opposition branded a threat to national security, or worse as terrorism, that needs to be eliminated. Daily life, through the rise of nationalism with a hint of Islamism and neo-Ottomanism, is controlled and put in order. “Good citizens” are created by encouraging civilians to take matters into their own hands if they are confronted with situations threatening general security, either by playing the role of an informant or playing the role of a vigilante by intervening directly. Opposition is then crushed in the micro-scale of the neighbourhoods, while the state takes care of the macro-scale by waging a literal war against the Kurds in the south-east of Turkey and a political one against all the “other”. Experiments with new discourses were attacked by a highly threatened government but were also undermined by the main opposition, who represent the old hegemony. The main opposition comes from a political lineage that established the Republic and effectively determined the borders of politics in the country. They have a natural tendency to see the survival of their political tradition and status as above any possibility of

fundamental change, even if that means indirectly aiding undemocratic policy-making. In the post-Gezi era, this has aided in delegitimisation of new actors and discourses, allowing the government to broaden the definitions of terrorism, national security, enemies, and so forth.

The 15 July coup attempt and the declaration of a general state of emergency took the suppression of democracy to another level. Pronounced by president Erdogan as “a gift from God”, the coup attempt gave the government further motivation and justification to shut down civil society organisations and newspapers, jail journalists en masse, engage in wealth grabbing, and engage in a mass purge of state employees under the justification of fighting terrorism. These practices of the government and its tight grip on society heavily resemble the undemocratic regulations of the coup d'état eras of the 60s and 80s, making the “advanced democracy” argument the president is inclined to bring up questionable. Erdogan is fond of comparing Turkey to Western countries in terms of democracy; this quote is representative of the rhetoric he recurrently resorts to: “What ban did we impose and on whom? We have every kind of freedom here, more than they have in the west” (T24 2017). In fact, through the widespread use of a language filled with high-peril factors and literal dangers – such as terrorism – the AKP has created a socio-political environment where dissent of any scale is securitised, thus presented as a threat that needs to be eliminated. In such a tense climate, for citizens, politics in everyday life becomes either something to be avoided or to be done at your own risk with the real or imagined possibility of becoming an enemy of the state by aiding terrorism.

President Erdogan, whose powers were on paper largely symbolic, also pushed for a presidential system to be implemented through a draft bill, passed through a referendum on 16 April 2016 amid allegations of voter fraud, which resulted in a significant power shift from the Parliament to the president himself while giving authority to the executive branch to appoint and fire Cabinet members. The Cabinet is accountable only to the president, whereas they used to be accountable to the Parliament. More crucially, the new system gives the president the authority to determine national security policies and necessary measures without the need for consultation. Such a power shift in the parliamentary system gave significant and mostly unchecked authority to

the president over the security apparatuses. Another issue of Erdogan's increasing influence over the security establishment can be observed in his generous spending of discretionary funds, which are allocated for presidents and prime ministers to use in any type of secret operations concerning national security. The amount disbursed by the president quadrupled over the past 10 years, reaching almost 400 million Euros in 2016 alone, which is similar to the entire annual budget of MIT and higher than the budgets of certain ministries.

To conclude, this study ultimately examines the changing institutional structures and mechanisms of the 15 years between 2002 and 2017, pinpointing how the AKP gradually erased the old hegemony and established their own through a combination of diminished democracy and strengthening a new security setup. At the same time, as economic power becomes tightly concentrated around the regime, the economic elites keep choosing to position themselves in the close circle despite the potential threat of retribution due to ever-changing political dynamics within the AKP. Social life is being restructured in line with conservative-nationalist ideas and suppression of dissent. The opposition's utmost concern over survival feeds into the AKP machine, reflecting on Erdogan's growing strength. Overall, any political, social or economic actor – any type of counter-hegemonic organism – with a hypothetical drive to push for democratisation cannot or does not do so, resulting in a loop of un-democracy even after the biggest challenge to Turkish democracy, the dominance of the army in politics, is effectively overcome.

1.2 Contribution to the literature and aims of the study

This study aims to contribute to important strands of literature. At its core, it delves into discourse around civil-military relations and examines the workings of the civilianisation process. Rather than focusing predominantly on structural elements bringing about change in civil-military relations, it aims to demonstrate the dynamics of agency and structure relationships and how they play out in this case. This study does value historical legacies but also explores in-depth the actors' behaviours and their implications and commits to doing so on an equal footing. Similarly, it aims to remedy the lack of analyses in the field focusing on causal mechanisms that generate civilianisation. This study not only discusses sets of variables triggering a reactive sequence leading

to a specific outcome but makes its main intention to zoom in on this mechanistic sequence to pick apart the pieces that in fact produce that outcome. While revealing these mechanisms, it not only shows a case of successful civilianisation but discusses the implications of it. Therefore, it contributes to the democratisation literature by challenging the idea that civilian control is of the utmost importance and an end goal, and by demonstrating the necessity of seeing democratisation as a holistic notion in which civilianisation is only one part. By widening the discussion from pure civilian control to security sector reform, it also shows that the civil-military relations literature's focus on civilianisation obscures the interconnections between the power dynamics of a variety of security institutions and the democratisation process, which are in much need of being rigorously investigated. By arguing that the Turkish case is a caveat for prematurely celebrating successful civilian control and showing exactly how it can feed into an autocratisation process, the study also aims to contribute to the growing body of literature concerning democratic backsliding, which has garnered increasing attention over the past decade (e.g. Casani and Tomini 2019; Bermeo 2016; Waldner and Lust 2018; Coppedge 2017). This strand of literature concerned with "waves of autocratisation" or "crises of democracy" is a fresh one and therefore in need of systematic analysis to illustrate how and why this backsliding takes place. In the same vein, the theory of competitive authoritarianism of Levitsky and Way (2010) describes but does not elaborate. This study exhibits exactly how a competitive authoritarian setup can be established via an autocratisation process. In addition, it provides thick analysis of a case of securitisation as a tool to construct competitive authoritarianism, therefore contributing to both sets of literature. Lastly, it contributes to the field of Turkish studies by putting forward a detailed account of an institutional transformation that took place in the recent past which has puzzled many spectators and confused many academics. By taking security sector reform as the core of the explanation of this transformation and presenting this explanation as sufficient, this study aims to participate in the academic discussions taking place at the moment trying to decipher "what went wrong" via a myriad of interpretations.

There have been numerous studies written on civil-military relations in

Turkey in recent decades. Many have praised the government's efforts in curbing the army's political power. Scholars concerned with Turkish civil-military relations have seen the changes as a step in the right direction towards full democratisation of the country (e.g. Satana 2008; Heper 2005; Cizre 2008; Cook 2007; Morris 2005). These studies follow modernisation theories suggesting that putting civilianisation of politics together with a strong-willed civilian leader and economic growth could increase the chances of democratisation. Starting from 2013 after the Gezi protests, however, the wind has changed direction. Following the Gezi events, understanding how Turkey's politics have been withdrawing from the beginnings of a democracy has become the subject of scholarly debate, although the warning signs appeared after 2005 – while pundits and academia were still glorifying the AKP. Today, it would not be a contested idea to state that Turkey is experiencing a visible authoritarian retreat.

The idea for this thesis emerged when the intelligentsia failed to do its primary job, of taking a critical and guarded approach at all times when it comes to power, and instead acclaimed what seems to be a policy change with more ominous implications as a positive revolution. This thesis aims to first criticise the ways in which the literature on Turkish civil-military relations misread policy by reconstructing what happened between 2002 and 2017. Through this reconstruction, it aims to create a causal chain leading to competitive authoritarianism, which will show how following a certain set of events can eventually lead to the failure of democratisation. This study takes the stance of seeing democratisation as a holistic project, and the Dahlian type of “modern dynamic pluralist society” (Dahl 1989) with all its requirements for power-sharing, which also emphasises full civilian control as an acceptable goal to pursue for a transitioning country, instead of accepting certain politically calculated, as well as ad hoc, steps as worthy of academic commendation.

There is scholarly activity describing Turkey as a diminished democracy under Erdogan and there are visible attempts to explain how it happened (Cook 2017; Tugal 2016b; Phillips 2017). There are also a growing number of studies putting the country in the category of competitive authoritarianism (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Stelgias 2015; Ozbudun 2015; Arbatli 2014). It is

clear that Turkey shows clear traits of a hybrid regime, but as with studies of all hybrid regimes, further study is needed to understand exactly how and why it turned into a competitive authoritarian system that would go beyond listing characteristics that fit Levitsky and Way's description. This study will attempt to do so by tackling the restructuring of the security sector and the strengthening of new coercive agents under the historical and institutional arrangements preceding the AKP. While political events and the cult of Erdogan have been abundantly studied (e.g. Lancaster 2019; Uysal and Schroeder 2014; Somer 2018; Esen and Gumuscu 2017b), the role of the police, intelligence and paramilitary has been lacking. There is already a gap in the literature regarding police organisation and policing work in Turkey.¹ However, a comprehensive study pinpointing the construction of a new security sector involving non-military agents and their involvement in autocratisation over the past decade does not exist. It is the aim of this study to fill this gap and further contribute to the historical documentation of the past 15 years of Turkish politics while attempting to explain the making of a new modernity under the AKP. Most fundamentally, this study aims to open up "the black box of causality" to see what processes caused the emergence of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 25). Moreover, since it is clear from the Turkish case that democratisation is not always the outcome of political demilitarisation, this study also aims to show, and consequently contribute to the civil-military relations literature by examining a peculiar case, that while Turkey is a successful example of a consolidated civilian oversight, it is also a good case study to demonstrate the complexities of civilianisation and what comes after. This case study of military reforms might prove useful when reading and assessing policy changes in other systems where contextual conditions might be similar.

1.3 Plan of the study

Seven parts follow this introductory chapter, in which I delve into the

¹ Apart from the critical studies of Berksoy 2007 (unpublished thesis); Berksoy 2010b; Demirbilek 2011 (unpublished thesis); Piran 2013. For descriptive but outdated works on the structure of the Turkish police, see Ozcan and Gultekin, 2000; Aydin 1996. Also on the privatisation of security in Turkey with analysis of the police, see Haspolat 2012; Dolek 2011 (unpublished thesis).

theoretical background of the study, the methods I used, and the analysis. Chapter 2 gives an overview of the theoretical framework of this study and elaborates on the relevant literature. At the core of this thesis lies the idea of problematising civil-military relations and its relationship with democratisation in a case study. Therefore, I look into the rich civil-military relations literature, as well as how it has been interpreted in the Turkish academic sphere. Since the causal mechanisms built into this thesis take their primary theoretical force from historical institutionalism to reveal and explain change, I examine what historical institutionalism stands for and which of its analytical tools are employed in this study. Lastly, theories on democratisation, autocratisation and competitive authoritarianism are discussed to give an overview of the existing literature. I add discussion on the theory of securitisation to this section as I consider securitisation to be a salient tactic driving autocratic transformation.

Chapter 3 assesses in detail the methodology of this study. It demonstrates why process-tracing is a suitable method to explain what happened in Turkey: it provides the instruments necessary to make a deep dive into a case, enabling an empirically rich study with high internal validity. Chapter 4 discusses the contextual conditions that constituted the backdrop of the institutional transformation in Turkey between 2002 and 2017. These specific conditions also provide the necessary context in which the causal mechanisms built could take place. They are important to discuss to understand how “history sticks” and how they influence actor behaviour.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 represent the analysis section of the thesis. These chapters investigate the subparts, and the postulations I associate with these subparts, of one main and two auxiliary causal mechanisms that form the analytical backbone of this thesis. In chapters 5 and 6, I build the main security sector mechanism presented in two parts. The first part (Chapter 5) firstly lays out the four interconnected explanatory variables that started off the causal mechanism(s) and shaped the outcome. It then examines the 2002 election and argues why it is the only meaningful critical juncture through which the causal mechanism can be studied. Afterwards, steps of the reactionary process started by the critical juncture are discussed. The second part of the security sector causal mechanism (Chapter 6) focuses on the time frame between 2010

and 2017, and explains the period that ended with the full takeover of the security sector by the government. In both chapters, the rise of the police, intelligence services, and the Gendarmerie is laid out to argue how the government established its own security complex in parallel to initiating and sustaining political demilitarisation. Chapter 7 is split into two parts to untangle the auxiliary mechanisms triggered in 2007. The first part demonstrates how the government increased its control over the economy and ultimately securitised wealth. The second part does the same with the socio-political sphere and reveals a process of securitisation of dissent and creation of a punitive state. As the concluding part, Chapter 8 summarises the arguments of the thesis, engages in a counterfactual exercise to strengthen those arguments, describes limitations of the study and possible avenues for further research, and explores Turkey's political prospects.

2 Theoretical framework

To be able to sufficiently answer the research questions and generate a robust explanation, this study utilises a mixture of theories. The process-tracing methodology, which will be discussed in the next chapter, allows an eclectic approach to theory utilisation, and enables the use of different theories to confirm different parts of causal mechanisms. I use a mixture of theory but historical institutionalism lies at the heart of the theoretical framework. Although historical institutionalism is largely concerned with institutional persistence rather than change, there have been valuable efforts by scholars in the field to develop concepts explaining how institutional change might occur. I apply historical institutionalism's many analytical elements to study institutional transformation in Turkey. Historical institutionalism, with its focus on the boundaries the past draws for the future, allows this study to look at a 15-year period from a wider angle by including the impact of antecedent and contextual conditions on a relatively swift political process. I do put more emphasis on the power of agency, especially during critical junctures, than historical institutionalists would be comfortable with, but I still justify the decisions that resulted in divergence as processes that were informed by actors' past experiences. In this way, I aim to have a more integrative approach, bringing together structure and agency in explaining change. Historical institutionalism pays attention to the roles of both history and institutions in political and social transformations, as well as emphasising "processes" and "mechanisms" generating change and stability, making it ideal for this analysis. The theory also puts heavy emphasis on power distribution among actors by interpreting "institutions as the developing products of struggle among unequal actors" (Pierson and Skocpol 2002, 706). In this way, the theory manages to explain power struggles and the self-reinforcing capability of power in a straightforward way. Therefore, it becomes more obvious why the whole process towards competitive authoritarianism in Turkey can be seen as a power struggle over institutions, which makes it less complicated to explain agency motivation for acting a certain way: it is about power.

Because the starting point of this thesis is success of civilian control but

failure of democratisation, civil-military relations and democracy theories are also used. Civil-military relations theories and their conceptualisations work as points of reference to inform what Turkey stands for and what needs to change to be able to talk about civilian control. Therefore, the theory makes it possible to describe the change in Turkey as a shift from a tutelary regime to one where the military is reined in. Similarly, democratisation theories are used as benchmarks to lay out what conditions are necessary to define a system as a democracy, and the points at which Turkey fails. These, together, show the discrepancy that Turkey demonstrates between fully controlling its military yet failing at democratisation. Additionally, as the study describes the path of political demilitarisation towards competitive authoritarianism as a case of autocratisation, it engages with the newly developing literature on democratic backsliding. I use its analytical concept “executive aggrandisement” to describe the ways in which the AKP captured power in a mostly legal but pernicious fashion. This study uses Levitsky and Way’s concept of competitive authoritarianism to describe how Turkey could be classified as of the end of 2017. Lastly, securitisation theory is employed to describe and explain the strategies and tactics autocratising regimes can utilise to capture institutions, hence power, and garner legitimacy to aid their survival. The following sections will elaborate on these theories, their claims, and how this study interprets and then applies them to the case at hand.

2.1 Civil-military relations and democracy

There is little doubt that civilianisation of politics is one of the main requirements for a modern and pluralistic democratic system. Civilian control of the military is clearly an important issue for all nation states but it becomes even more crucial “in those states where the military *was* the government and still enjoys prerogatives it negotiated for itself [...]” (Matei 2013, 30). A democratic system necessitates military compliance with government authority (Pion-Berlin 1992; Trinkunas 2005). The organisation, missions, and decisions of the military should be controlled and overseen by a civilian authority. “Civilians” in general refer to non-military political and social actors and institutions, though as mentioned by Croissant and Kuehn (2015), in a

wider sense it includes all institutions and organisations concerned with political decision-making as well as certain non-state actors. In short, civilian control of the military requires civilian officials to have broad policy-making authority over state matters without any interference from the military (Agüero 1995; Trinkunas 2005).

Associating the absence of coups d'état with "good" civil-military relations is futile as there are many other traits to civil-military relations (Desch 1999, 3; Croissant et al. 2010). Coups can be seen as an extreme condition, a last resort, and they are "only the tip of the iceberg" (Croissant et al. 2013, 21). Their occurrence and frequency give a good indication regarding the condition of civil-military relations in a given country, but are not sufficient. The lack of coups, in fact, might even suggest that a military does not feel the need to directly intervene in politics because they can influence politics and assert power in other, more indirect ways (Croissant et al. 2013, 21; Feaver 1996). This argument is particularly interesting when applied to Turkey, where the military put its tanks on streets when they felt most threatened, but relatively quickly went back to the barracks following an election. Apart from these outbursts, they managed "business" behind closed doors; pushing for a heavy security agenda, enjoying a privileged position in society, overseeing an independent and untouchable budget, and forcing unwanted governments to resign. Although it was a slightly different breed of coup considering the identity of the organising officers – who were mostly Gulenists instead of the usual suspects, namely Republican/Kemalist/secularists – the last coup attempt of 15 July 2016 can also be seen from this perspective. Due to the intense crackdown on the Gulenist movement in the political and socio-economic sphere, the coup was the last resort to assert power and to ensure the survival of the movement. They could not influence politics as they did prior to the breakdown of their alliance with the AKP, so this was seen as an opportunity to be seized. Ironically, it also brought an end to whatever influence and strength the movement had left in the circles that matter.

Michael Desch explains that the indicator of the state of civilian control is "who prevails when civilian and military preferences diverge" (Desch 1999, 4-5). Following Robert Dahl's arguments, Desch suggests that to be able to

understand whether the military has an important role in political decision-making, we can distinguish certain issues that pitted the military against the civilians and pinpoint the victor. According to Desch, “If the military [prevails], there is a problem; if civilians do, there is not”. Croissant et al.’s (2013) conceptualisation is more specific and more useful. They determine five decision-making areas in civil-military relations: elite recruitment, public policy, internal security, national defence, and military organisation. This type of categorisation with more tangible indicators allows a more elaborate assessment of the degree of civilian control (as high, medium, or low). A high degree of civilian control is more crucial in certain areas, such as elite recruitment, than others, such as military organisation. But overall, it can be argued that prior to 2002, Turkey fell somewhere between medium and low civilian control, whereas the military reforms pulled the country into the medium intensity level sitting close to a high level of control. As of July 2016, the degree of civilian control could be classified as high.

In scholarly work discussing newly democratised countries, it is common to come across Linz and Stepan’s description of a consolidated democracy as a political situation in which democracy has become “the only game in town” (Linz and Stepan 1996, 5). Regarding civilian oversight, Linz and Stepan claim that a democratic arrangement of civil-military relations “is one in which there is low contestation by the military of the policies of the democratically elected government and where the military accepts that they have low ‘prerogatives’ or reserve domains” (ibid, 110). Taking Desch, Linz and Stepan, and Croissant et al. into consideration, it is clear that civil-military relations in Turkey have shifted towards the civilian side and developed more or less in line with what civil-military scholars suggest to be a good pattern where the civilians mostly prevail. However, it is problematic to generalise what is happening in Turkish civil-military relations as a democratisation process leading to democratic consolidation (as some scholars have done, which will be discussed in the next section).

Linz and Stepan also argue that before consolidation, five interconnected conditions must exist. These are free civil society, autonomous political society, rule of law, state bureaucracy and institutionalised economic society (Linz and Stepan 1996, 14). Clearly, however, it is not only the

existence, but the proper functioning of these conditions, which is necessary. These conditions should be sustained by democratic political practices. Institutions providing a long-term basis for these practices should be established and maintained. Democratisation should be seen as a holistic project; tackling only certain institutions (e.g. the military) which challenge democratic rule cannot be seen as sufficient for democratisation. This study will examine certain rights and freedoms in Turkey to be able to assess the strength of its democracy. The status of the economic and social, and civil and political rights will demonstrate the efficiency of the acclaimed democratisation process of the Turkish government. Problems in these fundamental rights overtly demonstrate Turkey's shortcomings in terms of Linz and Stepan's five conditions.

Robert Dahl suggests that although civilian control is a must, in order for a state to be governed democratically, the civilians who control the military must themselves be subject to the democratic process (1989, 245). In his *Polyarchy* (1971), Dahl counts eight institutional requirements for a democracy: (1) almost all adult citizens have the right to vote; (2) almost all adult citizens are eligible for public office; (3) political leaders have the right to compete for votes; (4) elections are free and fair; (5) all citizens are free to form and join political parties and other organisations; (6) all citizens are free to express themselves on all political issues; (7) diverse sources of information about politics exist and are protected by law; and (8) government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference. In his later work on *modern dynamic pluralist society*, he emphasises the importance of dispersing power and political resources (money, knowledge, status, etc.) among a number of relatively independent actors and authorities to prevent these being concentrated in any single unified set of actors (1989, 245).

Dahl's argument is similar to Kamrava's, who states that genuine democratisation requires the existence of "competing groups scattered throughout the polity, both within the institutions of the state and the strata of the society" (Kamrava 2007, 201). According to Kamrava, there needs to be a civil society that would contribute to tipping "the balance of power in favour of society and away from the state". It was expected that democratic change would be seen in Turkey when developments in civil-military relations were

observed. However, claiming that the process would likely result in the consolidation of democracy in the country demonstrated a premature hopefulness. Following Dahl and Kamrava's lines of reasoning, it can be said that shifting power from one very powerful entity (the military) to another (the government) is not by itself enough to pave the way for meaningful democratisation as power is not dispersed throughout different segments of society. Therefore, the focus of discussions on ensuring civilianisation in unconsolidated democracies, such as Turkey, should shift from pure civilian control to a more specific form of civilian control, that is "democratic control", which denotes a system where authorities overseeing the military are themselves subject to the democratic process (Bruneau and Croissant 2019, 9).

2.2 Turkish civil-military relations

It is useful to study the literature on Turkish civil-military relations and the recent changes in order to pinpoint what is problematic in democratisation arguments put forward. Scholarly works on the Turkish military written before 2002 commonly talk about its "privileged position" in politics and its participation in decision-making processes (Narli 2000, 108). Turkey was seen as a one of the "military democracies" where "the state dominates but allows the military to play an important role in domestic politics" (Kamrava 2000, 68).

The remaining literature on this topic from this period bears similarities to these arguments and has parallel themes: a strong army manipulating policy-making and a weak democracy allowing it. Perlmutter's description of an "arbitrator army" fits very well to the Turkish case (Perlmutter 1981). According to Perlmutter, when an arbitrator army intervenes, it is expected to return to the barracks once the disputes are settled. This does not, however, mean that the army relinquishes its influence and power completely. It simply continues to exert power and influence from behind the scenes. After every coup d'état, the Turkish Armed Forces (Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri – TSK) stepped down, returning to the barracks fairly quickly. But the TSK ensured that it protected its position in society as defender of the constitution and the ideals of the Republic. The TSK's image as the protector had been highly praised by

Turks and the army had, in the recent past, been the most popular and trustworthy entity. Due to this fact, the above-mentioned scholarly works do not state any kind of anticipation or prediction of a possible rebalancing process in civil-military relations undertaken by the government. Narli warns that the stability of the country hinges on “the capacity of civilian governments to maintain harmonious relations with the military” as “efforts to discredit the military will lead to political turmoil” (Narli 2000, 121). Jenkins confidently states that the TSK “is unlikely to be prepared to relinquish the future of the country to its civilian politicians” therefore it is “likely to remain in the political arena” (Jenkins 2001, 85). It could be expected that with the EU accession process, civil-military relations would become a political issue to tackle; however, the historical and sociological context and experiences did not allow scholars or analysts to be bold in their predictions.

Studying the post-2002 literature on Turkish civil-military relations is a curious task. The initial euphoria regarding the military’s civilianisation process is visible, especially among Turkish scholars. There are numerous articles praising the government’s efforts in curbing the TSK’s political power. This process is seen as a step forward for democracy, and as Nil Satana (2008, 358) argues, it is the underlying reason why Turkey has “progressed through the stages of democratization”. Moreover, she declares that resetting the power balance “contributes to the consolidation of democracy”, making consolidation “more likely in Turkey”. Satana’s claims imply that the country passed the transition phase of democratisation and has entered the consolidation stage.² Metin Heper (2005, 228) also suggests that the government was able to “gradually and carefully let the military know who is the boss” because it gave the military the impression that it “worked hard in order to successfully grapple with the problems the country has faced”. According to Heper, civil-military relations in Turkey have moved “closer to those in liberal democracies” due to the AKP’s competency in dealing with the military. Another Turkish scholar, Umit Cizre (2008, 162), claims that it is possible to see a “genuine trend towards a more democratic civil-military equilibrium”

² However, Satana accepted in 2014 that Turkey’s democracy is broken, stating that civilianisation “cannot bring consolidation” and “other conditions are also necessary” (Satana, 2014).

when recent developments are considered. Steven Cook (2007, 13) talks about “Turkey’s ability to break from the logjam of authoritarian stability” and asserts that the visible changes “have clearly created conditions more conducive to the deepening of democratic practices” in the country.

All of these arguments suggest a direct link between political demilitarisation and democratisation without studying the social actualities at hand and without considering the unchanged dynamics in the fundamental mode of coercion and social relations. Without explicitly saying so, they fall prey to the electoralist understanding of democratisation (“fallacy of electoralism”), suggesting a positive link between facilitation of democracy and commitment to holding regular elections (Lindberg 2009; Carothers 2002). They assert that Turkey had already completed its transition to democracy since the 1950s as it was holding regular elections in a vibrant party environment, and that consolidation was the last and main challenge (Somer 2016). But when consolidation did not happen, the focus became, in parallel to the general civil-military relations literature’s shift to “second generation” issues, the military’s existing “reserved domains” as the only major obstacle to consolidation (Kuehn 2017a). Therefore, the formula seemed simple: no military equals impending consolidation. This interpretation not only glossed over the general democratic deficiency of Turkey that was carried into the 2000s but it also concealed the early signs of autocratisation and creation of a security complex benefitting the AKP government. The academic euphoria spilled into the public discourse (and vice versa) and created an atmosphere where scepticism over the civilianisation process became taboo and the sceptics were marginalised as anti-democratic. Although they had harshly criticised the Kemalist ideology for its rigidity for decades, these pro-civilianisationists did not give the same ideational flexibility and critical thinking space they demanded previously to those who argued for a multifaceted discussion over the process. Similarly, the civilianisation process, from the very beginning, did not include any vertical bargaining processes – such as between civil society and the state regarding the strength or transparency of the oversight of the security sector – and this was never factored into the discourse. The very fact that civilianisation was taking place was thought to be so revolutionary that anything to disturb or protract the

process was pushed aside, allowing civilian control to be played out horizontally at the top level in the form of power changing hands. The scholarly studies from this era capture this spirit of the time quite well.

2.3 Historical institutionalism

The history of political thinking shows that political theorists have always been concerned with understanding and analysing institutions. As the late 19th century witnessed major developments in the field of political science, the discipline was still occupied with institutions and government and their formal and legal aspects (Steinmo 2008; Peters 1999). Structure mattered and determined behaviour, but there was a lack of attempts to understand how other – such as informal – issues influenced institutions. The new institutionalist approach precisely focuses on these and gives one the flexibility of bringing other aspects of institutions, such as beliefs, paradigms, culture, shared norms and knowledge, into academic analysis (Bulmer 1998).

Peters (1999) shows that there are at least six versions of the new institutionalism: normative institutionalism, rational choice institutionalism, historical institutionalism, empirical institutionalism, international institutionalism, and societal institutionalism. Although there are a number of divergent approaches discussing the ways in which institutions form, persist, or change, there is no discernible disagreement in the field on how to define what an “institution” is. In their seminal work on historical institutionalism, Thelen and Steinmo put forward a definition of institutions that includes formal organisations, as well as informal rules and procedures structuring behaviour (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 2). Combining “formal and informal rules, conventions or practices” that shape “the relationship between individuals in various units of the polity and economy” can commonly be seen in definitions of the phenomenon (Parsons 2007, 70; Hall 1986, 19). This study follows the same definitional logic, which also includes seeing institutions as “the more overarching structures of the state” and “the nation’s normative social order” (Ikenberry 1988, 226).

This study focuses on historical institutionalism as the main element of its theoretical framework. It utilises the theory’s analytical components – such

as critical junctures; antecedent, permissive, and productive conditions; reactive sequences; and mechanisms of persistence – as well as its emphasis on the significance of agency during critical times of political divergence. Regarding the latter angle, its focus overlaps with the rational choice approach proposing that political actors move strategically to achieve their goals, maximising self-interest. This sentiment of rational choice, however, limits analysis and creates more questions than answers. Indeed, as Thelen and Steinmo (1992, 9) argue, to demonstrate the underlying mechanisms breeding a peculiar outcome, “we need a historically based analysis to tell us what [political actors] are trying to maximize and why they emphasise certain goals over others.” The historical institutionalist approach aims to aid in this particular task. It does not argue that institutions are the sole cause of “outcomes” but they certainly constrain or influence politics by structuring behaviour of political actors who, in turn, act within existing institutional constraints to perpetuate the status quo or shape institutions – intentionally or unintentionally – via “deliberate political strategies, ... political conflict, and ... choice” (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 10). Importance of agency will be touched on in the coming paragraphs in the context of critical junctures, the times when their significance is especially heightened.

Regarding agency, another factor makes the study of institutions both interesting and worthwhile, and especially useful in the Turkish case covering post-2002. Bearing the ability to shape politics and constraining or emboldening actors, institutions are a battlefield. Political actors, fully comprehending the potential of a certain institutional setup to make or break them, fight hard over them (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 9). Such a fight becomes even more relentless when new political figures, for instance the AKP, whose aim is to shake up the status quo, need to make their grip on power legitimate but at the same time tenacious. As Hall argues, institutions shape the way political actors structure power relations among them, giving some more, some less (Hall 1986, 19). This is a crucial aspect; as the aspiration to hold or influence power centres lies at the heart of the overall goals of political actors, the capacity of institutions to affect the extent of power any one set of players has over policy-making and policy outcomes cannot be ignored. In the end, for political actors, institutional outcomes become more important than policy

outcomes. The analysis of this thesis on the hard-fought battles of the AKP over institutional restructuring to undermine and ultimately replace the old hegemony demonstrates the power of creating new institutions as well as re-shaping, layering on, or tinkering with old ones.

Power, which Pierson describes as “decisive political advantages for those with more resources”, is an important component because the way in which power is distributed leads to “agenda control” by particular actors, which significantly advantages them for obvious reasons (Pierson 2016, 124-126). Contestation is usually costly so it does not happen often, at least openly, which feeds into self-reinforcing mechanisms keeping existing power distributions alive. Since institutions can be seen as active instruments in the hands of political actors, as Streeck and Thelen (2005, 15) propose, when contestation does happen – openly or more subtly – institutions are put at the core. One of the sources of institutional change that this study concentrates on concerns power relations and fluctuations. According to Thelen and Steinmo (1992, 16), “any changes in power can produce a situation in which old institutions are put in the service of different ends, as new actors come into play who pursue their (new) goals through existing institutions.” This suggests that new actors in their pursuit of shifting the power balance may utilise old institutions as the existing intra-institutional arrangements may already be benefitting them. But sometimes, tinkering or layering might be better options as the associated “transaction costs” could be too high to set up something from scratch (Parsons 2007, 79). Parsons states that the particular conditions that come along with dramatic exogenous change would be more suitable for “crafting new [institutions] *de novo*” but it could be argued that even when that happens they will bear the marks of their predecessors, “partly because they are reconstituted out of pieces of the old” (Parsons 2007, 79; Skocpol cited in Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 32 fn. 55). Both the post-Ottoman era in Turkey, marked by the Kemalist hegemony, and the post-2002 AKP era stand as valid examples supporting this argument. Old institutions and institutional arrangements, from certain formal organisations to norms, have found ways to creep into new setups of the post-Ottoman republican system as well as the post-Kemalist political and societal dynamics. This was done via agencies’ deliberate activities for practical purposes. But one can argue that sometimes

it has also been due to the strength of the remnants of self-reinforcing characteristics of certain institutional arrangements.

Another aspect of historical institutionalist theory is its emphasis on temporal dynamics of events and outcomes. The theory has the aim of understanding processes as consisting of long-term sequences creating change. Studying temporally extended “causal chains” can demonstrate why social structures are the way they are and why institutions might change or persist. This clearly requires an examination of history because “social life unfolds over time” and real-life social processes have obvious temporal dimensions (Pierson 2004, 5). This “historical turn” in analysing institutions and structures means that historical episodes in which institutions were formed or reshaped must be studied (Capoccia and Ziblatt 2010). Suggesting that a historical institutional study must be done through analysing “episodes”, it already solves the issue of whether one should see history “as a constant flux or as a syncopated process divided into different eras marked, for instance, by their relative openness to institutional or ideological change” (Hall 2016, 38). Theorists in the field have expanded on a few formulations to explain how politics is structured and how institutions are formed, saved, changed or maintained over time. Two of the most authoritative concepts coming out of these scholarly works are the notions of critical juncture and path dependence.

The critical juncture concept builds on Krasner’s theoretical model called “punctuated equilibrium”, illustrating that institutions are characterised by long periods of stability, which are “punctuated” by moments of abrupt change before institutional inertia sets back in (Krasner 1984). Brief episodes of institutional flux, now widely dubbed “critical junctures”, present phases where more dramatic change is possible. Critical junctures are periods of action with high political impact and long-term consequences resulting from “specific decisions taken by powerful actors during narrowly circumscribed periods” (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 362). The magnitude of an agency’s actions becomes paramount during these episodes. Power elites are not solely observers as change happens around them, but they are fully capable of “acting on openings provided by such shifting contextual conditions”, participating in the change itself and steering outcomes towards a new equilibrium (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 17; Capoccia and Kelemen 2007, 354). Political actors do

the steering through the choices they favour over several options they have during critical junctures. In other words, critical junctures are “choice points” (Mahoney 2001, 113). At these points, the theory suggests, as the contingency is high, the option selected cannot be entirely explained by the understanding of causal mechanisms pertaining to that specific context. That does not mean, however, that the choice is an entirely random event. It will have antecedent conditions, but it will be unpredicted; other choices could just as easily have been selected. Ultimately, critical junctures make structures loosen up where divergence from existing stable institutional patterns can occur. Once a choice has been made, the alternative options close off and it becomes gradually more cumbersome to return to the point where these alternatives were still available.

Peters states that the fundamental idea is: “the policy choices made when an institution is being formed or when a policy is initiated will have a continuing and largely determinate influence over the policy far into the future” (Peters 1999, 63). This argument is closely linked to the crucial concept of path dependency, frequently employed by historical institutionalism scholars. Path dependence refers to policies or institutions being dependent on the path that was already established, and having a tendency to remain on that path. In this way, historical institutionalism attempts to understand permanence over time via “path dependence”, “whereby decisions taken at one time constrain those taken at a later stage” (Keating 2008, 104). Margaret Levi explains path dependence as “once a country or region has started down a track, the costs of reversal are very high”. She argues that there will be other choice points “but the entrenchments of certain institutional arrangements obstruct an easy reversal of the initial choice” (Levi 1997, 28).

Historical institutionalists are generally more concerned about studying the persistence of institutions rather than how they came about or changed. Analysing the criticalness of the distinct “moments” of fluidity, the available but unmade choices, the contextual conditions, and the agency should also exist within a historical analysis examining an outcome, rather than labelling a certain episode as a critical juncture and leaving it at that. What conceived these episodes can demonstrate much about what shifts historical trajectories and what kinds of conditions are necessary and/or sufficient for change in a particular context/country. This thesis dissects the critical juncture that

started off with the election of the AKP in November 2002 which resulted in the dramatic political demilitarisation. Through this post-mortem, it aims to explain the causal mechanism in the form of a reactive process followed by the critical juncture, ending with the competitive authoritarian state layout.

This study borrows some of Soifer's analytical tools: permissive conditions, which are the factors that "change the underlying context to increase the power of agency or contingency and thus the prospects for divergence"; and productive conditions, which are the factors that shape and determine the initial outcomes emerging from the critical juncture once permissive conditions loosen the structural constraints (Soifer 2012, 1574). Both of these are separately necessary but sufficient only when they come together. Of course, critical junctures do not emerge in a vacuum. Borrowing the term from Slater and Simmons (2010), this study argues that there were "antecedent conditions" rooted in prior events and history that played a causal role in the choice made by the political actors in the 2002 critical juncture.

Historical repression of political Islam is the main antecedent condition. Defeat of many established centrist parties, and the AKP's election victory in 2002 as the majority government, caused an institutional flux and triggered the crisis of hegemony. During this crisis of hegemony – which is the permissive condition – several options opened up for the AKP to handle the hegemony. The AKP could have followed the path of its predecessors and put forward an initial policy agenda marked by political Islamist nuances. As a second option, they could have chosen to tread carefully with the military, as many governments had hitherto done, and construct a working relationship with the hegemony. The third option was to open up the road toward recalibration of power balances of the old hegemony.

At this point, the productive condition, which was general support for EU membership, worked as a tool determining the actor's choice of going after the hegemony. Antecedent conditions reinforce productive conditions but do not relate to permissive conditions as the latter only emerges once the critical juncture begins. Antecedent conditions were there before. A productive condition might also only manifest with the critical juncture, but its roots would be connected to the antecedent conditions. The initial outcome of the critical juncture was in 2003, when the 7th EU Harmonisation Package was

passed in the parliament. It converted the National Security Council, the biggest institutional tool of the military influencing politics and dubbed the shadow government, into an advisory body, dramatically shifting the civil-military power equation. From this moment on, the path towards demilitarised politics was more or less drawn and going back would have been irrational, if not impossible. This choice was the divergent option, not expected, and it carried the institutional relationships towards a different route. This divergence accentuates the “criticalness” of the juncture.

Institutional reproduction was done through “reactive sequences”, a term borrowed from Mahoney, which illustrates causally connected chains of events (the causal mechanisms) comprising reactions and counter-reactions (Mahoney 2000, 526). In reactive sequences, there is “movement toward reversing previous patterns” and backlash processes that respond to them (Mahoney 2001, 115). As Pierson puts it, “initial disturbances are crucial not because they generate positive feedback”, as it would not work in every context, “but because they trigger a powerful response” (Pierson 1998 cited in Mahoney 2001, 527). At the end, the conflicts of a reactive sequence pave the way for a relatively more stable final outcome. The deterministic pattern stabilising the institutions emerges through a series of reactions and counter-reactions establishing the winners and losers of the power conflict. After this point, relative inertia starts setting in.

With the AKP example, the initial choice in 2003 empowered the new government at the expense of the military. The AKP used its newly acquired power to expand this institutional arrangement, including restructuring the security sector by giving the police, among others, more power and resources. This new institution was then reproduced because it was supported by the elite group of actors. This power-based explanation outlines the rise of new elite groups, their loyalisation of others, and their institutional actions vis-à-vis the old regime. The rise has been, as mentioned above, not a clean fight. The reactive process that followed 2003 witnessed several rupture points, though not critical junctures, where the newly disadvantaged group attempted to gain back its power and influence through utilising institutions. This conflictual process, which is examined through the process-tracing method, led to the consequence of emergence of a competitive authoritarian regime in Turkey as

the legacy of the political demilitarisation process. And ultimately, the unique contextual conditions of Turkey consistently, but in varying degrees, influenced this overall reactive process and the institutional arrangements – formal or informal – that appeared as a result of the critical juncture. The early contingent event and the divergent choice of political demilitarisation manufactured a trajectory that eventually culminated in an outcome that deviates from other cases where civil-military relations were balanced, with or without the EU incentive. The path-dependent sequence of this trajectory was marked by a causal mechanism having “inherent logic” (Mahoney 2000), where one action led to a reaction – say, a counter-hegemonic move and its subsequent suppression – essentially forging an almost natural flow of reactionary events. This undoubtedly happened alongside – and is also the cause of – the advantaged actor, the AKP, strengthening its position in the overall institutional composition at the expense of any other actor.

2.4 Autocratisation and competitive authoritarianism

This study fundamentally examines an autocratisation process followed by successful political demilitarisation. How and why did things go wrong? It is only possible to answer this question by systematically analysing what kind of process took place and how causal this process was. There is not one single theory explaining causal mechanisms of autocratisation and this study aims to come up with an interlinked group of causal mechanisms to at least explain one case of autocratisation: Turkey between 2002 and 2017. Scholars have observed a worldwide democratic recession since the early 2000s (Diamond 2015). Turkey is now increasingly grouped with a number of countries where “democratic backsliding” is overtly detectable (Bermeo 2016; Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018; Tansel 2018; Lührmann and Lindberg 2019; Cassani and Tomini 2019). In the past few decades, extreme pathways leading to full democratic reversals, such as coups or stolen elections, have been in decline (Bermeo 2016). Instead, countries are facing serious challenges of democratic backsliding from those in office who were elected through the ballot box. The danger comes not from generals, but from politicians, in the form of “incremental within-regime change” (Waldner and Lust 2018). This is now

“how democracies die”: not with a bang but with a series of legislative changes (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018). There are a variety of concepts discussed in literature to encapsulate the essence of this recent wave of democratic erosion, of which “democratic backsliding” is one. In this thesis I employ “autocratisation” as I believe it captures the “process” characteristic of the change better. Although “democratic backsliding” is associated with both democracies and autocracies losing their democratic qualities (Waldner and Lust 2018), I believe that replacing what is essentially a derivative of “democracy” with simple “autocratisation” expresses the consequences of backsliding in a more vivid way while also signalling urgency. While, however, I argue that “autocratisation” would be too much of a stretch to describe polities like President Trump’s USA, it does fit well for President Erdogan’s Turkey where changes are substantially more prolific, recognisable, and more importantly, largely unchallenged.

Autocratisation is described by Lührmann and Lindberg (2019) as “substantial de-facto decline of core institutional requirements for electoral democracy”. Their understanding of “electoral democracy” is, like this study, based on Dahl’s polyarchy. They argue that due to the potential high cost, ruling elites refrain from drastic moves towards autocracy to attain power but instead engage in autocratisation by mimicking democratic institutions while gradually eroding their functions and capacities. For example, the institutions of multiparty elections are sustained but other institutions associated with government accountability or liberties are undermined. Autocratisation involves less dramatic actions than cancelling elections: one common path shared by autocratising countries is the concentration of power in the executive at the expense of the courts and the legislature (Coppedge 2017). This key mode in which autocratisation takes place is classified by Bermeo (2016) as “executive aggrandisement”. She argues that, together with “promissory coups” and “manipulating elections strategically”, “executive aggrandisement” constitutes part of the group of methods actors engage with to autocratise. Executive aggrandisement happens “when elected executives weaken checks on executive power one by one, undertaking a series of institutional changes that hamper the power of opposition forces to challenge executive preferences” (Bermeo 2016, 10). As mentioned before, this restructuring of institutions is

often done through legal channels, making the autocratising steps incremental as well as providing subversion with the cover of democratic mandate.

As Bermeo mentions and this study shows, Turkey under the AKP between 2002 and 2017 is an illustrative case demonstrating textbook examples of how executive aggrandisement can take place in a hybrid regime. The 2016 coup attempt can also be understood in terms of a very recent case of a “promissory coup”, where the coupists justified the act as a defence of democracy and assured the restoration of democracy post-coup. Turkey is an elucidatory example to get a glimpse of how autocratisation can accelerate when a promissory coup fails. Like Bermeo, the work of Cassani and Tomini (2019) also emphasises the role of institutional modifications as the core of autocratisation. They contend that autocratisation can take different forms depending on the institutional layout of the country, but the targeted areas are those regulating political participation, public contestation and executive limitation. They classify Turkey as the only autocratisation case in the Middle East that has made the shift from defective democracy to electoral autocracy. Cassani and Tomini do not delve into the specifics of the Turkish case but do point towards violation of political rights and electoral manipulation as measures of autocratisation. Naturally these underlying mechanisms that are merely touched upon by the authors need to be unpacked further, which this thesis aims to do. They are, however, accurate in their classification of the regime change shift. This study also finds that the process of autocratisation has led Turkey from being a defective democracy where the military had political decision-making and veto capacities to an electoral autocracy or competitive authoritarianism.

The AKP has increased its share of the vote in every election, with the exception of one; elections in Turkey are considered to be free and competitive, making the party more powerful and further legitimising the party’s authority. The AKP government’s confidence and assertiveness both at home and abroad have grown. The economy has boomed. At the same time, however, the past decade has witnessed that civil and political rights have suffered profoundly in Turkey. So, how to classify the AKP rule in Turkey given these discrepancies? Levitsky and Way’s (2010) competitive authoritarianism fits the Turkish case well, as previous studies have also argued (e.g. Esen and Gumuscu 2016).

Levitsky and Way define competitive authoritarianism as “a hybrid regime type, with important characteristics of both democracy and authoritarianism”. In competitive authoritarian regimes, elections are normally competitive, but the playing field is uneven. While the existence of elections and a popular political party can be seen as one of the prerequisites of a democracy, regimes with civil liberties violations and electoral irregularities – even if they are legal and nonviolent – do not meet minimum procedural standards for democracy. According to Levitsky and Way, “to label such regimes as democracies is to stretch the concept virtually beyond recognition” (2010, 14).

In competitive authoritarian setups, factors like access to resources, control of the media, and election thresholds can play a significant part in restricting democracy by widening the gap between the incumbent government and opposition groups. In general elections during its tenure, the AKP has received approximately three times more from state funds than the second biggest party took to run each of its election campaigns due to party laws that disproportionately benefit the winner. The unchallenged 10% election threshold itself has been a tool to restrict access to the political arena, widening the gap between the incumbent government and the opposition parties. In addition, since 2014, there have been allegations of widespread election fraud in both general and local elections. This is on top of a climate of violence and fear in which some elections took place due to securitisation policies of the government. It is clear that the elections are “free” and widely participated in, but they are completely “unfair”: at the minimum the incumbent capitalises on its access to state institutions to boost its chances of electoral success, and at worst the elections are tarnished by violence to such an extent that the electorate is too intimidated to vote for the opposition.

Levitsky and Way also argue that in competitive authoritarian regimes, “civil liberties are nominally guaranteed and at least partially respected.” They are, however, constantly violated: “Opposition politicians, independent judges, journalists, human rights activists, and other government critics are subject to harassment, arrest, and –in some cases – violent attack” (2010, 106). Also, independent media cannot function properly as it is “frequently threatened, attacked and – in some cases – suspended or closed”. A basic empirical study on the status of economic and social, and civil and political,

rights in Turkey would expose the discrepancies between the AKP's democratisation rhetoric and the actuality. As of the end of 2017, Turkey was named as the worst jailer of journalists in the world and as one of the countries where the media was the least free (Beiser 2017). Many opposition politicians, academics, and civil society actors have also been jailed. Following the 15 July coup attempt, the crackdown intensified at an unprecedented speed under the state of emergency declared on 21 July 2016. Due to their alleged ties to certain organisations deemed "national security threats", hundreds of non-governmental and media organisations were shut down with hundreds of thousands of state officials fired from public office. The government also used the law to confiscate the wealth of alleged coup plotters and their accomplices (including journalists, judges, army members, prosecutors, businessmen, state officials), of their companies and civil society organisations.

Employing Levitsky and Way's criteria to assess Turkey reveals that the country has neither stable authoritarianism nor a stable democracy, but it is an exception within the classical two-way division of state systems (democratic – undemocratic). Turkey has been regarded as an "ambiguous" case before (Diamond 2002, 31). But scholars have recently started to classify Turkey as a competitive authoritarian regime (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Stelgias 2015; Ozbudun 2015; Arbatli 2014). The general theory does not, however, give an explanation that would help unpack why Turkey has come to be what it is today and does not provide us with much insight into the possible influence of certain institutional and historical configurations. Turkey did not emerge from the Cold War as a competitive authoritarian regime nor did the AKP just turn the country into one overnight. Turkey is neither a "third wave" country nor can evince a completed democratic transition. Except for brief periods of military government, it rather oscillates between different poles of a hybrid regime, bringing certain changes as well as continuities. The recent autocratisation process marks one of these fluctuations. It is, however, one that stands out because the outcome of emerging competitive authoritarianism is a specific and unprecedented regime system for Turkey. The institutional setup is authoritarian but popularly so. It merits in-depth study.

Levitsky and Way's key concepts are relatively strong and there is a lot of space to explore and play with them, though they are not immune to

criticism. According to some scholars, the conceptualisation of the hybrid regimes and creating a grey area for polities that cannot be classified within the two-way division is problematic. It is argued that if these regimes cannot be outright accepted as democracies, perhaps they should be openly regarded as authoritarian (Cassani 2012). Certain authors refer to these types of regimes as plain instances of authoritarianism with nominally democratic institutions such as parties, elections, and legislature (Ezrow and Frantz 2011; Lust-Okar and Jamal 2002; Wright 2008). As Cassani (2012) argues, if the existence of these institutions does not alter the autocratic characteristics of a regime, then the notion of hybrid regimes loses part of its peculiarity, as it would not exactly be mixing democratic traits with autocratic ones. This line of argument has some merit but specifically the hybridity of the Turkish system still does leave some, albeit increasingly limited, space for political contestation, despite a decade-long aggressive executive aggrandisement.

Some scholars also argue that the presence of democratic institutions makes hybrid regimes more prepared to withstand a possible democratisation process (Hadenius and Teorell 2006; Bunce and Wolchik 2008). This line of reasoning would probably complement what Turkish civil-military relations scholars were arguing about Turkish democratisation following the AKP's reforms. The Turkish case, however, is a useful caveat to avoid understanding the succession of authority between power groups as illustrations of democratisation. It is even a worthy example demonstrating how flexible and therefore potentially sustainable hybrid regimes can be. Despite the moderate limitations of the theory, bearing in mind the existence of – however unfair – the competitive nature of its election process, this study will classify Turkey as a competitive authoritarian country. There is both a change and continuation of a hybrid regime going through an autocratisation process in Turkey and it needs careful construction of historical and causal alignments to be able to explain how and why this came about, and what it means.

2.5 Securitisation

This thesis considers securitisation as a part of the autocratisation mechanism the AKP employs. Although securitisation as a tactic is not unique to

competitive authoritarian regimes, the Turkish case shows how its utilisation can have consequences impacting a wider population and offering fewer remedies to those affected. Securitisation mainly comes into play as part of the auxiliary mechanism this thesis draws upon which demonstrates the AKP's increasing control over economic and socio-political spheres. In this case, securitisation acts help the AKP elites to mobilise voters and garner support while legitimising violence in previously de-securitised or un-securitised political spaces, and ensure the durability of the regime.

Starting from the 1980s, there has been scholarly debate on the need to expand the scope of security studies. Particularly with the end of the Cold War, the debate in the International Relations discipline intensified and found forceful articulation in the so-called Copenhagen School, consisting of a handful of scholars. The School argued for a more dynamic understanding of security and the need to move away from the traditional understanding of the notion which primarily puts military aspects at its core. Accordingly, scholars attached to the School developed relevant conceptual tools of analysis in their aim of untangling the concept of security and widening the security agenda. The most influential of these is securitisation theory. Securitisation can be understood as a process in which certain issues are framed as existential threats, which are then moved into a specific area where emergency measures – or whatever means necessary – can be used to deal with them (Wæver 1995; Buzan et al. 1998). When an issue is securitised, actions outside of the ordinary boundaries of political procedure become justified due to the severity of the threat. Handling the threat turns into a matter of “survival”, therefore it moves “above politics” (Buzan et al. 1998, 23). Evidently, the entity whose survival is at stake, which is referred to as “the referent object”, is traditionally the state. The understanding is that if this existential threat is not blocked urgently, then there would be no other remaining component of the state to handle any other functions a state is expected to perform. Therefore, when the notion of security is invoked, not only is the use of force legitimised but also a wide range of extraordinary, as well as ordinary, measures become available for the state to employ to overcome the threat. I follow Floyd's (2015) line of argument suggesting that securitisation does not always necessitate extraordinary or exceptional measures, but non-exceptional measures existing within ordinary

legislation (such as passing new laws, granting new powers, empowering security apparatus to deal with new issues) can equally be employed for securitisation.

Moreover, the threat does not have to be real or existential per se but its framing as such is sufficient for it to become a securitised issue. Borrowing from language theory and the work of John L. Austin (1962), Waever defines securitisation as a “speech act” whereby the utterance of security itself is the securitising act regardless of the veracity of the threat (1995, 55). He argues that by labelling something a security issue, the state makes one. This means that security no longer has any given meaning, but can practically be anything a securitising actor says it is (Floyd 2007, 329). Then, who has the capacity to become a securitising actor and demand justification of exceptions? In Schmittian terms, it is the Sovereign. It is the Leviathan, the sovereign state, that can be “the judge of both of the means of peace and defense” and do what is necessary to preserve the former (Hobbes 1965 [1651], 136). In a more contemporary understanding, whoever has the capacity to speak on behalf of the state will have the authority to invoke security. This gives state elites enormous power in terms of defining and re-defining discourses of security on top of their traditional access to the means of security. Some writings of the Copenhagen School argue that it is possible for other social entities to securitise issues in different environments, implying that although the state is the traditional referent object, securitisation does not always have to be through it (Buzan et al. 1998, 24). This study argues that, however, the only way for a securitisation process to be successful is its deployment by state-related actors who have the means to raise an issue to the high threat level and to act accordingly.

As political elites will usually be legitimate representatives of the state, they will have the capacity and authority to undertake securitising moves. It is logical to assume that they will also use this power to conflate state survival with the survival of the government whenever the elites perceive threats to their regime. This means that a securitisation process can indeed be primarily agent-benefitting as the elites will be tempted to use security rhetoric if they believe their power is in jeopardy (Floyd 2015, 9; Buzan et al. 1998, 152; Waever 1995, 55). It is not an easily avoidable fact that those who are bestowed

the power to use extraordinary measures to declare an issue/agent/movement a threat will do so for self-serving objectives. Indeed, in certain contexts this process might be easier than others, such as competitive authoritarian regimes and such as Turkey, where effective checks and balances that might have the competence to challenge such moves are eroded and the power is centralised.

Moreover, historical context plays an important role as a force shaping discourses defining enemies and friends, as well as a repository of precedence on which new but familiar security discourses will be built (Guzzini 2011). For the Turkish case, the most robust securitising actor has been the military, with its political authority to successfully invoke, and more importantly act on, military threats (such as the Kurdish insurgency) as well as non-military threats (such as political Islam) as existential threats to state sovereignty. Kurdish separatism/autonomy and all its associated political manifestations have been perceived and framed as such a persistent threat that securitisation of the Kurdish issue has been institutionalised and gradually embedded into internal policy discourse over almost a century. This history means that re-securitisation after de-securitisation or expanding the means/resources of securitisation for the Kurdish issue can be more conveniently justified and implemented. It also paves the way for widening securitisation policies for wider groups who might more easily be grouped together with the designated enemy (i.e. Kurds) due to their similarly perceived demands for expansion of rights.

Another concept of securitisation is the “state of exception”, coined by Agamben (2005) with significant references to Carl Schmitt’s understanding of “exception” in politics as situations decided by the Sovereign. Securitisation in this sense can be understood as a mechanism to manufacture states of exception by governments that would allow them to break ordinary codes of politics and even suspend law. It is the “no-man’s-land between public law and political fact” where these exceptions take place, according to Agamben (2005, 1). The government, or a branch(es) of government, expands its powers, rejects or suspends law, and defends it on the basis of the alleged necessity of making exceptions due to the emergency and urgency of the situation that needs to be coped with. Agamben also describes the tendency of the state of exception to turn into a lasting practice, or indeed a norm. The practice has direct

implications on the state's subjects and works as a political device to exclude "others", or as Agamben describes, reduce certain groups into "bare life" that is amenable to the power of the state due to this exclusion whenever and wherever the law is suspended (Vaughan-Williams 2008, 333). The state of exception and its consequences on specific groups (dissidents, Kurds, Gulenists, etc.) can be most lucidly seen in the expansion of executive powers following the 2016 coup attempt in Turkey. Although the coup attempt was a starting point for significant escalation, the road to complete securitisation of wealth (of specific groups) and securitisation of dissent had begun earlier. The abortive coup and its consequent state of emergency (the state of exception) facilitated the completing of successful securitisation and widened the impact of these policies to broader strata of society that the AKP elites perceived to be threatening to their rule. A mechanism is laid out in the analysis sections of this thesis to demonstrate this particular path.

Lastly, the securitisation theory posits the necessity of a sanctioning audience for successful securitisation (Buzan et al. 1998, 25; Balzacq 2005, 185; Waeber 1995, 69). This audience accepts the securitisation speech act and in this way the securitising actor can move forward towards a successful action plan. Seeking broad consensus is deemed crucial for garnering moral support from the public and the institutions the securitising actor interacts with. I argue that, although this argument might make sense in more liberal democratic setups, it is not necessary for a competitive authoritarian regime where the audience needs to either actively consent or stay neutral in order not to face the consequences of actively dissenting. In short, the response of an audience (public or inter-governmental) does not particularly matter for an actor whose power is vast enough to encompass the majority of the institutional structure. Rather than seeking a sanctioning audience to infer securitisation, it is more logical to assume that if an action is taken in response to the threat, however subtle, it would be sufficient to deduce securitisation (Floyd 2015, 9). This also means that it would be possible to directly observe these responses in whichever form they come, which makes it ideal for a process-tracing study.

3 Methodology

This chapter will explain the specifics of the methodology used to study the subject at hand. As the thesis looks into a time period of 15 years in a single country where one event followed the other, it is important to move beyond a descriptive story-telling and into the realm of analytical explanation, both to satisfy the requirements of conducting social science research and to discover paths towards causality. This is where process-tracing comes in. The following sub-chapters will delve into the workings of process-tracing by firstly describing the method, its accompanying tools and its philosophical standpoint, as well as its advantages when used in a single-case study. Then, issues surrounding matters of external and internal validity and possible remedies will be discussed. A discussion on what kind of data is used, and how it is collected and processed, will follow. Lastly, conceptualisation and attributions will be elaborated on to clarify under which principles the study generates concepts and treats the existing ones.

3.1 Process-tracing: Less Hume more Holmes

The aim of the process-tracing method is, fundamentally, to trace processes that bind causes and outcomes. The core ambition is to study the causal mechanism(s) that produce an outcome. And process-tracing gives one the “tools to study causal mechanisms in a single-case research design” (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 2). What is between explanatory variable(s) and the outcome of the dependent variable is a “black box of causality”, waiting to be kicked open, and process-tracing aims to do just that (ibid, 2). Peering into the box of causality would help “locate the intermediate factors lying between some structural cause and its purported effect”, which would then empower one “to make strong within-case inferences about the causal process whereby outcomes are produced” (Gerring 2006, 45; Beach and Pedersen 2013, 2). While statistical analysis can pinpoint correlations, it cannot, with strong diligence, reconstruct intermediate elements or events – and the overall mechanism – that lead from the cause to the outcome, and this is what process-tracing endeavours to remedy. As quantitative methods strive to identify “what

is associated with what”, process-tracing attempts to isolate what links causes and effects (or outcomes), in other words, it examines “what causes what” and more importantly “how” and “why”. It favours concatenation over covariation when making causal inferences (Waldner 2012, 68).

The utilisation of the method is not at all new. From genetics to cognitive psychology, scholars have made use of process-tracing methodology to identify sequences of events, decisions, actions and reactions through which an entity is changed, or more generally, an outcome is produced (Waldner 2012, 66; Falletti 2016, 455). In recent decades, it has also been used and referred to in political science research to investigate causal processes. What is new, however, is its increasing popularity among political scientists since the mid-2000s (Kittel and Kuehn 2012, 2). The method’s fame started rising when Alexander George and Andrew Bennett put it under the spotlight in their influential book *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (2005), extensively assessing its usability and advancing earlier methodological discussions on the qualities and the authority of qualitative analyses.

In their dominant methods study, *Designing Social Inquiry* (1994), the authors King, Keohane and Verba (KKV) shaped the boundaries of qualitative research for the years to come, emphasising the importance of using a multitude of cases and observations to be able to confer inference and explanation. They deemed single-case studies to be unhelpful or unimportant, with process-tracing’s potential being mostly dismissed. KKV’s mode of social inquiry required a statistical understanding of explanation with the perception that more cases or more observations over a longer period in a single case were preferable – although avoiding single-case research was wiser – leading to comparisons of incomparable cases and discarding deviant ones. The emphasis on large-n studies and the logic of experimental ideals have dominated the field and KKV have been praised over the years, as well as criticised for underestimating social complexity and not addressing weaknesses of the methods they advocate (George and Bennett, 2005; Brady and Collier, 2010). The overall sense in the studies assessing KKV’s influential work is that it fundamentally looks at qualitative analysis through the lens of quantitative methodology, skewing perceptions.

The gradual move from big correlation-related contentions towards deeper examination of the complexities of the social and political world, with all its interactions, path dependencies, critical junctures and incremental changes must signify that social science research has entered a new era; while acknowledging their crucial contribution, attempting to shed the influence of KKV. In this sense, KKV provoking vigorous scholarly debate over scientific methods was worthy as, at the minimum, they triggered critics to engage in producing better arguments and also tools to improve the ways in which qualitative research should be conducted. If KKV was unfair to process-tracing and its potential to reach causal explanations, then how do we ensure that the method receives the importance it deserves? The early and mid-2000s saw a surge in studies both advocating the use of process-tracing and utilising it (e.g. Checkel 2008; George and Bennett 2005; Falleti and Lynch 2009) These discussions and early examples are useful because they are the initial attempts to have a proper and unified definition of process-tracing and how exactly it produces causal explanations.

If causality is “at the centre of explanation and understanding”, then how can causal relationships be established? (Brady 2011, 1058) The Humean approach, followed by KKV and many others, emphasises covariation and constant conjunction, meaning that causality will depend on regularity (regular association) and multiple observations of both cause and effect. Naturally, such a conviction makes single-case studies unworthy attempts as it is not possible to talk about covariation. From this prevalent ontological standpoint, causation is understood in terms of association of X and Y whereas what is in between them, the actual process producing Y, is black-boxed (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 25).

Instead, those who see possibilities to establish causality beyond Hume’s philosophy advocate a mechanistic notion of causality. In this ontological argument, given voice by scientific realists (e.g. Bhaskar 2008 [1978]; Salmon 1998; Bunge 1997), it is proposed that instead of the emphasis on regularity, the search for causality should focus on the process which produces an effect. There is a dynamic influence of causes on outcomes, and causal forces find their way through a set of interlocking parts of a mechanism to produce that outcome (Bennett and Checkel 2015, 25). Such an

understanding of causality is about energy, movement and force, not about frequency. For a mechanism to repeat itself in other cases is largely irrelevant in explaining the mechanism itself and the outcome it produces. As process-tracing is known to be “a key technique for capturing causal mechanisms in action”, it can be understood why, considering its divergent ontological standpoint, it is so “fundamentally different from statistical analysis” (Bennett and Checkel 2015, 9; George and Bennett 2005, 13). Over the years, as the neo-Humean sceptical approach to causality is debated and challenged, an unlikely actor has been used by teachers and practitioners of methodology to embody a good process-tracer, the fictional detective Sherlock Holmes. Rather than treating a black box as it is, Holmes would analyse the triggers, actors and the context then pry the box open and put the pieces of multi-styled evidence together to understand an outcome. This is precisely what the method aims to do.

If process-tracing is, roughly put, Cause (C or X) → Causal Mechanism → Outcome (O or Y), then what exactly is the causal mechanism that process-tracing captures? There are various definitions but George and Bennett (2005) offer the most well-rounded one, accounting for all crucial aspects of the concept:

Causal mechanisms [are] ultimately unobservable physical, social, or psychological processes through which agents with causal capacities operate, but only in specific contexts or conditions, to transfer energy, information, or matter to other entities. In doing so, the causal agent changes the affected entities’ characteristics, capacities, or propensities in ways that persist until subsequent causal mechanisms act upon them. If we are able to measure changes in the entity being acted upon after the intervention of the causal mechanism and in temporal or spatial isolation from other mechanisms, then the causal mechanism may be said to have generated the observed change in the entity (p. 137).

Or in short, they “connect things” (Checkel 2008, 115). To unpack George and Bennett’s comprehensive definition a bit further, a few explanations are needed, also because they are important for the study at hand. Causal mechanisms are usually defined to be unobservable (also in Mahoney 2001, 580; Hedström and Swedberg 1998, 13), meaning that, although we could if it was possible, we do not have to deal with directly observable and measurable

phenomena. Instead, we can study an unobservable process through its implications that are observable. If we deem that the mechanism at hand is not explicitly observable, then we would have to see the fingerprints of the mechanism on the outcome(s) it produces, otherwise there would be no mechanism to talk about. In this study, the mechanisms tying explanatory variables and the outcome of backsliding of democracy are multilayered and implicit but each step of the mechanism has an empirical implication. The aim is, then, to bring out these implications with empirical data verifying their existence, hence the overall mechanism. In this sense, the ultimate solution of using empirical evidence applies to both observables and non-observables (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 93-94).

Causal mechanisms rely on agents with causal capacities to operate. These “agents” are entities that engage in activities and they could be individuals, groups, governments, organisations or structures (Machamer et al. 2000, 3). They are depicted as nouns. Their most important quality is their ability to, through their activities, transfer forces that have the capacity to transform or have some degree and kind of impact on other entities. Capabilities and properties of agents that allow them to engage in activities come from contextual conditions. Activities they engage in are hypothesised as part of the mechanism and are defined in a verb form. For example, if we pick apart one segment of the main mechanism of this study, we find these two connected subparts:

Old hegemony *organises* its supporters (A) → The new government *agitates* its base (B).

In this case, the old hegemony and the new government are entities engaging in activities of organising and agitating. There is a logical flow between A and B, creating a causal story. The arrow between them signifies both action and continuity, showing that a causal force has been transferred, a change has been produced, and the mechanism is now moving forward. By themselves, A and B do not tell us much as they are operating within the overall mechanism and are integral parts of it. With each step hypothesised, the mechanism is theorised explicitly to assess the underlying causal logic and to be able to connect the

hypothesis to evidence showing that the mechanism does exist and work for the case at hand (Beach and Pedersen 2016b, 7). Once hypothesised, it also becomes more straightforward to gather evidence; for example, how did the old hegemony organise its supporters? The task is then to collect empirical data showing that it happened and explain why and how it happened. Causal claims can only be made if the subparts of the mechanism and the changes in entities can be investigated empirically.

During the process of conceptualising the mechanism and defining its subparts, another potential issue is remedied to a large extent. This is the problem of infinite regress, of analysing smaller and smaller steps between any two points in a modelled mechanism and going further into micro-level explanations. In this case, process-tracing has a disciplining effect because it only allows a causal model to be crafted to include merely the essential subparts (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 31). This means that each subpart is carefully selected to be incorporated into the mechanism as an individually necessary piece which only becomes sufficient as a whole. If a subpart carries causal force towards the outcome and is absolutely essential – as in a mechanism would not exist without it – then it is included in the model. Every other step in between is redundant.

George and Bennett's definition of causal mechanisms also emphasises specific contexts or conditions in which agencies engage in activities to create change. According to the authors, identifying these conditions is one of the challenges that those who use causal mechanisms encounter (2005, 137). Entities/actors do not operate in a vacuum. They emerge from within a particular socio-political and historical order and they move around within the system which created them. Whether a set of structures limits a president's area of manoeuvre and makes him obey the established norms, or a president picks a radical option during a critical moment, their actions are designated by the contextual conditions. These conditions are necessary, but not sufficient, for a causal mechanism to operate and produce the outcome. However, they do not do anything active; there is no observable force or movement. A contextual condition is a constant and a mere "enabler" of the entities, it is the shadow under which the movement of the mechanism occurs (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 89). For the case at hand, the contextual conditions are the

600 years of imperial history of Turkey, a revolution from above at the beginning of the 20th century, and the military's guardianship that followed the revolution. As the study will show, this specific backdrop aids in explaining the behaviour of actors at critical junctures and overall, the jump from one subpart of the mechanism to the next. It also creates the contextual boundaries of the analysis, demonstrating the setup under which the causal mechanisms are expected to work, which also eases the issue of equifinality at the level of mechanisms.

As process-tracing adopts determinism on the ontological level, the assumption is that if a cause or causes are sufficient to produce an outcome, then, under the necessary contextual conditions, the outcome should occur every time. While ontologically the method assumes that things do not happen randomly, epistemologically there are no such claims. Why things happen is a whole different matter and is always contingent upon new research and accumulated knowledge (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 23). Being ontologically deterministic seems fitting when undertaking a mechanistic case study aiming to explain the emergence of a phenomenon, otherwise the entirety of the analysis would seem futile, because the only possible alternative to holding such a worldview would be to deduce that there are genuinely stochastic elements randomly producing outcomes, or that "things just happen" (Mahoney 2008, 420). This deterministic view does not ignore social complexities or promise perfect explanatory mechanisms, but it advocates that the complexities are the result of countless nonlinear interactions in the social world and if a deterministic analysis were to be falsified it would be due to the limitations of the research itself.

Overall, if causal explanation should be the goal of social science research, then pinpointing causal processes through a mechanistic understanding of causality seems to be the most logical way to achieve it. As scientific realist Wesley Salmon (1997, 66) puts it: "When we recognize these causal processes and the role that they play in unifying the patterns into which facts and events fit, then we have gone a long way toward scientific understanding of our world and what goes on within it". Two hundred years after Hume contended that what is between X and Y cannot be empirically determined so one should stick to proving correlations and avoid theorisation

beyond anything verifiable, Salmon in fact argues that “causal processes are precisely the kinds of causal connections Hume sought but was unable to find” (1997, 71).

3.1.1 Explaining-outcome variant

There are several variants of process-tracing that Beach and Pedersen (2013) differentiate to clarify that process-tracing is not a single method as had been implied before. They argue that different research purposes call for different types of process-tracing, introducing three distinct kinds of the method: theory-testing, theory-building, and explaining-outcome. Aiming to set a practitioner free from “a set of murky methodological guidelines”, the authors distinguish between the three types and the divergent practical requirements when undertaking them (2013, 11). In their later work, Beach and Pedersen (2016a) add theory-refining as the fourth distinct type of process-tracing. This study utilises the explaining-outcome type of process-tracing where the ambition is case-centric, unlike the other three theory-centric types where the aim is to test or build an ideally generalisable theory. This means that the purpose is to analyse a historical outcome through structuring a mechanistic explanation. The explaining-outcome variant of process-tracing is especially suited to studying “a case” and constructing a case-centred study. In such studies, as opposed to theory-centred ones, theory is instrumental for the formulation of an explanation of a single case (Rohlfing 2012). This study is case-centric specifically because it seeks to understand what happened in Turkey and to make sense of the process through utilising relevant theories rather than aiming to develop or test them.

Explaining-outcome process-tracing is driven by the motivation to account for an especially noteworthy historical outcome, a particular event or a phenomenon. Such an analysis is a single-outcome study whereby a single outcome for a single case is sought. This single outcome could be a revolution, a regime change, the emergence of a political culture, etc. (Gerring 2006, 187). Beach and Pedersen argue further that the outcome does not have to be viewed as a “case of” something but rather should be put as a particular event that in and of itself is crucial to understand (2016a, 309). In this study, the single

outcome is the competitive authoritarian regime in Turkey. This regime change, however, comes from the fact that the outcome is an instance of degeneration of a democratisation project into a competitive authoritarian regime, so it is not harmful for the analysis to point this out. In fact, even though generalisation is not one of the main end goals, defining “the case of” still aids in placing the analysis in a group of competitive authoritarian regimes, revealing the causes and processes behind the emergence of such a regime, however dissimilar other cases might be.

To reach the outcome of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey, several interconnected mechanisms are built. These mechanisms are heuristic tools operating to assemble the best possible explanation of this particular outcome. It is an iterative process that aims to come up with a “minimally sufficient explanation” where there are no loose parts and all relevant elements of the outcome have been accounted for properly (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 20). This study does not suggest a bulletproof certainty about its main claims regarding what explains autocratisation and competitive authoritarianism in Turkey, but it does come up with an explanation accounting for the most crucial aspects of the outcome.

Justification of utilising this type of process-tracing is self-evident. The explaining-outcome variant works well with single case, single-outcome studies. It is the only case-centric type and it allows eclectic use of theories, events, evidence, and observations. It also permits a complex and circuitous modelling of causal mechanisms where there might be feedback loops, multiple switches, jumps; in short, many nonlinear connections. There could be many moving parts, even splits and parallel mechanisms. These can operate at multiple levels, going from micro to macro processes and back again (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 81; Gerring 2006, 173). The causal path is longer with numerous subparts and there is no limit to the number of parts that could be added, as long as they are necessary. The mechanisms of this study are detailed and switch back and forth between levels of analysis, but no part is unnecessary and overall the model captures the entire time period under study, highlighting the causal forces carried through the critical points.

Even though the methodology allows complex and elaborate mechanistic models to be built, such models then become more and more

case-specific as the number of subparts increases. Inclusion and interplay of systematic and non-systematic, as in case and context-specific, parts complicate the possibility of generalising the case study to a broader population. It is of course possible to have a more simple and linear design to explain a historical case, but a multi-levelled, multi-path, multi-cause model does not diminish the explanatory power of a mechanism.

A mechanistic explanation can be “messy”; an inventive juxtaposition of different theory and empirical elements. What matters in the end is whether that explanation is sufficient. Just as the methodology allows for creativity and pragmatism, it also allows for intuition; an explanation is deemed sufficient when the researcher knows and is satisfied that all vital parts are accounted for. The focus is to put forward “the best explanation” (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 311; Harman 1965, 88).

Another valuable aspect of process-tracing is its compatibility with historical institutionalism, as well as rational choice models. Scholarship on processual methodology often speaks of the types of processes that are ideal or likely to be studied and these usually invoke elements of the historical institutionalist approach. Goertz and Mahoney argue that to be able to produce a sufficient explanation, the case analysis would include “different observations at different points” with “historical junctures when key events directed the case toward certain outcomes and not others”, and indicators showing “how small changes during these junctures might have led the case to follow a different path”, which would create an explanation “rich with details about specific events, conjunctures, and contingencies” (2012, 89). Process-tracing’s flexibility in involving systematic and non-systematic elements into an explanation and the possible switches between micro (agency) and macro (structure) make it especially suitable for studies with a historical institutionalist focus. Others have emphasised the method’s usefulness in examining institutional change, or persistence, considering its focus on temporal analysis of dynamic events which cannot be easily quantified (Kittel and Kuehn 2012, 3). Process-tracing also provides an opportunity to empirically test decision-making processes that would aid in strengthening rational-choice theories and overall developing rounded and comprehensive explanations of complex events involving numerous (or few) actors and critical

moments (George and Bennett 2005, 208).

This study relies heavily on the institutional historical approach and also uses elements of rational choice models, advocating that the two are not incompatible. Through such an approach, its purpose is to understand how Turkey became a puzzling case, defying expectations of certain theories and generalised statements, particularly about democratisation and civilian control. Considering the study's end goal and the theoretical framework of reaching it, it is only logical to adopt process-tracing as the research method. Some scholars, however, caution against biasing the method towards specific theories and automatically expecting certain mechanisms to emerge due to the theoretical approach one adopts (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 82). Although this does not change the simple compatibility of institutionalist theories and process-tracing, it should be acknowledged that a mechanism has a life of its own and theoretical frameworks cannot be imported into methodological understandings. An end mechanism can easily have a multi-theory, multi-level look and might not adhere to a rigid theoretical viewpoint. And this is all right because the conception of a mechanism is not dictated by theory. Although dominantly using historical institutionalism to explain change, this study also deploys other frameworks, such as competitive authoritarianism, civil-military relations, and securitisation, in justifying hypothesised subparts and defining key concepts. Flexibility of the methodology's explaining-outcome variant allows theoretical juxtaposition provided that frameworks do not clash in terms of their fundamental epistemological worldviews.

3.1.2 Single case study and validity questions: a trade-off

After George and Bennett (2005, 17), this study defines a "case" as "an instance of class of events" where the class of events refers to "a phenomenon of scientific interest". A case is a historical instance, rather than a historical event, containing various classes of events inside it. After Gerring (2004, 342), here a case study is defined "as an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units." In this definition, Gerring refers the studied phenomenon as a "unit" that would be observed at a single point in time or over a period of time. This case study looks at Turkish regime

change as the case, the Turkish regime as the unit and observes this spatially bounded phenomenon. The temporal boundaries are also clear-cut: the observation is for 15 years. This particular case and time frame have been chosen because although a path to democratisation was expected, it did not occur. In addition, the political demilitarisation process resulted in a competitive authoritarian regime being set up. Therefore, seeing the kind of mechanisms and conditions that could result in this type of backsliding/autocratisation is worthwhile, even if it covers merely a single case with many parts and a single outcome.

As discussed earlier, there has been long-standing scepticism over the value of single case studies. KKV and their proponents discouraged such research designs, seeing them as single observation studies that would carry the heavy risk of indeterminacy. Accordingly, what KKV calls “the $n=1$ problem” brings out inherent issues in research involving causal inference (King, Keohane and Verba 1994, 208). In short, it is deemed not useful unless it is comparable or applicable to bigger populations. It is of course desirable to have a comparable case and this would make one’s argument stronger, but it seems unfair to dismiss single case studies in this way, after all many influential works of political science are $n=1$ studies and this research method is frequently practised. Instead, it is more rational to think about the purposes of a study and the research goals, and how to achieve them most scientifically and logically. When the aim is to deduce inference via regularity, then it is imperative to have a cross-case analysis. If, however, singular causation is assumed, the focus is on examining how mechanisms work in specific cases (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 19). In such case-centric research, insight into causal mechanisms is valued over causal effects. Gerring argues that such case-centric studies are works of an exploratory nature and only cross-case studies can test hypotheses, which he sees as a useful divide (2006, 39). Process-tracing, in fact, requires hypothesis generation in each subpart as well as hypothesis testing. Without testing one subpart and confirming it, the causal force cannot travel to the next. Admittedly, these tested hypotheses might be too case-specific and not carry the weight of repeated cross-case testing, but process-tracing’s rigorousness in this regard should not be so easily dismissed, nonetheless.

The case-centric approach has its own benefits and setbacks. Valuing going deeper into a single case inevitably raises the question of internal versus external validity. There is a simple trade-off: for a within-case analysis, internal validity is prioritised over external validity. Process-tracers of single cases are not easily intimidated by complexity of social life or numerous variables, observations or hypotheses; these are what make the method worthwhile. Accordingly, process-tracing with its multifaceted research design has the potential to produce comprehensive and complete explanations and have higher internal validity. In return, however, as one moves from good explanation to generalisation, external validity suffers. A well-rounded and complete explanation can be “the best” but it “may or may not provide a theoretical explanation relevant to the wider phenomenon of which the case is an instance” (Bennett 2008, 704). In other words, the insights derived from case-centric studies do not necessarily advance general theory or are generalisable to other cases (Rohfling 2012, 2). Thus, external validity becomes problematic as it is not possible to extrapolate causal inferences from few or single well-studied cases to far larger numbers of unstudied cases. In-depth analyses could still have, however small, ambition to go beyond a single case but in general this is not the main purpose, unlike in large-n studies. Certain lessons drawn from a single case study or certain systematic (non-case-specific) subparts of a mechanism could potentially be further developed to be generalised to other cases. Not every hypothesis confirmed would be unique to the case. This, however, does not change the fact that, overall, generalisation is troublesome and a case-centric causal model with its combination of various moving parts cannot, with any confidence, be generalised. Some small-n studies in the political science literature might have had well-generalised results, but such studies are rare, and this rarity should not be controversial.

Although internal validity is already high in a within-case analysis, one can still tackle the indeterminacy problem that might potentially be raised. Internal validity can be strengthened by being parsimonious when applying theory and including causes into the analysis. The same applies to selecting subparts carrying causal movement; not every step is necessary but those that are crucial and logically possible are. Therefore, reducing the number of subparts should further decrease indeterminacy. Additionally, as mentioned

before, generating scope conditions eases the issue of possible indeterminacy by specifying a domain in which the mechanisms would exist, and hypotheses and causal inferences are supposed to hold true (Rohlfing 2012, 8). Transforming some of the potential causes into scope conditions would also reduce the number of causes, aiding in mitigating indeterminacy issues. Selection of good data and high inferential power of the selected evidence should also increase internal validity by strengthening the causal steps within the mechanism.

To further fortify the causal analysis and reinforce the importance of explanatory variables as well as the subparts of the mechanism, a counterfactual investigation is attempted in this study (see section 8.2). A counterfactual analysis, which is a thought experiment, involves manipulating a factual case to be able to assess whether the manipulation would have made a difference. In other words, it asks: Would the outcome have been different if one aspect of the case at hand was changed (Rohlfing 2012, 175)? A counterfactual is, in short, a “what if” probe and a mental exercise. According to Richard Lebow (2010), a good counterfactual experiment comprises a number of features. The basic premise is that rewrites of history should be plausible and should take into consideration the antecedent conditions. For example, in a counterfactual attempted for the Turkish regime change, it would be meaningless to engage in such an experiment attesting that with a socialist leader, Turkey would have become even more authoritarian by 2017, simply because the contextual conditions would not allow for a socialist party to have won the elections in 2002. Furthermore, counterfactuals should make as few historical changes as possible to keep the experiment plausible. This means that the variables, values, and contexts in which the actors operate should be minimally disturbed, as they become less predictable otherwise. Overall, a researcher should be conservative in their mental exercise as playing with one variable/segment might inevitably lead to simultaneous disruption in other parts of a mechanism that would become difficult to make sense of. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, a counterfactual analysis is undertaken to confirm that without the security sector mechanism the outcome of regime change into competitive authoritarianism would not have occurred. This could be done by a minimal rewrite of history and changing a small event in the

AKP's election victory which triggered the mechanism. A mental play to see what would have happened if AKP had not entered the elections in 2002 would identify the necessity of the event and therefore the mechanism. In historical cases, counterfactuals are argued to complicate within-case analysis more than they help (George and Bennett 2005, 231). Due to the chain of events described and many variables counted, it might not be possible to develop a plausible counterfactual involving numerous changed variables. The burden of proving the importance of variables and events still lies heavy on the mechanistic explanation. The attempt of a counterfactual is carried out only to support such explanation, however minimal its contribution would be.

3.2 Data and evidence

Process-tracing is seen as “arguably the most important tool of causal inference in qualitative and case study research” that evaluates claims about the causes of a specific outcome in a specific case (Mahoney 2012, 571). To make causal inference claims, firstly a mechanism is modelled and then within-case inferences are made to infer that all of the subparts of the mechanisms were in fact present in the case and functioned as they were hypothesised to. These within-case inferences are made through the heavy use of empirical material as evidence.

The type of evidence used in process-tracing is significantly different from what is gathered for a statistical analysis. Instead of dataset observations, a process-tracing study relies on “causal process observations” or CPOs, as named by Collier et al. (2010). CPOs are defined as “an insight or piece of data that provides information about the context or mechanism and contributes to a different kind of leverage in causal inference” (184). These observations are still raw data; they need to be turned into evidence that could be admitted into the study, very much like in court cases, so that they can go through tests determining their inferential power. Not every CPO could be accepted as evidence; each of the raw observations needs to be scrutinised in terms of its content, accuracy and probability (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 120). Once they are filtered through case-specific knowledge, assessed, and admitted as evidence, they are deemed to potentially carry inferential value and can update

the researcher's degree of confidence in the presence of variables, conditions, events, and hypotheses. Beach and Pedersen (2013) depict this as $o + k \rightarrow e$ (observation + knowledge \rightarrow evidence). This means that the researcher should have in-depth knowledge about the case and the theory(s) to be able to identify useful and strong observations that would turn into diagnostic evidence and discard unreliable ones.

Evidence collection includes each step of the analysis, starting from the contextual conditions. While the presence of contextual conditions is a simple yes or no question, evidence collecting and testing for the mechanisms themselves are relatively more difficult. Especially in the explaining-outcome variant, evidence assessing becomes a more laborious task with all the moving, overlapping, and non-systematic parts (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 107). The positive side is that the same pragmatic mindset when building the mechanisms applies when including evidence. Evidence collecting and including them into the analysis is more heuristic and less rigid, with more circumstantial and eclectic evidence being acceptable. The Bayesian logic still applies, albeit in a looser fashion compared to theory-centric variants (ibid). Still, quality evidence is crucial and this disciplined way of data collection requires multiple types of data to be gathered for a variety of tasks: to prove the conditions, to prove that an event happened and caused what was claimed, that the actors were engaging in activities, that an activity started the next subpart of the mechanism, and so on. Oftentimes, multiple pieces and types of evidence have to be included to confirm a single inference. Considering the strict assessment of evidence in each part of the study, data collection for diagnostic material must be thoughtful and thorough. Such studies, including the one at hand, are empirically heavy and "analogous to detective work, legal briefs, journalism, and traditional historical accounts", with the analyst seeking to bring together groups of disparate observations and knowledge to understand a single outcome (Gerring 2006, 178).

For process-tracing studies, the collected data is dominantly qualitative and the gathering process is lengthy. Any kind of qualitative source and tool can be employed. The data may involve primary and secondary resources, including interviews, archival material, press briefs, surveys, historical documents, official documents, statistics, speech transcripts, meeting minutes

and the like. Ideally, the data collection should be done in a theory-informed and structured way to specifically look for the presence or absence of mechanism-related factors in all these vast materials (Vennesson and Wiesner 2014, 100). This study relies primarily on secondary evidence and most of the above-mentioned sources are used. The amount of scholarly work on the 15 years covering Turkish politics and democracy from 2002 to 2017 is not vast but sufficient. Especially since 2013, there has been increasing interest in academic literature re-assessing Turkey's failed democratisation. In addition, as the subparts of the mechanisms are usually critical events, there will be abundant use of journalistic work, which brings its own challenges. I also rely on "speech acts" frequently in the thesis, especially to describe motivation and justification of actors, which involves directly quoting relevant elites. For this, journalistic sources are vital. But not all journalistic work coming from Turkey or written on Turkey is reliable and sometimes the motivations might be questionable. In these cases, such pieces are more intensely scrutinised and corroborated through other sources or other types of material, such as official documents. Throughout this process, I use my own professional investigative journalism experience and skills to be able to sort through and verify the authenticity of the quotes or the actions/events. As a rule, naturally, not just journalistic ones but all these types of observations are interrogated in terms of reliability, accuracy and context before being turned into evidence used to confirm the explanations in the mechanisms.

Specific data collection, especially in a process-tracing study, brings out potential risk of bias due to the non-random nature of the selection strategy (Beach and Pedersen 2013, 124). This might cause evidence not updating confidence in the study's claims being ignored, leading to misrepresented inferences. It might also happen when a historical observation is misinterpreted or taken out of context, or when a source sharing the bias is preferred and the alternatives are deliberately left out. Since researchers are also products of their own political environment and exist within a certain political context while writing about it, being completely unbiased does not seem possible. It would be more logical to accept certain bias and not treat it as an impediment to good scholarly work. This of course does not mean that facts should be distorted or skewed but it perhaps should be admitted that

interpretation will always carry a certain amount of inevitable bias. Nevertheless, this study naturally compares observations gathered from multiple sources to be able to combat such bias.

3.3 Conceptualisation and attributions

Concept definition is an important aspect of process-tracing to be able to demonstrate what causes the mechanism and what it produces at the end. With this type of qualitative work, concepts focus less on matters of data, measurements, and indicators and more on depth and meaning. Goertz (2006, 4) argues that with a good concept, the central attributes that a definition refers to are those relevant for hypotheses, explanations and causal mechanisms. He proposes that concepts should be structured as “multidimensional” constructs, having multiple levels in their definitions, from basic to secondary to indicator level. The basic level is the core notion; what term is used in theoretical propositions, such as “democracy”. The secondary level is what the term consists of, such as civil rights and elections for democracy. The next layer is the indicator/data level where conceptualisation becomes more fine-grained, such as free and fair elections. Process-tracing studies are interested in the attributes of concepts that would contribute to the causal mechanism and causal productivity. With this in mind, concept definitions stipulate all relevant and necessary conditions. Concepts are structures with the attributes framed within AND/OR relationships. While an AND relationship between attributes signifies necessity, an OR relationship implies sufficiency. Many big concepts, such as democracy, have existing well-established attributes and definitions that can be structured with AND/OR. This, however, might not always work as well as expected due to certain definitions not bearing aspects of the concept one finds crucial for the mechanism to work or for the study to explain. They are, nevertheless, good starting points.

Case-centric researchers have the advantage of “tailor-making definitions of concepts that fit more closely with the types of causal claims” that their study aims to make (Beach and Pedersen 2016a, 97). This means that in such studies concepts can be more strategically structured with the idea that certain attributes would aid in capturing causally relevant aspects of them.

With the explaining-outcome variant, where the purpose is to explain why an outcome occurred, then concept structured is more geared towards understanding “big and important things” that are going on in a case (ibid, 98).

The framework of Goertz’s three-level model not only properly identifies the concepts but also gives practical help to the researcher regarding where to look for data and evidence by specifying and fine-graining in the third level. To be able to explain this concept-making process, a few of the study’s main concepts will be discussed below.

As discussed before, this study takes the Dahlian approach when defining democracy as polyarchy. The main constitutive elements of Dahl’s (1971) conceptualisation of democracy can be observed roughly to be political liberties and participation. Under these concepts, at the indicator level, Dahl argues that polyarchy has eight institutional requirements: (1) almost all adult citizens have the right to vote; (2) almost all adult citizens are eligible for public office; (3) political leaders have the right to compete for votes; (4) elections are free and fair; (5) all citizens are free to form and join political parties and other organisations; (6) all citizens are free to express themselves on all political issues; (7) diverse sources of information about politics exist and are protected by law; and (8) government policies depend on votes and other expressions of preference.

These eight necessary attributes defining Dahlian democracy have been considered to comprise a thin concept consisting of only few facets of what we observe (Coppedge 2012, 21). Considering, however, the widespread use of more minimal concepts of democracy across the political science discipline, the Dahlian version is well-rounded and comparatively rich. Many of the attributions invoke further implications, for example, a thicker definition would include a functioning civil society, but this would already be possible when citizens were free to form them and when diverse sources of information existed. If it is considered that satisfaction of socio-economic needs is part of the definition, this too can be found under free and fair elections with an understanding that elections provide the possibility for those with such an agenda to be elected, and those without policies to tackle social inequality would lose the ability to govern. The only crucial aspect that is directly relevant to the causal mechanism of this study is that a democracy should also

necessitate officials to be elected and enjoy autonomy from unelected veto groups. This requirement can be included in the eighth attribute of polyarchy where only votes can direct government policies. Overall, it can be argued that Dahl's definition is adequate but could be made thicker at the third level of concept-making where attributions are made more detailed, explicit and ready to be operationalised.

The second concept this study brings up is political demilitarisation. This notion does not have an established definition in the literature so one will be developed here, taking Croissant et al. (2010) as a baseline. Political demilitarisation, on the secondary level, requires civilian oversight of the military. And to operationalise it, this conceptualisation needs to consist of (1) implementation of full civilian oversight of the military by elected government (where all political and most security decisions are taken by the government); (2) no interference by the military in state matters (where no military personnel hold any position in key state institutions and in the parliament and no civilians are tried in military courts); and (3) the army being content with civilian oversight (where they are either silent about civilian rule or make only positive announcements about it). These three necessary attributes would satisfy the conditions to define a regime setup as politically demilitarised.

Within the same conceptualisation framework, autocratisation can be understood to denote the process of erosion of democracy. Going deeper, to be able to talk about autocratisation, certain indicators should be visible: 1) executive aggrandisement in the form of weakening institutional checks on the executive, 2) preservation of democratic institutions (those laid out by Dahl) but eroding their functions and capacities. Competitive authoritarianism's fundamental constitutive dimensions are competitive elections and uneven political playing field. On the indicator level, elements such as existence of democratic institutions in combination with incumbent's unfair access to state resources, violated liberties, control of the media would operate to flesh out the concept.

4 Contextual conditions

One of the fundamental elements an empirical phenomenon, a case, should have is the temporal bound. This is crucial for the clarity of the research and positioning of one's arguments within the proper temporal setting. Social processes are seldom instantaneous, hence periodisation, clarifying a starting point and an endpoint, is essential (Falleti and Lynch 2009, 1153). These arguably subjectively selected temporal points save the research from straying too far from the phenomenon analysed and their selection would be justified by the researcher. This thesis takes the AKP's electoral victory of 2002 as such a starting point, as many historical institutionalists do with critical junctures, but it does not mean that all began there or that the AKP emerged out of nowhere overnight, as political movements rarely do. A historical background is necessary to situate the mechanisms into a proper context. After all, these causal mechanisms only work within a specific temporal context and events, giving the relevant actors the motivation to act later on. In this part, instead of a general background of Turkish political history, three specific conditions will be explained. The causal mechanisms analysed in this study are only valid if there is: 1) a legacy of absolutist rule and early development of military apparatus, 2) an experience with revolution from above, and 3) the military's guardianship.

What Beach and Pedersen (2016a, 89) call "contextual conditions" are factors enabling a mechanism to operate. They are not "triggers" causing a mechanism but the socio-political and historical environment in which a mechanism takes place. A context does not "cause X or Y but affects how they interact" and it can be understood as a broad term describing a setting "in which a set of initial conditions leads to an outcome of a defined scope and meaning via a specified causal mechanism" (Goertz 1994, 28; Falleti and Lynch 2009, 1152). The conditions that the context produces are fundamentally the social structures that "constrain and enable" the agents of change (Kurki 2008, 256). Actions of these agents shaped by their historical, social and material environments would then intentionally change norms, rules, and other environments, which would subsequently result in intended as well as

unintended consequences. The three historical conditions identified here are relevant not only because they set the scene for the study, which covers just 15 years, but they also play the role of enabler or constrainer for the power actors who occupy the key spots in the causal mechanisms. It is not easy to understand agent motivation without seeing the bigger (historical) picture. Some of President Erdogan's decisions are *prima facie* impulses, for example, unless one understands the Ottoman legacy and its fingerprints on modern Turkey as well as the legacy's anxiety-inducing capabilities for the rules of this post-empire state. Then it is not about a madman's rash decisions but the fear-filled and populist judgments of a statesman operating in a distinctly harsh climate for a member of a previously oppressed group, an ex-subaltern. This, however, does not mean that the power of agency should in any way be disregarded or minimised. Rather, it is only to argue that agency's actions have circumstances that are causally relevant. In other words, "People make history, but not in conditions of their own choosing" (Marx 1852 quoted in Dessler 1989, 443). So, while defining the contextual conditions under which the causal mechanisms operate, this chapter discusses their "inheritance" qualities that have causal effects, of varying degree, over the autocratisation period Turkey went through between 2002 and 2017.

Historical legacies in general influence a wide range of political, economic and social institutions (Hite and Cesarini 2004) as well as behavioural patterns, relationships, norms, etc., and are especially visible in the workings of security forces (Morlino 2010). Studying the authoritarian legacies concerning political elites, and especially repressive institutions, has been deemed crucial as they are the most divisive and salient phenomena determining the workings of the regime type and the society's perceptions in post-authoritarian setups (Pinto 2010). It is argued that to be able to talk about the "survival" capacity of legacies into new eras, the phenomenon in question needs to have existed over at least two observation periods (Croissant 2019). Here, I define the period markers as the imperial era, the single-party era, the multiparty era, and the autocratisation/competitive authoritarian era. As this chapter shows, many norms, procedures, institutions, attitudes and so on survived through multiple period markers. Some, especially informal institutions, are more persistent. Following LaPorte and Lussier's (2011)

typologies and Croissant's (2019) neat classification of them, I argue that there are structural, institutional and behavioural legacies in political, social and economic spheres. The following sections in this chapter explain them more in detail.

The overall view of the political sphere from the empire era to the competitive authoritarian era reveals a specific pattern of power (non)distribution. The power becomes centralised around a clique and does not get dispersed among a number of reasonably independent actors. Clearly, an absolutist monarchy and a hybrid regime with a parliament is not the same but one can see the former's structural imprint on the periods that followed it in the political sphere. This legacy has been embedded into the structural foundations strongly enough to withstand the demolition of another institutional legacy in the political sphere, namely the military prerogatives. Secondly and similarly, the idea of the "state" has been paramount since imperial times. A strong state tradition, the efforts to maintain it, and the concomitant authoritarian and non-transparent practices can be seen playing out at the institutional level in the political sphere. A strongman tradition is a similar surviving legacy that can be studied at both behavioural and institutional levels in terms of the society's readiness to support one and the institutional arrangements' capacity to accommodate one. The state's involvement in the economic sphere is another lasting legacy that can be traced to the Ottoman times, but the close state-economic elite relations after the establishment of the republic is a visible institutional mark that has defined the rule of many governments, including the AKP. The idea of security-oriented politics is another legacy that continued under different period markers. The dynamics of the war management model of the early Republic and its associated authoritarian and interventionist policies were adopted by succeeding regimes. These earlier legacies were especially reinforced by the eras of military rule in Turkey (Morlino 2010). Securitisation of a variety of issues, from minorities to the economy, at early stages of state-building made it easier for elites to securitise new phenomena during the competitive authoritarian period. Lastly, particularly in competitive authoritarian regimes, previous legacies are managed and utilised by the new regime elites as they lack the ideological impetus of previous strong systems or, in general, a

foundational myth (Croissant 2019; Pinto 2010). It is evident that both Ottoman and Kemalist-revolutionary identities are used as framing tools for the AKP's competitive authoritarian regime, to remedy the acute lack of any foundational myth, therefore providing an ideological base for legitimacy.

Contextual conditions are not manifest in the mechanistic analysis directly but their existence indicates that the mechanisms created and conclusions inferred hold true only under them. This means the elaborate mechanisms defined in this study would only result in the defined outcomes under the combination of contextual conditions identified. It also means, however, that one should accept the rule that each time these conditions existed, such mechanisms would produce the exact same outcome. So, causal mechanisms are condition-bound and context-dependent and this fact has its own advantages and also challenges. The most discernible advantage is the contextual conditions' ability to specify a domain where the inferences are true, as mentioned above, therefore remedying to a large extent the problem of indeterminacy (Rohlfing 2012, 8). A disadvantage of defining relatively strict contextual boundaries, as this study does, is that the size of population that can be observed naturally decreases as these conditions would fit only a number of cases. This is why, in large-n studies, such conditions are not so strictly or frequently invoked. The consequence for the study at hand is the fact that it becomes harder to compare the Turkish case to other cases, even with a few cases and even as an intellectual exercise. On the bright side, for single-n studies, this shortcoming automatically turns into an advantage as establishing boundary conditions increases internal validity by allowing a deeper dive into the analysis, identifying the fingerprints of history, recognising more intricate agency-structure dynamics, and therefore enabling more meaningful inferences.

4.1 Imperial history

4.1.1 A state-centric absolutist monarchy with an early bloomer military

The dramatic rise of the Ottoman state from a tiny frontier town to a cross-continental empire is by any standards impressive. The vast Anatolian land at

the end of the 13th century was witnessing the decline of the Turco-Persian Seljuk empire, the concomitant anarchy, and the subsequent emergence of independent Turkic tribes dispersed throughout. From within this chaotic landscape, a small emirate emerged in western Anatolia, on a piece of land stuck between a dying Seljuk state and the Christian Byzantine, with Osman Bey at its helm. The success of Osman Bey lies in the fact that he was one of the most ambitious and active of the local rulers raiding the Byzantine land – as the frontier tribesmen often did – and he managed to gain the loyalty of local fighters around the land and gathered them under his banner (Inalcik 2010, 23). Osman Bey and his band of brothers then carried on capturing more land, taking booty, and attracting more nomads into their fighting ranks. By the time of its tenth ruler, within 200 years, the sultanate started by a tribal leader’s “obscure and insignificant band of frontiersmen” rose to the status of a world power, ruling from Hungary to Yemen (Kunt 1995, 5). However obscure and insignificant they were, the existence of these men shows that a small but aggressive core group of “soldiers” pledging allegiance to a leader had been at the heart of the Ottoman empire. Brothers in arms of tribal leaders around that time were considered loyal servants of the ruler until they died, absolutely bound by his orders. In this way, it could be assumed that the ruler maintained high group cohesion and also prevented any of his “brothers” from straying away to become a rival. The power of the leader of the Ottoman land had always been dependent on elite fighters and had always been absolute.

In only a few decades, crossing the Dardanelles in the 1350s and controlling the trade and plunder of south-east Europe, the Ottomans became “the richest and most powerful of the emirates” in the region, coercing or conquering neighbouring groups (Kunt 1995, 9). Successful expansion continued until it came to a halt in 1529 after the failed siege of Vienna. During its heyday in the mid-16th century, the empire was the most powerful in the world, with its Sultan enjoying a revenue twice that of his nearest rival, the British king (Anderson 1974, 365). What was the mechanism behind such wealth and power? Mainly two factors working in tandem: a formidable army and a strong support system geared towards the needs of the forces undertaking conquests.

Before explaining the force structure of the Ottomans, it is important to

highlight the system of ruling in the empire. As mentioned before, the sultan's rule was absolute and, with no concept of private property, all the wealth, including land, of the empire belonged to him and him only. The sultan would delegate his authority to the small ruling class, the *askeri* (literally "soldiers"), who took care of and defended the imperial possessions, took on administrative duties and powers, paid no taxes, did not contribute in production, and in turn devoted their lives to the service of the sultan and were considered slaves to him (Shaw 1963, 59). The rest were the ruled and their duty was to contribute to the imperial wealth and pay taxes. They had no access to the sultan's authority, nor did they differentiate between the sultan himself and his elites; the ruling "Ottomans" were perceived as a whole (Göçek 1996, 22). The social control was dominantly at the hands of the clergy, called *ulema*, which was part of the *askeri*. The *ulema* ensured indirect but crucial linkages between the ruled and the power centre by controlling educational access and legal administration, at the same time unifying a diverse range of ethnicities under the social rules of Islam (Jacoby 2004, 32). Like the overall structure and features of the *askeri* class, the motivation to empower clergy built on earlier precedents when the first Ottoman rulers would depend on un-institutionalised local clergy to help rule newly captured land (Inalcik 2010, 24).

The economic system in the Ottoman empire was strictly regulated, production and trade were tightly controlled by the state, and entrepreneurship was banned. All kinds of economic activity, along with all political and social institutions, existed and worked to promote and preserve the power of the single ruler (Inalcik 1969, 97). On top of controlling production and the supply of raw materials, the state had authority over consumption through suppressing sales as it wished while buying certain products only for the palace. Profiteering and usury were severely punished. Through these measures, the state made sure the only class to collect surpluses was the ruling class (Jacoby 2004, 37). Basically, the sultan owned all the land and its fruits; he redistributed them as he saw fit and could take it all away, even from the privileged few who had permission to accumulate excess.

One of the most vital assets to be redistributed was land. Through an ingenious system established in the mid-14th century, the state gave out

captured land as *timar* to be administered by cavalrymen. This way, it ensured that the land was cultivated at all times under the administration of the *timar* holder, taxes would be collected for the state, and the *timar* holder would have to provide his military service and find additional horsemen whenever needed. These cavalrymen were also considered slaves to the sultan, could not marry or leave their land to any relative as inheritance, and their holding of the estate was dependent on their loyalty to the sultan and their compliance with his orders. This system “provided the government with a crucial means of maintaining some control over the most important economic resource, namely the land, and also over the largest segment of the population, the peasantry” and it proved to be “the most effective means of establishing and maintaining a social order” (Karpat 1974, 89). The *timar* holder, a soldier, was technically the representative of the state in the provinces. He provided certain services, managed administrative duties, and most importantly, reproduced order at the local level on behalf of the sultan. The state became omnipresent without ever needing to reach the provinces. On top of that, it had a standing military force without needing to pay for it.

What coexisted with the local *timar* holding cavalrymen was the Janissaries, the sultan’s famous slave corps constituting the elite infantry arm of the Ottoman forces. Recruitment was done through the infamous *devsirme* system, where boys of Christian families of the imperial land would be collected as tribute. The children would then go through heavy military and cultural training and could rise up both military and political career ladders. Cruel as it sounds, capturing and using these children to become elite soldiers worked well for the Ottoman: “Children were more responsive to the training, and their bodies and minds were easily moulded according to the needs of the military... [i]n the long and complex training, heavy emphasis was placed on unit cohesion and élan, and very rich rewards were granted for merit and combat achievement, which combined to create intense loyalty to the institution” (Uyar and Erickson 2009, 19). Many of the *devsirme* occupied high-ranking offices, including the second-in-command after the sultan, and the Janissaries became the most powerful corps of the empire.

The establishment of this permanent army consisting of elite infantry with high group cohesion, loyalty, and combat capabilities going back to the

14th century was something unheard of in Europe. Both western and eastern rulers would have to wait until the 17th century to come close to having central armies. This gave the Ottomans a unique advantage on the battlefield and with each victory the Janissaries became more powerful. And with such power, came leverage. In 1532, Machiavelli explained the Turkish “prince”: “He always maintains near him twelve thousand infantrymen and fifteen thousand cavalymen, upon whom depend the safety and the strength of his kingdom, and it is necessary that this ruler should maintain them as his allies, setting aside all other concerns” (Machiavelli 2005 [1532], 70). Indeed, the Janissaries had high bargaining powers and used them liberally, including to dethrone, even murder, sultans. Until their meticulous and brutal elimination by a sultan in 1826, they dominated the military and political scene, blocking reforms, resulting in European armies trying to catch up fast (Kadercan 2014).

After even a brief look at the political and military history of the empire, the orientalist perception of savage Turks fighting around the world seems too simplistic. It was a well-oiled machinery that brought effectiveness and made expansion possible, not brute force or numbers (Murphey 1999, 49). While an institutionalised army controlled the battlefield with the sultan physically by their side during the empire’s prime centuries, the rest of the arms of the state with all its institutions, as well as people, only worked to make this possible. Such a single-focused and despotic state setup had an enduring legacy, with its effects felt in the 20th and 21st centuries, firstly as a failed system to rebel against and rebuild, and then as an ideal past to be revived and rehabilitated.

4.1.2 Legacy

The Turkish experience was born out of a system where two factors differed entirely from the European cases: existence of an early developed and institutionalised (slave) military force and an absolutist system with no property rights (and any privileges associated with titles) where the survival of the state was considered paramount. As historical institutionalists argue, how things start matters (Pierson 2004). How the Ottoman empire was established as a band of brothers on horses, both fighting and collecting taxes, had a lasting effect on how the later Ottoman state and the new republic were structured. At

the same time, an early bloomer army that became too strong to handle created the earliest civil-military tensions and crises in history. As populist politics took root in the 21st century, this imperial past was revived in mostly crude ways to serve an emerging strongman and aid in assembling his neo-Ottomanist policy ideals.

It is certainly possible, and does happen, that institutions are created from scratch when new states are born. Almost always, however, new institutions and systems will be the result of old ones being tinkered with (Parsons 2007, 79). Hence they will have the fingerprints of their predecessors, leading certain institutional and structural norms, constraints and behaviours to linger on for centuries. As critical agents take advantage of times of political flux to change the status quo, the structure might struggle. Keeping in mind the historical institutionalist literature, I argue that this happens mainly for two reasons: certain “ideas” get cemented in a socio-political setup and become part of its anatomy, and the healthy working of this body produces increasing returns. What follows is what we know well from the historical institutionalist literature as path dependence, meaning that once these two mechanisms operate in a system, it becomes extremely difficult to reverse course.

It would be disappointing for nationalistic Turks to find out, but the Ottoman empire’s state configuration borrowed many features from the Byzantine that it conquered in 1453. Historians have long debated this, and “the Turkish consensus” drawing a clean line between Greek and Turkish histories has been generally accepted internationally (Kafadar 2002, 63). A deep look into the structure of the Byzantine state and political life, however, demonstrates many similarities. The imperial court in Constantinople was the political centre, with the emperor having full authority over the subjects. Closeness to the palace determined the degree of privileges and accompanying wealth one could acquire. The ruled did not exactly identify themselves as “Roman”, nevertheless they were servants of the emperor, and the clergy was the crucial link tying the ethnically loose people to the palace by emphasising the unity between religion and the state – albeit under the supervision of the latter (Whittow 1996, 106–8). As discussed below, at the heart of the Ottoman was the inherited characteristics of early Turkic tribal norms. Once the tribal type primitive style political organisation ceased to be sufficient as the land

expanded, the increasingly complex administrative layout became a hybrid of Greek-Roman imperial and Turkic tribal.

The Ottoman system, with its distinct land practices and strong army, worked efficiently for centuries, until it did not. The rise of Europe and internal policy failures gradually weakened the empire and pushed the sultan to bow to the reformist intelligentsia and officers, known as the Young Turks, in the mid-19th century. Although it is impossible to delve into the roots of the Young Turk movement here, it is important to mention two fundamental features of it: its radical Westernisation agenda which took European states as models, and this agenda's essentially non-democratic character. The notion of *devlet*, literally the state but what Serif Mardin (1997, 67) describes deeper as "stateness" or "the priority of the state", was the overriding concern and top-down modernisation was seen by this small group of elites as key to keeping the *devlet* and in fact the empire alive (Ozyurek 2006, 13). Uyar and Erickson (2009, 217) claim that officers involved in the movement "believed in the merits of democracy", but primary and secondary sources on the era suggest that such beliefs were weak on their own, if not non-existent, and were not to promote political freedom or individual liberty but to supplement the strength of the state. The devotion was to the Ottoman state, not to any specific ideals that accompanied European polity models of the 19th century, and could be constituted as "democratic". What was presented as necessary reform was not a representative democracy with its institutions but rather was "enlightened despotism" (Mardin 1997, 68). This legacy is important because the first serious reformist movement within the Ottoman elites failed as a political institution but its force led to a process at the end of which a republic was founded, with many of the movement's core thoughts, especially on modernisation and the priority of the state, carried forward, albeit in transformed fashion. Moreover, the sanctified understanding of *devlet* as an above-all concept of polity which theoretically would flourish under enlightened despotism, strictly not democracy, has lingered on even when multiparty politics became a norm in Turkey. It is a recurrent theme for policy-makers on both sides of the spectrum and notions such as "the survival of the state", "continuance of the state", and "may God protect the state" become familiar, whereas "democracy" turns into a mere buzzword with no tangible

culture behind it.

The Ottoman history also reveals that the civil-military contestations of 21st century Turkey are neither arbitrary nor without precedence. The “idea” that soldiers are at the heart of empire-building defined what Turkish monarchical rule looked like, which continued to affect the ideological foundations of Turkish republican rule. Historical institutionalists pay special attention to the role of ideas in defining institutions and aiding institutional persistence (Peters 1999, 66). Even though the concept of “idea” comes across as vague and nondescript, in many cases, ideas embedded in the political psyche could be much more powerful and long-lasting than formalised structures. It is no surprise that Turkish citizens see themselves as an army nation (*asker millet*) or that the military’s image has been mostly unscathed for centuries. Soldiers have been part of the social fabric since the beginning of the Ottoman times as their war fighting, service-providing, and state-mirroring duties have been intertwined. The first right hand men of the sultans would collect taxes during peacetime and grab their swords during war, and later, *timar* holding soldiers would have to allocate a significant portion of their time to performing law enforcement duties in their districts. Additionally, it was not uncommon to have these army members provide services that the palace left to the people to organise, such as building and repairing roads, bridges, schools and mosques, usually done jointly with members of the public. The local administration became a more complex web of organisations as time went on, but “the Ottoman military remained an important policing instrument” throughout (Uyar and Erickson 2009, 212).

As the military became more and more deeply embedded into social life in the Ottoman times through *timar* holders, and into political life through the intense influence and bargaining powers of the elite forces, power bred power, which is part of what historical institutionalists call “positive feedback” (Pierson 2004). The elite Janissaries won countless wars for the sultans but eventually became a financial burden and an extremely capricious political actor, significantly affecting the everyday workings of the state, but they could not be touched. They were so powerful in fact that this civil-military crisis had to be solved with the literal decimation of thousands of the force. The *timar* holders could be more easily dismissed by the state – no bloodshed – but they

had created strong bonds with the locals they interacted with due to how the arrangement was set up at the beginning, which gave them significant benefits when the system was working and more crucially during the War of Independence in the 1920s when they switched sides. Even when the military was gradually professionalised and Europeanised during the reform period of the mid to late 19th century, the high-ranking Turkish officers ignored the advice given by French and German military advisors to change the structure of military education to include more practical training to increase battlefield efficiency, because the Turks wanted to raise overall officers/statesmen who were not only knowledgeable about war but also about science and administration, capable of handling civilian governmental duties (Uyar and Erickson 2009, 207). The making of military men was a wholesome state project so even when military reforms were taken seriously and as a last resort to save a moribund empire, the institution resisted changing its existing patterns of norms which had historically produced increasing returns.

The military's early institutional development provided the Ottoman state with unparalleled advantages but at the end its resistance to reform paved the way for the sultan and the empire's eventual downfall. The new generation of officers with ties to Europe ignited the modernisation – not democratisation – project via a revolution from above, which will be discussed in the next section, that would be the basis of a new republic. Seeing the inevitable collapse of the Ottoman state and dynasty, regiment after regiment abandoned the sultan and joined the War of Independence as rebels, transforming the sultan's army into a nationalist one (Uyar and Erickson 2009, 283). The transformation was swift and early during the war, which mattered a great deal for the victorious end result. What matters from a legacy point of view is the fact that from the early days of the Ottoman tribe until the last days of its empire and beyond, the armed forces hardly ever lost in the civil-military game.

Another effect the imperial political heritage had was on the leaders of modern Turkey. The founder of the republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, receiving the elite wholesome training of the reformed royal academies, was the ultimate 20th century Ottoman officer. The same staff colleges, however, also bred radical new ideas that the officers were exposed to (Hanioglu 2011). Combined

with Ataturk's highly ambitious character, this environment created a renegade who would first be loathed then followed. Leading and winning the War of Independence, Ataturk represented the antithesis of the sultan while still being a strongman. He destroyed the monarchy and the caliphate, which he saw as backward, and rose above the Young Turk movement which he saw as incompetent. Ataturk's modern legacy was built upon his "modernness"; eliminating all that was associated with the Ottoman era and all of its public and intellectual representations. Leaders following him took Ataturk as their model statesman and although due to his god-like status in the country they would not dare claim to be like him, they aspired to rule following his political ideals. Setting aside some anomalies – promptly corrected by the military – no ruler, elected or who had seized power, strayed from this linear path for decades nor attempted to revive the Ottoman past. Until Erdogan came to power.

“Here comes the protector of the oppressed, hope of the poor, the strong voice of the underdogs, child of the nation, here comes the fearless advocate of the just cause, grandson of [Sultan] Fatih, apple of the ummah's eye, architect of new Turkey, servant of the nation, president of the republic” (quoted in Karakaya 2018). This is how President Erdogan's arrival to the stage was announced during the 563rd commemoration of the conquest of Constantinople in 2016. The AKP's predecessor Islamic parties in the 1990s played with Ottoman-influenced ideas to mobilise the masses and their leaders aimed to enrich their public appeal by using the Ottoman past in their speeches (White 2014, 127). None of them, however, had been as successful as Erdogan in doing so. The president uses the Ottoman past fundamentally in two ways: to derive his legitimacy from it rather than from Ataturk's Kemalism, and to use as a populist tool.

In 2018, Erdogan said: “Some people insistently try to start this country's history from 1923. Some unrelentingly try to break us from our roots and ancient values [...] Of course, the borders have changed. Forms of government have changed [...] But the essence is the same, soul is the same” (AA 2018). His efforts to create a linear past from the Ottoman times to his rule is not new for Erdogan, however, only since 2016, with the lingering trauma of a coup attempt and no intellectual authority left to challenge him,

has he become more overt in his Ottoman-related statements. As a leader who has battled Kemalism, the secular establishment and its military apparatus, Erdogan's search for legitimacy in the imperial past is not so surprising. This so-called glorious past gives him the necessary positioning within the political history; he portrays himself as a pious strongman encircled by enemies outside and within, fighting for the nation to bring back the times when Turks would be feared and Islam brought the nation together – times before Westernisation was forced upon the land and Islamism was erased. It is no coincidence that one of the last sultans, Abdulhamid II, is a role model for him. An increasingly paranoid sultan witnessing the collapse of his empire, who resisted reformists and employed heavy coup-proofing measures against its own army, ultimately toppled by the Young Turks is who, unsurprisingly, Erdogan most identifies himself with. He supports popular manifestations of this parallel. A TV series called *Payitaht Abdulhamid* depicting the last years of Abdulhamid II, a highly dramatised and often historically inaccurate show that often nods at the current ruler of the country, became his favourite: "What we were and what we have become... we should know our history. You are watching *Payitaht*, right? You see everything there," he urged young students he once addressed (TRT 2017).

Erdogan's use of the imperial past and its nostalgia is a significant part of his populist policies. The Ottoman empire's 600-year history is totally flattened, erased of any transgression, and presented as highly tolerant and multicultural with formidable fighters/statesmen at its helm. A sultan can do no wrong and if he does, it is due to the outside forces trying to bite away at the Ottoman land. The AKP undertook this endeavour as part of its own legitimisation efforts to base itself on the rehabilitation of a former superpower. This imperial narrative, and the nostalgia the AKP created around it, emphasised the Ottoman-Islamic civilisation as the source of Turkish heritage with the aim of binding citizens to the nation (Karakaya 2018). In parallel, from the popularity of members of the ex-royal family to admiration of Ottoman art to the commerciality of Ottoman-inspired products, there is a growing fascination in society with the monarchical past, which is what Ergin and Karakaya (2017) call "Ottomania". Children's books teaching about sultans, rings with the sultan's seal, wallpapers with Ottoman motifs, wedding

ceremonies with Ottoman garb, and in general, the manifestation of this heritage in popular culture and the consumer world shows a gradually changing societal sphere in Turkey. These manifestations and symbols are hard to quantify, therefore might be uncomfortable for political scientists to delve into, however, they are important signifiers showing how “ordinary” Turks in the 2000s are searching for their identity in the Ottoman past. More importantly, this is the societal environment Erdogan operates in as a political actor, both creating and capitalising on a whitewashed and glorified past while presenting himself as a “lonely” but undefeated sultan fending off foes, real or imaginary, one by one.

4.2 A revolution from above

4.2.1 A war to win

The concept of “revolution from above” refers to a revolution initiated and completed by elites as opposed to a “revolution from below” in which the masses would be the key actor. Ellen Kay Trimberger (1978, 2) defines a revolution as “an extralegal takeover of the central state apparatus, which destroys the economic and political power of the dominant social group of the old regime.” In a revolution from above, this takeover is led by military and civilian bureaucrats occupying high-ranking offices in the old regime, who demolish the political and economic core of this old regime and the class/aristocracy attached to it. This concept is not so far from Gramsci’s “passive revolution”, where power changes hands and new social groups are included under the hegemony of the political order, but, as in a revolution from above, without any expansion of real political control by the mass of the population over politics (Sassoon 1987, 210). The state-building of modern Turkey is an exemplary case of these phenomena. The early 20th century in Anatolia was marked by an independence war and a consequent revolution from above and its concomitant social and political reforms that define and explain both modern Turkish polity and its fault lines, hence it is one of the contextual factors helping to decode actor behaviour and structure limitations in Turkey a century later.

The concept of revolution from above, or a passive revolution, derives from the understanding that state relations should be at a breaking point and there would be a group to take advantage of it (Trimberger 1978, 20). As Gramsci also argues, “no social formation disappears as long as the productive forces which have developed within it still find room for further forward movement” and this movement will depend on “the relative weakness of the rival progressive force” (1971, 106). The Ottoman military elite, equipped with the ideas they were exposed to during their education, and specifically the young officer Mustafa Kemal, found this opportunity during World War I when the Ottoman land was attacked from multiple fronts and the central authority seemed to be crumbling in the war. Kemal’s most significant achievement during this time was to unify the elements of resistance that had already materialised against the occupying forces of Europe. By doing so, he “coordinated their efforts, expressed their goals, personified their ambitions, and led them to victory” (Shaw and Shaw 1977, 340). He was certainly ambitious and self-assured, and while equipped with the most elite Ottoman training and political behaviour, he was renegade material not hesitating to break the norms of state conduct. He believed that he was destined for a higher calling and that he possessed the vision to bring the country out of its darkest hour.

From his initial organisational move in May 1919 to his declaration of a new government in Ankara in March 1920, Mustafa Kemal managed to gather military and civilian elites around his movement and attracted immense support for the nationalist cause, with military groups swiftly changing sides and bureaucrats abandoning their Istanbul posts to join his administration. In April 1920, the Parliament was set up, dismissing the sultan. Following victorious battles defeating opposition inside and invasion from outside, the republic and independence were finally declared in 1923. After six centuries of mono-dynastic rule in Anatolia, a new band of brothers came and terminated the empire and all it represented. A new country was born and the time to fight was over. But only on paper. The war mentality would deeply affect state-building and nation-building projects and have lasting impact on what modern Turkey was going to look like.

When the new parliament, called the Grand National Assembly

(Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi – TBMM), was set up in the secure, inland and sleepy town of Ankara in defiance of the palace, it was, by all accounts, a war government rather than a “national assembly”. One of the first decisions taken in the new parliament was to enact the High Treason Law prohibiting crimes “against the nation” and a few months later to establish revolutionary courts, the Independence Tribunals, headed not by judges but by deputies, where dissidents, royalists, and deserters would be punished (Zürcher 2004, 152). Punishment was severe and liberally handed out. Executions included figureheads for anti-nationalist rebellions as well as low-level privates who would plead with the court that they ran away simply because they had neither gear nor clothes to fight with (TBMM 1921, 571) During this time, the army was in a key position and it, inescapably, handled everything related to the independence war; from enlisting, to collecting war taxes, to quelling rebellions. The parliament was a mechanism to ensure the army’s efficiency. This was not always smooth in a “proud, faction-ridden, and intractable Assembly” mixing officers and civilians from both the royal capital and the forgotten corners of Anatolia (Rustow 1959, 547). For example, the archival material reveals that during a heated debate over Mustafa Kemal’s proposal to establish a separate War Committee that would be accountable only to him, a deputy stated: “Reinforcing the army... Sirs, appointing two war ministers was not deemed sufficient. We also gave [you] a national defence deputy and that was found lacking. A chief-of-staff... On top of these, we enacted the Independence Tribunals. We accepted all the budgets without a debate. We took everything peasants have, unlawfully. What else do you want to do that you ask for [a committee with] extraordinary mandate?” (TBMM 1922a, 578). Needless to say, the deputy could not find himself a seat in the following parliament and was even later tried in the Independence Tribunal himself. His outcry, on the other hand, demonstrates well the initiatory framework of the state structure, laying bare its mentality and priorities, and how its leader was gradually consolidating power as one man.

Regarding the composition of the parliament, as mentioned before, the group of deputies included a large number of higher officers on active duty and Mustafa Kemal relied on them heavily (Rustow 1959, 547). The boundaries between civilian and military authority were blurred from the beginning.

Although Mustafa Kemal believed that soldiers should stay out of politics, this did not apply to senior commanders, possibly due to him seeing the top-ranking officers, like himself, as more than just a member of the army. He, being both the chief-of-staff and the head of the government, said in the first parliament that he envisioned the head of the military “having not only the primary role of overseeing soldiers but also be[ing] engaged with ideas whether he is [in the parliament] or elsewhere” (TBMM 1922b, 610). To directly quote him again, the military organisation was “closely concerned with internal and external affairs as much as it is with national defence [...]” (TBMM 1920, 164). These were the circumstances under which a republic was established, and the mandate was given to the public. And Mustafa Kemal, now ruling over ashes with an impoverished and heavily reduced population after a decade of unceasing war, was ready to implement his agenda of radical social reforms that transformed the Turkish socio-political structure to the hilt.

Starting with abolishing the caliphate in 1924, a sweeping set of changes was implemented within ten years. The sharia courts and religious colleges were abolished; religious networks/brotherhoods were prohibited; wearing of the fez was banned and Western style clothing became mandatory; women were enfranchised; the Gregorian calendar, Swiss civil law, European numerals, the Latin script, the metric system, and the surname system were adopted. Mustafa Kemal held deep-seated suspicions towards the West, after all he literally battled it for decades, but he also saw Western civilisation as the zenith of progress and a blueprint for modernisation (Hanioglu 2011, 57). As the revolution itself, the reforms were also top-down and implemented in a radical fashion on an agrarian population of 13 million who were ravaged by war, fighting illnesses and poverty. Science, however, Mustafa Kemal believed, was the cure for all societal issues and the epitome of scientific thinking was to be borrowed from the West. Combined with his impatient character and known lack of regard for tradition, his republican reforms aimed to replace the old entirely, instead of leaving any room for modifications of time-honoured values, institutions or norms. They represented something retrogressive and would not help in pushing the country ahead. He not only, for example, made Western clothing obligatory but he ordered severe punishment for those who insisted on wearing traditional garments. It was a revolution and there was to

be no middle ground.

The abolition of religious institutions from early on was a clear message regarding the political will to erode the power of Islamic networks over society. As new schools, foundations, and charities were opened, the state gradually took over civil society responsibilities in these realms that had once been occupied by religious groups. The Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) was founded in 1924, on the same day as the caliphate was abolished, and in this way religion was put under the control of the state. Mustafa Kemal did not exactly aim to separate religion and the state, as secularism would dictate, nor did he want to agitate the public by seeming to disrespect it, rather “he wished to tame [religion’s] power, harness it to his own program of reform, and exploit it to raise the moral standard of the masses” (Hanioğlu 2011, 153). His idea of secularisation was about state control of religion and subordinating it to the government’s will. Hakan Yavuz argues that this is in fact an institutional tradition and legacy that carried on from the Ottoman times, where the *ulema* would be under state control, into the republican era (Yavuz 2009, 18). Although this chapter of the thesis is particularly interested in such continuities and legacies, Yavuz’s argument is a stretch; the *ulema* class had relatively high autonomy and influence over the sultan and was part of the ruling elite. Their decisions had strong impacts, such as blocking the introduction of the printing press for centuries. Mustafa Kemal’s aim was to rigorously limit and control such influence; he or the state would be exercising the authority to take decisions and the new clergy would become state officials reproducing his scientific order.

Another key reform point concerned the restructuring of the economy. This issue too had been considered by Mustafa Kemal in the initial stages of the state-building process. So much so that the first national gathering to draw the first economic plan, the Izmir Congress, was held eight months before the establishment of the republic. More than a thousand participants, comprising merchants, industrialists and workers, signalled an initial commitment to establish a private enterprise economy (Bugra 1994, 98). This was also a Young Turk legacy, where the idea of generating an indigenous bourgeoisie was one of the reform goals. The optimism of the newborn republic did not last long, however, and such an economic regime, combined with the impact of the Great

Depression, did not produce the expected results in terms of economic development and wealth production. Hence, in the early 1930s, the statesmen found themselves at a decision point as to how to revive the economy. The solution was found in creating interventionist economic policies aiming for autarky, which, while borrowing experiences and ideology from the west, would build a nationalist Turkish developmental concept (Hershlag 1984, 176). Turkey was a late-comer country and it had to institutionalise capitalism at a much faster pace to catch up with the west and grow, and also shelter from the volatility of the global market that would impact a fragile Turkey more harshly. Furthermore, a revolution and all its assurances could not be fulfilled if the economy lagged behind. Therefore, etatism started to play a crucial role in the early development of the Turkish economy and also became a cornerstone of the Kemalist ideology. In a pre-capitalist post-war society, the most feasible way forward was to pragmatically implement etatism-a-la-Turca to put in place an industrial structure as quickly as possible. The Minister of Economics Celal Bayar, at Mustafa Kemal's – now with the surname Ataturk – orders, explained this policy in a 1935 speech: “Turkish etatism is not a system which borrows ideas that have constantly been harped on by socialist theoreticians in the 19th century; it is a system peculiar to Turkey, which has evolved from the principle of the private activity of the individual, but places on the State responsibility for the national economy, with consideration of the needs of a great nation and a large country” (quoted in Barlas 1998, 63). In this way, intermediary steps of capitalist development were skipped, the project to generate a national bourgeois was hastened, and the state became the central power controlling economic activity, trade, growth, and accumulation of resources.

4.2.2 Legacy

The centralised nature of the Ottoman state, late military reforms, and the non-existence of land-connected aristocracy had an impact on how the empire was then taken down by the civil and military bureaucratic cadres. Afterwards, the way in which the new state was established, as a revolution from above, and how its apparatuses were institutionalised had a lasting effect on how

modern Turkey's socio-political sphere was configured. While the war mentality shaped political relations for decades, it found its modern manifestations in the populist discourse of Erdogan as well. In addition, Ataturk as an icon and his Kemalism as the state ideology created the boundaries within which all political actors have operated, whether they played along or rebelled. The ideology has created the major fault lines, cleavages and subaltern identities, around which 21st century Turkish politics continue to take place. Another legacy of the revolution from above was manufacturing the idea of "Turkishness" as a signal of anti-imperialist pride and self-sufficiency, but which then became the root of fearing and rejecting "others", which has also crept into the modern political discourse shaping actor behaviour.

The generals who led the independence war slowly took off their uniforms as they went into the parliament. The mentality, however, was harder to shed even as their primary job became law-making instead of war. What Ali Bayramoglu (2017) calls a "war management model" was dominant in the post-1923 governments and mechanisms were structured to maintain this model. When it came to re-organising the office of the chief-of-staff of the armed forces, the government opted to keep it as an independent entity, virtually unaccountable. It had direct command contact with the lower-level forces and had the authority to directly communicate with all ministries on all relevant matters. The Ministry of Defence essentially was made to support the chief-of-staff in organisational and logistical matters with no real decision-making capabilities. Ataturk's earlier vision of a chief-of-staff almost as a magister-factotum was implemented in a way that the office had wide authority with vaguely defined boundaries. Additionally, the High Military Council was set up in 1925, consisting of 14 force commanders and two civilian ministers, headed by the president. This council had the authority to determine defence policies, draw up military strategic plans, manage the armed forces, prepare the defence budget and determine the legislative needs to implement military policies. The Council, albeit in a modified form, still exists today. These institutional formations provided the military with an abundance of space and protection inside the political decision-making machinery and the state apparatuses, which paved the way for the military to further reinforce its position at later

stages (Bayramoglu 2017, 69). The politics of insecurity and the high level of perceived threat, and possibly the lack of trust in a fully civilian administration's capabilities, resulted in Ataturk and his comrades designing a state structure with significant parts of it remaining unanswerable, autonomous, and unchallengeable, which was to normalise the "war management model" in the proceeding decades, without the sight of a war to manage.

The war mentality and the politics of insecurity were to affect virtually everything during the first decades of the republic, from the maintenance of public order, to education, trade, and investment decisions. A good example is the first chief-of-staff's interference with projects of ministries and the particular case of the country's first steel factory and his veto on its location on the Black Sea coast, claiming that it would not be possible to defend if enemies attacked, resulting in the factory's setup in a logistically and financially far less ideal place. He also blocked projects to establish manufacturing in the south-east, arguing that factories would require building of roads which an enemy could then use to infiltrate the country (Agaoglu in Bayramoglu 2017, 70). The south-east of Turkey is still the least industrially developed province. Although other factors have surely been at work, these early security-focused decisions of specific actors had enduring economic and political consequences for certain regions and industries. In the same vein, a civilianised and properly trained police force was out of question, as the army had the job of preserving public order with the mandate given to it by the state. The path-dependent effect was so drastic that it would be the early 1980s before the police finally emerged as a professional civilian force (Piran 2013, 18).

Another legacy was related to the culture and persistence of political oppression. Ataturk's consolidation of power and extended political authority required excessive measures and even violence. While he would himself travel to staunchly conservative provinces to explain his social reforms, the compassion would end there. The Independence Trials, for example, hanged 70 people for opposing the "hat laws" and still wearing the traditional fez, with the total number of executions for opposing the reforms reaching 660 (Zürcher 2004, 173). As the war ended but the military continued to claim space and authority to formulate the future political order into the 1930s, dissent inside

and outside of the government became increasingly visible. Whereas rebellions in various regions – but specifically Kurdish – were quashed brutally, deputies or bureaucrats who voiced opposition were swiftly purged or exiled. Loyalists would fill the Cabinet. Similarly, a core cadre was established consisting of mostly ex-officers appointed to positions of civil bureaucracy, which played a critical role in extending compliance with social reforms and reproducing the new order (Jacoby 2004, 80–1). Political dissent was handled with such ferocity that no signs of parliamentary opposition would be visible for two decades and even then, it would continue to be quelled.

More importantly, economic elites would never emerge as a class that could or would organise autonomously or reach a critical mass to push for more openness and democracy. This is another explanatory point regarding the cyclical trajectory of autocracy and diminished democracy in Turkey, and the non-existence of a democratic tradition in which political actors act. There were several interrelated elucidatory developments at work. Firstly, even the “liberal” period marked by private enterprise between 1923 and 1931 was strictly controlled by the state as it “interfered countless times *in favour of* private enterprise (...) resulting in elimination of competitiveness” (Boratav 1974, 17, emphasis in original). The economic foundations of the new country were built on state-centric and interventionist ground. Secondly, only specific groups, the key requirement being an early ally of the nationalist cause, reaped the benefits of the generosity of the state during this phase and usually this process was openly political. This means that even though a commercial class was gradually getting bigger and more powerful due to its encouraged access to resources, it did not challenge the state functionaries and “it simply expressed its gratitude, and hesitantly put forth demands that would bring immediate pecuniary returns (...) it exchanged the right to establish (even the faint traces of) a civil society for (what seemed to be) the privilege to make money” (Keyder 1987, 82).

By the late 1920s, Ataturk managed to silence opposition who criticised the nature or the speed of his reforms and rose as the survivor of the initial political fights in the parliament. Both himself, and the political and economic elites who stayed by his side, contributed to forging Ataturk’s legacy as a god-like hero, the chosen one, upending a nation’s doomed destiny. This

personality cult of Ataturk and his philosophy-turned-ideology Kemalism constitute another republican legacy that defined the borders of post-Ottoman politics within which the subsequent political actors operated. In his 1927 marathon speech of 36 hours, Ataturk's first words marked the definitive victor of the parliamentary infight of the time and the primary creator of the nation: "I landed on Samsun on the 19th day of May in 1919" [emphasis added]. This first-person narrative where all the others would either be his friends or foes, was the beginning of formation of ideas and images in the collective consciousness equating the independence war almost solely with Ataturk (Alaranta 2008, 118). Following his epic speech, the intelligentsia and the bureaucratic cadres actively reproduced the narrative of state formation as dictated by Ataturk. His speech became the standard and unchallenged source for the history-writing of the republican years (Under 2009, 143). While the names of other generals and his comrades were slowly erased from official memory, the heroism of both Ataturk and the Turkish people were elevated in official discourse to aid nation-building and national unity in a fragile new state. Ataturk, whose given surname means Father of Turks/Ancestor Turk, became a father figure, a disciplinarian but benevolent at the same time. National iconography centred around him depicted the Turkish state and its leader both as a soldier and a statesman. This policy of reproducing Ataturk as an idea and as a symbol especially gained importance after his death and was actively promoted by his party CHP as a legitimacy tool. His statues were built throughout the country; his pictures adorned public offices, company buildings, schools, houses; his stern face was put on banknotes, coins and stamps. Insulting his memory or image became a punishable offence. Through the state-sponsored promotion of Ataturk being beyond just a leader, he attained supernatural features when alive and became immortal after his death. He appeared to be "a figure beyond time, beyond history, politics and human constraints" who "dare[d] the Turks: could they question his legacy and challenge the destiny he laid out for them?" (Glyptis 2008, 355). Indeed, two intertwined issues emerged in the Turkish context when such a figure dominated the public and political spheres: through state apparatuses the Ataturk iconography was internalised and then reproduced by the people themselves with no need for coercion, and the iconography became so

omnipresent and natural that it was not questioned. As Islamic symbols became more visible in the public sphere in the 1990s when Islamist politics seemingly were gaining ground, the Islamic iconography was in a contest with the republican iconography. As a response, the state and the military intensified their efforts to solidify the symbolic dominance of Atatürk by erecting more statues and busts in far corners of the country (Ozyürek 2004, 378).

As populist Islamist politics found fertile ground in Turkey once more in the early 2000s with Erdoğan, Islamic symbolism has started to increase its visibility again. With the lower-middle and middle classes emerging with full allegiance to the AKP, their use of symbols is a hybrid of Ottoman and Islamic. The personality cult of Atatürk is too ingrained to be entirely challenged but Erdoğan is the only politician since the establishment of the republic whose image and words have been so widely shown and distributed, dominating everyday life. As a country with a strongman legacy, considering Erdoğan's popularity, it seems that the general public did not regard his increasing omnipresence over the past 17 years as too out of the ordinary. Erdoğan has positioned himself within Atatürk's political legacy in flexible ways; he mostly avoids using the surname Atatürk, calling him "Mustafa Kemal", a symbolic rejection of Atatürk's national status, or "drunken", a direct attack on his capacity as a ruler, but he also does not shy away from using Atatürk as a rhetorical tool of his populism, when needed, by claiming the AKP to be the only group who are genuinely protecting "his memory from the tyranny of these abusers," meaning the CHP (HDN 2017). In the public realm, too, symbols increasingly matter more. Hanging up Atatürk posters, putting his photo on social media accounts, referencing his quotes, wearing clothes with his face on, even tattooing his signature have become examples of public expressions of choosing a side in a growingly polarised society.

Very closely related to the cult of Atatürk is the notion of Kemalism, which, although it does not have an exact definition, came to denote Atatürk's doctrine of a secular and modernised society. The fundamental principles of Kemalism were first mentioned in the CHP's party programme of 1931 and put forward as republicanism, nationalism, secularism, statism, populism and reformism. It is an all-encompassing set of ideas lacking systematic

particularities, which made it a flexible ideology with many political uses by various factions. After Atatürk's death, Kemalism continued to be heavily promoted by the party, made to serve as its ideological backbone, and fundamentally became the state ideology and the basis for indoctrination in schools, the media and the army (Zürcher 2004, 182). The military became Kemalism's guarantor and protector. It raised future generations of officers with a curriculum focused on Kemalist values, perpetuated the ideology, stretched and twisted the concept as it seemed fit to the political atmosphere and its interests, and also used it as a justification for staging coups d'état.

Whereas criticism of Kemalism has been especially prevalent in scholarly circles since the early 2000s, the ideology had a multifaceted nature beforehand. Kemalism did not emerge out of nowhere; it was a product of the zeitgeist and it is difficult and unfair to ignore the ideology's impact on a war-torn nation and its ability to build a set of institutions not only to conduct state affairs through emphasising peace rather than conflict, but also to raise citizens' standards of living via industrialisation and public education. As critics would argue, the reformist outlook of Kemalism also emphasised an authoritarian strategy to implement those reforms. In addition, the success of the reforms and ultimately the survival of the regime depended on a unified society, which Kemalism prioritised by defining nationalism based on cultural and racial connectedness and unity. Hence, the last legacy of the republican revolution this study considers significant is the creation of the idea of Turkishness and its concomitant effect on long-lasting political and societal fault lines.

As opposed to the empire's rule over ethnically diverse groups in Anatolia and the political culture accompanying it, the new republic had a staunchly homogenous understanding of ethnicity and culture, promoting the notion of Turkishness above all. From his young officer years, Atatürk was influenced by the German general Colmar von der Goltz's *Das Volk in Waffen*, which he studied under Goltz during his enrolment in the Military Academy. Atatürk believed that the only feasible way to forge a nation in arms consisting of citizen-soldiers ready to field a strong army would be to promote a robust national identity (Hanioglu 2011, 37). What was a unifying sentiment during the War of Independence, bringing all ethnicities together to fight to save the

land, turned into exclusionary race politics afterwards. Population exchanges, suppression of minorities, and manufacturing histories contributed to creating an official nationalist narrative. The Turkish Historical Thesis, advocated by Atatürk, claimed that Turks were a separate race that came from the Aryan natives of Central Asia who then migrated all around the world and established civilisations. Around the same time, the Sun-Language Theory was put forward arguing that essentially all languages could be traced back to Turkish as they derived from a primal Turkic language spoken in Central Asia. Although by the 1940s the forcefulness of these radical theories had started to fade, a generation of professors, teachers, archaeologists, and anthropologists were raised with these schools of thought and continued to study and teach them for another few decades, having a long-lasting impact with traces of these pseudoscientific theories finding their way into textbooks and thoughts even today.

The creation of the “Turk” and his close association with being a citizen-soldier, highly inspired by *Das Volk in Waffen* and also the Social Darwinism of the time, resulted in a combination of phenomena that had a durable socio-political footprint. Firstly, such a staunchly militarist understanding of the citizenry would pave the way for the military normalising indoctrination and make political influence much more effortless. Secondly, as the boundaries between Turks and the rest (non-Muslim, Islamist, Kurds, Armenians, etc.) were made increasingly evident as opposed to the Ottoman times, “the Other” came to be. These identities the republican regime sought to repress became the defining characteristics of groups who would then stand as the subalterns of the new order who were displaced from the political arena and swiftly securitised. Lastly, combined with the trauma of the War of Independence, the ethnocentric nation-building practices can be seen as the root of fear of outsiders or non-Turks, a deeply embedded element of the Turkish mindset. Indeed, this element is such a defining characteristic of the national identity that it is in fact more pronounced than secularism or Islam, which were traditionally thought to be the main fault lines (Haynes 2010, 313). This legacy becomes prevalent in Erdoğan’s politics and the 15-year period under study in several ways. Erdoğan is part of a group, the political Islamists, that have historically been excluded from any meaningful role in regime power,

therefore they were not considered genuine Turks as per the republican recipe; they were the Others. The power struggle between Kemalists and the subaltern political Islamists was, for the first time, won by the latter and Erdogan was at the helm. Now that the ex-subalterns are in power, the established and deeply imprinted political codes are used, this time by them, to gain public support as well as to divide the society. It is no coincidence that Erdogan is presented and viewed both as the protector of the ummah – a group that Ataturk radically split Turkey from – and also the saviour of Turks against nefarious others (Karakaya 2018). His speeches have become increasingly divisive and countless times have explicitly referred to “us” –exclusively his voters – and “them”, a generic term to denote groups ranging from non-AKP voter citizens to invisible global power cliques. His populist tools and demagoguery worked precisely because of the historical legacy which created political “underdogs” armed with the rhetorical advantage of politico-religious preaching operating within a social context where “the outsider” (or the nefarious insider) is feared. The structure the guardians of the regime established and worked within, as the next section will delve into, to securitise certain groups was then instrumentalised by Erdogan, albeit with a populist twist.

4.3 Guardianship and its institutions

4.3.1 “The god of all policies”

Turkey’s revolution from above, undertaken by rogue military bureaucrats, brought about a system of guardianship. In this system, the military was carefully put in a position to “guard” the new nation and its Kemalist ideals. Then, as the decades passed, the military cautiously put itself at the centre of state affairs, effectively becoming the decision-maker. Although Ataturk strongly believed in the separation of civil and military affairs, the pure fact that the republic was set up and designed by military men had a lock-in effect. Whereas officers could not be elected to the parliament and the number of military-associated deputies gradually declined, the chiefs of staff and generals have enjoyed a high degree of autonomy from the beginning, as discussed in the section above. With each coup, this setup allowed the military to claim

more space and become more entrenched in the heart of Turkish socio-political life.

Turkey is not a unique case. From Latin America to sub-Saharan Africa, militaries, especially if they are part of “foundational myths”, have been deeply connected to state formation and nation-building processes, seeing these tasks almost as permanent military assignments (Koonings and Kruijt 2002, 20). These political armies also take on a leading role in the formulation and the defence of the national identity (Croissant and Eschenauer 2017). Under such circumstances, the armed forces become custodians of foundational myths, positioning themselves as the core of the state rather than its mere apparatus. In Turkey too, the military came to perceive itself as the guardian of the Turkish republic and its essential Kemalist principles laid out by Ataturk. The armed forces saw themselves as above politics and claimed impartiality, but this attitude worked well for the institution; it managed to claim guardianship status while enjoying the privileged position such status brings and managing to move without much difficulty among a range of policies (Demirel 2004, 130). It also laid the groundwork for flexibility in ideology; since the military was the guardian, it would have to guard the establishment against enemies, external but more importantly internal, so it had to find an above-politics justification to fend off “the enemy”, which required a strategic and flexible institutional mindset.

In 1934, the military’s duty to “defend the Turkish nation and republic” was written in the first draft of the Army Internal Service Law but after being deemed insufficient, it was changed to “protect and safeguard the Turkish nation and the republic”; the law was enacted in the Parliament in 1935, formally structuring the guardianship system. This infamous part of the law, initially dormant but gradually gaining and assigned power, remained intact until 2013 when it was rewritten as part of the civil-military reform process of the AKP government amid heated debates in the parliament. The guardianship system also came with a set of institutions. Here, “institutions” are defined broadly, following Thelen and Steinmo’s (1992) definition, to include both formal structures, such as laws and entities, as well as informal ones, such as behaviour.

Until the introduction of multiparty politics in 1950, the military

enjoyed institutional privileges and popularity among the public while having no impetus or reason to directly interfere actively in politics. It was mostly concerned with quelling armed rebellions against the new regime. The landslide election victory of the Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti – henceforth DP) in May 1950 and its subsequent policies pushed the military outside of its cocoon and into action. The conservative and pro-Islam party led by Adnan Menderes, seeing itself as the representation of popular will (*milli irade*), attracted rural votes but was largely unwelcome among the urban, educated intelligentsia, as well as the economic groups tied to the Kemalist regime. The DP broke the well-oiled machinery of decades marrying the CHP and the state, with all its apparatuses. Naturally, the DP leadership mistrusted all the products of this machinery, specifically the bureaucracy and the military, and spent a great deal of effort to make them subservient (Zürcher 2004, 221). All the while the DP governments were utilising increasingly authoritarian policies and tactics to intimidate the CHP as well as to oppress dissident groups. On 27 May 1960, triggering the “protect and safeguard” clause of its internal law, the army took over the state and arrested all the DP leadership and deputies. Although it is now referred to as a democracy-promoting coup (Varol 2012), the military takeover was only celebrated by the urban segments of the society, while the rural population remained anxiously quiet, having been largely supportive of Menderes’s policies in the previous decade.

The armed forces intervened again in 1971 and 1980. All three coups were preceded by either societal and political polarisation, or both, and for all of them, guarding the regime, secularism, and the unity of the nation were used as the pretext for coup action (Gursoy 2013, 259). After each of the coups, the military withdrew relatively quickly and cleared the transition paths to political normalcy. It did, however, plan and execute exit plans, meaning that after each transition, it increased its autonomy and power in the following democratic phase, resulting in obstacles to full democratisation (Gursoy 2013, 259). In this sense, Turkey is an exemplary case of Perlmutter’s “arbitrator army”. As opposed to a ruler army, an arbitrator army neither wants nor needs to directly rule as it will see such prolonged rule as detrimental to the institution’s professionalism and integrity, and the institutional arrangements ensure that it influences civilian governments behind the scenes (Perlmutter

1978, 313-314). The Turkish military's interventions were strategic strikes to extinguish the inflamed crisis moments brought by the passive revolution of 1923, and the initial institutional setup enabled it to pull out and let a capable new political group take charge with the promise that the old practices would not return. The initial fertile institutional setup then further encouraged and enabled the military to extend its depth of influence and multiply the fruits of power with each coup while remaining an arbitrator army, which is arguably a more stable and beneficial position than a ruler army.

The tools of influence for the military during the times of civilian rule were a set of institutions. The most significant of them was the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, henceforth MGK), established following the 1960 coup and marking the military's first constitutional role. The formal duty of this hybrid group of civilians and military was to "advise the Cabinet with the aim of helping decision-making and coordination processes with regards to national security". With this, the notion of "national security" was formally enshrined in the law, marking the beginning of an era where the concept was to eventually fully replace "national defense" and was to grip the country's politics to the day (Bayramoglu 2017, 79). The council made it possible for the military to have a proper corporate identity beyond just the barracks and a physical entity with its own secretariat and departments to be involved in the political process. And its power over policy was to gradually grow with the passing of each decade.

The 1971 coup, which took place in the form of a memorandum demanding that the government resign, saw in its aftermath a further emboldened military apparatus. Certain liberal clauses of the 1961 constitution were pinpointed as the culprit of the growing dissidence and the concomitant emergence of extreme (left and right) factions in society. Therefore, it was amended to limit rights and freedoms in the name of national security and unity while expanding the duties of citizens. Reform of the judiciary enabled civilians to be tried in military courts and armed forces members to be tried only in specially designated military courts, giving the armed forces additional autonomy and distancing them from the civilian sphere. Furthermore, the two years of martial law following the coup witnessed mass imprisonment of dissidents, executions, extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, and

torture by activating the military's clandestine Special War Department, or the contra-guerrilla, established in the early 1970s with the aim of curbing communist influence (Gokay 2006, 77). The National Intelligence Agency (Milli İstihbarat Teskilati – MIT) and the US-backed contra-guerrilla worked in tandem with the military government to eliminate any type of activism, demonstrating the extent of the military's will to engage in unsanctioned violence to protect the regime. The risk of losing their guardianship status and its perks outweighed the real risk of the military damaging its professionalism or moral authority.

Instead of bringing the calm/obedience hoped by the military, the repression of the 1970s escalated social polarisation and political strife, which ended with another coup d'état on 12 September 1980. The repression and violence from the military during this time made the previous coup look like an amateur trial. Additionally, the state was successfully militarised and military autonomy reached its peak (Bayramoglu 2017, 82). Severely restricting basic rights and freedoms and making virtually all societal matters the armed forces' purview, the 1982 constitution is the product of an authoritarian military mind. The MGK members were not to "advise" but to "declare" their policy suggestions. The MGK's role became as vague as possible, "to protect society's tranquillity and safety," allowing it to encroach further into civilian politics and stray further from solely military duties, while normalising the dominance of their national security discourse. In 1997, a former TSK chief-of-staff put the MGK's role in context: "As defined by our constitution, the MGK determines the national security policy, which is the god of all policies (...) It is unthinkable to act against this" (Gures quoted in Bayramoglu 2017, 92).

The 1982 constitution also set up the Council of Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurulu – YOK) to control and manage the universities, surveil the activities of faculty and students, and reward or punish them accordingly. In parallel to securitising politics, the 1980s military government militarised the police. In addition to increasing the police forces' budget, recruiting en masse, and opening new police schools, two paramilitary units were set up: the highly militarised anti-riot squad Rapid Action Units (Çevik Kuvvet) and the Special Operations Teams (Özel Harekat Timleri) with high-

tech new weapons and armoured vehicles (Berksoy 2010b, 140). Lastly, on 28 February 1997, also referred to as the postmodern coup, the military issued a memorandum on the TSK's website forcing the prime minister Erbakan, a political Islamist, to resign. The following events, dubbed the 28 February Process, resulted in an open marginalisation of Islamist politics and its securitisation. As part of the regime's Islamist cleansing, Erdogan, then the mayor of Istanbul, was jailed for reciting a religious poem at a public gathering and temporarily banned from politics.

As the military's sphere of influence widened, political benefits were not the only reward. The institution also managed to secure considerable economic power. Following the 1971 coup, the new constitution severely limited the Court of Auditor's jurisdiction to examine the military's assets and accounts by making the audits an exception that would be undertaken on a certain "secrecy basis required for national security services." A decade later, the state's ability to audit the military's books was eliminated altogether with the next constitution. The military's overall budget, as a cumulative number, is known but the details have only ever been discussed in secret sessions in the Parliamentary committee. It is suspected that these meetings have never been anything but a formality to inform a handful of civilian committee members, rather than a debate over numbers. The budget itself has passed the Parliament usually with a round of applause, sometimes with a group of MPs officially thanking the TSK for its service on behalf of the Parliament. Since Turkey is a NATO member, it is required to present elaborate budgetary information to the Alliance, which then becomes public in certain databases. So it is in fact possible to obtain this information, but the TSK has always preferred secrecy as part of its symbolic power, regardless of how illogical it is to give them "military secret" status (Insel 2017, 47).

Following the 1960 coup, an investment programme to provide social security to military staff, the Army Mutual Assistance Association (Ordu Yardımlaşma Kurumu – OYAK) was established. Quickly passed in the parliament without much debate, the OYAK law demonstrated the will of the men on horseback, who had already become politicians, to also become industrialists and merchants (Parla 2017, 202). Over the years, owning shares in a variety of industries and businesses – from cement to supermarket chains

– OYAK has become one of the biggest companies in Turkey. It was managed by generals and also provided pension, loan, insurance, and mortgage benefits to personnel at very low cost, as well as subsidies for personnel housing and expenses, significantly increasing the standard of life for officers. Having officers regularly contribute to it and being exempt from a myriad of taxes in Turkey due to its special legal status, it is no surprise that OYAK has become an incredibly profitable corporation over the years and made the military richer while expanding its presence in the Turkish economy. Additionally, by successfully positioning itself at the heart of middle-class consumption, OYAK has led to a significant “bourgeoisification” of the military elite (Jacoby 2004, 137). The soldier had become the capitalist.

4.3.2 Legacy

The “special insular and inward-looking self-selected guardian role” of the Turkish armed forces shaped the core of the Turkish political system (Haynes 2010, 313). Such a dominant system’s legacy has been far reaching and it makes the AKP and Erdogan’s battle over its institutions easier to comprehend. Amassing an incredible amount of power in the span of several decades, the military managed to establish itself as a wealthy and stable institution with all the state and ideological apparatuses, to borrow terms from Althusser, working to sustain its existence. All representations of dissent to the regime and any threat to its economic benefits were crushed, preventing a dynamic opposition from ever growing in the future. It also moulded the social psyche, creating citizen-soldiers through education and the conscript system as well as raising a generation post-1980 believing in the futility – or danger – of engaging in politics. Above all, the military made itself so powerful that it disregarded strengthening any other institution than what benefitted its semi-authoritarian, security-focused, and neoliberal policies, creating a strong state but with extremely weak checks and balances, which would ultimately aid in its own downfall.

Through the MGK, which was sometimes referred to as “the parallel government” with its top-secret strategy document known as the Red Book, the military, true to its arbitrator role, has become a powerful watchdog and

sometimes even replaced the parliament as the true power centre (Zürcher 2004, 245). This was a somewhat natural course, considering how the republic was established and how power was disbursed – or rather not disbursed – from the beginning. The military expanded its influence in political, social as well as economic spheres, sometimes in visible bursts – the coups – and mostly in semi-invisible terms. It directed and handled this setup so well that it has managed to remain respected and popular among the public.

With every coup, the military, expanding its multilayered spheres of influence, became more entrenched in politics and more embedded in the socio-political order. The ideological backbone of the military, Kemalism, proved flexible enough to provide various justifications for this interference. The survivalist emphasis of the Kemalism of 1920s was replaced with nationalist priorities to keep the regime thriving in the 1980s. While strict secularism was a vital part of Kemalism between 1920–1945, the 1980s military saw it as worthwhile to integrate into Kemalism and promote the concept of “Turkish-Islamic synthesis” as an antidote to the ideological foes of the era, i.e. socialism and communism, with religion and ethics classes becoming compulsory in schools (Zürcher 2004, 288). Whereas the concept of an “internal enemy” was used by Kemalists to define anti-republicans, pro-monarchists of the 1920s, the notion came to denote leftists, communists, unionists, political Islamists and Kurds by the 1980s. It proved to be so versatile that even with Kemalism challenged, under the AKP, it came to define all those who do not support the policies of the president.

Another consequence of both the nature of state formation (“The army fought for it”), the subsequent guardianship of the military (“The army intervenes to fix what politicians cannot”), and the concomitant indoctrination and myth-making (“Every Turk is born a soldier”), militarism has been deeply embedded in society and become a natural part of the collective soul of the country. Military officers, through their education, mostly genuinely believe in their safeguarding role. After all, it is even enshrined in their college anthem: “Having founded the Republic with blood and insight/We guard it for good even if the hells rage.” But it was also the people who believed in the army’s capability to protect, and more importantly, to step in if events get too out of control. For decades, the army has been the most trustworthy institution for

Turks, topping the police and the parliament alike in opinion polls. They trust it, see it as fearsome and effective, and for a long time it was seen as an institution where nepotism could not penetrate and one could climb the career ladder through merit. I argue that this deeply embedded militarism has had two main consequences in the past decade; firstly, with the military's waning influence, the gap of a dominant character (or a father figure even) became easier to fill by an authoritarian civilian and secondly, even after the coup attempt in 2016, the military managed to retain its favoured status in society. However, its reputation is undoubtedly damaged and its post-coup battlefield effectiveness is questionable at best (Sentek 2019). Nevertheless, remarkably, it is still highly trusted (Kuantum Arastirma 2018). The Turks have succeeded in separating the event of an outside group infiltrating the army to influence it to the point of launching a coup from the army as an institution.

The military's introduction of a national security agenda in the 1960s and its deepening at the turn of each decade has placed it at the heart of the regime. More importantly, it has solidified the concept of national security itself within the official discourse. It has become something that can be the justification or reasoning for virtually anything the state does, which ranged from torture in the 70s, to executing minors in the 80s, to bombing citizens in the 90s. Since the 2000s, the use of the concept has expanded unprecedentedly at the hands of the civilian AKP governments, from justifying corruption to jailing state officials en masse. In a similar vein, the practice of securitisation of social or political issues, such as the Kurdish minority's demands, has paved the way for emerging issues threatening the AKP government to also be swiftly securitised. Similarly, the military's routine and widespread use of keeping records on dissidents, state officials, and even their own personnel provided the civilian government with a historical precedent and institutional capacity to do the same against its own enemies. The practice became even more radical with Erdogan actively encouraging citizens to inform on suspected Gulenists as "the intelligence or the police might not know everybody", calling it a "patriotic debt" (Sozcu 2016). Promptly after the statement, both the MIT and the police set up phone lines and online applications for citizens to send relevant information. Creating a vast informant-citizen network would not have been so easily possible and so quickly functional if the state-centric and

militaristic groundwork had not already been done by the old regime.

Furthermore, the sanctification of the state justified both republican authoritarianism and post-1950s semi-authoritarianism and resulted in the concept of the state being placed above all – specifically democracy, human rights and the rule of law (Akgonul and Oran 2019, 14). This resulted in a highly unbalanced institutional setup where all was built to keep the existing state system working. Therefore, the state has been strong because the military has been strong. But the overall institutional picture reveals massive historical gaps in terms of strong entities, norms or behaviours required for democratic rule. This is why it was relatively effortless for the early AKP's reforms to be overturned fairly quickly because the institutional setup where the reforms were taking place had to change in a fundamentally more significant fashion but did not. So, reverting was uncomplicated. Of course, it would be unfair to rule out the role of agency and how Erdogan's political makeup aided this process. It is important to emphasise that the DP years of Menderes, his hanging, and the 28 February Process were political traumas for Erdogan, moulding his behaviour vis-à-vis the military as well as democracy. Erdogan certainly sees himself as similar to Menderes, a conservative right-wing nationalist operating in a strictly Kemalist environment, attracting peasant votes and pushing for more Islam in daily life. Menderes's execution by a sham trial, an event which Erdogan claims turned him to politics, is an established part of his rhetoric and is regularly repeated by his followers (Sontag 2003). A popular poster regularly doing the rounds in the online sphere, as well as in rallies, shows Menderes and Erdogan's photos next to each other saying: "You hanged him [Menderes], we won't let you bury him [Erdogan]." Similarly, the direct attack by the regime during the 28 February Process on his Islamist party and self are never to be forgotten. But both Menderes's and his predecessor parties' fates were cautionary tales not for Erdogan but rather for the old regime, for it is the political underdog meeting the politically underrepresented masses that started the undoing of Kemalist rule. The weak institutional balance then made restructuring more viable, and once power changed hands, its centralisation around Erdogan was swift.

Overall, it could be said that the Turkish military had gradually become a more inward-looking, self-reproducing, self-enriching social class (Insel

2017, 45). As Trimberger (2003, 207) argues, Turkey's revolution from above neither promoted real political or economic participation nor dismantled the capitalist relations of production. In fact, the military became a capitalist class. It became a capitalist class with members seeing themselves capable and responsible for producing solutions to a wide range of issues – from minorities to international relations – while expecting “a mute society” (Insel 2017, 45). Additionally, the military as a class safeguarded the Kemalist hegemony by using not only repressive state apparatuses – such as the army, police, prisons, etc. – but also ideological state apparatuses, such as schools, conscription, political parties, and law (Althusser 2014, 244). It sought not only a limited hegemony but an active one where consent is manufactured and the regime's legitimacy is engrained. Throughout this process, as with the early republican era, democracy was not an end but a means to an end, that is, survival of the regime/state. There was no attempt to prompt a genuine socio-economic reform programme or challenge the existing power relations for the benefit of the civil society. Therefore, when a civilian government challenged the existing power dynamics, the entirety of the regime with all its apparatuses was threatened. And when the civilians successfully took over the power centre and these apparatuses, they started using the institutional setup for their own interests and political goals, and ultimately for the new regime's survival.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the historical context of the Turkish political and institutional domain and presented three interconnected contextual conditions under which the causal mechanisms of this study operate. There are a few overarching legacies that can be argued to have “survived” into the AKP's competitive authoritarian regime, such as the importance of a state tradition, strongman rule, undistributed power, and a statist economic regime. These legacies do not directly connect the beginning and the end of the causal mechanisms, or the autocratisation process as this study calls it, but do influence how parts of the causal mechanisms work, and how actors interact with structure and each other. In the Turkish case, the contextual conditions put forward give a solid overview of the institutional

foundations on which the political demilitarisation process was attempted to be built, and crumbled.

The Ottoman Empire was above all a soldier-state where the army was the paramount institution and all other functions of the state were working to bolster it. The army not only fought for the empire but also regulated fundamental aspects of political life as well as maintaining social order. The civil-military history of the Ottoman empire reveals that the contestation in this area in modern Turkey is not without precedence. The institutional setup that put soldiers at the heart of the empire defined what Turkish monarchical rule was and continued to affect what a republic looked like in the same geography. The reform process that followed the republican revolution from above was a distinct modernisation project that was implemented through authoritarian measures. It was a successful effort at restructuring politics and society in a war-ravaged country but without any attempt to change power or ownership relations. The military as the main actors of state- and nation-building processes continued to exert power and influence in daily politics and amassed institutional prerogatives in the new system. The civilian political and economic elites managed to access the state's resources depending on their proximity to this power centre. There had been no genuine confrontations or negotiations between the power centre, headed by Ataturk first and his party afterwards, and other potential social forces over the distribution of power, therefore power remained concentrated. Political oppression is one of the key elements of the Kemalist regime that has persisted in varying degrees of intensity. Until the multiparty era came in the 1950s, the military enjoyed its institutional privileges and popularity. The election of a populist pro-Islam party threatened the Kemalist hegemony so under its guardianship mentality, the military overthrew the government to preserve the regime. Each coup reinforced the earlier authoritarian rules and entrenched the military further. The military became a wealthy and stable institution with all state and ideological apparatuses working to sustain it. With each coup, the military became more inward-looking and self-enriching. In this period, as well as in the single-party era, democracy was not an end but a means to an end, which was regime survival. Capitalising on a moment that put the hegemony in a crisis, a civilian actor successfully took over and started to take control of the

military's power to re-centralise it around itself. The non-dispersed nature of power eased this process and the authoritarian legacies persisted in new and old forms as the new key actors utilised them for their own goals and survival. The next chapter of the thesis will lay out how the Kemalist hegemony went into a crisis in 2001, paving the way for Erdogan to swoop in during a state of flux and triggering a critical juncture process that would generate a competitive authoritarian Turkey by the end of 2017.

5 Security sector mechanism: Part I (2002–2008)

This chapter will first clarify the explanatory variables that were active in shaping the outcome this study aims to explain. Then it starts building the main causal mechanism which concerns the restructuring of the security sector. For this, the critical juncture of 2002 is dissected to demonstrate its “criticalness” and effect on triggering the mechanism, putting the politics on a divergent road which became harder to return from as norms became more entrenched. The chapter then, in two sections, analyses the beginnings of the reactive sequence that pitted the resistant institutions against the rising elites who were determined to alter them. In the first section, the reaction of the old hegemony to the AKP government is analysed in detail to explain the ways in which subversive actors can initiate institutional change and how veto powers can counteract it – sometimes to their demise. The second section shows how veto players can further mobilise their associated institutions to impede change, and the tactics that relatively powerless actors can employ as a response to compensate for their lack of institutional reach. As the veto players are occupied with their pursuance of political relevance, the new elites use their legislative powers – an institution they have direct control over – to begin restructuring not just civil-military relations but the entire security sector including the Gendarmerie and the police forces.

5.1 Explanatory variables

This study considers a few factors as explanatory variables that shaped the outcome of the emergence of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. Accordingly, for the causal model of this study to work, I argue that there should be the following factors at play: failed political elites, an outside actor, a repressed group, and elite alliances. In the Turkish case, these factors started the causal mechanisms while the transformative event of the AKP’s electoral victory provided conditions for these factors to have causal effect. Analysing these explanatory variables will show that the historically unprecedented combination of these factors at the right moment resulted in a new political establishment and a causal force pushing the country towards a divergent

political pathway. Once the pathway was more or less determined and the mechanisms of reproduction slowly took over, it became gradually more difficult to return to the original course. The consequent reactive sequence of events provided the new elites with opportunities to overcome obstacles and hence attain more power, and all the while the positive feedback loop provided them with widening political space.

5.1.1 Failed elites and crisis of hegemony

In defining elites, I use David Waldner's description proposing that they are those who, basically, have control over political, economic or social resources, "giving them the capacity to make decisions binding on the larger community" (1999, 22). As for state elites specifically, their power and influence come from the political position they hold within the state apparatus. I argue that when these elites in Turkey failed to maintain the political and economic status quo in the late 1990s, it paved the way for the rigid structures to loosen up and the Kemalist hegemony to be challenged. Here, the concept of hegemony is used in a simple, Gramscian way to describe the political and moral leadership of the ruling class based on the consent of the led, secured through ideological apparatuses, and the existence of available coercive power reserved for the moments when that consent might fail.

Two significant consequences of the 1980 coup d'état in Turkey and its military government were the implementation of the 24 January Decisions and the creation of the 10% election threshold. The 24 January Decisions consisted of a comprehensive structural adjustment programme, triggering a neoliberal transformation and radically shaping the economy as a result. The 10% election threshold, still one of the highest in the world, was designed to prevent fragmentation in politics and aimed to ensure a parliament with only a few, ideally two, players. Both plans, however, in one way or another, failed. Despite the high threshold, many politicians went on to establish new parties and entered the Parliament, and by the end of the 1980s, the party system in Turkey was "display[ing] a high degree of instability and fragmentation" (Onis 1997, 751). On the economy side, although the neoliberal restructuring worked miracles when it comes to growth, Turkey has become a country with the least

equal distribution of income among the OECD countries, with the majority of the population excluded from experiencing the effects of the growth (ibid). In 1991, Turkey entered an era of coalitions that would last for 11 years, marked by a cycle of combinations of conservative, social democrat, and ultra-nationalist parties forming and dissolving coalitions, always locked in ideological clashes. Already suffering declining real income, the economic crises of 1999 and 2001 hit citizens hard. Coupled with the austerity measures of coalition governments, the severe economic conditions were one of the crucial factors that eroded support and trust for mainstream parties (Ciddi and Esen 2014, 421).

At the same time, the Susurluk scandal of 1996 laid bare the unprecedented extent of corruption in Turkish politics. To the shock of the public, the incident revealed a criminal network that included various politicians, members of the security forces, terrorist groups, and the mafia, reflecting the horrendous state of Turkey's political system (Jung and Piccoli 2001, 112). Further scandals of what Rainer Hermann (2014, 112) calls "a lost decade" involved mass embezzlement from state banks under the protection of state elites. The era was also marked by intense anti-guerrilla campaigns against the Kurds in the south-east and incidents of forced disappearance, torture, and extrajudicial killings. Furthermore, the 1999 earthquake killing 18,000 people not only displayed an utter lack of state efficiency, it showed how corruption also tainted the construction business. When the president Ahmet Necdet Sezer threw a copy of the constitution at the prime minister Bulent Ecevit during the first minutes of the National Security Council in February 2001, it was the last straw. The lira dramatically crashed, capital fled, and the stock market collapsed in only a few hours; the hegemony that had held the country together for almost 80 years was barely standing on its feet.

Scholars came up with explanations as to why elites fail and why political party systems might collapse at certain times. Seawright argues that voters abandon their parties because "corruption scandals erode patterns of party identification, and because poor ideological representation then provides a motive for turning to outsider candidates" (2012, 11). Coppedge distinguishes a "moral outrage" stemming from a collapsed economy and how citizens perceive this collapse and the state elites as the culprits (2005, 311). Morgan

(2007) explains that voters flee traditional parties when the established elites fail to incorporate interests in society and if viable alternatives emerge to fill the representation void. Unexpected electoral outcomes, argues Roberts, arise most forcefully in periods of political and economic crisis or transition, “when established patterns of representation are strained or breaking down, and new ones have yet to be consolidated” (2003, 37). This is similar to what Gramsci calls a “crisis of authority”, emerging when the old is dying and the new is yet to be born, as a result of the ruling elites failing in their political undertaking and in harnessing “consent” (1971, 210). In Turkey, a combination of economic crisis, political corruption and the people’s perception of the elites contributing to these issues created an atmosphere where voters from both sides of the spectrum were at a breaking point and ready to abandon their parties in search for something – a political programme, party, system, politician – untainted and untried (Hale and Ozbudun 2010, 37-38).

With the general elections of November 2002, Turkish voters pushed aside an entire group of well-established political parties and instead chose the brand-new Justice and Development Party (AKP), formed only a year prior. The AKP was the latest in a long line of Islamist parties in Turkey and the most ideologically innovative, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The AKP won 34.3% of the votes, winning 363 seats. Apart from the CHP, which received 19.3% of the votes and 178 seats, all other parties were wiped off of the political arena. Voters mercilessly punishing the established party system, going against the implicit wishes of the military, and opting for self-described Muslim democrats was a political tsunami for Turkey (Ozel 2003). It also showed how mass elite failure can leave a system vulnerable and open for divergence. Although some, naturally, argue that going for an “outsider” during/after elite failure is a risky option (Seawright 2012), it is clear that for Turks the AKP was a somewhat familiar outsider. Its leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan held the mayor position in Istanbul between 1994 and 1998 and was known for his pragmatic approach to the city’s problems. The desire for change and the outrage outweighed the riskiness of electing a new party. According to a poll conducted shortly before the elections, almost half of the AKP voters said they were going to pick the party “just to try it out” (Erdem 2002). This political earthquake swiftly resulted in elite failure to become a crisis of hegemony

whereby structures loosened up, creating a “permissive condition”, as per Soifer’s terminology (2012), that was to increase the causal power of agency and the prospects for divergence.

5.1.2 An outside political entity: EU as an anchor and populist tool

The second explanatory variable is the existence of an outside entity/actor linked to the polity to serve as a political anchor as well as a populist tool. In the Turkish case, this was the European Union. The EU functioned as a safeguard for the reform process, specifically in the security sector, in Turkey and its existence aided in the critical juncture happening and the divergent path being taken. It was a facilitator for the AKP’s initial reform agenda that found national support amid the crisis of hegemony. Even after its influence waned and the membership process stalled, the EU’s effect on the causal mechanisms was still visible. After 2013, as the security sector was on the brink of a full transformation, the EU’s anchor status became questionable and it was instead used as part of the populist agenda to describe it as one of “them”; those who wish ill on Turkey. While the literature argues for the positive effects of outside linkages to democratisation processes (Levitsky and Way 2010), it is argued in this study that such linkages can be both positive and negative in the same case at different times, activated for different ends.

EU-Turkey relations go back to 1963 when the Ankara Agreement was signed with the European Community and it has, in general, been “a particularly arduous and often bumpy road” for both sides (Jung and Raudvere 2008, 3). The European ideal is almost ingrained in the tenets of the Turkish republic and becoming a member of the EU has been “the natural corollary of the modernization and westernization movement pioneered by Atatürk in the 1920s” for both the political and military elites (Tocci 2005, 75). The EU has always anchored Turkey to the western world and western civilisation. For the Kemalist hegemony, the EU membership was a definite goal on paper but implementation of the changes necessary for accession proved cumbersome as it required almost total political and societal metamorphosis.

With timing that would later prove to be ideal, the EU officially gave candidate status to Turkey in 1999 with the condition that it fulfilled the

Copenhagen criteria on democracy and human rights so that actual negotiations over accession could begin. The coalition government started the work and introduced a few harmonisation packages. Those few years before the election of the AKP, however, did not see substantial government progress over the EU criteria as the coalition members had divergent opinions over the benefits of membership (Lagendijk 2012, 166). As discussed in the previous section, the infighting of the early 2000s affected, as it did other sectors, the Europeanisation project as well. Although the coalition government managed to abolish the death penalty, the established state elites failed to make visible progress and failed to act on society's visible desire for deeper change in Turkey, of which EU membership was one vital part.

As the soon-to-be old elites were bickering over and struggling with how to solve the EU problem, the AKP explicitly referred to the EU accession and the Copenhagen criteria in its manifesto for the 2002 elections. It said that the party "saw the full EU membership as the natural result of modernisation process" and that it was "inevitable for the [Copenhagen] criteria to be implemented even if they were not part of the EU membership process" as these criteria were "a significant step towards modernisation of the state and society as a whole" (AKP 2002). The manifesto also stated that those who were against the EU process, meaning a portion of the failed elites, were deliberately stalling the process and "aiming to continue with the ruling style that is bureaucratic and statist" (ibid). The party's message with these statements addressed several audiences. It denounced those who had failed and assured the public that the EU accession process would not get lost in bureaucracy and infighting like before. It also aimed to dissuade suspicion of the liberals and secular elites who were pro-EU but undecided on an Islamist party's willingness to associate itself with Europe. It signalled to the military elites that it was going to use the EU agenda as a tool for reform, almost as an early warning, knowing that the military could not implicitly or explicitly oppose the EU project, and also that the party was reformist and modern, meaning that their Islamic roots were no longer an issue and the manifesto was proof of their break from the past.

Upon its election, the AKP government, now the majority in parliament, started to pass EU harmonisation packages at an unprecedented pace. By

2004, six of these packages were passed, aiming to harmonise Turkish legislation with EU regulations and involving crucial constitutional amendments. What Lagendijk (2012) calls the “golden years”, 2003 and 2004, saw real progress with the EU serving as the political anchor to the democratisation project. The euphoria in these years was so visible that not only the EU officials and Turks but also citizens of countries such as the Netherlands and Germany were in favour of starting negotiations with Turkey (Lagendijk 2012, 168). Starting from 2005, however, there was an evident and gradual slowdown of the reform progress and the momentum was never regained thereafter. With major security sector reform being initiated and the organic bond between the old hegemony and the military being steadily curbed, the AKP government did not need the EU as a legitimacy tool to consolidate power and instead depended on electoral leverage. By 2007, the irreversible and path-dependent process of the government taking full control of the security sector was already underway, making the EU’s anchor role obsolete for the AKP.

Levitsky and Way debate that linkage to the West or the density of such political, economic and social ties could be effective in democratisation processes. More specifically, they mention the EU’s membership conditionality as a type of mechanism of international influence that could aid in strengthening linkages of a country to the West, hence easing the way towards democratisation (2010, 39). In this way, an international anchor becomes a necessary condition for democratic consolidation (Soyler 2015, 50). In the Turkish case, this linkage was useful for domestic actors to induce reform and served its positive purpose until these actors did not see its usefulness, did not trust that the EU side would deliver, and saw scepticism towards Turkey’s membership in the EU rising. Around 2008 and 2009, Erdogan was declaring that “Turkey had done all of its homework and more” and now it was the EU’s time to decide what it would do with Turkey (Milliyet 2008). In 2011, when the AKP was elected with an increased majority of 49.8%, the promised reforms entirely ground to a halt. From then on, relations turned visibly sour. A furious Erdogan stated in 2011 that the EU was “experiencing an eclipse of reason, (...) tricking the country, (...) and throwing dirt at Turkey” (Odatv 2011). In 2012, the Minister for EU Affairs Egemen Bagis said that the

EU “was repeating the unfair and fake arguments heard by ideologically marginal factions in Turkey” in its progress report for Turkey. As a response to the EU, Bagis’s ministry prepared its own democracy progress report. In the foreword, Bagis stated that “[a]t a time when EU Member States have been struggling with crises, Turkey is experiencing the most democratic, transparent and prosperous period of its history” (quoted in Turkes-Kilic 2014, 182). As the Turkish public’s support for the EU membership was simultaneously declining, the EU began to be used as a populism tool. The institution has become one of the targets for Erdogan’s speeches to the public, used to portray Turkey as independent and strong and the EU as weak: “We don’t need [the EU’s] criteria anymore, they are today’s sick man. They threaten us but they should look at themselves, they’re not doing well” (Birgun 2017). The EU is also portrayed by Erdogan as cunning, invoking historical conspiracies about the west’s deep desire to destroy Turkey:

We are not a country that’d come to your door and beg (...) Who are you? Since when can you decide on behalf of Turkey? (...) The games you play with the help of some in Turkey are not for [the benefit of] this nation (...) You did not keep any promises. These [EU] people are not honest (...) We see that some people want to kick us out of these lands. Let them do their best. As a response, we will crush the heads of those traitors, handymen, and back-stabbers that they use for their plans (IHA 2016).

This populist rhetoric helps in bolstering Erdogan’s image as the man fighting enemies while letting the public believe that the failure of Turkey’s EU membership is the sole responsibility of the EU. Overall, throughout the phases of mechanisms of reproduction transforming the security sector and political arena, the EU’s existence and its relation to Turkey continue to have a causal influence. This time, the linkage provides a negative effect and aids in the failure of the democratisation process and the emergence of a competitive authoritarian setup.

5.1.3 A subaltern group to take over

The third explanatory variable is the existence of a subaltern group to take over during the crisis of hegemony. With a successful appeal, such a group makes a

forceful entrance into the political sphere and initiates divergence. I argue that under a crisis of hegemony, only a “new” and anti-establishment party could trigger a critical juncture, considering that the establishment parties would not have the capacity to adapt in a short period of time to the realities of the system collapse. At the same time, the very fact that it is a subaltern group taking over the state apparatus has causal influence over the outcome of emergent competitive authoritarianism. The experience of being subaltern brought together the high capacity of political adaptability and flexibility, while making them determined to solidify their political stance not to once again succumb to the hegemony’s strain. As the group gradually defeated opponents, their subaltern past influenced their increasingly pugnacious attitude towards the old hegemony.

I borrow the term “subaltern” from Gramsci to describe antithetical and repressed groups in a socio-political system where their power is limited vis-à-vis the hegemon and their access to meaningful power is denied. One could speak of several subaltern groups in Turkey but the political Islamists are the most formidable among them. Considering tenets of the republican revolution and the guardianship model, it is not difficult to recognise the struggle of political Islamists in relation to the Kemalist hegemony. Since the 1970s, political Islamists had been trying to make their mark on the Turkish political arena by, in various degrees at different times, asserting their influence and autonomy. The Gramscian understanding of subalternity comes with the possibility that the subaltern can work within the existing hegemonic framework to become the “most advanced subaltern” group, eventually taking over state structures and becoming the dominant social group by taking advantage of a moment “of objective enfeeblement of the state” (Gramsci 2011, 52). The most advanced of these groups whose development vis-à-vis the Kemalist hegemony could be clearly traced is the political Islamists.

The Islamist understanding of the world and politics have always been a part of the Turkish polity and the right-wing parties in the multiparty era have been relatively successfully and carefully incorporating religion into their programmes to attract the votes of the conservative rural masses. But more explicit Islamist political expression came with the establishment of the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi – MSP) by Necmettin Erbakan

in 1972. Although it was clearly an Islamist party, the MSP advocated rapid industrialisation and did not emphasise religion in its party programme, knowing that socio-economic realities would determine the elections during that time (Ciddi 2009, 142). The party, however, was closed down during the 1971 coup d'état. Erbakan then went on to establish successor parties with slightly amended but still Islamist agendas, managing to have MPs in the Parliament and even becoming coalition partners by appearing pragmatic and ideologically flexible once in power. Knowing that in the post-Cold War era religious identity had started to hold a more significant role in society, Erbakan's Welfare Party emphasised the Islamist project as the main party foundation during the 1995 elections, winning 21.4% of the vote and becoming the major coalition partner. On 28 February 1997, however, the military forced Erbakan to resign by citing that Islamic revivalism was becoming a threat. What is now referred to as "the post-modern coup" resulted in the Erbakan government falling and political Islam being fully securitised, with the Kemalist hegemony attempting to not only erase it from the political arena but also to ostracise vocal Muslims from the market, education and social spheres (Yavuz 2009, 65). True to his political character, Erbakan urged his followers not to take to the streets and instead opted to organise again under a new party banner with a milder programme. The party was, however, closed down by the Constitutional Court in 2001 due to "anti-secular activities." The juncture awaiting the political Islamists now was now about deciding whether to keep tweaking their agenda and continue in the traditional way, or to profoundly transform their political stance to fit the realities of the time.

Erbakan's parties and the associated political outlook – called the National Vision – was ultimately too dogmatic. Onis groups them as "moderate fundamentalists" whose "ultimate goal is to establish an Islamic state that involves a total reversal of the existing constitutional order" but attempting to do so by using moderate tactics to gain power (Onis 2001, 283). As Erbakan's political statements turned increasingly radical during the Welfare Party era towards the end of 1990s, the ideology's existence ultimately disturbed the system too much. Breaking off from Erbakan's movement, the AKP, known within the movement as "reformists", managed to thoroughly transform into a centre-right group, shedding its political Islamist expressions, with the aim of

appealing to a broader stratum of society. The AKP's 2002 party manifesto does not refer to Islam once and religion is mentioned only in combination with other concepts – such as language, ethnicity, and gender – in the context of freedoms. Instead, the manifesto condemns the historical inward-looking attitudes which resulted in blaming outside forces for domestic problems, which had been a crucial part of the political Islamic identity in Turkey (i.e. conspiracies on Zionism, Communism, the USA, etc.).

Tayyip Erdogan, who was a protege of Erbakan, together with his core team, projected himself as a Muslim democrat and tried to distance himself from his only very recent past when he openly denounced the west and claimed that “democracy is only a means to an end” and “the system we want to introduce cannot be contrary to God’s commands” (Hale and Ozbudun 2010, 9). The change in these die-hard conservatives was swift and radical, leaving some suspicious, nevertheless it captured the attention of wider sections of society who wanted an alternative. This kind of adaptability and flexibility that political Islamists have shown has no equivalent in Turkish politics. Against a hegemony disciplining their ideology, political Islamists managed to work within the system and integrated their voices while also encouraging socialisation by Islamic groups, preventing real radicalisation or violence by these (Yavuz 2009, 51). At the same time, the group accumulated political experience, became wiser in its political manoeuvres, learned how to navigate inside a hardcore establishment, and strengthened its ability to re-organise. In contrast, establishment parties such as the CHP, who had built the hegemony, did not need to battle against the current institutionally so kept their ideological rigidity, failing to ever reform from within (Ciddi 2009, 143). While this rigidity caused the CHP to alienate itself further from the electorate, the political Islamists demonstrated extraordinary skill in adapting, being resilient and ideologically floating to the extent that they ultimately became the dominant political group. Once in power, having been repressed before and excluded from any access to meaningful power, the group subjugated the opponents that could halt their political and economic ascent, which is one of the aspects that drives the causal mechanisms in this analysis.

5.1.4 An elite alliance

The subaltern group, once it becomes “the most advanced” and the most able to push for autonomy, also needs alliances to win elections and implement its political programme. This is why I argue that, as the last explanatory variable, an elite alliance is necessary for a repressed faction to take over state apparatuses. In the Turkish case, the AKP successfully managed to garner the support of centre-right voters, the undecided, the fundamentalists, as well as liberals in the early 2000s. A coalition of diverse and cross-ideological social and political forces brought together media elites, local elites, business elites, and national religious movements with considerable power. They also had the support of the conservative and liberal intelligentsia. Their re-invention of political Islam and the associated political pledges brought further support from Western policy and media elites as well as the USA and organisations such as the EU and the IMF. Without such a formidable and heterogeneous support base, an electoral victory of the AKP would have been difficult and the party’s initiation of a reform process would have been virtually impossible.

Although not directly related to elite alliances, cross-class constituency support was one of the determining factors in the AKP’s success, in combination with the backing of the elites, so it is useful to briefly dive into how it happened. The post-1980 coup era in Turkey was marked by securitisation of leftist parties, unions, and movements, as well as other marginal groups such as fundamental Islamists. Instead, the military government and the succeeding governments promoted a “Turk-Islam synthesis”, a pseudo-ideology aiming to combine nationalism with religion at acceptable doses. Moving outside this state-sanctioned socio-political outlook put both movements and individuals at the fringes of the system. The post-1980 generation, growing up under the shadow of the legacy of the most brutal coup, has mostly refrained from actively engaging in politics, and specifically from identifying themselves with leftist parties or movements. The combination of nationalism and “being in the middle” was presented by the hegemony as an acceptable alternative. Accordingly, both in the late 1990s and in the early 2000s, the one third of voters described themselves as being at the “centre” of the political spectrum, and more than 40% “right of the centre,”

with a significant portion of the right-wing shift happening in the span of a decade (Kalaycioglu and Carkoglu 2007, 116). For the AKP, this was a significant electoral advantage. While other right of centre parties were too embroiled in corruption and financial crises, the only party that could take significant advantage of the 2002 elections, the CHP, was simply too established to understand the voter preference shift quickly enough and act accordingly. The literature suggests that a party's performance in a changing electoral marketplace is heavily influenced by how organisationally entrenched it is, and bureaucratic mass parties suffer from their lack of innovation during such times (Kitschelt 1994, 212). In the same vein, a "weakly routinised organisation", with less heavy and more fluid organisational procedures and structure, might actually be better equipped to adapt to rapid environmental change (Levitsky 2003, 18). For the newly emerging and non-entrenched AKP, the emergence of de-aligned voters and the state of flux proved to be crucial leverage vis-à-vis the fragile and fragmented right-wing parties, as well as the hegemony's highly institutionalised CHP.

This changing environment also provided an opportunity for the newly organised AKP to solicit cooperation from various actors that established parties would avoid due to these parties' ideological rigidity. Fully aware of their rather precarious situation, the AKP elites firstly moderated their ideology's essentialist aspects in pursuit of strategic interests, which has been an observed phenomenon aiding electoral success of religiously oriented parties (Tezcür 2010; Kalyvas 2000). Armed with the new moderate outlook, they sought allies cutting across conventional party/ideology lines. The most important backing came from the business elites. The pro-Islamic business community, mostly consisting of Anatolia-based industrialists organised under the banner of Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association – MUSIAD), who were historically excluded from forming state-industry connections and further marginalised during the 28 February Process, backed the AKP. MUSIAD's members were mostly family-owned small to medium sized companies with owners holding religious and traditional values. Although marginalised, the organisation grew substantially in the late 1990s and had considerable influence in the heartlands of Anatolia, representing the conservative

bourgeoisie in Turkey as opposed to the big secular industrialists settled in the main cities. Not satisfied with Erbakan's Islamic parties' inelastic understanding of the economy and longing for a leader who could merge piety with free markets, they actively supported the "moderates", the AKP team, versus the "hardliners", as the political Islamists were splitting among themselves (Gumuscu 2010, 846). When the AKP was formed, the group not only financially supported the electoral campaign, but many MUSIAD members became parliamentary candidates for the party. Although Türk Sanayicileri ve İş İnsanları Derneği (the Turkish Industry and Business Association – TUSIAD), the organisation representing the big industrialists and the city bourgeoisie, and historically closely linked to the secular hegemony, was deeply suspicious of the formation of the AKP, it soon realised that it "found in [the AKP] an unexpected ally" (Gursoy 2017, 147). The party's early promise to continue with the IMF plan to recover from the economic crisis, to pursue neoliberal economic reforms, to have a pro-business agenda, and to privatise certain state entities convinced TUSIAD to give its backing to Erdogan. This way, in an unprecedented move, the AKP managed to bring together two opposite sides of the economic power in Turkey.

A major domestic support factor was the alliance the AKP brokered with the Gulen movement and its associated elites. The so-called Gulen movement (also called Hizmet or Cemaat) led by the self-exiled preacher Fethullah Gulen, whose following is thought to be in the millions in Turkey and abroad, has been working as a civil society organisation in Turkey since the 1970s, expanding its influence base and economic power mostly via its educational institutions. By the early 2000s, it had many affiliates who became business and media elites, who then pledged their support to the AKP and boosted the party's programme through their networks. For the group, supporting the AKP meant expanding the organisation and strengthening their legitimacy. But since Gulen's audience was vast, the support did not come cheap for the AKP. Through a quid pro quo relationship, the AKP secured a solid voter base. In return, it enabled the movement's rising influence over politics and made concessions with regards to the group's aim to hold key positions in the country's institutional layout. On top of the Gulen movement, the actors embodying "a distinct Islamic subculture" that grew despite the strictly secular state institutions

supported the newborn AKP, believing that it could provide them with genuine representation and, in some cases, access to the state (Ozbudun 2012, 70). These entities ranged from trade unions, charities and schools to Islamic newspapers, TV and radio networks, and publishing houses. Although they were low-key institutions back then, they all had considerable capacity to influence their circles of followers or members.

Additionally, from very early on, the AKP was successful in identifying the importance of local elites. Through what Ocakli (2015) calls “strategic elite incorporation”, it recruited high-status individuals into the party cadres in places where the AKP would not have core constituency. These local elites, ranging from experienced local politicians to heads of community organisations, ensured the party was represented and promoted at the micro-level prior to the elections. This was a tactic that worked especially well in south-east Turkey, where there is a significant Kurdish population and tribal relations, consisting of regions which have traditionally been unreachable to the old hegemony. The selective recruitment of local notables of various social forces and clans contributed to the AKP’s first election as well as its successive electoral victories in this geographical area.

Right after the elections, when Erdogan was victorious but still battling to become Prime Minister due to his previous political ban, the United States of America’s then-president George Bush invited Erdogan to the White House, giving a visible boost to the AKP’s stature at home. An exceptionally friendly meeting and joint press statement emphasising democracy and freedom showed USA support for the AKP government. The USA expected these new Muslim democrats to become role models for the exceedingly chaotic Middle East right after 9/11 and to increase the intensity of their strategic partnership to use military bases in Turkey for their operations in the region. The Bush administration’s explicit support for Erdogan would continue until the end. Additionally, the Western media saw the rise of the AKP from a generally very optimistic perspective, emphasising the democratic transformation of the political Islamists and their commitment to the EU agenda. Domestically, a substantial portion of Turkey’s liberal elite consisting of academics, journalists, think-tankers, civil society heads, and so on, joined the alliance supporting the AKP in 2002 and beyond. They saw the AKP’s potential to

dismantle the hegemony that they associated with military regimes, human rights violations, and lack of democracy. This particular group did not have many votes but their political support was necessary for the AKP's electoral success "as they built bridges between the party, international observers, and the country's Westernized economic and cultural elite" (Bakiner 2017, 22). Ultimately, mobilisation of this victorious coalition of elite forces uniting diverse factions became the winning formula for the AKP's election and its initiation of the reform agenda, which subsequently turned into a gradual institutional battle witnessing the takeover of the state and erosion of democratic rule. As the causal mechanisms will show, many of the elite groups continued to support the AKP, despite signs of emerging competitive authoritarianism, so long as the partnership benefitted their strategic interests.

5.2 The critical juncture: beginning and end

How did the explanatory variables mentioned in the previous chapters come together and lay the groundwork for the AKP to attain power and continue to have causal effects during the autocratisation process? It was through a trigger event or a "critical juncture" that took place in 2002, which this section will delve into. The term "critical juncture" is a popular one in historical analyses as it provides one with the ability to pinpoint well-defined moments where divergence in political course happen as well as breaking causal chains at certain meaningful events, which enables a more structured argument while also preventing possible infinite regress in the analysis. Although there is not a parsimonious theory about the concept of critical juncture, there is useful literature building on and complementing each other and offering intra-concept tools to study critical junctures. But perhaps because there is no such strict theorisation of the concept, the term – although not severely misused – is overused. With regards to literature on Turkey, researchers studying democracy in Turkey have described many vital moments in history as critical junctures (Gozaydin 2017; Kiliç 2014; Soyler 2015; Yavuz 2009; Somer 2018). "How many critical junctures one country can experience in a decade," ask Baser and Ozturk (2017, 14) after emphasising the various turbulent events

Turkey had witnessed in that period of time. It is important, however, for the sake of better historical analysis, to acknowledge that not every new fork in the road is a critical juncture. In other words, not all junctures are critical. To better make sense of this, it is useful to mentally tie such events to potential or developing “institutional divergence” rather than only tough decision times or unexpected events. A political system will encounter numerous exogenous and endogenous events but not every such event will have the power to divert an existing system onto a previously impractical and wholly new path. In this framework, this study argues that to be able to understand the security sector takeover and the subsequent emerging competitive authoritarianism, the critical juncture that needs to be studied is the November 2002 elections when the AKP came out victorious. This event, with its antecedents and consequences, bears all the hallmarks of a critical juncture and is methodologically a simple enough point to start examining the causal mechanisms to explain the historical process that resulted in a new state layout (Figure 4).

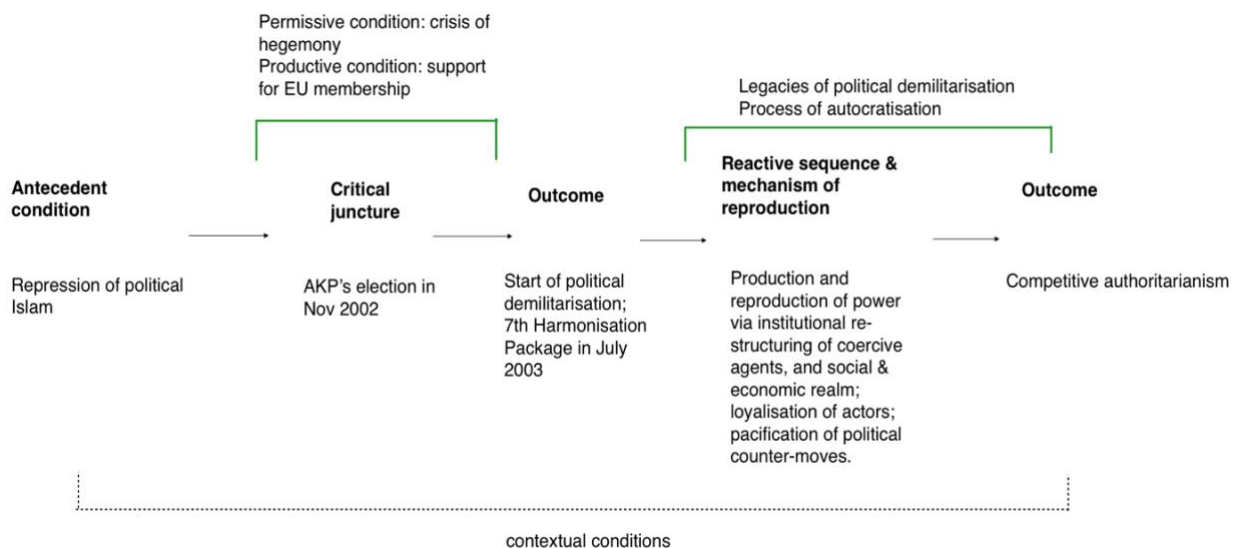


Figure 4. Critical juncture in 2002 (Main analytical framework borrowed from Mahoney 2001)

Critical junctures are periods during which there is a visibly heightened probability that divergence from the existing course might happen and the choices of key agents might affect the outcome of interest (Capoccia 2015, 150). These are relatively brief moments in which opportunities for major

institutional reform or transformation emerge for certain actors to take advantage of. These moments, or junctures, are “critical” because they put institutional arrangements on certain paths or trajectories, which are then difficult to alter (Pierson 2004, 135). Once the choice of agents gets locked-in, the path is virtually determined, and it gradually gets more entrenched through certain mechanisms.

Building on the critical juncture framework, Soifer (2012) differentiates two kinds of causal conditions at work during critical junctures. These are permissive conditions, which ease up the existing institutional setting and therefore the constraints of structure, and productive conditions, which aid the production of the divergent outcome. While permissive conditions create an atmosphere during the critical juncture where divergent outcomes are possible, productive conditions determine which type of outcome will emerge. Slater and Simmons’s (2010) understanding of critical antecedents, which are closely linked to productive conditions, define pre-existing factors or conditions that interact with causal forces during a critical juncture to assist in the production of an outcome. These critical antecedents dictate the resources and strength of relevant key agents and their positioning within an institutional field where divergence will happen (Rinscheid et al. 2019). The range of choices available as well as the motivation for actor choices during junctures are rooted in the past, whereas the productive conditions ensure the choice is selected. Differentiating between permissive, productive and antecedent conditions is sometimes cumbersome as scholars do not always clearly pinpoint their exact characteristics. In my understanding and application, however, permissive conditions “permit” an outcome by merely existing at that moment of time while productive conditions aid in “producing” the outcome actively by motivating/causing the actor to take the divergent path, and antecedent conditions provide the historical basis in which the divergent path is taken by the actor due to the actor’s experience/capacity to act in a certain way. In this framework, during this critical juncture, the permissive condition was the crisis of hegemony, the productive condition was the overall support for EU membership, and the antecedent condition was the repression of political Islam. I explain and justify these in detail next.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the party system in Turkey was

already in a state of impasse by 2002, which turned into a crisis of hegemony following the elections. Economic meltdown, political scandals, and corruption brought along a perception that the political elites were failing and the situation seemed unsalvageable. A poll conducted shortly before the elections revealed that 81% of Turks felt “insecure”, a 20% jump from five years before (Sabah 2002a). On 3 November 2002, the AKP emerged victorious from the elections, winning 34.28% of the votes. More significantly, the high electoral threshold meant the AKP, with 363 MPs, would now control almost 60% of the government. The historical institutionalist literature mentions exogenous events shocking the system, such as a disaster, war, etc., as possible examples of a critical juncture (Rinscheid et al. 2019). Bearing that in mind, elections might seem too mundane and predictable to be considered as a critical event. In the AKP’s case, however, for the first time in centuries of Turkey’s history, an anti-establishment group was rising to the ranks of top elites and state power. More crucially, retrospective analysis of the event shows that it was the trigger moment marking the point when the state system and institutional setup started to diverge in visible and significant ways. The electoral victory of the AKP turned the situation of failed state elites into a crisis of hegemony. The day after 3 November, the established elites were not only unsuccessful at the voting booths, but were facing the tangible risk of being eliminated from the political arena completely. The only entrenched institution that managed to hold on to power was the CHP, which was elected as they were not part of the previous coalition, therefore were not held responsible for the economic and political crisis by the electorate. As the CHP, with its 19.39% of votes, was pushed into the opposition corner for the first time, the reins were entirely handed to the new actors. But even the CHP was aware of the crisis; despite their 150% increase in votes, the general secretary of the party quelled celebrations at the party headquarters, shouting “there is nothing to celebrate” (Hurriyet 2002b). The previous prime minister Bulent Ecevit said “the regime would receive a big wound” if the AKP was elected, and on the night of the elections he commented that the results were the party system’s “suicide” (Sabah 2002b; Bila 2002). In the same vein, the Minister of Economy Kemal Dervis, appointed by the coalition government to fix the economic crisis, commented that an absolute majority government by the AKP

would create “problems for the regime” (Derviş et al. 2006, 187). As the failed elites created the conditions for an anti-systemic party to seize power, the consequent state of crisis the hegemony found itself in eased the constraints of the existing structure, therefore making change plausible. This permissive condition would pave the way for the critical juncture to end with a significant step towards the security sector takeover.

The military’s attitude to the failed elites and to the victory of the AKP is not a separate condition that made divergence possible but can be considered as part of the crisis of hegemony. During the late 1990s, the top TSK cadres sustained a confrontational relationship with the politicians. Even after they made the Erbakan-led party resign and forced “normalcy”, they remained combative on political and security issues with the establishment parties under the leadership of chief-of-staff Huseyin Kivrikoglu, which certainly did not help the already suffering image of the political elites amid chaos. In 2002, although they were still emphasising the secular system to be at the heart of a national security understanding, the top military elite, now led by chief-of-staff Hilmi Ozkok, unusually refrained from declaring their political preference before the elections. Ozkok answered journalists’ questions about the election by saying: “I do not wish to comment on politics, I would like to stay away. We will go and vote like every other citizen,” apparently upsetting many journalists who were fishing for a headline about the TSK’s election choice, as per tradition (Ergin 2002). Ozkok was known for his reluctance to interfere with politics and his belief that such meddling damaged the reputation and capabilities of the military. This attitude, at least until around 2007, resulted in hardliners within the TSK becoming restless but nevertheless remaining quiet. The consecutive contrasting agency behaviour from the military first deepened the crisis and then left the door open for a new actor to fill the gap created by the failed elites, intensifying the crisis of hegemony overall with the political side not finding solid backing from its military apparatus.

The productive condition which, in the presence of a crisis of hegemony, produced the divergent outcome was the support for international linkages that came in the form of favourable attitudes towards the EU membership process from business elites, intelligentsia, civil society, as well as the public.

Sakip Sabanci, of the biggest Turkish conglomerate Sabanci Holding, commented: “No arguments, no noise. Everybody should rest assured (...) Turkey is going to be rebuilt. We are hopping on a new train that will take us to the EU” (Sabah 2002c). Another business tycoon, Cem Boyner, said: “[The AKP] will work hard for the EU and liberalisation. They will push the economy forward in incredible ways” (ibid). The head of Koc Holding, Mustafa Koc, celebrated the end of “the crisis-generating fragmentation in Turkey’s politics” and said that “the newly found political stability and the absence of intra-coalition squabbling would make it easier to take hard but necessary decisions for the economy,” emphasising throughout his speech the importance of pushing for EU reforms to further stabilise the country’s political arena (TUSIAD 2003). The support of the uniquely broad coalition of social forces provided the AKP with an unprecedented advantage to start a reform process generally and to tackle the issue of military tutelage specifically. At this point, one can see the significance of agency to ignite institutional change or reform. As Hall (2016, 41) argues, during a critical juncture, there is a robust role for actors joining together for a common purpose with some of them becoming “prime movers” and others supporting the process. Without successful coalition building, it is indeed difficult to imagine a critical juncture to instigate major institutional change, especially by an anti-establishment actor. In addition, the military could not risk being perceived as anti-modernisation, anti-Westernisation and reactionary by explicitly opposing the EU process so the tacit approval of the military should also be considered as a bolstering factor for the productive condition.

During this critical juncture, there were several options for the AKP to choose from when it came to dealing with the military. It could have chosen a more “centrist” path to keep the broad coalition of support together while also accepting the military’s behind-the-scenes role. This was certainly the political tradition and would have been the expected route for any party to take. Even the AKP’s latest predecessor took this pragmatic stance, albeit in vain, and did not directly challenge the TSK’s guardianship role. Other centrist parties had historically internalised the military’s political influence and acted accordingly. Even though it signalled moderation pre-elections, the AKP could also have turned to its ideological roots in the post-election phase and

established itself as a predecessor to Erbakan's National Vision outlook, and committed to a programme of political and social transformation as per their deep-rooted ideological preferences. This would have likely triggered a crisis with the military and dispassionate interference, not in the form of a full-blown coup d'état but possibly via a political move to dissolve the government by legislative means. Such an action would have been mostly an impassive one, due to the chief-of-staff's personal stance on such matters, but anxiety over possible regime change would have triumphed over staff beliefs about democratic rule. It is plausible that this kind of interference would have found support in a sizeable segment of society. This path might seem too unlikely and abrupt but it would be still in the realm of possibilities considering the decades-long insistence of political Islamists to push forward agendas to make Islam more prominent in society (i.e. banning alcohol, widespread mosque building programmes, changing working hours during Ramadan, etc.) through legislative attempts. The third option was to appease the coalition of social forces that brought the AKP to power and the public, through initiating a transformational agenda to reform the country's politics and economy while guaranteeing ideological moderation and protection of the hegemony's interests. The AKP picked the last option and executed it in a swift and skilful way. In fact, the AKP not only guaranteed ideological moderation, but it presented a largely liberal outlook regarding social and political issues – such as minority rights, the Cyprus issue, LGBT rights, gender issues – and a neoliberal standpoint when it comes to the question of economics, such as proceeding with structural reforms, attracting foreign capital, and so on (Hale and Ozbudun 2010, 21). With such guarantees regarding the economic structure, it aimed to guarantee the old business elites who historically had a symbiotic relationship with the Kemalist hegemony that their material interests would be protected.

The morning after the elections, in the first interview he gave, Erdogan made several assurances with the very first one being “not interfering with people's lifestyles”, a clear message to sceptics who had been scared of a possible “secret agenda” of political Islamists. He then continued declaring that furthering the EU process was “the primary goal”. More importantly, he added that they “[would] not stress out Turkey. There will not be a repeat of

the 28 February process (...) We will be extremely careful” (Hurriyet 2002a). Therefore, it seemed that while the party was certainly aware of the implicit acceptance of the military of a potential reform process, it still did not want to antagonise the military elite, which was still the most vital veto player despite its somehow amicable chief at the time. With such statements, it aimed to assure the military elite that their political privileges would be protected too. At the same time, the AKP was continuously signalling that it was going to implement its election platform: full membership of the EU, which inevitably came with the requirement to implement the necessary political criteria.

The choices ultimately made by actors during critical junctures are typically rooted in prior events and process (Mahoney 2001; Collier and Collier 1991). These are critical antecedents and they also determine the resources and strength of the relevant agents, and their position within an institutional field (Rinscheid et al. 2019). In this case, the antecedent condition was the repression of political Islamist groups by the Kemalist hegemony. This critical antecedent provided the base for the determination of the AKP to take the path that it did. The AKP core cadre was acutely aware of the capabilities of the military to topple or dismantle it and their electoral victory could not be taken for granted. Erdogan’s own political ban, which had prevented him from becoming prime minister, was overturned in 2003 so he had personal motivation to adopt a reformist stance to strengthen the AKP’s political position (Abdullah Gul became the place-holding prime minister). The antecedent condition and the sore experience that came with it also made the AKP more tactful in political communication and more liberal in handing out reassurances, to prevent a predictable backlash.

Despite open assurances and a non-aggressive chief-of-staff, the military still seemed to be apprehensive of the AKP and the new government. Kalyvas (2000, 380) argues that previously powerful incumbents including the military will have a tendency to distrust moderate behaviour and “view [religious] challengers as a Trojan horse”, especially because such groups have a reputation for strong beliefs and inflexible values combined with ideological principles denouncing democracy. Shortly after the elections, on 9 December 2002, the TSK held a security briefing for selected members of the new government, including the PM Gul. This session turned into a lecture on

“religious reactionism” where the top TSK commanders explained to the attendees how “dismantling the existing system using religion and establishing a religious order” was a high-priority concern the TSK was determined to combat and that the government should enact necessary laws to that effect (Cumhuriyet 2002). The AKP government and Erdogan did not have a public reaction to the briefing and the PM Gul said the next day that the commanders were “respectful and polite” and “nothing said was new and nothing that was said there bothered me” (Akyol 2002). On 26 December 2002, the yearly High Military Council (Yüksek Askeri Şura – YAS) meeting, headed by Prime Minister Gul, was held where dismissals and retirement of high-ranking military staff were discussed. On the agenda was the dismissal of seven officers from the TSK due to “religious reactionist” (anti-secular) activities. The YAS decisions were final and could not be appealed but PM Gul expressed reservations about the dismissal decisions, potentially opening up the way for certain legal remedies for the expelled officers. This unprecedented move disturbed the TSK, led to a tension-full meeting, and resulted in the chief-of-staff denouncing the act, saying it would “undoubtedly encourage those involved in anti-secular activities” within the ranks (Dymond 2003). Prime Minister Gul defended his action as a democratic right. This critical meeting had two effects: it made the AKP aware of the military’s unwavering red line and also understand that changes must be done structurally – not with risky and unworthy tit for tat. The AKP swiftly softened its stance and instead concentrated on the EU harmonisation packages that would pass the parliament in the coming months.

Around the same time, EU officials were signalling that for membership not religion, but military tutelage, was the main problem. For example, the European Commissioner for Enlargement Verheugen said about Turkey’s membership process: “Islam is also a part of European culture (...) I cannot think of Turkey as a member as long as the military controls the politics and not the other way around” (NTV 2002). Erdogan, realising both the clear message from the EU side and the implicit threat from the military side, declared the party’s only short-term goal: “The Copenhagen criteria will become the Ankara criteria,” implying that the EU’s requirements for institutional change would not only be implemented but also internalised

(Hurriyet 2002c).

An expeditious legislative process followed and marked the end stages of the critical juncture. The 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th harmonisation packages, containing hundreds of amendments to existing laws, to bring the Turkish legislation in line with the EU *acquis communautaire*, were passed under the AKP government starting from 11 January 2003 (the first three had been enacted under the previous coalition government). The last of these packages, Law 4963 of 7 August 2003, brought significant institutional changes and paved the way for significantly diminishing the military's influence in politics. The amendments particularly targeted the National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu – MGK), the strongest institutional tool of military tutelage to actively shape politics. The MGK secretary-general's executive authority was abolished and replaced with secretarial duties. The meetings became bimonthly instead of monthly. The MGK secretary-general could be now selected from civilians whereas previously only senior military officers could hold this position. The MGK deliberations and decisions, which previously had to be treated as a priority by the Council of Ministers, were reduced to being recommendations. The civilian-soldier ratio of the council was reversed, with seven civilian members to five commanders. The Chief of the General Staff lost his prerogative to call the MGK for an extraordinary session. To increase the transparency of the institution, the bylaws on the functions of the MGK's secretariat would have to be shared with the public. This extraordinary set of legal revisions, and especially stripping the MGK of its executive powers, denoted a new era in Turkey's civil-military relations and roughly drew the path toward political demilitarisation.

Operationalising the critical juncture concept, Capoccia and Kelemen (2007) formulate a way to measure “criticalness” of junctures in terms of two factors: probability jump and temporal leverage. If an outcome becomes more probable at the end of a critical juncture compared to before it, then the probability jump is considered high. Similarly, if the effect of the critical juncture lasts longer than the duration of the juncture, the temporal leverage is considered high. The higher these factors measure, the more critical the juncture becomes. The election of the AKP and the months that followed started an irreversible path and by the end of 2003, the military's political

power and institutional reach was in decline, which would not have been an imaginable scenario before 2002. Thus the probability jump factor of the AKP's critical juncture is high. Considering that the impact of this critical juncture was still visible by the end of 2017, one can say that the temporal leverage of the critical juncture was also high. The next sections will discuss the aftermath of the critical juncture and the reactive process brought by the legacy of political militarisation. Divided into two parts as "reaction" and "defiance", the following parts delve into the first subparts of the security sector causal mechanism.

5.3 Reaction of the old hegemony

Historical institutionalists emphasise path-dependent mechanisms that get activated following ruptures in institutional stability. The idea behind this conceptualisation is that once a country has started down a track, it is both costly and difficult to reverse even when there will be other choice points. Because the entrenchment of certain institutional arrangements is already set in motion, easy reversal will be obstructed (Levi 1997, 28). This viewpoint might imply that critical junctures are followed by a linear path where institutional acceptance by all actors involved is produced and therefore a new trajectory is followed whereby stability is automatically generated. This, of course, might happen and relevant actors might follow the new divergent path because they find it a more functional system or they morally believe in it, or the new system serves their needs (Mahoney 2000). Consequently, with no visible opposition, the path would be reproduced and the new system becomes locked-in in a relatively straightforward way. Sometimes, however, the mechanism reproducing the path leading to a certain outcome is a reactionary one. That means there is not necessarily further movement in the same direction and a positive feedback loop, but the path is comprised of certain actions and reactions. In such reactive mechanisms, "each event in the sequence is both a reaction to antecedent events and a cause of subsequent events" (ibid, 526). Instead of reinforcing earlier events, these types of mechanisms produce backlash events that might transform and even reverse earlier events. This typology fits better to describe what happened after the

2002 critical juncture and its outcome. The political demilitarisation process, as part of a democratisation project, that started with the critical juncture set an autonomous reactive sequence in motion that, instead of producing democratisation, led to the final outcome of regime transformation with new institutional arrangements.

According to Mahoney (2001), actor resistance to prevailing institutional patterns is often the initial force that instigates a reactive sequence. In this subsection of the causal mechanism, I argue that when the incumbent elites or the hegemony's material as well as political future interests are not automatically, fully and recurrently guaranteed, they are more prone to resist and react to preserve them. For the case at hand, it could be said that the military was aware of their waning power at the end of the critical juncture, and acted accordingly by increasing civil-military tension at times, but it did not explicitly react until 2007 and when it did, the cost of exit became too high as the relative benefits of the current path had already increased.

The concept of resistance is almost a natural part of institutionalist studies. It is assumed that institutionalised systems or mechanisms are mostly inert and will inherently resist actors pushing for change, since such systems owe their survival to relatively self-activating processes (Jepperson 1991; Pierson 2004, 144). The "winners" of such processes will unsurprisingly engage in self-preservation when faced with challenges to the status quo. Critical junctures generate moments when all relevant actors need to make decisions and determine their best course of action; these decisions "are likely to be directly influenced by political pressures of varying strength" and the actors will have options to choose which pressures to yield to and which to resist (Capoccia 2015, 159). For the military, 2003 to 2007 marked the time when the institution struggled with the decision to oppose the AKP and its reforms outright versus accepting a subaltern into the state ranks. The political pressure was too high to reject the EU reforms but it clearly also felt threatened. These four years were a low-intensity tug of war where the military tried to put the AKP in line and the AKP responded with a mixture of compliance and defiance, yielding to some pressures and resisting others.

On 23 April 2003, as per yearly tradition, the Speaker of the Parliament Bulent Arinc organised a reception to celebrate the anniversary of the

Parliament's establishment. A crisis ensued because Arinc's wife wore a headscarf and President Sezer, who was a staunch secularist appointed by the previous government, had concerns. The headscarf issue was a sore point for both the Kemalists, who effectively banned it in the public sphere, and also political Islamists, whose political struggle centred around such bans. A woman with a headscarf joining a state event for the highest-ranking officials was not illegal but a serious break of protocol. Although at the last minute Arinc stated that his wife was not going to be present, the President, the heads of the military, the head of the Constitutional Court, as well as the CHP officials refused to attend the reception. The next day, Erdogan said the secularist block "made an issue out of nothing" and that the real issues were poverty and jobs (Milliyet 2003). While Erdogan was cleverly echoing the public sentiment of the moment, this gesture showed how much symbols still mattered for the remnants of the old hegemony and signalled future contestation over certain issues.

Soon after, on 30 April 2003, Erdogan attended his first MGK meeting as prime minister, which proved to be the most heated meeting since the one on 28 February 1997 where the MGK forced the Erbakan government to resign. In the course of 7.5 hours, the generals and President Sezer grilled Erdogan on the dangers of anti-secular activities and at the end issued resolutions declaring assurances of the Erdogan government that secularism would be preserved with utmost care and that the government would not insist on ex-Islamists filling bureaucratic ranks (Hurriyet 2003a). On 20 May 2003, the prime minister Erdogan and the chief of general staff Ozkok gathered for a private meeting, for General Ozkok to relay discontent brewing in the military over issues such as the extension of religious freedoms, to which Erdogan apparently responded with "We will consider all this. I believe, with time, everything will improve" (Balbay 2009). Erdogan was again showing his classic conciliatory tone that became his signature attitude for this period. This is also the type of actor behaviour that Mahoney and Thelen (2010, 25) consider "subversive", whereby change actors "seek to replace an institution but do it by effectively disguising the extent of their preference for institutional change by following institutional expectations and work[ing] within the system." Often, subversives promote new rules on the edges of old ones,

carefully emptying out the old arrangements and gathering support around new ones. During this specific meeting, Erdogan must have been well aware of the revolutionary reform package that was going to pass the Parliament only a few months later, as his government had legislative dominance. In the same way, when he headed the High Military Council (Yüksek Askeri Şura – YAS) meeting for the first time as the prime minister on 1 August 2003, he declared beforehand that, unlike his predecessor Gul, he would not put reservations on any decisions of the generals in order not to “create unnecessary tension and conflict” (Hurriyet 2003b). It was also reported that during the official dinner following the YAS meeting, President Sezer refused to shake Erdogan’s hand and some generals did not get up to greet him, which did not receive any reaction from Erdogan. Considering that the reform package that significantly curbed the military’s institutional power was already in the Parliament waiting to be ratified, such a reserved attitude and statements by Erdogan seem to have been politically calculated, especially considering that he would express reservations about YAS decisions repeatedly thereafter.

A day before the second biannual YAS meeting, on 3 December 2003, the chief-of-staff Ozkok gathered the generals to receive their complaints about the government and noticed that some of these generals were anxious to serve an official ultimatum to the government (Gormus 2014). He was not, which presumably was one of the main reasons why outright interference did not happen during this time (Aydinli 2011). Ozkok’s lenient stance did not stop the high-ranking officers from gathering PM Erdogan and certain ministers shortly after on 14 January 2004 for a security briefing where, among other warnings, the generals reminded the civilians of the infamous Article 35 of the TSK’s internal service law, which lays out the military’s role to protect and preserve republican order. True to his subversive qualities, Erdogan, during this period, did not openly challenge the institutional order and continued to work within the system to achieve the AKP’s goals. According to Mahoney and Thelen (2010), this kind of political move works especially effectively in systems where there is a strong veto player and veto possibilities, such as Turkey, hence bending the rules would potentially have a significant cost.

In May 2004, through another EU harmonisation legislative package, the civil-military balance tipped further towards the civilian side. The

amendments removed the military representatives from institutions such as the Council of Higher Education (Yükseköğretim Kurulu – YOK), which regulates the universities, and the Radio and Television High Council (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu – RTUK), which regulates the media. Both institutions were formed by the 1980 junta to ensure that the military could have oversight in universities (specifically over curricula) and media. Additionally, the infamous State Security Courts, another legacy institution of the 1980 military regime, were abolished. These courts tried crimes against the state and had a highly politicised existence with anti-democratic institutional structuring. The military was also no longer exempt from the monitoring of the Court of Accounts and their assets and properties could be audited.

The local elections in March 2004 provided additional victory for the AKP and further legitimised their nascent rule. The party managed to win 56 of 81 cities with 41.67% of the total votes, a distinct increase within 1.5 years. The AKP saw this as a vote of confidence and a sign that their programme appealed to a wide segment of the population. This election would be the start of many where the AKP gradually increased their share of votes and consequently their power to actively carve more institutional space vis-à-vis the military and its associated institutions. As discussed above, the civil-military relationship during this period was not entirely harmonious but the military did not explicitly challenge the AKP's rise either. The dissent against the government in the military was not unified and although several high-ranking officials – such as certain generals or MGK advisors – had straightforward expressions of disdain for the new political arrangements, they could not find backing of the leadership and were neither organised nor strong enough to bypass the top command.

The chief of general staff Ozkok's tenure was defined by a bipolar institution, characterised as “hawks versus doves”, with the leadership carefully calculating their strategy against the AKP by balancing stern warnings to the party with their quiescence about EU reforms. The military might also have believed that, by having the facade of a mostly harmonious relationship, they could control the reform process. After all, they managed to oppose the TSK's subordination to the Ministry of Defence – one of the “good practices” of the EU countries – and remained attached to the Prime Ministry.

In the same way, the infamous Internal Service Law remained untouched. But beyond these, an overtly hawkish attitude of the military at this time could have risked repeating the 28 February Process, albeit at a worse time, and destabilise politics once again while jeopardising institutional professionalism as well as the TSK's public image. Moreover, unlike the 1990s, this time was not only about creeping political Islam inside a secular republic, and the issues were more urgent and tangible. The 2001 economic crisis hit the citizens to such an extent that whoever stood between them and promised economic recovery and potential prosperity risked their wrath. Certainly, the military was aware and had even seen this as a security issue. In the MGK meetings following the peak of the crisis, it regularly proposed security measures to be increased in the big cities. It seems the "hawks" within would not have opposed unsettling the emerging state of affairs despite the potential cost, the leadership took a more guarded approach and managed to rein in the dissent. By 2005, with two major reform packages already passed and the EU deciding to open negotiations with Turkey, the momentum was already with the civilian side and reverting to past arrangements or opposing supplementary reforms became virtually impossible. Even the institutional privileges the TSK managed to retain, which were somewhat significant, still were not comparable to the effects of the shrinking institutional reach and political sway of the military.

With Ozkok's retirement and Yasar Buyukanit's appointment as the TSK's chief in 2006, the "hawks" in the military found a representative in this hardline commander. Around the same time, a decrease in EU euphoria became discernible and the government's ambitions to hold the democratisation agenda manifestly weakened while the government started relying more on constituency support, populism, and, increasingly, nationalism. Civil-military relations started to become more confrontational. As the military took a more inflexible stance vis-à-vis the AKP, the party determined it would be in their self-interest to guard against the military's interventionist potential rather than focusing on implementing democratic control of the armed forces via additional reforms or fashioning an intellectual understanding of the issue (Cizre 2011, 64).

Unlike his predecessor Ozkok, who mostly refrained from making

public statements about politics, something which he had been both praised and criticised for, General Buyukanit was not shy about making his standpoint known. In his widely televised speech in October 2006, he attacked those who “want to re-define secularism” who were occupying the highest offices of the land, emphasised that “the fundamental characteristics of the republican regime are under heavy assault” and stated that the attacks against the TSK “were trying to be shown as big steps towards democratisation” (BBC Turkish 2006). The military was getting more vocal in venting their anxieties about the potential demise of the regime, especially because of the upcoming presidential appointment by the Parliament. The office of the presidency was largely symbolic with limited powers, but it carried great significance for the Kemalist hegemony. The president was, on paper, non-partisan but had the ability to appoint key bureaucrats and was a solid symbol of the secular establishment as its defender above party politics. President Sezer, an ex-constitutional court judge and a faithful Kemalist secular, vetoed many of the AKP’s bills and although he had limited legislative authority as he could not veto a second time, in the eyes of the waning hegemony, his existence felt like the last line of defence against the political Islamists taking over the state apparatuses. Hence, when the AKP announced that it would nominate Abdullah Gul for the presidency, it was perceived by the military and the regime defenders as an offence. A week prior, Buyukanit had stated that the appointment of the president “was of great concern to the TSK as the president is also the commander-in-chief” and declared his preference as “a president who is loyal to the republic’s fundamental values, the secular and democratic ideals (...) not on paper but in reality with behaviour to show for such commitment” (Hurriyet 2007a). The AKP, by nominating an ex-hardliner political Islamist and one of the core members of the Erdogan clique, seemed to have disregarded the military’s preference in its entirety.

On 27 April 2007, the Parliament voted on the appointment and fell short of a majority in the first round. As the CHP took the issue to the Constitutional Court to nullify the first round altogether, which will be discussed in the next chapters, the military took more drastic action. At midnight on the same day, an unsigned communique appeared on the TSK’s website. The memorandum declared that the military was “concerned about the recent situation” as “the

absolute defender of secularism”, while warning that the armed forces “maintain their sound determination to carry out their duties stemming from laws to protect the unchangeable characteristics of the Republic of Turkey”, ominously concluding with the statement that the TSK’s “loyalty and faith to this determination is absolute” (BBC 2007). Written in the all too familiar TSK parlance combining urgency and self-professed duty to act, it was a clear ultimatum to the AKP government and a direct threat to its civilian rule. Knowing that an outright coup was neither feasible nor desirable, the military leadership opted for a “softer” intervention, believing that it might give the AKP not a full blow but a stern nudge to get its politics in the desired order. What the TSK leadership miscalculated amid the fog of existential anxiety, however, was that the balance was already tipped towards the civilians to the point of no return, severely curtailing – although not eradicating – the military’s capacity to influence or intercede in the regular flow of politics.

5.4 Defiance, agitation, and victory

The TSK’s bombshell memorandum hurled the AKP dynamics and plans into disarray and although Erdogan tried to keep a calm and straight face right after, he gathered his ministers and head of intelligence for crisis meetings. Meanwhile, the CHP endorsed the military’s message. Right away, the party spokesperson said on a TV programme: “Of course, this is a memorandum. The government should do what is necessary to do about it.” A day after, CHPs vice president stated that the party would not leave Turkey to the hands of Ataturk’s enemies and that “the TSK’s observations are not different than [CHP’s]. We would put our signatures below it” (Haber7 2007a). The CHP leader Deniz Baykal, who had been pursuing particularly divisive politics in the previous four years, saw the memorandum as an ominous warning of potential violent conflict “unless the Constitutional Court approves of [the annulment] procedure,” referring to the CHP’s application to nullify the presidential voting round in the Parliament (Ogur 2010). Baykal was observed to be especially content with the developments, calculating that a deadlock might push parties to ask for early elections, where electoral balance would be re-established with the AKP losing its majority. The hegemony was struggling to regain its political

footing and was hoping to reconfigure the political field through trusting its core base, believing that the secular masses would back it up at the polls. Rather than producing a strategy to explain what it would do differently if it was in power, the CHP's entire approach to politics from 2002 until 2007 was about countering via attacking by emphasising the AKP's Islamist roots and demonising them as the enemy of the regime (Ciddi and Esen 2014). Now, Baykal was counting on this strategy to pay off.

In less than 10 hours, the AKP government decided on its plan of action against the military's memorandum and chose to react rather than acquiesce. Breaking from the political Islamist tradition of bowing to the hegemony, the government spokesperson gave a short, unemotional, but stern statement reminding that:

“(...) the General Staff is under the authority of the government (...) [The memorandum] will be perceived as an attempt to influence the rule of law (...) It is the government that has the primary role to protect the state's fundamental values (...) Every problem in the country will be solved within the framework of rule of law and democracy. An opposite attitude can never be accepted” (Sabah 2007).

The military might have thought that there would be international support for its defence of secularism, specifically from the USA, as per precedence in previous ally support during the guardianship outbursts, but, for the first time, it did not happen. While the EU explicitly condemned the interference, the USA, after initial ambivalent statements, expressed support for “the democratic order in Turkey,” stating that the US “wish(es) to see the constitution, the ballot box rule in Turkey (...) We don't want the military or anyone else interfering in the constitutional process or doing anything in an extra constitutional way” (DoS 2007). While some sections of the Turkish intelligentsia applauded the military's act, most believed that it carried the danger of reversing the democratisation gains of the last few years. There were mass anti-AKP protests preceding the memorandum called “Republic Marches”, which will be delved into in the next chapters, but the hegemony failed to see that those masses also opposed a possible coup. During the 28 February Process, in addition to the military's determination, civil society was almost unified in staging a “psychological siege” to pressure the fragile

Erbakan government to resign (Gursoy 2017, 138). Ten years later, the military could not find tangible support for its move either internationally or domestically, except for the CHP, resulting in the Kemalist guardianship institutional network increasingly losing its reformist and modernist perception and, in particular, the military and the CHP becoming increasingly isolated in the political arena.

One institution, remaining as the bastion of the Kemalist hegemony, was critical during the 2007 presidential appointment crisis. Upon the CHP's petition to annul the voting in the Parliament, within a few days it decided to invalidate the vote. The CHP's petition argued that a quorum of 367 deputies was required for presidential appointment, not the usual number of 184. Abdullah Gul had received 357 votes with 361 deputies present (the AKP had 353 seats and the opposition boycotted the vote). This petitioning was arguably "constitutionally questionable", nevertheless, the judges of the Constitutional Court, many of them appointed during President Sezer's tenure, agreed with the CHP and annulled the vote on 1 May 2007 (Cizre 2011, 61). Erdogan saw the decision as "a bullet aimed at democracy" and vowed to change the way the president was elected (Der Spiegel 2007). He then called for early elections to be held in July. The normal elections would have taken place in November but by creating this legislative crisis, the opposition believed that they could use it to their advantage to rally the masses behind them and benefit from the momentum the Republic Marches had created. It is doubtful that they believed they could win a majority, but they aimed to at least obstruct Gul's presidential ascent, buy some time, and work to disrupt the AKP's parliamentary majority via the ballot. The military, on the other hand, had threatened possible action in the memorandum but did not take any when confronted with defiant civilians, reinforcing the government's superior positioning in this civil-military crisis.

Certain institutional arrangements, such as those governing state structures, legislative relations and the like, might prove to be more resilient than others, putting a considerable amount of pressure on actors to adapt (Pierson 2004, 155). In that case, previous "losers" in such arrangements might find that the arrangements are so entrenched that their only choice is to adapt themselves and limit their ambitions to create deep change. The actors

then need to decide how costly it is to replace existing arrangements towards the ends they desire and if it is projected to be too costly, they might opt to work within the extant framework (Hacker 2004, 246). The AKP's choice to accept early elections showed that they settled on putting an end to the crisis via the ballot, ultimately leaving the public with the task of picking the winner. They could have disregarded the Constitutional Court's decision and opted not to withdraw Gul's candidacy, continuing with the appointment process in the Parliament while fighting the case on moral and constitutional grounds, but it would have likely produced an outright state crisis, resulting in them having the appearance of an autocratic government with unstable legitimacy.

The AKP, by opting for early elections, basically took the matters to the street, where the military could not directly influence, and it had limited time to convince the electorate that its survival mattered. Compared to the 2002 general and 2004 local election campaigns, the AKP entered the race visibly better prepared and organised, and conscious of the medium where they delivered their messages. Unlike the previous two campaigns, they used dedicated campaign websites targeting a younger electorate and also splurged on newspaper advertisements. The campaign put Erdogan in the forefront as a leader rather than the party as a whole; it was emphasised that the electorate would vote primarily for the leader, making this election the first where Erdogan's personality and leadership were presented as the dominant electable qualities.

The campaign was primarily designed to stand on two bases: the services and the injustices. In rallies, Erdogan, a gifted orator, styled his speeches so the attendee would leave having two basic impressions, that the AKP made things better in terms of economy and that the others were undemocratically trying to bring it down, hence preventing further services they would, under the AKP, receive. In each speech, Erdogan talked about the rising GDP per capita, economic growth, the successes of privatisation efforts, and flux of foreign capital. He mentioned the lowered debt to the IMF. These issues, however, although important election talking points, were too abstract to incite emotions in rallies. The real reactions, booing, cheering, and slogans occurred when the issue of the establishment's blocking of Abdullah Gul's presidency came up. He regularly referred to Gul as "my brother" and implied

that “they” were preventing one of “us” from representing “us”.

Interestingly, although the military was the main obstacle between the AKP and the presidency, the speeches never targeted the military, as it would not have played well with the public who always had a high degree of trust in the institution. Rather, it pointed the finger towards the CHP as the root of all undemocratic practices. Erdogan drew a clear distinction between the AKP’s source of legitimacy and the CHP’s: “It does not matter how much they hit [us], the real power firstly belongs to the people and then to the people again (...) [The CHP] get their power from certain institutions, but not us. We did politics with tooth and nail, by going from village to village.” As the crowd became more riled up, he continued: “If I am mellow, who said I am a sheep? My head can be cut but cannot be yanked. You [the CHP] might have protection from certain places but you will get your answer from us [the people] (...) Don’t be cruel to the oppressed for one day you will pay for it” (AKP 2007b). These statements were sometimes mixed with false claims. In one of the rallies, he referred to the CHP boycotting the presidential appointment session in the parliament and alleged: “One CHP deputy went in regardless [to vote] even though he risked everything, he risked death. These were the circumstances under which we did the voting in the Parliament” (AKP 2007a). In each of the 54 rallies Erdogan held during a very short span of time, he referred to the issue of presidential elections and explained it to the crowd as an issue of the republican system and democratic rule where the people would have the last say at the ballot box: “The Constitutional Court decisions cannot be appealed. So, I thought, how could we appeal it? I said to myself, there is only one institution for this. What is it? It’s the people (...) Don’t say it’s just a vote, this is a matter of honour” (ibid). Erdogan took Gul as his rally-mate to a number of key cities, where he only spoke after Erdogan, and only to describe what was done to him: “I know your reaction shown here now is due to the games played during the presidential elections. Everybody watched what happened. Didn’t I get more votes than the previous three presidents? But then what happened? If you’re going to answer, answer in the ballot box,” Gul urged in one of the rallies (Haber7 2007b). In the final Istanbul rally as he said the last sentences from the AKP side before the elections, Gul summarised the party’s campaign message succinctly: “On 22 July, this nation will vote for two things: Firstly, to

continue the services, stability and security. Secondly, to remedy the wrongs and injustices” (AKP 2007c).

Focusing heavily on unfair treatment helped to capitalise on the electorate’s emotions but more importantly, it eased pressure on the AKP to address issues that its electorate would face, such as jobs or inflation. A study conducted in 2006 shows that 38.2% of Turks thought unemployment was the biggest problem, followed by the high cost of living with 12.1%, whereas the headscarf issue scored a mere 3.7% (Carkoglu and Toprak 2007). Analysing the rally speeches, one can see that the problems of unemployment or the high cost of living were rarely mentioned, if at all. Similarly, these issues, or economic issues in general, found less space in the media during the pre-election summer as the civil-military crisis dominated, giving the political parties less incentive to address it. After the polling companies predicted that the AKP would win around 35% of the votes, the party in fact won 46.58% of the votes on 22 July 2007 and increased its share of the vote by 12.3%. Although it lost 22 seats due to the ultra-nationalist MHP managing to enter the Parliament with 71 seats, the AKP maintained its majority status whereas the CHP stagnated at 20.88%. The showdown ended with an impressive, and largely unexpected, clear victory for Erdogan and a stark loss for the CHP who, until the end, insisted on pursuing a campaign on ideological lines. Several polling companies argued that the presidential election deadlock and the consequent campaigning on it likely contributed between 5 and 10 percent of the hike in the AKP votes (Aydin 2011a). Erdogan himself seemed to have been surprised at the margin of votes and said right after the results were announced that “I was not sure if we could get this percentage,” adding that the AKP’s victory “was the reflex of nation against what was done to Abdullah [Gul]” (Bila 2007). The election was historic in the sense that no other party in Turkey’s history ever had such a high portion of votes and confidence of the public to govern. It showed that, although it was still struggling with certain economic issues, the electorate was largely content with the growth and relatively increased prosperity and reforms, while being sympathetic to the plight of a government being prevented from exercising its legislative rights enshrined in the constitution and extant bylaws. It also demonstrated the effectiveness of hyper-local-level organising and campaigning via local elite cooperation,

which the AKP activated as a strategy with this election and has utilised ever since. But more importantly, it illustrated that the Kemalist hegemony was in irreversible decline and the identity war they had fought creating Islamist-secular cleavage was alienating, and indeed ineffective. The election result did not deter the old hegemony entirely as it would continue to try to impede the AKP's growth, but it did put an end to historical doubts about who was governing as well as ruling the state. The military's miscalculation was so tragic that General Buyukanit, in the week following the election, shocked about the AKP's win even in Antalya, a staunchly secular town, asked a journalist: "I wonder if the city's electorate too didn't vote for CHP because of our memorandum?", seemingly having not come to terms with his institution's strategic blunder (Aydin 2011a).

While the AKP government was demilitarising politics, it was at the same time tinkering with other institutions such as the Gendarmerie and the police forces to gradually take the former into the civilian sphere and to expand the powers of the latter. In the early 2000s the Gendarmerie, with quarter a million in its ranks, was the armed law enforcement organisation under the dual command of the Ministry of Interior and the Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces (this structure changed after 2016). With the majority of its personnel being conscripts, it had jurisdiction where the police did not, and was considered to be the army's parallel police force designed to combat domestic threats (Aksoy 2010, 172). As part of the EU reforms, the government ratified a pledge on 31 December 2008 to civilianise the Gendarmerie: "The domestic security service will be carried out by professional units of law enforcement, within the framework of rule of law and human rights, and with the guidance of policies determined by the civilian authority under this authority's supervision and oversight" (Official Gazette 2008). Although it did not cause the stir the civil-military spat created, it was a significant signal by the government on their intentions over the Gendarmerie, which had jurisdiction over 92% of the land due to special laws, and the TSK took notice of the ultimatum. "The existing Gendarmerie Organisational Law is sufficient to carry out domestic security service. It would be appropriate for the statement regarding civilianisation to be excluded from the program", dictated Lieutenant-general Mustafa Biyik of Gendarmerie Command, in a letter to the

Ministry of Interior when the pledge was still in its draft form (T24 2008). It is noteworthy that the TSK's letter did not deter the ministers and the pledge passed the Parliament without any amendments. With another regulation enacted in March 2009, district public administrations were given authority to re-organise police jurisdiction in their areas, which resulted in considerable narrowing of the Gendarmerie jurisdiction in Istanbul with the arrangement of new districts (Aksoy 2010).

Another set of security sector law amendments was passed targeting the police forces in June 2007 amid the political mayhem of the e-memorandum and the looming elections. The bill was drafted and enacted in a hasty fashion, without even being presented to the sub-committee on internal affairs to be deliberated on, as per parliamentary norm. The amendments involved notable changes to the Police Duty and Authorisation Law (Polis Vazife ve Salahiyet Kanunu – PVSK), which is the main law laying out police powers, responsibilities, and jurisdiction. The powers of the police forces were extended to include an officer's right to use their weapon to catch a suspect even when no threat to life was present, without any limitation as to how the officer would use their weapon (e.g. not aiming for vital organs, etc.). In addition, the officers were given the authority to fire their weapons if a person did not obey their order to "stop" or "surrender". Another amendment to the PVSK allowed officers to use personal discretion to stop and search a person or a vehicle, based on their perception at that moment and professional experience, without needing a judicial order. In this way, the borders of reasonable doubt were expanded to include any officer's situational perception and personal judgment. Moreover, the Penal Code was amended in 2006 to restrict the right to organisation and demonstration, allowing the police force to intervene more freely during public gatherings if the protestors were deemed to be "propagandising to serve the aims of an [illegal] organisation even if they are not members of [illegal] organisation," allowing the police to use violence to disperse crowds and capture protestors for the prosecutors to instigate potentially lengthy penal processes to try demonstrators. The penal code's amendment to include "not being a member but still serving the aims of illegal [read terrorist] organisations" made it easier for the police to apprehend and for the prosecutor to jail while investigating as the very act of

demonstrating became connected to national security. A separate set of amendments made to the Anti-Terrorism Law expanded the definition of terrorism by increasing possible terrorist acts from 20 to 60 (Berksoy 2010a, 195). Crimes such as forgery, alienating the public from military service, and resisting officials became possible acts of terrorism and could be prosecuted as such.

Additionally, in this period, the police forces were given extra resources to invest in surveillance technology. 2005 saw the widespread installation of CCTVs in the main cities, which then rapidly spread to the entire country within a short span of time. On top of this, in 2006, new fingerprinting and live-scanning digital technologies were adopted in 30 provinces and in 2007, the police forces started to experiment with rubber bullets during public gatherings, which subsequently were broadly deployed (Berksoy 2010a). Although the use of pepper gas was rare in the early 2000s, the police forces had started to employ pepper gas more liberally during demonstrations by 2007, which was to become their primary method of crowd dispersion quite quickly. The numbers also show that imports of the gas increased from 42 tonnes in 2000 to 115 tonnes in 2005 and 90 tonnes in 2006 (Aydin 2015, 243). Through certain revisions in laws enacted in 2005, for the first time, it became easier to become a police officer. The amendments were designed to swell the low-level police ranks. In addition to the Police Vocational Schools, which had been the traditional way to join the force, a university graduate (from a 4-year degree programme) could enrol in a 6-month course in designated Police Vocational Training Centers (Polis Meslek Eğitim Merkezi – POMEM) and become an officer at the end of the very short course.

5.5 Conclusion

With the critical juncture of the November 2002 elections, the combination of interrelated explanatory variables found a suitable environment to have causal effect. The institutional flux that was primarily triggered by the unstable position of the Kemalist hegemony turned into a crisis of the hegemony following the AKP's electoral victory in 2002, whereby the coercive and political arms of the regime found themselves in an existential frenzy. This

situation then turned into a productive condition that loosened the rigid institutional structures and made divergence possible. This divergence came in the form of the AKP announcing its democratic reform agenda with an emphasis on rebalancing civil-military relations, as per the “good practices” of the EU. This pretext of the EU reform agenda was utilised highly effectively with massive legislation packages moving forward in the Parliament one after the other, curbing the tutelary powers of the military in a determined fashion. The changes were so dramatic and took place so swiftly that it was even referred to as a “quiet revolution” (Financial Times 2003). The AKP was successful in implementing this political demilitarisation agenda without ideologically framing it as such and presented it as one step in the ultimate goal of democratic transition (Caliskan 2017). In this way, it managed to garner support from a wide segment of society, including the liberal intelligentsia, who would not have significant electoral clout but surely serve a mediating function between a political group and the public by propagating certain ideas.

As some of the hitherto powerful political groups were decimated and actors such as the CHP were trying to stay afloat, the AKP managed to rebrand itself as a people’s party with promises of services and as a globalist actor with an outward-looking political agenda. The AKP’s majority status in the parliament also gave them legislative opportunities to enact laws to expand the powers of the police force and attempt to civilianise the Gendarmerie, both developments giving the government more say in the security sector at the expense of the military. Trying to adjust to the emerging developments, the military was disturbed but its guardianship reflexes were temporarily immobilised by its reluctance to oppose the reform process outright and by the attitude of its chief, General Ozkok. Not having the patience nor the conciliatory tone of his predecessor, the nationalist chief of general staff Buyukanit then paved the way for a civil-military crisis which at the end only made the civilians stronger.

It is expected for “subversives” to face obstruction, especially in contexts where veto possibilities are strong and numerous, preventing them from mobilising elite resources to displace existing institutional rules in a swift way (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 19). Therefore, they will tend to seek opportunities where veto players are comparatively weaker to be able to “layer” on existing

institutions to divert their course towards their goals. This alternative path-seeking can be seen clearly in the decision to go for early elections in 2007, when the AKP encountered a myriad of vetoes from several fronts. Their projection of the presidential election deadlock as an issue that the nation would ultimately solve shows that the AKP chose “the streets” to shore up support and source legitimacy, rather than the extant institutional arrangements. This strategy, at the end, proved to be much more successful and through institutional layering the AKP would diminish the influence of veto players and dismantle their support network without changing the core political and institutional context. The next chapter will first discuss the aftermath of the civil-military crisis in 2007, and then delve into the second part of the security sector mechanism covering the years 2009 to 2017.

6 Security sector mechanism: Part II (2009–2017)

This chapter examines the second part of the security sector causal mechanism. It firstly discusses the fallout from the civil-military confrontation in 2007 which resulted in the AKP reinforcing its electoral legitimacy. Despite its ambitions over EU membership visibly faltering, emboldened by its victories at the ballot box, the AKP continued to push for civilianisation reforms and take steps to punish the old hegemony. These actions further eradicated the bond between the Kemalist hegemony and the military while providing the AKP with political clout to expand its preferred institutional arrangements. Next, the chapter elaborates on the argument that once the AKP captured enough state power through various institutional means, it did not need the endorsement of an elite alliance to capture votes. As it centralises power, it also becomes increasingly averse to power-sharing, which eventually leads to eliminating members of its former alliance. In the meantime, the security sector continues to be transformed, with the police and the MIT playing an increasingly visible role as the coercive extension of the AKP government. This chapter then explains how the abortive coup of 2016 came about as the culmination of a political battle over power-sharing between the Gulen movement and Erdogan's AKP. Lastly, the process of full takeover of the security sector will be analysed. The chapter will demonstrate that by the end of 2017, the AKP government successfully implemented a full civilianisation project and replaced the military as the political decision-maker, while failing to implement accountability mechanisms, therefore sustaining undemocratic legacies. It established undemocratic control over the security sector while bolstering the institutional and material capabilities of the police, the MIT and the Gendarmerie at unprecedented levels. In the end, this combination of concentrated executive power seized from the military through political demilitarisation and the restructuring of coercive apparatuses was placed at the core of the competitive authoritarian regime setup.

6.1 Emboldened government, intensified reforms

This subpart of the security sector mechanism proposes that the electoral victory in 2007 and the following referendum victory in 2010 emboldened the AKP government to push for reforms with more confidence and to widen its institutional realm of power and influence. As the AKP increasingly became the power centre, it used its newly acquired powers to expand its preferred institutional arrangements further. In such cases, in a cyclical manner, the expanded arrangements in turn increase the power of the advantaged group, who then encourage additional institutional expansion (Mahoney 2000, 521). The visible beginnings of such snowball-like power growth indicates that the institutional persistence of the new arrangement started to take hold. For the AKP, this corresponds to the period between 2009 and 2012, when the EU euphoria visibly died down with the momentum lost, but the government's insistence on political demilitarisation continued. The only difference was that the AKP did not need the anchoring of the EU anymore and began to rely on its electoral clout and "street cred". This also meant that it was possible for the government to shift the ways in which it dealt with the military from a more restrained, EU and legislative focused one to a more combative, confrontational, and punitive one fixated on wholly eliminating the now-weak bond of the institution with the slowly dissolving hegemony.

Following the snap elections and the boost in public confidence in the AKP, Abdullah Gul was appointed by the Parliament as the new president on 28 August 2007. The day before, the chief of general staff Buyukanit aired his disgruntlement with the prospect of Gul occupying the presidential office: "Our nation has been watching the behaviour of centres of evil who systematically try to corrode the secular nature of the Turkish Republic" and he stated that it was the armed forces' duty to protect the republic, striking an ominous tone, but one that was increasingly less consequential (Telegraph 2007). Gul's swearing-in ceremony in the Parliament was boycotted by the CHP as well as the force commanders and General Buyukanit. When Gul went to the Cankaya Mansion, the official residence of the president, on the same day for the traditional handover ceremony, he encountered the bitter surprise of a closed-door affair and an indignant outgoing president, Mr Sezer. Within 15 minutes, the handshakes and signatures were completed and the Sezer family left the Mansion. The bastion office of secularism, occupied firstly by

Ataturk and one of the last standing institutions of the Kemalist hegemony, had been taken over by the AKP. This started an era where the legislative and executive branches worked in tandem with President Gul rubber-stamping the AKP majority's bills, hastening and smoothing the process of institutional expansion. Although Gul was known for his somehow calm demeanour, more conciliatory political behaviour, emphasis on the importance of outward-looking foreign policy, and his tendency to engage with different societal stakeholders including anti-government groups, thus opposing Erdogan semi-openly, his legacy is not one of stabilisation or reconciliation as his behaviour was not matched by political action. He remained loyal to Erdogan despite the latter's visible and growing autocratic tendencies and he approved of each piece of legislation that turned those tendencies into rules of governance.

It could have been expected that Gul's and the AKP's relationship with the military would stabilise with the appointment of the new Chief of General Staff Ilker Basbug in 2008, as he was known to be more of an intellectual than an impassioned soldier, but a chain of trials in this period targeting the top brass would try Basbug's equanimity while putting the entire military's moral authority on the stand. The 2007 electoral victory of the AKP also emboldened the government to take more confrontational steps to consolidate its power by dismantling hegemonic structures. A mere five days after the June 2007 election, anti-terrorism police teams raided several houses and arrested a small group of people, ranging from retired lieutenants to novelists, for being part of a nondescript "gang". These arrests would later become the first wave of many spanning several years which would consequently be dubbed the Ergenekon affair. Although the beginnings of the Ergenekon investigation and trials go back to 2007, the real impact came later in 2009 and 2010 so this section will focus on those periods. As thousands of pages of indictments were accepted by special courts in 2008, 2009 and 2010, the Ergenekon trials, named after the alleged terrorist organisation the prosecutors sought to investigate, and the Sledgehammer investigation, revealed a clandestine network of military members (both high and lower ranking), academics, journalists, NGO admins, and organised crime figures united with the aim of eliminating the AKP government by a range of false flag operations and a consequent coup. The initial sentiment about the Ergenekon investigation in

Turkey was one of hope, because the quintessentially Turkish concept of “deep state” has never been properly addressed or its members punished (Söyler 2015). The Ergenekon trials were widely welcomed in the country at almost all political corners and the prosecutors were expected to expose all those who undermined democratic practices and formed illegal networks to undercut an elected government via corrupt, unconstitutional and violent means.

A comparative example to this kind of high-level judicial investigation would be Mani Pulite in Italy, where many public figures were prosecuted for corruption through a diligent and successful trial process. Unlike Mani Pulite, however, it was to become apparent soon after that the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer investigations were riddled with contradictions and that the prosecutors seemed to rely on weak to no evidence to order heavily geared anti-terror teams to round up a strange mix of suspects in dawn raids. The hundreds of suspects of the clandestine Ergenekon group, without exception, were vocal critics of the AKP and/or the Gulen movement and/or staunch Kemalists. Some had conducted in-depth journalistic investigations on the Gulen movement’s reach or had questioned their alliance with the government. Within the military, the prosecutors targeted the highest ranking; by 2012, 140 generals and admirals, including the former chief of general staff Basbug, and another 400 active military officers had been arrested. Erdogan strongly supported the investigation and announced that he was “the public prosecutor” of the case (Unver 2009). But the process was far from being as meticulous as required in such a high-stakes trial. The court kept the suspects in arbitrary detention for increasingly lengthy periods of time and when indictments were produced, they were so “full of contradictions, rumors, speculation, misinformation, illogicalities, absurdities and untruths that they are not even internally consistent or coherent” (Jenkins 2009, 11). The majority of the evidence was in digital format and unsigned. In certain cases, it became apparent that the evidence was fabricated and planted by the police prior to or during the raids. The court, however, continuously rejected the defendants’ appeals for independent forensic examination of the evidence that linked them to violent coup plots. The accused generals’ defence speeches in court were regularly dismissed.

The evidence was consistently leaked to two newspapers, a liberal anti-

army daily *Taraf* and Gulen's flagship paper daily *Zaman*; both sensationalised the trials and worked as mouthpieces for the prosecution without any critical or journalistic engagement with the material they received. The deputy editor of *Taraf* asserted that the troves of documents the paper obtained were too detailed not to be real (Filkins 2012). The media's involvement is important because their strong defence of the prosecution and offers of explanation when doubt over evidence surfaced worked as the primary glue holding the whole Ergenekon and Sledgehammer affairs intact for several years (Rodrik 2011). While the Gulenist allies of the AKP contributed to the judicial process with their members in the judiciary and the police, the liberal intelligentsia consisting of journalists, academics, civil society members, etc., together with their Gulenist counterparts, created an echo chamber where anti-military, thus pro-government, sentiment was amplified and those who were in doubt were marginalised.³ They not only set a dangerous precedent for the future of investigative stories by not upholding minimum journalistic standards but they also contributed to the serious erosion of public trust in the media. Nevertheless, with their aid and the judiciary's zeal, through the Ergenekon process, the government managed to destabilise the military and gravely weaken the shaky remnants of power and reach the military and the Kemalist elites had remaining.

More importantly, the forceful trials seemed to have intimidated the military to an extent that even in the early stages of the investigation, the top brass refrained from vigorously defending their own officers. In a rare show of defiance, in June 2009, the office of the chief of general staff released a statement refuting allegations about a document that *Taraf* newspaper released alleging a detailed plan to destroy the AKP and the Gulenist movement, and stated that the TSK's internal investigation proved it was not written there, but this response was taken seriously neither by the prosecutors nor the public (TSK 2009). Pressure rapidly mounted on the TSK; the military

³ These Gulenist allies consisted of the followers of the Gulen movement who held positions in state institutions and who had varying degrees of political power. For a more elaborate description of the Gulenists and their origins, see Section 5.1.4. Additionally, I use the term "liberal intelligentsia" to describe a certain group of intellectuals who are not conservative, who usually have socialist origins, and who have an audience, therefore a degree of clout, on their respective platforms. For an elaborate discussion on the relationship between this group and the AKP, see Ersoy and Ustuner 2016.

even had to relent and open the top-secret area of the TSK headquarters, called “the Cosmic Room”, to the prosecutors for them to go through files of highly confidential national security documents. The military promptly lost its “untouchable” status; neither the top-ranking soldiers nor the TSK’s documents of highest secrecy were beyond the reach of the judiciary, which operated as an extension of the AKP government’s will. This emboldened the AKP to further reconfigure civil-military relations. In February 2010, the EMASYA (Security and Public Order Cooperation) Protocol was abolished by the government. The protocol was an agreement between the Ministry of Interior and the TSK which enabled the military to intervene in public incidents (e.g. protests, riots, uprisings, etc.) without seeking the ministry’s approval if the police were deemed insufficient. In a 2010 High Military Council (YAS) meeting, breaking from the tradition of rubber-stamping senior-level promotions with minimal contestation, Erdogan overtly objected to the promotion of a number of generals who were embroiled in the Sledgehammer case and did not further the proceedings until alternatives were decided on. The military’s YAS members did not have much leverage left; the promotions did not take place and different generals were appointed to these positions. When in 2010 the chief of general staff Basbug said “This is enough (...) these things are making our patience run low (...) the morale is broken and I will fight all those who lower my soldiers’ morale”, his tone was one of pleading rather than the familiar army-speak thinly veiled threat (Radikal 2010).

With the momentum of the trials in full force, the AKP declared in 2010 that it was preparing a constitutional amendment package. The party had been floating the idea of transforming the 1982 constitution for a while. The “patchwork” constitution was enacted by the junta in 1982 and had been amended numerous times by the subsequent governments since then. It was seen by constitution experts as an undemocratic charter, primarily protecting the state rather than the individual and giving the military further prerogatives (Ozbudun 2011). With an increasingly tamed military, Erdogan found himself in an ideal position to propose a legislative package that at its core augmented his government’s power but had an anti-junta cloak. Instead of overhauling the undemocratic constitution, the AKP came up with 26 amendments to the text,

and they would have to be voted on collectively during a referendum. According to the proposed amendments, military officers would be tried in civilian courts, instead of military courts, for crimes against the state (such as coup plotting). The dismissed military officers would have the right to a court appeal against their sacking and access to legal remedies, significantly undermining the authority of YAS whose military members' decisions were judicially immune. Additionally, personal data protection would become law with individuals having the right to access the data institutions held on them, and arbitrary data collection by state institutions would be banned, certainly an attempt to restrain the military which had been known to collect and store personal data of persons of interest unbeknownst to those individuals. More significantly, the legal protection of the 1980 junta would be abolished, allowing the leaders of coups d'état to be tried in a civilian court for their role in military takeovers. Another amendment proposed fundamental changes to the top judiciary bodies, which will be discussed in the next chapter, visibly increasing the role of the president and the government in appointment procedures. The remaining amendments dealt with issues such as boosting human rights via enshrining affirmative action and protection of the rights of children in the constitution.

Because changes to bureaucratic quotas and the inner workings of the judiciary are not exactly suitable topics to rile up crowds, Erdogan mainly focused on two issues in his referendum propaganda in the summer of 2010: rights of the disadvantaged, especially children, and the sins of the juntas. Using the tactic of agitating and "taking the matter to the streets", Erdogan assured the public at every rally that the amendments "would stop child abuse" and protect the rights of the elderly, women, disabled, and veterans, so he urged all citizens to do some "soul-searching" and vote "thinking about children and their future" (Gazete Vatan 2010). He also presented the constitutional package as Turks' opportunity to settle accounts with the military, especially the 1980 junta who had inflicted the most brutality in the history of Turkish coups d'état. He heightened the drama for this part; in highly sentimental speeches he would vow to "give their honour back to those poor little kids [who were hanged by the junta]" (Haber7 2010). On a few occasions, he even cried while reading letters the youth had written to their

families shortly before they were executed, and promised to face “the mentality that took 17 year-olds to the gallows” and reckon with “torture, abuse, inhumane practices, young deaths, untimely goodbyes” (Haberturk 2010). Society became increasingly polarised during the referendum campaign, with those who supported the “No” block and were wary about the increasing power of the AKP being branded as supporters of the status quo, outdated Kemalism, and elitism (Atikcan and Oge 2012). On the other hand, the intelligentsia, considerable segments of leftist groups, the Gulen movement, and the majority of the media loudly supported the “Yes” block, actively promoting the AKP’s campaign. In the end, 58% of the voters approved of the constitutional amendments, delivering one of the last blows to the military’s claim over politics and society while paving the way for further centralisation of political power around the AKP.

In parallel, the AKP kept up the momentum in the process of restructuring the other side of the security sector in its preferred configuration. Starting from 2009, the police began to play an increasingly visible role as the coercive extension of the AKP government. While Erdogan and his minister’s explicit praise of the force elevated the police’s status in society, the state endowments to the institution enabled it to modernise, expand, and incrementally militarise. Needless to say, it is not uncommon for state officials anywhere to commend police forces. Erdogan, however, known for his brazenness, took it one step further and explicitly communicated the role he bestowed upon the force: “Our police organisation is the unshakeable guarantor and insurance of our democracy, the legal system, and, in general, the regime” (Milliyet 2009). The choice of words like “regime” and “guarantor” would remind one immediately of the Kemalist parlance. Only this time, the institution assigned to the role was presented as the police. It is logical to think that the Erdogan government, as it centralised power, needed a coercive apparatus loyal to the civilian rule and that could be strictly controlled, and utilised at will. The police force, with its previously undermined and undervalued socio-political and institutional standing (Piran 2013, 41-42), seemed more than ready to rise to the occasion and fill in the social forces gap. This, naturally, did not exactly mean that Erdogan aimed to replace the military with the police but rather to use the latter as the primary coercive

apparatus domestically in a better calculated fashion to suppress dissent to the AKP's new order and reproduce this order. By this time, the military was still not completely tamed and, obviously, could not be put on the streets of major cities to subdue unarmed protestors without the risk of descent into civil war. The replacement was more cognitive than literal; it signalled the new regime's chosen coercive structure.

In the 1990s the Turkish police were heavily involved in anti-guerrilla action of the state through its special forces unit and had an impressive inventory of military-grade heavy weapons. Becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the power these units gained and their murky relations with organised crime, the chief of general staff demanded the transfer of the inventory to the TSK during the 28 February Process in 1998 when it forced the Erbakan government to resign. Since then, the police forces had not played an active role in counter-terrorism operations in the south-east and could not acquire heavy weapons. Even the modernisation and upgrading of its existing armoury were sensitive issues, hence were not vigorously pursued by governments. In late 2009, PM Erdogan proposed a draft bill to the Parliament to amend the "Weapon Law" and gave the reasoning as harmonising the existing law with the EU *acquis communautaire* and laws of EU countries (TBMM 2009). This was done despite the EU directive 91/477/EEC explicitly excluding from its purview a state's (or its institutions') acquisition and possession of arms. Among the proposed amendments, there was a curious twist; the police and the intelligence service (MIT) would be allowed to import war weaponry through the Ministry of Interior. This way, the de facto acquisition ban on the police was lifted and the Ministry of Defence, hence the TSK, lost its monopoly over heavy weaponry imports. As the draft bill was deliberated in the sub-commission in early 2010, the TSK sent several communiques to the Parliament urging that the amendment not be passed, arguing that it had shaky legal grounds and would dangerously decentralise the arms procurement process, but the amendments were enacted nevertheless (Sabah 2010). Although this law was not going to be exercised for a while, until at least the abortive coup in 2016 (for detailed analysis of the coup, see Section 6.3), it prepared the legal grounds for future practice. The Parliament also decided shortly after that if the special forces unit (Polis Özel

Harekat – POH) did need such weaponry, it would request it from the military. As the government decided to deploy a growing number of POH officers to the south-east for anti-terror operations to fight alongside the military, using the TSK's war weapons became common practice.

Additionally, starting from 2008, the concept of “society-assisted policing” was actively promoted by the Ministry of Interior. The programme aimed to involve citizens and community groups in policing activities and to enable the police to form relationships on the hyper-local level, increasing the visibility and penetration of the police into society. This kind of community policing was presented as “preventative policing”, which the institution was increasingly engaging in. The programme's expansion and further networking with local groups was included as part of its 2009–2013 strategy planning (EGM 2008). By 2009, the programme was operational in all 81 cities. Similarly, specialised “Trust Teams” were established around the same time to accompany the society-assisted policing. These officers would be engaged at a personal level with the localities they served and were expected to prevent street-type urban crimes. They were trained to form interpersonal relationships with citizens they deemed “credible”, and would ask these individuals to report back to them about “activities they consider suspicious” and “events happening around them”, something which an officer described as “having many eyes to control the area” (Celik and Kara 2014, 63-64). Some would also be planted into neighbourhoods as plain-clothes officers or street sellers to collect intelligence about occurrences in the area. The officers also worked with a performance-based bonus system whereby each time they prevented or solved a crime and/or arrested a suspect, they would be awarded with points towards promotion. The system assigned extra points to the officers if the crime-fighting happened at night or if “excessive force was used to handle the crime” (ibid 65). This performance-based award programme was gradually applied to all police officers. The scheme incentivised the use of brute force as well as suppression of any opposition as it handed out comparatively higher bonuses to dissent-related activities. As such, it was criticised for vague wording to define crimes and blamed for the increasing number of arrests of youth for terror-related offences without evidence (Insel 2012). As the definition of terrorism was widened with the new anti-terror laws, the police

were also given higher discretion to determine what constituted terrorism during a particular moment on the street and charge suspects accordingly.

The riot police continued to be frequently deployed for quelling demonstrations and their visibility on the streets increased, especially during previously calm mass events such as May Day, pride marches, and Women's Day marches. In such events, attacking without provocation to end any public gathering as quickly possible has become the primary mode of crowd control of the anti-riot teams. The violence visibly increased if the gathering was to air frustrations specifically against the Erdogan government, and demonstrations occasionally turned deadly due to excessive police force, such as the 2011 Hopa protests. In parallel with the government's heavy reliance on the police, the institution was given resources to renew its inventory of arms and vehicles. In 2011, the force completed the largest procurement of armed vehicles in its history and also renewed its entire rifle inventory, with the Ministry also pledging the same amount of additional budget for such renewals for the following year (Milliyet 2011). The existing fleet of armed vehicles, including the water cannons, was modernised to include latest technology as well as additional capabilities of spewing foam, paint, and pepper gas canisters. The anti-riot teams acquired several types of less lethal high-tech weapons, such as the US-made semi-automatic FN303 riot rifles, to use for crowd control (Atak 2015). They were also given new and strengthened gear with helmets implanted with communication technology so they could be directed remotely by their commanders during action (T24 2011). When the police finished its yearly allocation of pepper gas by mid-2011 due to the increasing number of street protests/marches and the force's indiscriminately harsh responses to these, it turned to the office of the Prime Ministry, which transferred around \$1.5 million from Erdogan's discretionary funds to the police authority for the purpose of "urgently" purchasing pepper gas (Milliyet 2011). Additionally, the law enacted in 2009 about the Gendarmerie's lessening jurisdiction over new administrative areas, which was touched upon in the previous chapter, were expanded further and additional protocols were signed between the Gendarmerie command and the police to hand over certain regions to the authority of the police, including major universities located in Ankara. By 2012, around 60 Gendarmerie stations around the country were handed to the

police and the TSK announced that the numbers of privates conscripted to the Gendarmerie ranks were steadily being lowered by around 10% each year. In general, the proportion of government expenditure on internal security (including the police and the intelligence services) went from 0.88% in 2006 to 1.29% in 2012, a 47 percent increase in six years (Gokdemir 2015).

6.2 Broken alliances, centralised power

As discussed in the previous chapter, elite coalition formation was one of the key determinants of electoral success for the AKP and of the institutional changes it brought forward. The party managed to bring together a variety of social forces on its way towards attaining power and holding it. These particular elite coalitions were especially difficult to build as they merged contradicting ideologies and goals, but substantial institutional change might in fact depend on such unconventional coalitions being formed (Hall 2016, 41). Once the institutional change and reshuffling reached to the point where the AKP has become the only political agent with decisive power, especially after the destruction of military tutelage, it started to eliminate other potential rivals and opponents while continuing to build up its own coercive apparatus against the blowback from breaking former alliances and expanding of its power. Culpepper (2005) argues that meaningful institutional change is prompted when “joint belief shift” takes place, meaning that central strategic actors are determined to change the rules of the game and persuade those around them to believe the same. Through “triggering events”, these actors then coordinate their future expectations around the new rules of the game – new institutions. By 2011, the AKP had successfully used the crisis of hegemony to initiate a joint belief shift among the elites, as well as the public, to adjust their understanding of political rule to not include the military’s guardianship. For the AKP’s political elites, being part of the incumbent naturally brought power, prestige and additional resources, so their incentive for the perpetuation of the new institutional arrangements was understandable. In the same way, when power became increasingly centralised around the party and Erdogan while there were visible early signs of authoritarian behaviour, there was almost no defection from the party. In contrast, the party became increasingly unified in

legislative decision-making with no “nay” votes or intra-party deliberations for the AKP’s policy proposals. This within-party power consolidation can be discerned by temporally analysing the legislative practices of AKP deputies.⁴ The existence of the alliance partners, who made the joint belief shift possible via a variety of resources held and instruments used, became more difficult. As Erdogan managed to fully get his party and electorate in his tight grip, he did not need these alliances for dissemination of ideas, reinforcement of the new system, or sourcing of legitimation.

The June 2011 general election was an important milestone. Increasing its share of votes by 3.5% since 2007, the AKP, again, was handed the authority to form a majority government with 49.83% of votes controlling almost 60% of the parliament. With this election, a dominant-party system was established in Turkey where competition in elections gradually became more unfair and the AKP’s electoral power base was consolidated (Carkoglu 2011). It also showed that the electorate approved of the civil-military reforms – or at least did not oppose them or was indifferent – and the economic programme. More importantly, this victory occurred without the explicit backing of the most influential alliance partner, the Gulen movement (or the Cemaat). The group, which had established a quid pro quo relationship with the AKP, as discussed before, and whose members occupied various positions in the state, had its first roadblock with the AKP prior to the 2011 elections. It was reported that the Cemaat wanted to nominate more than a hundred of its followers as AKP deputy candidates, which Erdogan found suspicious and consequently excluded them from the party election list, blocking them from competing in the elections from the AKP trenches (Selvi 2016). It is clear that he increasingly saw the Cemaat as a threat and was aware of the movement’s growing influence in the judiciary and the police force (Ozbudun 2014, 160). The Cemaat had a large following and it was an “open secret” that it had positioned members in certain institutions, such as the police, and the movement had a very courteous

⁴ To give an illustrative example, the bill that would have deployed Turkish troops to join the Iraq invasion in 2003 to aid the US forces was voted down despite the AKP’s parliamentary majority, suggesting a degree of intraparty dissensus and the deputies’ confidence in exhibiting it. Similarly, the AKP ranks were more open to vote to set up bipartisan commissions. Since especially 2011, however, all commission or draft bill requests from non-AKP parties have been voted down, and their requests for amendments have been systematically refused, whereas the AKP deputies have voted on AKP-initiated bills and commissions in unison.

relationship with the government. But in 2011, the Gulen movement's insistence on putting forward deputies for the election was perceived as a sign of the movement's desire to accumulate more power from within the centre of the state, the Parliament. The subsequent electoral victory demonstrated for Erdogan that it, after all, did not require the Gulenists', or any super-groups', endorsement to collect votes.

Shortly after the June elections, a few days before the High Military Council (YAS) meeting, the chief of general staff Kosalan and all force commanders resigned in protest, citing the jailing of their colleagues during the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer trials. One of the points of contention between the government and the military prior to the YAS meeting was the AKP's insistence on involving the special police forces in anti-guerrilla operations in the south-east to fight alongside the army. When the compliant Necdet Ozel was appointed as the new chief of general staff, he confirmed that the police-military cooperation would continue and that police forces had always been a successful partner in such operations (Hurriyet 2011). Considering that it was the TSK itself that abolished this uneasy partnership back in the 1990s, precisely because of its failure and the police's corrupt and extrajudicial practices, it was a remarkable statement establishing the TSK's compliance with the decisions of the civilian authority. In the YAS meeting on 1 August 2011, the seating arrangements were changed and instead of the chief of general staff and the prime minister sitting together at the end of the table chairing the meeting together, Erdogan presided over the council by himself. It was merely symbolic, but it made everyone aware that there was no doubt who held the reins in the room.

As mentioned before, the period following the 2011 general election was marked by the process of breaking up alliances the AKP had built to harness power. Not only was it not in need of coalition patronage, but it started to see any other group as a potential rival or obstacle to consolidating power. As a previously subaltern group, the AKP's behaviour partly stems from its continuous anxiety and concomitant tendency to defend itself against the former ruling groups, and in this case, potential challengers (Gramsci 1971, 55). A more straightforward source of the AKP's efforts to undermine others is the political agents' ultimate goal of amassing resources in aid of holding onto

power. While the military tutelage which was seen as the main obstacle to democratisation was eradicated, the government became increasingly averse to power-sharing and eventually started to actively take steps to obliterate those projecting signs of defiance. Elimination of tutelage and the fact that the key veto player was muted eased the process of breaking up alliances as the AKP was becoming the sole decision-maker in politics. Similarly, the fact that these unconventional alliances had been made during an extraordinary time in a quick fashion and did not have deep ideological or historical roots, apart from shared goals regarding access or proximity to power, made it uncomplicated to break them.

On 7 February 2012, the first full-blown crisis between the AKP and the Gulenist movement took place in the public eye. A Gulen-affiliated prosecutor asked for five national intelligence agency (MIT) officers, including the head of MIT Hakan Fidan, to give their testimonies as suspects in an ongoing investigation. The prosecutor was examining previously unknown bilateral talks the MIT had held in Oslo with the PKK command as part of the Kurdish peace process the AKP government was undertaking. The prosecutor claimed to possess leaked recordings of the Oslo deliberations. The crisis quickly became political. The MIT officials were ordered by the government not to submit to the court order, essentially breaking the law. The prosecutor's act was perceived by pro-government pundits and the government members as "a sabotage attempt" and "political intervention", aiming for the Gulen movement to dominate the judiciary and project power vis-à-vis the AKP (Cakir 2012). Erdogan got the message; he said: "Every endeavour breaching boundaries is an extortion of authority. We will not make those who have been appointed slaves to those who have been elected" (CNN Turk 2012). Clearly, MIT officials were also appointed, just like the prosecutor, but since he knew that his government was the target in this incident, he fervently defended his elected office in his speeches. He took it personally: "I gave the orders [to the MIT]. If you want to take somebody in, take me (...) It is almost like saying 'I can bring in [to interrogate] anybody including the President'" (Milliyet 2012). Within the week, the prosecutor handling the case was dismissed and in 10 days, Erdogan proposed two amendments to the national intelligence bill in the parliament. According to these amendments, any judiciary investigation

on MIT officials would require the Prime Minister's approval and the existing investigations or lawsuits would be presented to the PM for dismissal. The bill caused uproar among the opposition but swiftly passed the Parliament with the AKP's majority, signed by the president, and became law in a few hours. In this way, the MIT was shielded from judiciary powers, its accountability decreased further, and the institution became more secure under the wing of the prime minister. The MIT's authority has always been deliberately vague and vast but this amendment removed any possibility of public control and answerability over these powers and of legal remedies in case of harm done. In addition, a month before the so-called MIT crisis, the TSK's entire electronic intelligence command centre had been handed over to the MIT with the aim of civilianising and centralising signals intelligence gathering and coordination (Polat and Pusane 2016). Already holding a state-of-the-art intelligence system, the MIT received extra protection from the prime minister in its operations via the bill, resulting in a well-equipped and legally fortified institution loyal to Erdogan.

As part of his operation to alleviate the MIT crisis, Erdogan ordered the sacking of a number of police chiefs, including two senior ones directly involved with intelligence and evidence gathering for the MIT investigation (Bianet 2012). By the end of February 2012, around 700 police officers including senior investigators and chiefs were either sacked or transferred from main cities to the rural south-east, a de facto demotion. These officers were either known to be affiliated with the Gulen movement and/or directly involved in the MIT crisis. With both sides showing their teeth, the crisis simmered down for a while after. When the Gezi protests blew up in the summer of 2013, the target of the AKP's political wrath changed direction for a period of time.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that the Gezi uprising, which started as a peaceful sit-in in central Istanbul to protect a park then spread to the whole country, shook up the AKP. It was used to opposition, but this was the first time it encountered a series of mass, networked, continuous street protests that largely targeted AKP policies. The particularities of the Gezi and its major role in the AKP's securitisation of dissent as part of competitive authoritarian regime-building will be discussed in the next chapter but the

pertinent part here is the unprecedented utilisation of the police forces to quash the movement, or at least the street manifestation of it. As mentioned before, techniques of “hard” policing in the AKP era were not novel by 2013 and it was used against crowds on numerous occasions. What set the Gezi apart was the magnitude of the police action and its escalation. Prior to the Gezi, the suppression was more targeted (against Kemalist elites, Kurds, the far-left, minority neighbourhoods, etc.), limited, and selective (Bayulgen et al. 2018). With the Gezi, the coercion was taken to the heart of Turkey, Taksim Square, and to more than seventy other Turkish cities where Gezi-inspired protests took place. No real political compromise was signalled by the government and the police were given orders to quash the protests by aggressive means. Anti-riot teams were deployed and although they seemed unprepared for the scale of the events at the beginning, they were well-equipped, had the numbers, and quickly adapted to the realities of their field assignment and mostly acted in a coordinated manner. The deployed teams’ aim was to clear the streets and arrest those they could catch. Expansive use of tear gas quickly became ordinary and later on, rubber bullets and sound grenades were also utilised frequently. The police put its monstrous water cannons on the streets, filled with either paint to tag protestors to later arrest them or with pepper gas in liquid form that burns the skin. Less lethal weapons would be directed towards the crowds (as opposed to air, as instructed) and beatings became commonplace. Ten days in, the chief of police sent messages to the anti-riot teams praising them for “making history” and forbidding them from “engaging in a dialogue with any civilian even if they look innocent” during their shifts (Sol 2013). It is argued that such hard-policing techniques can play a role in magnifying violence (Jefferson 1990). They might encourage marginal groups to resort to counter-violence and even when they do not directly have such effect, they might at least motivate other citizens to go on the streets as a response. It is also argued that equipment such as full riot gear, and riot tactics like clashing with the crowd, results in the police seeing protestors as an undifferentiated entity to be dealt with as opposed to a group of citizens (Stott and Reicher 1998). The casual use of heavy policing methods and the indiscriminately brutal treatment of the demonstrators and bystanders by the anti-riot teams was what snowballed the Gezi and turned it into a nationwide

chain of anti-government unrest that lasted for some months. When the protests did not die down, but more people joined as an act of solidarity against the police action, the crackdown significantly escalated with anti-riot teams going into hotels and hospitals where the protestors took refuge. The police's aggression was no doubt aided by constant pressure from their superiors to use excessive force against the slightest street action, and the consequent fatigue (Letsch 2013; Atak 2017, 205). A month in, Erdogan found the opportunity to address police cadets and gave his full backing to the institution: "I and my government congratulate our police wholeheartedly. On behalf of my country and nation, I would like to thank all my police siblings for standing up against incidents that have been going on for weeks, with sacrifice and patriotism" and called the actions of the police "a heroic saga" (HDN 2013). While the old elites would depend on the military as their coercive apparatus, for the newly structured regime the internal security system was dominated by the police with the institution increasingly becoming the dependable coercive tool to subdue dissent. In the meantime, the Gezi unrest ended the "liberal reform alliance" that had supported AKP policies for a decade and many self-designated liberals visibly distanced themselves from the government (Bakiner 2017, 35-36).

Soon after the Gezi protests died down by the autumn of 2013, Erdogan shifted his attention back to the strongest former ally. The government announced that it would shut down all private study centres (*dersane*) that had been established to prepare students for the highly competitive university entrance exams. This was a significant strike by the AKP because the Gulen movement had the lion's share of the country's study centres and used them to recruit new followers and as a major source of cash. The movement perceived the move as "a direct and vicious attack" which signalled the AKP's intentions to finally cut off the financial flows of the group, hence irreversibly changing relations between the Gulen movement and the AKP (Demiralp 2016, 4).

The Cemaat hit back fast. In December 2013, a major criminal investigation was initiated by Gulen-affiliated prosecutors – the main one being the prosecutor who also instigated the Ergenekon trials – involving the head of a state bank, businessmen close to the AKP, state bureaucrats, and families of ministers and Erdogan. This time, the media were bypassed and the evidence,

largely consisting of tapped phone tapes collected by the organised crime department of the police, was directly leaked to the internet where private conversations of highly influential political actors openly discussing bribes could be listened to. The tapes for the first time revealed a financial network behind the scenes consisting of bankers, politicians, and businessmen working together to bend or break the law for financial gain and also to appease the Erdogan family by sharing these highly dubious and mostly illegal gains with them. It also brought the Gulen-AKP conflict out into the open, with Erdogan immediately blaming the movement as the force behind the conspiracy and declaring an all-out war with the Cemaat (Ozbudun 2014, 159). Once a “war” is declared, the other side naturally becomes the enemy and an actor to be neutralised. The political language becomes loaded with urgency and a political relationship becomes securitised. This is why Erdogan announced that he would “go into their den and destroy them” and used the scandal as a pretext to purge hundreds of police officers and chiefs from the force who were suspected of aiding the investigation or being pro-Gulen (ibid). These large-scale purges helped the government loyalise the force further by firstly cleaning the ranks of potential troublemakers and secondly sending a message to any other officers who might be inclined to act in defiance. In parallel, Erdogan publicly disowned the Ergenekon trials, which were ignited by the same clique of prosecutor-police teams, paving the way for the release of dozens of generals and officers from prison (Arango 2014). The moral authority of the military, however, was already irreparably damaged by these trials (Soyler 2015, 207).

Although the corruption scandal looked too destructive to bounce back from, especially combined with the legacies of the Gezi unrest, the AKP proved to be a highly resilient player skilled in deflecting scandals. Playing on the historical conspiracies embedded in the public’s mind, discussed more in-depth in Chapter 4, Erdogan managed to convince his core voters that the Gulen movement had collaborated with foreign forces to smear the AKP’s reputation and curtail the “national will”, which came to denote the election of only the AKP (Gursoy 2017, 154). In rallies, he used now-familiar techniques to agitate and galvanise the masses against a number of enemies. The polarising strategy worked because in March 2014, a mere few months after

the corruption allegations surfaced, the AKP increased its share of votes by 4.4% in the local elections and held onto major cities. Right after its election victory, the AKP brought to the Parliament a draft bill to amend the existing law regulating the intelligence agency MIT's activities and jurisdiction. It was a controversial bill but the AKP majority allowed its smooth passing in the parliament in April 2014 and swift approval of President Gul (TBMM 2014). According to the amendments, a prosecutor needs to notify the head of MIT if a complaint is filed that involves MIT personnel. Even without permission from the PM – which is what the 2012 amendment put forward – the head of MIT has the power to bestow immunity on such personnel and stop the prosecutor, hence erasing any authority of the judiciary to initiate an investigation into wrongdoing by the agency. In addition, the prison sentences for any whistleblowing activity involving MIT material were increased and unprecedentedly, journalists and editors who published such material would be facing prison sentences of nine years. Also, perhaps the most damning part of the bill, the MIT was given expansive powers to collect information, including private data, without the need for a court order. Entities such as banks, companies, and public institutions would have to provide any type of information on any persons/entities that the MIT requested and would be criminally prosecuted if they refused to oblige. The law also gave permission to MIT, without the need for a judge's approval, to intercept any kind of telecommunication domestically and internationally, and store such data indefinitely. The new law effectively shielded the institution from both judiciary and parliamentary oversight.

In August 2014, following a short but intense 40-day campaign, Erdogan emerged victorious in the presidential election, becoming the first popularly elected president in Turkey. (The law was amended in 2007 following a referendum allowing the public to elect a president rather than the Parliament appointing one.) Although the passive and symbolic standing of the presidential office did not change on paper, Erdogan vowed to be an active and partisan president, ominously declaring that “there is no article that limits the actions of a president” in the Turkish constitution (Zalewski 2014). Access to resources is one of the key determinants of fair elections that enable competition and a level playing field for politicians (Levitsky and Way 2010,

10). Although Erdogan had used incumbent advantage in previous elections too, in 2014, all resources were geared towards his personalistic and partisan campaign and state resources were used for a role that was constitutionally supposed to be non-partisan, blurring the borders of legality. International observers determined that Erdogan had undue advantage against his rivals due to his misuse of administrative resources and his official position as the PM, merging state and party activities for the benefit of his campaign, while contravening EU regulations (OSCE 2014). The rallies were a public manifestation of Erdogan's "exclusive, abrasive, and at times sectarian and stigmatising discourse emphasising partisanship" and were designed to mobilise his masses around the notion of elites – by now increasingly denoting all that was non-AKP regardless of class – versus the people (Kalaycioglu 2015, 163). "Subversive" political actors, as discussed in the previous chapter, are especially associated with patterns of institutional layering (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 26). They tend to encourage institutional changes by constructing new rules on top of existing ones, trying to rally for support for the former. The presidential election is a good example of such layering by Erdogan; although he did not change the existing political system, he implied its impracticality and ineffectiveness by offering to become an active president, therefore reversing the symbolic nature of the office. By obtaining public support for the layering, he managed to legitimise his grafting of new institutional patterns and expected behaviours onto the old ones. Gradually, as these patterns became normalised, the unconstitutionality of a partisan president mattered less and these new patterns became the norm, paving the way for further centralisation and personification of power around Erdogan.

With the military disgraced and compliant, and the Gulen movement increasingly resource-strapped, the AKP had the opportunity to expand its preferred institutional arrangements while implementing consent-seeking policies towards its supporters and increasing coercion towards all "the other" (Yalvac and Joseph 2019). Structuring a new security sector loyal to the Erdogan government was certainly a critical part of these preferred institutional arrangements. The Gezi unrest showed that the discontented masses could cause disruptions to Erdogan's rule and the corruption probe demonstrated that unsubdued political players could threaten not only his rule

but also his system of patronage. The risk of being prosecuted if he lost any power in the near future was real, and the cost of suppression needed to be visibly decreased for Erdogan to sustain his power (Gursoy 2017). To this effect, shortly after Erdogan's election as president, what was dubbed the "Internal Security Bill" was presented to the parliament by the AKP; it was officially named "Legal Package to Protect Freedoms" as a succinct example of doublespeak. Due to the controversial nature and the depth of the bill (almost 70 different laws were open for amendments), the parliamentary deliberations were lengthy, heated, and a few times involved fistfights and subsequent postponements. Therefore, the AKP deputies implied that certain parts of the bill could be decided on in a more bipartisan manner and be tamed but Erdogan was adamant: "One way or another, this code will pass," he declared (HDN 2015a).

By the end of March 2015, after months of dispute, the bill passed (TBMM 2015). The police were given enhanced authority to conduct searches including strip searching and vehicle searching without the approval of a judge or a prosecutor. According to the new law, a police chief can order such searches verbally, bypassing any judiciary oversight. The police also received more discretionary powers over warrantless wiretapping, increasing the permitted time period from 24 hours to 48 hours when they can intercept communications without a judiciary order. Similarly, the police can now detain a person without a prosecutor's warrant for 24 hours and are obliged to allow that person to talk to a lawyer or see a judge. If the crime is deemed to be a "collective" one, meaning mass protests, the warrantless custody time goes up to 48 hours. Regarding demonstrations, the police were given powers to "remove" a person from the scene of a protest (or even before), even if there was no crime committed, and put them under "preventative custody" for 48 hours. Punishment for carrying materials the police would deem injurious or concealing one's identity during a demonstration (i.e. wearing a mask/scarf/etc.) became a minimum of 2.5 years in prison, five times higher than before. Donning an emblem, sign or uniform of an illegal organisation became punishable by up to three years in prison. Police officers' authority to shoot was further expanded: they can now use firearms against those who the officers believe carry, attack with or are attempting to attack officers on public

or private property with injurious materials to the extent necessary. Additionally, the government-appointed governors (who are the administrative heads of cities) started to hold equal power to the prosecutors and could give direct orders to the police in terms of searches or detaining. Governors can also give orders to any public official for the use of publicly owned vehicles and materials, and can order any public official to take on an – unspecified – duty. Failure to obey the governor’s orders became punishable by imprisonment. Moreover, the amendments gave authority to the Minister of Interior over appointments and sackings in the Gendarmerie and oversight capabilities over the force’s non-military duties. Although it was still not a full civilianisation, the new law pulled the institution further towards the civilian side to gradually become the rural police force instead of the military’s law enforcement entity.

Another interesting and underreported development occurred around the same time as the passing of the internal security bill. This involved the government transferring a huge empty swathe of land located in the Ankara suburbs from the military’s ownership to the MIT’s. Construction work on the land, which was contracted to a company close to the AKP, to build the new MIT headquarters started in the summer of 2015. The MIT had its headquarters closer to the city in a relatively humbler compound. Public satellite images show that the new land is comprised of several buildings across a total of 6.5 hectares, around 3.5 times bigger than the old building, rivalling the CIA’s Langley headquarters which measure around 6.6 hectares. Construction of the new MIT headquarters, which was formally named “The Fortress”, was completed by 2020 and the building was opened by Erdogan. Similarly, in early 2016, the construction for a brand-new state-of-the-art compound for MIT’s Istanbul directorate began, which was concluded and opened by Erdogan also in 2020. The timing of the start of the constructions coincided with the legislative changes that strengthened the MIT, illustrating that the institutional and material capabilities and capacities of the agency were simultaneously reinforced. Generous endowments over the years loyalised the MIT further and worked to benefit the AKP during the 2016 coup attempt as the agency stood by the government during the takeover attempt, and the agents physically fought the coupists. The next sections in this chapter

explain how the 2016 coup attempt came about and how it led to the full takeover of the security sector.

6.3 Old partners strike: The 2016 coup

The AKP went into the June 2015 general election slightly bruised by corruption allegations and increasing criticism over undemocratic practices. By now, the party had severed ties with all once-partners and alienated a large segment of the population as a result of breaking alliances as well as of using increasingly oppressive practices while consolidating its core conservative-nationalist constituency.⁵ The fact that all opposition forces – including secular Kemalists, liberals, religious conservatives, and Kurds – more or less designed their entire policies around overturning, albeit in different ways, the AKP’s corrupt and undemocratic practices made them stand against the AKP as an almost unified block. Those who were not content with a partisan president and his aspirations of a monolithic Turkey designed in his vision rejected the party and sought membership in one of the opposition parties (Onis 2016, 144). Although it remained the largest party, the AKP lost its majority in the June elections, winning 41% of the votes. As coalition talks descended into chaos with an unwilling Erdogan pushing to block them, tensions in the south-east of Turkey increased and the Turkish military was given the green light to stage major urban operations against the PKK. The army was instructed to quash the PKK presence in specific cities and was joined by the Gendarmerie as well as the Police Special Forces, combining three units with different sets of operational knowledge to fight together but more importantly demonstrating the valued role Erdogan attributed to the police force in his new security complex. It was far from an efficient operation; at the end 1,040 security forces and 437 civilians were killed against 1,655 PKK militants (Mandiraci 2017). The flaring conflict was a projection of power by Erdogan and it re-securitized the Kurdish issue. But more importantly, “the politics of fear” helped him depict stability and security as the primary issues rather than pluralism or freedom of expression and gave him the incentive to call for snap

⁵ These practices and the overall increase in oppression in the socio-political domain are elaborated upon in Chapter 7.

elections (Onis 2016, 150). In the November 2015 election, the party regained the lost votes, won at 50%, and once more established a majority government.

With its electoral dominance regained and its crackdown on Kurdish politics and population already underway, the AKP, right away, also deepened its offensive against the Gulenists and officially designated the movement as a terrorist organisation (Bayulgen et al. 2018). Slowly it started to take over its businesses and media outlets while continuing to steadily purge key institutions, such as the police and judiciary, of its followers. The purges found their way into the military as well; slowly but surely the officer ranks were being cleaned of alleged Gulenists, while there were court cases filed by loyalist prosecutors to freeze the assets of the movement's entities and prosecute military officers for fabricating evidence during the Ergenekon trials. The quid pro quo relationship between the Gulen movement and the AKP has been discussed in previous sections. Erdogan himself admitted in an interview back in 2013 that the movement was treated generously: "What request did [I] send back that the Cemaat brought to me? There has been nothing I ever rejected. God is my witness" (Kartoglu 2013). The movement's influence over the judiciary and the police were well-known and various AKP leaders have since admitted that mass staffing of Gulenists was done under their watch (Sik 2017; Bakiner 2017, 35). So, the AKP-Gulen coalition ended the military tutelage via various institutional tools and tactics. At the end, the Gulenists were naturally eager to harvest the spoils of this victory over the Kemalist establishment by gaining greater control over the state apparatus (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b, 61). As Erdogan monopolised power and the state centralised around him, this proved to be increasingly more difficult. Ultimately, "one of the fiercest political battles in the history of Turkish politics" turned violent as the erstwhile allies and their backers staged a coup d'état against the Erdogan government (Demiralp 2016, 3).

During the Ergenekon trials, many spots in the military were up for grabs as the prosecuted officers were sacked and these ranks were believed to have been filled by those who were loyal to the Gulenists (Caliskan 2017, 98). In the summer of 2016, the government was signalling that it was ready to expel higher ranking officers from the military due to their links to the Gulen movement (Shaw and Sik 2016). It is argued that the anticipation of mass

purges of staff officers pushed them to take action before they could be suspended (Gursoy 2017, 196; Caliskan 2017, 99). The putsch attempt came just a few weeks before the planned High Military Council (YAS) gathering presided over by Erdogan where such decisions are taken each year. Even after the military was increasingly subdued and many thought the era of coups was over, some scholars warned that an attempt was “far from improbable”, however, not many were expecting such an attempt to come from Gulenist officers, whose penetration into the armed forces was not widely acknowledged (Kadercan and Kadercan 2016, 97).

On 15 July 2016, a regular Friday night turned into a day to remember for Turks following an extraordinary chain of events. It started around 9.45 PM with a small flood of tweets on the social media site Twitter: “Something is happening at the Bosphorus Bridge”, “There are jets flying very low”. Very soon after, at around 10 PM, it was not an army general but a low-ranking conscript who broke the news: a small internet news site shared on their Twitter account a photo of a private standing in front of the historical Beylerbeyi Palace in Istanbul with the caption: “A soldier just said: ‘Martial law has been announced, go home now’” (Haberdar 2016). This was quite a different scene from what Turkish people had come to expect from coups d’état. There were no army generals in sight, and there was no official announcement at first. The news was spreading faster than the army could organise itself. The putschists did not identify themselves directly but called themselves the “Peace at Home Committee”, a nod to Ataturk’s famous motto. Although no coup leader was named, their target was clearly the AKP leadership; a small group of commandos raided the hotel Erdogan was staying in Marmaris but missed him. With his “most visceral nightmare” materialising in front of his eyes, Erdogan was put on a plane and toured the sky with no ability to land either in Istanbul or Ankara (Cagaptay 2017, 278). The coup’s centre was the Air Force base just outside Ankara, with fighter jets taking off one after the other while the army blocked bridges and took over the Istanbul airport. At 11 PM, Prime Minister Binali Yildirim made the first announcement from the government side declaring the coup attempt, branding it an insurrection.

Powell argues that coup conspirators evaluate their chances of success and would only attempt a coup when the expected rewards of the act and its

probability of victory are high enough to offset the dire consequences of failure (2012, 1019). History of coups demonstrates that the cost of such failure is usually very high, ranging from group-level sanctions to civil war. Thus, the military should be sure of its chances of success and be well-prepared. The literature also shows that the visible support of more branches of the armed forces increases the likelihood of success (Thompson 1976). Although the coup attempt of 2016 demonstrated that mid-ranking officers could technically mobilise lower cadres for action relatively quickly, due to the fact that the military leadership did not give the order and many strategic units did not join, the putsch was doomed to be abortive. The coupists, however, seemed to be aware of the lack of military unity necessary for their success so they planned to strategically target: while the commandos chased Erdogan, other teams kidnapped the chief of staff and other unit commanders at gunpoint (Caliskan 2017, 99). With the military leadership held hostage, they managed to block the lines of communication and hence top-down orders to stop the attempt. For a short while, they seemed to have the upper hand and released a coup manifesto via state TV declaring their intention to re-instate rule of law and eradicate corruption. At midnight, however, Erdogan made his first public appearance via video-chat on a mobile phone shown on a TV channel, denouncing the coup as an “invasion” and urging his supporters to take to the streets (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b, 61). By morning, it was obvious that the coup had failed.

There were several reasons why the coup attempt was not successful. The most obvious one was the lack of military unity. Previous, successful coups in Turkey had the backing of the military leadership and it was clear that this attempt was carried out outside of the hierarchy, with key officers announcing their loyalty to the government (Gursoy 2017, 197). For example, the chief of the First Army in Istanbul contacted Erdogan directly and told him to land his plane in Istanbul so they could protect him, and later announced on TV that the TSK was against the attempt that was being carried out by a small clique (ibid). Other units joined in to show support. The outcome would have been unimaginably different if the 120,000 strong First Army in fact had been one of the backers of the rogue officers. No doubt many junior officers decided against joining the coupists after seeing the absence of validation by the core

leadership and strategic units. Another reason for the failure was the lack of elite backing; none of the opposition parties declared support for the coup attempt, and overtly they gave their backing to the AKP government. This unprecedented overall rejection of the coup was not so surprising as the political elites have based their appeals on the need for more democracy rather than less (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b, 67). It would have been riskier to support an uncertain future with an armed ambitious political player such as the Gulenists, than to continue to oppose and challenge the AKP via parliamentary means. This picture was predictable to those who were familiar with Turkish politics of the time so it is unlikely that the coupists did not envision this, which only reinforces the idea that they must have acted out of desperation (Gursoy 2017, 198). Civilian resistance was the third reason why the coup failed. Never before in Turkish history had a leader openly called for his supporters to face the army on the street and defend the government. Research shows that such calls for mass mobilisation by authoritarian regimes increase the collective action costs for rival elites as they signal regime strength, but they are also risky as such rallies require organisational capacity (Hellmeier and Weidmann 2019). As the AKP's internal, local, and national organisational capacity has always been the winning determinant for elections, Erdogan must have been at least somewhat confident that his call for action would find a response. Right after his TV appearance, tens of thousands of his supporters flocked to the streets and stood against the tanks, pacified the soldiers, and marched against the military. District representatives of the AKP reached out to their members and organised mass gatherings at lightning speed (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b, 64). As one of the perks of being a competitive authoritarian, Erdogan already enjoyed unmatched access to public resources, media and state institutions, and he utilised all towards mobilisation against the coupists.

Erdogan and the AKP leaders unequivocally blamed the Gulen movement for the coup attempt. Although at the beginning there was a slight suspicion by the opposition that the coup might have been staged, the witness statements, including by the chief of staff himself who offered to speak with Gulen while held hostage, suggests that the Gulenist officers were the primary initiators. Some of the officers admitted their ties to the movement in subsequent trials. Captured officers' statements also reveal that some Kemalist anti-Erdogan

officers seized the opportunity and took part while a small segment of them were pressured or coerced into joining (Yavuz and Koc 2016). Gulenist purges in the police seemed to have worked as the force did not join the coup apart from a few dozen rogue officers. But the coup did pit different coercive apparatuses against each other: the police special forces were deployed to fight the Gendarmerie coupists in several locations and engaged in heavy gunfight. No elements from MIT participated in the coup and its officers were involved in occasional gunfights as the coupists tried to take over their headquarters but failed. Both the police and the MIT proved their loyalty to the regime in July 2016 and their worth to Erdogan as key institutions of the AKP's reformed security sector. Loyalisation through both purges and endowments enabled the AKP to depend on these two apparatuses to defend its interests at the darkest hour. The government was skilfully overseeing these entities, but the putsch showed that even after security sector reforms the military remained a problematic player. Although it can be argued that the rebalancing of the civil-military relations partially coup-proofed the regime as the military leadership or higher numbers of officers refrained from seizing the opportunity, the attempt itself showed that full civilianisation of the military would be the only viable way to entirely protect the regime from threats that might come from its military or its utilisation of it by rivals, and effectively and genuinely control the institution.

6.4 Full takeover of the security sector

Literature shows that the aftermaths of failed coups are usually dire and multileveled, ranging from individual to group-level to nation-level consequences (Powell 2012, 1019). In extreme cases, a failed putsch can result in enough fighting and fatalities to count as civil war (Powell and Thyne 2011). Just as the consequences of failure are visibly great, the fruits of potential success are equally attractive. Logically thinking, officers should not attempt such a manoeuvre unless they are convinced of their ability to accomplish the task, but the worldwide occurrence of coups – successful and not – shows this rarely stops plotters, indicating their high levels of confidence in their chances of success (Powell 2012, 1020). Although it was argued that the plotters were

disorganised from the beginning, I believe the disarray did not show until much later when they became more violent, and started bombing the Parliament and other state buildings and shooting at protesting citizens. The officers' group text messages, leaked and reported on later, in fact show that they had high confidence in their mission, impeccably followed the command hierarchy among themselves and were mostly methodological in the execution of the act (Triebert 2016). As many of the leading plotters were waiting for their imminent sacking and perhaps even prosecution prior to 15 July, it seems that desperation and high confidence proved to be a deadly combination, resulting in plotters giving orders to drop bombs, and kill civilians using the full extent of the weaponry under their control, including tanks, assault weapons, and F-16 fighter jets. The violence caused 240 civilian deaths and 1400 wounded while 104 plotters were killed, making it by far the bloodiest coup action in Turkey (Gurcan and Gisclon 2016). Just as the consequences of a failed coup are high, one must consider such failure's positive effect in empowering the incumbent by not only giving further legitimacy to continue to rule but also enabling the incumbent to punish the plotters to the extent possible and suppress a variety of sources of dissent without visible objection. It is natural to assume that the more violence the plotters inflict, the harsher the victorious incumbent's post-coup reaction and punishment will be as he will have legitimate incentive and undisputed evidence to prove the plotters' intentions to dismantle a popularly elected regime, rather than bringing rule of law as the rebellious officers suggested.

First and foremost, the day after 15 July, there was a nationwide manhunt for the plotters and thousands of soldiers of various ranks were detained, with the number reaching around 8,000 by the end of July (Gurcan and Gisclon 2016). Thousands of others were purged; among them were 151 generals, corresponding to half of the total number in the entire armed forces, 1656 colonels and 3500 junior officers, including Erdogan's first aide-de-camp (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b, 62). The rest were low-level conscripts, very likely only following orders but mixed into the chaos of purges and most of them not able to clear their names. Erdogan, now in a widely quoted statement, declared the coup as "a gift from God" giving him the justification to "cleanse our army" (Dolan and Solaker 2016). Less than a week after the coup attempt, a state of

emergency was declared by the Parliament, giving Erdogan the authority to issue presidential decrees and bypass the legislative process. Through these decrees, the government swiftly took full control of the armed forces while taking decisive steps to coup-proof the regime.

Security sector reform and rebalancing civil-military relations generally require cost-benefit calculations between the government and the military, and the general understanding is that while civilians will want to increase their control, the military will want to preserve their prerogatives (Kuehn 2017b, 158; Croissant et al. 2013). Therefore, it is not unlikely that especially in defective democracies, an aggressive push for more reform will be avoided by political leaders so as not to risk civil-military conflict (Croissant and Kuehn 2017, 17). Erdogan was single-minded in his civilianisation course but refrained from abrupt advances towards proper and full oversight of the armed forces. Of course, a coup attempt is an extraordinary event that easily has the potential to be a catalyst for drastic action by civilian leaders. Having the ability to pass executive decrees at will, Erdogan started an aggressive process to take control of the military, subdue it to the extent possible, while punishing the perpetrators of the coup attempt and concomitantly sweeping the state of all dissent. In the same vein, regimes who perceive threats of coups as high will invest in coup-proofing measures and will prioritise those over other dangers, even when they are more significant or imminent (Talmadge 2015, 19). After thwarting a major threat to both his government and his life, Erdogan took measures to coup-proof the regime to increase the cost of armed or unarmed rivalry against it and to signal the potential consequences to potential defectors.

Firstly, all armed forces were put under the command of the civilian Ministry of National Defence. Within the Ministry, the majority of offices reserved for military personnel were abolished, and the Ministry would by itself decide which military personnel could take the remaining positions. A civilian was appointed as the undersecretary of the ministry whereas the post had always been occupied by a lieutenant-general before. Previously, the chiefs of general staff would have been selected from the force commanders (always from the land forces, so the options were limited to one as the appointment from commander of land forces to the chief of general staff was virtually

automatic). An executive decree made it possible for the Cabinet to propose any four-star general for the President to appoint to the position. This way the civilians had more flexibility in selecting the head of the military and could opt for a loyal general of their choosing. In addition, the decree enabled the prime minister and the president to give direct orders to force commanders and their associates. Such an order would have to be obeyed and immediately executed without the need for the consent of the chief of general staff. Prime Minister Yildirim explained this change as “the final step of democratisation” but it clearly is more of a coup-proofing measure to protect the head of state in the case of a threat from the military or elsewhere (Zeyrek 2016). More significantly, this amendment is at odds with the position of the president as commander-in-chief representing the Parliament in the military, according to the constitution. If the president can directly order the commanders, then the authority of the Parliament gets completely bypassed and becomes null. In the same way, this law is written in such a general way that it does not limit the kind of orders these two civilians could give; technically, the president can order fighter jets to fly into a neighbouring country to drop bombs and it could be challenged by neither the chief of staff in operational terms nor the Parliament in legal terms. Since the establishment of the presidential system in 2017 – which will be discussed – and the subsequent abolition of the position of prime minister, the president has become the only person who has such authority to order the military directly, with no ethical or legal limitations or need to inform any other civilian institution prior or after.

In addition, the High Military Council (YAS), where TSK-related matters and promotions are decided, became further civilianised with the decrease of military members from 12 to four (only the force commanders) and the civilian members were increased from two to 10, establishing a clear civilian majority. The secretariat of the Council was transferred from the office of the chief of staff to the Ministry of National Defence. Moreover, war academies (graduate level) and military high schools, which the government believed to be a breeding ground for Gulenist officers, were closed. Military universities (bachelor level) and NCO vocational schools were transferred to the civilian National Defence University, which was newly established under the Ministry of National Defence. All the existing students of all military high schools,

universities and academies were dismissed and placed into other civil faculties quite randomly and not of their choice. No new cadets were enrolled in 2016, resulting in a loss of a year's worth staff officers, including military doctors, and specialised war academy graduates. As there would be no military high schools anymore, the civil defence university started to accept students from all types of schools, including religious high schools. While this chance no doubt democratises the process of enrolling and potentially diversifies the ranks, the main problem is the loss of accumulated military knowledge and traditions, and the foremost challenge is to keep up with the elite education that these historical institutions were known to have provided. With the same decree, all military hospitals, including educational ones, were civilianised and transferred to the Ministry of Health. The existing military doctors were dispersed to civilian hospitals and the government declared that there would be no speciality training for military doctors anymore. This way, the government took over previously autonomous military hospitals and put them under its use including their labs, research facilities, and equipment. The ambition to civilianise and possess all institutions the armed forces had, however, resulted in the elimination of dedicated military medical training for doctors, which may prove to be very costly in the battlefield and for the after-war care of veterans. With the same decree, the Ministry of Defence also took control of all factories, manufacturing and maintenance facilities and shipyards that were owned and operated by the TSK. In subsequent months, Erdogan bypassed the Ministry of Defence and put himself on top of the Undersecretariat for Defence Industries and Defence Industry Support Fund, with reserved funds of \$11 billion and \$3 billion, respectively. The Undersecretariat is a powerful institution having the sole authority to procure and make arms/equipment deals related to all armed forces as well as the police in Turkey and has the highest share of the defence budget (Gurcan 2018).

In subsequent emergency executive decrees, changes in military promotion and appointment were undertaken. Limitations were put on the office of the chief of staff in deciding military appointments and the Ministry of Defence became the authority in appointing or promoting officers and NCOs. All recruitment authority and capabilities of the TSK, including initiating

disciplinary action against TSK personnel, were also transferred to the Ministry. Similarly, to fully civilianise the previously relatively autonomous military courts, the recruitment of military judges and all employment related duties became the responsibility of the Ministry while restrictions to becoming a military judge were eased. Some changes were more symbolic but still significant to demonstrate norm shifts in a staunchly secularist institution: the headscarf ban for female cadets and officers was lifted. Only a few weeks afterwards, the chief of staff Hulusi Akar, who survived the coup attempt and the purges to emerge as a new loyal ally of Erdogan, performed Umrah, the Islamic pilgrimage rituals, in the company of Erdogan and the MIT chief during an official visit to Saudi Arabia, which was certainly an unprecedented sight.

The Gendarmerie General Command, which was increasingly civilianised but still jointly overseen by the Ministry of Interior and the TSK, as well as the Coast Guard, were once and for all put under the Ministry's authority. According to the police chief's testimony to the Parliament's coup commission, the partial civilianisation of the Gendarmerie and the subsequent rotation of commanders in key rural districts prevented full coordination of the plotters in the Gendarmerie on the coup day (TBMM 2016, 18-9). The coup finally gave the last push to the government take the reins of the Gendarmerie and its 180,000 strong force who oversee security with serious military and law enforcement capabilities in large swathes of the country. In the following months, the uniforms of the staff changed from green/brown to blue, to resemble the police officers more. Although rumours were floating around that a police chief would be appointed to lead the force, this never materialised and the Gendarmerie remained as a commander-led paramilitary entity undertaking both counter-insurgency and law enforcement operations, but now under the complete control of the government in all institutional aspects. In this way, the Gendarmerie's intelligence gathering unit (the core of military intelligence) was handed over to the Ministry of Interior.

With the state of emergency being continuously extended, while still technically the partisan but symbolic president, Erdogan nevertheless became the de facto head of state ruling by decree; he purged government officials and military personnel, restructured institutions, and almost completed building

the regime's new security sector. With the state of emergency still intact, he took the final step in presenting the executive style presidency to the public for them to vote on it in a referendum. An American style executive presidency – albeit with fewer to no checks and balances, and no unicameralism – was something the AKP had persistently advocated for but found the opposition stalling the talks (Esen and Gumuscu 2017a). The coup enabled talks over a new system with a strong president to gain momentum. The far-right nationalist party backed the constitutional changes in the Parliament and paved the way for the referendum. During the campaigning period, the AKP emphasised the importance of economic and political stability, and the necessity of swift decision-making in state matters, by eradicating divisions between different branches of government, which an executive president would provide (Bilgin and Erdogan 2018, 38). International observers addressed the uneven playing field whereby the referendum took place under a state of emergency with “Yes” and “No” blocks not having equal resources or opportunities (OSCE 2017). As with previous elections and referendums, Erdogan used his access to a competitive authoritarian toolkit to dominate the airwaves and stifle the opposition. At the end, the presidential system was narrowly accepted by 51.3% of the voters, marking “a transition from an already incongruous parliamentary system to rampant presidentialism” (Bilgin and Erdogan 2018, 29).

Although it was not an easy victory, the referendum results further consolidated Erdogan's personalist rule and constitutionalised his de facto presidency. Now ruling with virtually non-existent oversight from the Parliament, Erdogan proceeded to take several key institutions, including the MIT, under his command. It might be argued that the MIT's intelligence capabilities failed during the coup as it was revealed later that the agency got the information on a possible coup at around 4 PM but did not inform the government until much later (worse, Erdogan stated that he heard the news from his brother-in-law and not the MIT chief). The MIT managed to escape Erdogan's wrath almost completely unscathed, even getting permission to expand and modernise in the aftermath. In the meantime, the MIT chief Hakan Fidan started to appear alongside Erdogan during official visits more frequently. In July 2017, the agency was given the authority to conduct

intelligence gathering from within the TSK on military personnel, which would previously have been unthinkable as neither the military would allow, nor would the MIT be keen on undertaking, such a task. With the new changes under the presidential system, the agency would also have to carry out duties given to it by the president himself, not only the Cabinet as before, and the agency became accountable solely to the president.

Another institution that emerged from the coup largely untarnished was the police forces. Although the government took the opportunity to purge the remaining alleged Gulenists from the force following 15 July, the force was widely praised by Erdogan and the AKP leadership as one of the defenders of the civilian regime against the military. Right after the coup attempt, the Ministry of Interior announced that the entire police force would be financially rewarded. The Minister also announced that heavy weaponry would finally be purchased by the police forces in order to “create a system where a bad-intentioned person cannot realise his bad intentions ... and to create a balance of forces” (CNN Turk 2016). In the months following the coup, the police played a vital role for the AKP in bringing in suspected Gulenists and plotters on the run. Via executive decrees, the institution’s authority was further widened: it could now search military vehicles, conduct in-depth online interception of web traffic, question suspects for longer without permission from the prosecutor, and obtain heavy weaponry from the Gendarmerie. In addition, the educational requirements for becoming a police officer were lowered. Erdogan also removed all military personnel attached to the protection of the presidential compound and brought in police officers and the police special forces instead, while doubling his bodyguard count. When the president of Kazakhstan visited Ankara as the first foreign leader to meet Erdogan after the coup attempt in August 2016, the doors to his presidential palace were guarded by fully equipped police special forces officers with rifles, instead of the TSK’s historical presidential guard regiment (Hurriyet 2016a).

In addition to bolstering the status of the police, another executive decree provided the Ministry of Interior with 7,000 spots to hire “neighbourhood guards”, uniformed para-police men who would patrol the streets in their designated areas to ensure public order, which was an institution abolished in 1991. The new decree allowed men with a minimum of a primary school

education to become neighbourhood guards following a total of one month of training (two weeks theory and two weeks practice). They carry a gun, have a vague mandate on protecting public security, and in practice usually act like the police but are more embedded and visible in the localities where they work. The institution not only has the police's full backing but also its encouragement; in the graduation ceremony of the first guards, the Istanbul police chief told them: "Do not hesitate to use your weapon" (Cumhuriyet 2017). The number of neighbourhood guards has gradually increased since he post's initiation, with their total number exceeding 20,000 by 2019.

6.5 Conclusion

The AKP projected the image of an eager player ready to play by EU rules but the initial positive reform record over a few years did not follow a coherent path. Since 2005, there has been a significant decrease in EU euphoria and the government's ambitions to hold on to the democratisation agenda have manifestly weakened. The AKP leaned increasingly more on the electorate as their source of legitimacy and justification for security sector reforms rather than an international democratisation anchor. As its record on other EU reforms was regressive, the political demilitarisation process continued despite the visible decline in EU aspirations. Starting from 2007, the AKP government, with the help of political allies positioned especially in the judiciary, started a more aggressive political fight with the Kemalist regime and through sensational trials, now tarnished by revelations over fabricated evidence, ended the decades-long military tutelage while significantly diminishing the TSK's moral authority. During this process, the government started to utilise the notion of "terrorism" more liberally and to target political rivals, enabling the judiciary to prosecute through special courts whose judges were appointed by the government. Through such institutional means, the AKP played a direct part in eliminating the Kemalist hegemony once and for all, while it managed to frame this process as a "cleansing" of the country from the deep state and its apparatuses, rather than political rivalry and threat elimination. In the meantime, several legal changes enabled the police to widen its sphere of influence and the institution started to play an increasingly

visible role in suppressing dissent.

Gezi unrest shook up Turkey in 2013 and forced Erdogan to decide between giving in to the protestors' demands for a more democratic and free society or increasing coercion to suppress it. Seeing the events as a threat to his rule, he chose the latter. To decrease the cost of such suppression, his government later put forward expansive internal security legislation to give sweeping powers to the police. Combined with earlier legal amendments furthering police authority, the bill provided the police with expansive powers (such as shoot to kill) and governmental backing with virtually no oversight. In addition, a rise in allocated resources for the police allowed the institution to expand and slowly militarise. Police special forces also started to play a key role in counter-terrorism operations in the country, fighting alongside the military. The government also empowered a para-police institution – the neighbourhood guards – to penetrate more into smaller segments of society and enable these forces to exist as a reflection of the state inside neighbourhoods.

As the AKP centralised power around itself and Erdogan, the party began to see its erstwhile allies as a threat. The Gulen movement was the most formidable of these allies, having wide range of human and material resources to demand more from the AKP and challenge if its demands were not met. While the AKP's battle over institutions was more or less won vis-à-vis the Kemalist hegemony by 2012, it was already fighting another battle with the Gulen movement. Throughout this struggle, Erdogan loyalised these institutions, such as the police and MIT, through endowments as well as purges. Ultimately, the victor of the fight of allies was clearly the AKP government, further self-reinforcing the power distribution that significantly benefits the party. The escalated tensions that culminated in a violent coup attempt and its failure gave the government the necessary incentive to control the entirety of the agenda-making process and consequently take over the security sector while taming the military through executive level law-making. The Gendarmerie was fully civilianised, the police were given more symbolic power as well as more resources. Despite intelligence failures in the weeks preceding the coup attempt, the intelligence officers stayed largely untouched by the president's brutal purges and the MIT remained a valued institution for

Erdogan's government.

Within a year, the government established full but undemocratic control over the security sector at the expense of international norms and institutional effectiveness. By the end of 2017, civilian control over the military was high but the regime was competitive authoritarian, and the new security sector was at the heart of this new state formation, reproducing the order built by the AKP. The Turkish case is a useful caveat to avoid equating the succession of authority between certain groups with illustrations of democratisation, regardless of the elected or appointed status of such groups. As the (lack of) accountability mechanisms remain the same, it is unquestionably difficult to discuss democratic control over armed forces even when full political demilitarisation is achieved. Although, as discussed, they were the key elements, the tight control over the military and the establishment of a new security sector were not sufficient to create a competitive authoritarian system in Turkey. Therefore, in parallel, the AKP gradually took control over other state institutions while securitising wealth and dissent. In these takeover processes, the emerging authoritarian politics manifested themselves in an even more clear fashion. Thus, the next chapter will discuss the two auxiliary mechanisms (on the socio-political and economy domains) that, when combined with the main security sector mechanism, resulted in the competitive authoritarian state setup by the end of 2017 in which the political playing field is highly unlevel, repression is widespread rather than limited, and patronage relationships dictate the economy.

7 The auxiliary mechanism: Control over economy and socio-political domains

This chapter is divided into two parts and focuses on the two auxiliary mechanisms this thesis puts forward as an explanatory device to analyse the autocratisation process in Turkey. These two mechanisms illustrate how the economic and socio-political spheres were restructured under the AKP government in line with rebuilding a new security complex. The two mechanisms, triggered around 2007, complement the main security sector mechanism and at the end merge with it, providing a minimally sufficient explanation for the competitive authoritarian regime setup.

7.1 Increased control over the economy

This is the first auxiliary mechanism that demonstrates how the AKP modified the economic domain to consolidate capitalist development while gathering economic elites around itself, how the budgetary decisions it took aided the establishment of a new security sector, and how wealth was securitised to ensure it became a domain where the government has the last say.

7.1.1 Security expenditures: politicised, high, unaccountable

Elections are generally the main pathway for politicians to attain political power, hold office, and also to leave office, in consolidated democracies. They enable constituencies to formulate and signify preferences, and these preferences to be materialised in the form of policy, meaning that if voters are displeased with previous preferences, they will push the responsible policy-makers out (Dahl 1971, 2-3). Naturally, one would also assume that allowing the policy-makers make policy as their voters desire is part of this contract. This relatively straightforward contract between the ruled and the rulers, however, becomes cumbersome if there are veto players embedded in the institutional structure of a polity. These veto players, whose agreement is required for a policy decision, usually have strong impetus for maintaining the status quo that benefits them, and have access to institutional as well as extra-institutional means of opposing change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 19). In

Turkey, the military has become the most significant veto player, possessing strong bargaining powers against the civilian rulers since 1960, when it showed teeth for the first time with a coup (Kadercan and Kadercan 2016, 88). Since then, civilian governments have depended on amicable relationships with the military for their political survival. Free elections allowed citizens to indicate preferences but implementation of these by their elected politicians was never guaranteed as a certain policy could be blocked via informal means by the military, or worse, their rule could abruptly be ended via various methods. In such defective political environments, it is natural for each actor to draw a threat model and act accordingly. Greitens argues (2016, 12) that autocrats face a “coercive dilemma” that pushes them to decide how to structure a coercive institutional network depending on “the dominant perceived threat at the time they come to power, optimising institutional characteristics for whichever threat they perceive to be most acute”. Although she theorises about dictators, the main premise could be applied to military democracies with a strong personalist leader rising against the status quo; rather than the democratic process, such a leader will be concerned with coercive apparatuses’ potential to topple him and so must decide how to balance protective policies against elite-based (veto player) versus mass-based (uprising) threats. An elite-based threat was present for the AKP starting from their election in 2002 but the publication of the e-memorandum by the military in 2007 demonstrated the acuteness of the threat and the need to solve the coercive dilemma to ensure survival of the political leadership. I argue that to solve this problem, the AKP started to invest in its own coercive network to ensure loyalty and protection of other apparatuses that were under civilian domains, such as the police and MIT.

For the Kemalist hegemony, there was no alternative armed establishment that could compete in strength and organisational capacity, thus the military had been used as the primary tool of coercion by the regime since its establishment (Kadercan and Kadercan 2016, 88). Naturally such a concentration of power generates “civil-military problematique” (Feaver 1996) over how to rein in those who have the weapons against those who do not, especially when the latter is not organically bonded to the ideological roots of the hegemony which those arms serve. As the military reacted to the rising

power of an anti-establishment actor and the possibility of their institutional interests being seriously threatened, the AKP opted for creating its own security complex. This move was initially essential to protect itself from the elite threat but was expanded as it later increasingly faced a mass-based threat starting from 2013. Whereas pre-2007 could be regarded as a period of AKP's "war of position" against the military, which was a subtler struggle against the power centres using the EU as leverage, the post-2007 era is defined by a "war of manoeuvre" whereby institutions of state power were directly targeted and captured, and the AKP was built and projected as the new power bloc (Akca 2014; Gramsci 1971, 59). One of the essential elements of this war of manoeuvre was establishing a security complex by allocating higher shares of the state budget to non-military agents with the aim of ensuring their loyalisation.

Turkey's military spending has been in a visible decline since the early 2000s and kept on steadily decreasing until it was halved by 2016. Demilitarisation was not only political but economic as well. Not only was the political influence of the military being curbed, its resources were simultaneously being taken away. Some argue that cuts in military spending could signal a lasting shift in policy priorities in favour of the public and have a democratising effect (Lebovic 2001). In the Latin American examples the author gives, however, budgetary allocations were redesigned to boost other sectors – such as education and health. Therefore, it is important to understand which institutions come in to fill the expenditure gap created by the military's lessening economic power, which would demonstrate where the civilians' priorities lie in a post-demilitarised political setting.

The previous chapter mentioned the increasing role of the police in the AKP governments, the institution's elevated role in society and the endowments it receives from the state. As Erdogan felt increasingly threatened by the Kemalist hegemony that was still clinging onto power, he empowered the police forces while increasingly becoming dependent on consolidating his electoral base for sourcing legitimacy all the while expelling Kemalist civilian bureaucratic cadres from office, aiming to widen the AKP's hegemony (Akca et al. 2014). A rise in the expenditures of the General Directorate of the Police is visible, starting from the AKP's tenure, but they increased further especially

from 2009 (Figure 5). Within 15 years, the share of police expenditures in the state budget nearly doubled, reaching 3.82% in 2016. Indeed, it is not possible for the police's budget to catch up with the military's but around 2016, the numbers have never been closer to convergence, as Figure 5 reveals. With the military's full takeover by the AKP government, the military's budget share started to rise again, which signals that the AKP will continue to utilise the military for its counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency operations progressively more and will give it endowment to further ensure its loyalty now that the institution is in a position where it can be bent to the AKP's will.

The Gendarmerie's expenditures remained mostly steady during the institution's time under dual civil and military management but began to gradually increase with its partial civilianisation. Its budget witnessed a sharper increase after 2016, when it was fully civilianised, with a 35% rise within three years. In the same way, MIT expenditures reveal a pattern of gradual growth. Although MIT's allocation is small compared to the other institutions, the increase is still remarkable and telling. Starting from 2009, the agency's expenditures slowly but surely swelled: between 2009 and 2018, the increase was at 105% (no public data is available on MIT expenditures prior to 2006). The overall budget of the civilian security institutions collectively (at 5.8%) overrode the military's share (at 5.3%) for the first time 2014 (Gunluk-Senesen and Kirik 2016, 8). This corresponds to the AKP government's threat perception shifting from elite-based (military) to mixed (former allies and the masses) around 2013, which shows that the AKP expanded its coercive complex accordingly to deal with dangers that might come from several fronts, even when the primary risk factor, a coup, seemed to have been eliminated.

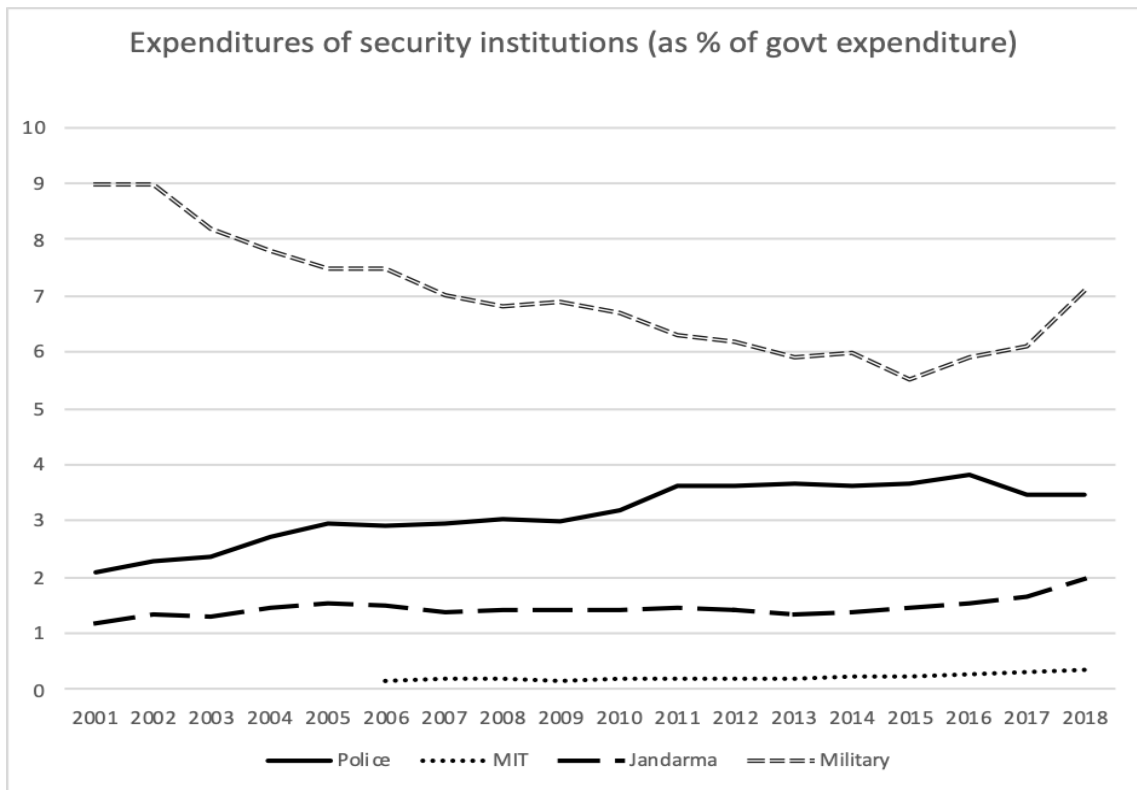


Figure 5. Expenditures of security institutions as percentage of government expenditure (SIPRI 2018 for military expenditure data; Ministry of Treasury and Finance, Financial Management Department yearly reports for others)

The defining factor in the surge in the police budget is the swelling officer ranks. Between 2004 and 2017, the number of police personnel (all ranks) increased by 37%, reaching 261,000 by the end of 2017 (Figure 6). The overall number of staff in the police force (all positions) rose by almost 50% in the same time period. There was a slight increase in the number of police officers in 2017 following the mass purges but the number quickly picked up and reached a remarkable 305,000 by 2019. Wages constitute around 70 percent of the overall budget of the police, which explains the parallel increase in the force numbers and institutional expenditures (Gunluk-Senesen and Kirik 2016, 6).

As the requirements to join the ranks were gradually lowered starting from 2007, more police schools opened. In addition, police vocational schools (POMEM) were introduced in 2005 that allowed university graduates to become police officers after six months of training, as mentioned in the previous chapter. By 2017, the number of these schools had reached 32 and in the same year, the POMEM training was decreased to only four months, which

contributed to the sharp increase in officer numbers after 2017. In its strategic planning document of 2008, the Directorate of the Police emphasised that the opening of POMEMs and the short training were “an emergency measure” to hire officers swiftly and that “the appropriate way” was in fact a regular two-year training course to raise “qualified officers”, which it argued could only be done with a capacity increase in traditional police schools (EGM 2008). Within a few years, however, POMEMs have become the standard form of hiring and training, providing the state with a steady stream of fresh officers who lack proper training but are plentiful in numbers.

Another reason for the expenditure increase is the government’s growing reliance on the police special forces. As their number increased from virtually none to 22,000 within a few years under the AKP government, their armoury was overhauled and new combat rifles were purchased, followed by the acquisition of grenade launchers in 2016. Considering that such weaponry revamp and specialised training are expensive, it is no big surprise – but still staggering – that the expenditures of the special forces within the police increased from 31 million lira in 2014 to 1.4 billion lira in 2017, a 43-fold jump (EGM 2014; EGM 2017). Although the special forces are a relatively small and concentrated unit, the endowments it amassed denote the distinctive place it was given in the AKP’s new security complex.

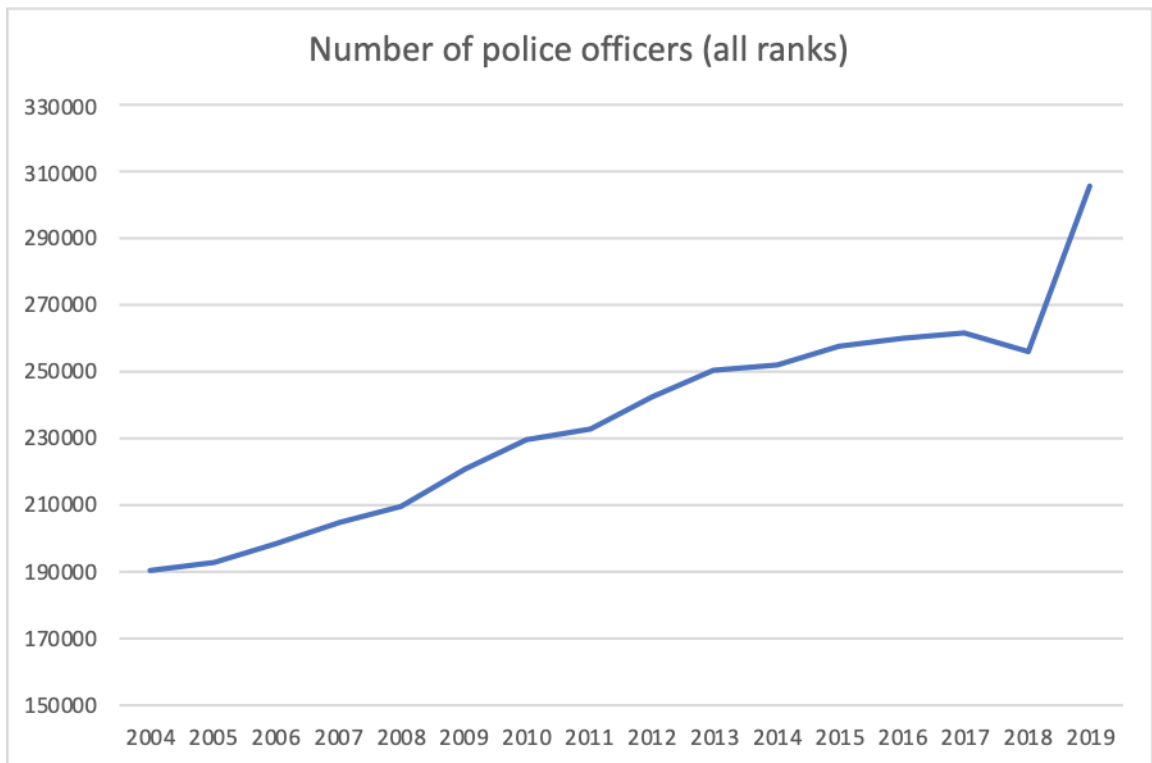


Figure 6. Number of police officers of all ranks between 2004–2019. (Data gathered from Police Performance Reports 2004–2019, General Directorate of the Police – EGM.)

Turkey’s allocation of resources to the police force distinctly stands out in comparison with EU countries. By 2014, Turkey had a higher share of police expenditures than any of the EU countries and by 2015, its share of resources allocated to the police as a percentage of GDP was 1.5 times higher than the EU average (Atak 2017). Another important boost the police forces and MIT received in terms of funding was off-budget mechanisms. With a law amendment in 2011, the government enabled the police forces and the MIT to access the Defence Industry Support Fund (Savunma Sanayi Destekleme Fonu – SSDF) coffers. The SSDF, administered by the Undersecretariat of Defence Industries (Savunma Sanayi Müsteşarlığı – SSM), was established in the 1980s to guarantee steady funding for the military and a swift procurement process bypassing ministerial procedures owing to special laws (Gunluk-Senesen and Kirik 2016, 8). The fund receives tax revenue collected via lotteries, betting, and corporate taxes, among others, and has been traditionally used to supplement the TSK’s funding allocated for arms acquisition. In 2011, the law governing the SSDF was amended to include the police forces and the MIT as security agencies, which allowed them to access the fund for “urgent”

procurement purposes, meaning the government successfully managed to divert further funds to these institutions while lessening the resources for the TSK. The amendment changed the long-established authorisation requirement to access funds for these organisations and reduced it only to the prime minister and the minister of defence, while excluding the board's third member, which is the chief of general staff (ibid, 9).

The SSDF had reserve funds of \$3 billion in 2016 and it can be used as an extra-budgetary financial resource for the newly empowered coercive structure. Not only did the government redirect additional endowment for the police and the MIT, but it also enabled these institutions to enjoy the same secrecy and unaccountability the TSK has over SSDF spending. Although the SSDF has technically been audited by the Court of Accounts since 2008 (as part of EU accountability reforms), the court's own yearly reports emphasise its lack of access to actual accounts due to "the usage of SSDF resources under 'top-secret' secrecy level" (Sayistay 2019) and assess instead the fund's publicly available performance reports containing mostly PR material, meaning that there is no existing independent state mechanism either to oversee or to review arms transactions done through financing sourced from the fund. In 2013, another amendment to the SSDF law facilitated direct money transfer from the fund to the MIT. Customarily, SSDF funds are allocated for specific procurement requests that are then managed by the Undersecretariat of Defence Industries which runs the fund. With the amendment, the MIT was allowed to bypass all these bureaucratic procedures and directly access funds to procure equipment and arms, in accordance only with its own bylaws, without any need to report back to any state authority while registering the income as off-budget. Through the changes in the SSDF legislation, Erdogan has become the key agent allocating crucial resources to the government's emerging security complex without any meaningful checks and balances. Once the government had bestowed such power on him through legislative means, he continued to extract more resources without modifying any of the undemocratic and opaque institutional elements of the junta-remnant fund.

7.1.2 Executive level economic decision-making

For those who praised AKP's Turkey's "breathtaking economic boom" in the media and presented the country as an "economic miracle" and "Eurasia's rising tiger", it was all about the numbers (Zalewski 2011; Spencer and Zalewski 2011; Parkinson 2011). Indeed, Turkey had growth rates in the double digits and became the fastest growing economy in the OECD. It witnessed an uninterrupted growth period between 2003 and 2007, and managed to stay relatively resilient after the global financial crisis in 2008 and beyond, with exports increasing more than threefold, all the while finally bringing inflation under control (Subasat 2014, 141). A top economist put this success down to Erdogan and his team, and their focus on "fundamentals, rather than bubbles" (Sachs 2013). Comparing Turkey's "economic renaissance" to debt-weary European countries, the *New York Times* asked: "...who needs the other one more – Europe or Turkey?" (Landon 2010). The numbers were correct but they failed to depict a full picture of the deep institutional shifts, as they rarely do. Those who praised the economic boom failed to acknowledge that the way in which the growth took place had noteworthy consequences on the regime setup, which this chapter aims to expand upon.

As argued in the previous section, the AKP government took substantial steps towards solving its "coercive dilemma" by strengthening its own security complex against the elite-based threats it perceived. Once the security complex started to take shape and the main veto player, the military, was essentially eliminated, the AKP shifted its focus towards the political and economic allies it had gathered during the first years of its tenure. It is not uncommon to see that once-closest allies of an authoritarian leader might eventually be perceived as a threat. Elites across the loyalty spectrum will have their own calculations vis-à-vis the regime and will have incentive to act in accordance with their own interests (Magaloni and Kricheli 2010). In the same vein, it is plausible to think that a leader who is gradually amassing more power autocratically will have his own calculations about how to share the economic resources of the state and with whom. The increased governmental power of a single party naturally means increased power in decision-making in the economic sphere. The years between 2010 and 2016 marked a period of the AKP government strengthening a new class of economic elites while consolidating neoliberal economic transformation in the country. This meant

that as previous alliances loosened up and were broken down –which had become easier as a new security complex reassured the government – power continued to be centralised around the AKP, which empowered itself further to make budgetary decisions. Elites then had to orient themselves around the emerging realities of a government that required loyalty either overtly or tacitly. At the same time, economic institutions of the state were rapidly captured as part of the autocratisation process and were designed to become AKP-dependent structures.

The chapter on contextual conditions delved into the bourgeoisie that the Kemalist regime created after the establishment of the republic. The bourgeoisie was “moulded, protected and fed” the state mechanisms and the state acted “as a non-neutral distributive agent” in the market (Cizre and Yeldan 2005, 391-392). Therefore, the economic elites sided with the status quo, remained staunch allies of the Kemalist regime, and did not push for a more open society or expansion of democratic reforms (Boratav 1974, Keyder 1987). This path-dependent relationship between the economic elites and the state has had crucial impact on how the relationship continued in the AKP era. Although it can be argued that all bourgeoisie have connections to the state they are attached to, in Turkey the relationship is symbiotic and the dependency is virtually impossible to break, which makes it vulnerable to political and ideological power shifts even when the market is supposedly depoliticised.

The post-1980 period marked the beginning of neoliberal era for Turkey. The military, via its coup d'état, provided permissive conditions to implement economic liberalisation legislation and to act as a coercive agent to violently crush any dissent that stemmed from it (Bedirhanoglu and Yalman 2013, 110). The military government repressed wages, suspended the unions and eroded the redistributive taxation system, while the post-coup civilian government continued with anti-labour neoliberal reforms, appeasing the big business groups (Boratav 2015, 3). What this environment also bred was the inclusion of Islamic capital owners into the economic arena. As the market became relatively depoliticised due to efforts to create an open economy and as the military preferred a “Turkish-Islamic synthesis” to the threat of working class activism, religious business owners from Anatolia managed to expand into

national and global markets, which marked the beginning of the rise of Islamic capital (Ozturk 2015, 134). Although they could not really compete with the big bourgeoisie of the Kemalist regime, Islamic capital has been on the scene since the 1980s and has been gradually adapting to the workings of a capitalist system. Since the 1980s, a fundamental cleavage within the business community in Turkey has occurred between the big old capitalists who were there before and the latecomers who emerged through the rise of political Islam (Bugra and Savaskan 2014, 18). These latecomers have flourished under AKP rule and the devout bourgeoisie gained significant ground as the government consolidated the neoliberal transformation of Turkey's economy. While the capital changed hands, the state's economic mechanisms were taken over and used by the AKP to buttress this new class.

The initial prediction regarding the ascent of the devout bourgeoisie was about its potential to aid democratisation. Going along with the traditional modernisation model, scholars argued that the rising Islamic economic elite was “the vanguard of Turkey's recent democratization” (Yavuz 2006, 5). The simple idea was that this group, unlike the big Kemalist bourgeoisie, did not need to cosy up to the state to accumulate capital, was independent of such relations, therefore was of democratising character (e.g. Demir et al. 2004; Demiralp 2009). In reality, Islamic capital has been benefitting widely from close relations to municipal administrations, especially in Istanbul, that were under the control of AKP-predecessor Islamic parties. It was expected that this relationship would be further strengthened once the mayor Erdogan became the prime minister Erdogan. Actors in political settings are not mere spectators to changing contexts but rather are capable of acting on “openings” to defend or enhance their own positions (Thelen and Steinmo 1992, 17). So, as the conditions became more amenable, this business group adopted new strategies to profit under them. The old capital class also benefitted from the neoliberal economic agenda that the AKP brought forward to ensure growth and was an explicit supporter of the party during its initial years of governing. The relations, however, became more complicated after 2009 and the 2010–2016 period witnessed this group excruciatingly trying to navigate the new system and re-orienting themselves around the power centre not to lose access to resources and privileges.

The first real blow to the old economic elites came in 2009 when the media arm of Dogan Group, a significant monopoly capital, was hit with a billion-dollar tax fine. The company fought the fine in court but had to shut down or sell several of its papers, which constituted a sizeable portion of the mainstream media, and accepted the resignation of its chairman Aydin Dogan whom Erdogan had a personal animosity towards (Yesil 2016, 92). Tensions escalated afterwards and the 2010 referendum was a cut-off point where the AKP drew a clear distinction between the economic circles who explicitly supported the regime and those who did not. A month before the referendum, Erdogan targeted the big bourgeoisie's representative association TUSIAD and posed an ultimatum: "Those who don't take a side will be eliminated" (Milliyet 2010). A few weeks later, he spelled out the source of friction and signalled what lay ahead: "This is what bothers us: The Istanbul capital, for whatever reason, gets along with us when it comes to making money but not politically (...) But whether they like it or not the capital is seriously changing hands in Turkey. This is a big source of confidence for us" (Hurriyet 2010). Indeed, the devout businesses belonging to their special networks such as MUSIAD, TUSKON and ASKON, representing the rising so-called Anatolian tigers were multiplying, increasing in size and revenue, as well as attaining considerable political power inside the government (Tanyilmaz 2015, 104; 92). The number of MUSIAD members, for example, rose from 2,136 in 2004 to 6,500 in 2010 and 12,000 in 2016 (ibid 105; Can 2016). The exponential growth was the result of the long-cultivated organic link they managed to protect with the AKP government and especially Erdogan.

The way capital changed hands is intrinsically connected to the so-called success story of the Turkish economy. The real driver of the economic growth and capital accumulation was not investment in productive sectors or creating world-competitive industries. Rather, it was primarily the process of collecting revenue through privatisation of public assets, which amounted to "nothing but large-scale dispossession" (Balkan et al. 2015, 3). Through this dispossession, with Erdogan's explicit encouragement, Islamic capital was for the first time given the chance to be included in large-scale privatisation processes – a privilege which solely belonged to the old capitalists before. Although the old capitalists were the only entities resourceful enough to

compete in sales of large-scale enterprises, the Islamic capital class managed to win small and medium scale privatisation bids, which accelerated their transformation into multi-sector conglomerates (Zaifer 2014, 140). Having succeeded in jumping into the big capitalists' league, these companies then went on with winning gradually larger bids, rapidly expanding their presence in the economic sphere. It is argued that the privatisation process in Turkey seemed to in fact have been merely "one of liquidating state assets" and not about selling unprofitable or ineffective entities (Gultekin 2012, 385). This was precisely the point. The process of rapid conversion of public assets into cash made the AKP look compliant to the IMF-mandated neoliberal agenda while, more importantly, lifting exclusionary state practices on devout businessmen's involvement in the economy and letting capital flow through these newly flourishing enterprises, which in turn became loyal agents of the government in order to occupy any opportunity spaces that might emerge in the economic arena. In addition, with the gradual erosion of the Privatisation Administration's independence, the process of distributing rent to these nascent elites became a less cumbersome and more direct process.

Additionally, the construction sector got a boost from the government, supplied with consumer credits as well as mass housing projects and mega-projects for infrastructure. Via a decree, the previously dormant Mass Housing Development Administration (Toplu Konut İdaresi – TOKİ) was put directly under Prime Minister Erdogan in 2004, was given the authority act as a state contractor for social housing, and was gifted with special budget status, preventing the Court of Accounts from auditing it. Moreover, the ownership of the majority of public land was transferred to the entity. This quickly turned TOKİ into one of the biggest landowners in the country and started the process of TOKİ transforming valuable public land into marketable tangible assets (Serin 2016). TOKİ provided the land and private companies built on it; the end profit was shared, which also opened up an obvious and lucrative opportunity space for the emerging bourgeoisie to embed in. While TOKİ's mandate became broad enough to make decisions on overall urban policies, the contracts have been a tool to augment a selected group of companies that have close connections to the AKP government and Erdogan, who has enjoyed gradually increasing discretionary powers over urbanisation and housing via

TOKI (Madi-Sisman 2017, 5). Furthermore, as the number of high-value mega-projects skyrocketed, the Public Procurement Law (PPL) has become another tool to create and distribute rent. During the AKP's tenure, more than 150 amendments were made to the PPL, which significantly increased discretion in awarding contracts by enabling less competitive and less transparent procurement methods (Gurakar 2016, 5). More alarmingly, the independence of the Public Procurement Administration, which oversees the PPL, was meticulously eroded. When the Administration revealed misuse of public funds during procurement in 2004, Erdogan declared that the entity "was causing us great distress" and that it "needs to be re-structured" (Hurriyet 2004). What followed was years-long cabinet decrees being passed to curtail the Administration's regulatory powers and eventually putting it under the direct authority of the Ministry of Finance, which effectively eliminated any checks and balances in the public procurement process. It is therefore not surprising that favouritism became prevalent in key sectors, and entities close to the Erdogan governments were chosen to undertake major projects or purchases, with large number of these being conducted at much higher cost than their actual value (Gurakar 2016, 108).

As explained before in this study, not only the military but also the civilian bureaucratic cadres were principal components of the Kemalist hegemony and ensured the reproduction of the system at the institutional level(s). State institutions were generally comprised of secular and urban-educated civilians whereas those adhering to the Islamic movement could usually only find themselves openings in local governments where political Islam had managed to penetrate more easily via local elections. With the AKP's ascent, state-level institutions also began to go through the process of party-connected staffing. Economic institutions were no exception. Long-term activists from the Islamic movement were placed in mid-level and top-level positions in ministries such as the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Ministry of Public Works, and the Ministry of Finance, including the ministers themselves (Hosgor 2015, 221). State corporations were also staffed in a similar manner while existing cadres were emptied. The State Planning Organisation (Devlet Planlama Teskilati – DPT), which was independent and had the mandate for developing and overseeing Turkey's

development policies, was abolished in 2011 via a Cabinet decree without any discussions in the Parliament. The DPT was a reputable public entity with highly educated, highly paid, elite cadres and had a history of opposing “unplanned” and neoliberal-style state development, which they argued created uncontrolled growth of specific industries to aid select businesses and proliferation of unprivileged urban population. Instead of the DPT, a new Ministry of Development was established, which put the subject of state planning under the direct control of the AKP government and muffled dissident voices in the developmental policy sphere.

As the AKP progressively captured the institutional structures of the economic sphere and accumulated power over key economic matters such as public procurement, planning, and privatisation through increasingly centralised decision-making processes, it also targeted the resources of its former allies. This coincided with the time period when the wide alliance the AKP had garnered started to loosen up after 2012. The first visible blow was to the Gulen movement and their study centres, which had been the prime cash generator for the organisation (Demiralp 2016). As discussed in the previous chapter, these study centres were shut down and instead the state took over the responsibility of designing extracurricular courses for national examination preparation. If they were not overtly connected to the Gulen movement, study centres were given the chance to switch to being private schools, which would mean increased tax resources for the state. Starting from 2013, however, Gulenist capital was increasingly politicised and more directly targeted. For instance, state auditors started to investigate a major conglomerate called Koza Ipek Group, which was active in publishing, media, education and mining, owned by the Ipek family who were closely connected to Fethullah Gulen, for stock manipulation. Ultimately, the state took over the entire corporate structure in 2015 and appointed trustees to run the firms while the chairman fled the country. Another example was Kaynak Holding with its expansive reach in the tourism, publishing, delivery and IT sectors, and multi-billion-dollar annual revenue. In the same vein, the Gulen-connected Bank Asya, which became the largest Islamic (participation) bank during the early tenure of the AKP with assets totalling more than four billion dollars, was singled out to be first chastised then eventually taken over

(Hendrick 2015, 256). Bank Asya was used previously by several state corporations as well as institutions, including Turkish Airlines, for investment and salary payment purposes. Following the corruption scandal of 2014 and Erdogan's explicit statements over the bank's ties to the Gulen movement, these entities as well as regular people who used the bank emptied their accounts, resulting in the bank declaring massive losses, which paved the way for its failure and eventual confiscation by the state in 2015.

Due to the fact that the government had warm relations with the Islamic business networks, relations with the TUSIAD-connected old bourgeoisie and their representative networks were tense and consisted of a mixture of threats and attempts at co-optation (Bugra and Savaskan 2014, 12). When the Dogan Group was hit with billion-dollar tax fines and politically charged interference, the big business did not lend its explicit solidarity to the conglomerate, which made Dogan's chairwoman remark privately to other TUSIAD members that they were giving the impression that "we are all silent together" (Tanyilmaz 2015, 94). Indeed, the government attacked Dogan with such ferocity that it was sufficient to quieten any criticism that TUSIAD would liberally convey under any other government. The fact that these big families were also still competing for public bids made the situation all the more difficult for them. Then it was the Gezi protests in 2013 that marked the point when the AKP made a clear distinction between opponents and supporters, and the big economic elites were not immune to the ultimatum. The most glaring case was Koc Holding, the biggest conglomerate in Turkey, owned by the country's richest family who are prime representatives of the secularly oriented old bourgeoisie. As the protests were raging, the ultra-luxurious Divan Hotel, owned by Koc and located adjacent to the Gezi Park, opened its doors to the protestors, provided them with necessities, and prevented the police from entering. Doctors from the nearby American Hospital, owned by Koc Foundation, were sent to the hotel to tend the wounded. Koc University announced that, as student attendance lowered, they would make the schedules for final exams flexible. Although Koc was hardly carrying the torch of revolution with these small acts, it was enough to incite Erdogan's fury and he accused the Koc family of "abetting criminals" (Haksoz 2015, 59). Other TUSIAD member heavyweights – such as Dogus, Boyner, and Dogan – whose

owners openly or implicitly supported the protestors, also found themselves in a tricky situation as the government backlash intensified and Erdogan's threats became increasingly personalised. Erdogan's targeting of specific big capital owners was swiftly followed up by action of the state institutions. Around a month after the Divan Hotel incident, auditors from the Ministry of Finance, accompanied by the police, raided the offices of three major companies of Koc Holding and confiscated all their documentation, which was a sight out of the ordinary despite the ministry's claims of routine procedure (Gursel 2013). This incident showed the enormity of the threat to those who do not toe the AKP line and also laid bare the transformation of public institutions into direct extensions of Erdogan's dictate.

Pierson (2004, 36) argues that one of the sources of power asymmetry is certain actors' position to impose rules on others, which makes the employment of power self-reinforcing. Increases in power in this self-reinforced manner gives these actors the capacity for political action while diminishing that of their rivals, which then produces adaptations in behaviour that reinforce these trends. A key manifestation of this is vulnerable or weak actors joining "the winners", which aids in substantially widening discrepancies in political resources among different groups over time. The effects of the loss of revenue for the old bourgeoisie did not manifest itself as explicit criticism or dissent; they preferred to blunt the edges of their political expressions instead. Ultimately, it was a cost-benefit approach that influenced their attitude, which confirmed that this group "remains mainly a class in itself of purely self-interested capitalists" who expected to reap any available benefits at opportune moments in exchange for their implicit assent to the dynamics of the powerful regime (Boratav 2015, 9). As for the new economic elites, the AKP represented an opportunity to expand their economic interests, stretch their institutional reach, and protect themselves from possible bureaucratic and legal hurdles. The legacy of the statist past evidently fed into the behaviour of this group, who expected the AKP to become the political representative of their class interests and protect them as previous governments did for the old elites (Gurakar 2016). Historical institutional setups shape actors' expectations as well as goals (Pierson 2004; Thelen and Steinmo 1992). Moulded inside an institutional arrangement where the

political power holders actively worked to benefit the business groups they were ideologically attached to, the rising provincial economic elites demanded the same from the AKP regime in their pursuit of finally occupying hitherto impermeable layers of the economic system. As a result, not only did premature hopes about the “Anatolian tiger” effect on democratisation quickly dissipate, but also the attitudes of both the new elites and the old ones completely failed to challenge the autocratisation process in any meaningful manner. In fact, it can be argued that their behaviour, influenced by self-interested cost-benefit calculations, cleared the path for further executive aggrandisement in the economic sphere and facilitated institutional reproduction. Therefore, both business groups indirectly aided in enabling the government to not only politicise but gradually securitise wealth. After the brief case study of the security sector finances concisely illustrating the fight over economic power below, the proceeding section (7.1.3) will delve into how this securitisation took place and how it became a salient element of the autocratisation process in the AKP’s Turkey.

7.1.2.1 The battle over controlling the security sector finances

The security sector became one of the battlegrounds during this fight to control capital and economic policies, and serves as a good example showing the dynamic between big business and the AKP government, and the process of co-opting. In January 2013, Koc Holding’s RMK Marine won the bid to build six corvettes for the Navy under the indigenous warship project dubbed MILGEM. In September 2013, however, the bid worth around 2 billion euros was cancelled by the Undersecretariat of Defence Industries (SSM), chaired by Prime Minister Erdogan, following a negative report prepared by the auditors of Prime Ministry and signed by Erdogan. Furthermore, in December 2013, the SSM announced that Sedef Shipbuilding had won the Landing Platform Dock tender worth around 3 billion euros, which RMK Marine was also bidding on. Koc’s RMK Marine was the most experienced bidder, offered an original design, and put forward the lowest offer but Sedef Shipbuilding had the advantage of being owned by Metin Kalkavan, who was known for his close relationship to Erdogan. Leaked phone conversations afterwards revealed that

Erdogan personally meddled in the bidding process by telling Kalkavan that their high offer “put [you] at the back of the row [among other bidders], but still, I told them to talk to you again about the price” and encouraging him to engage with the SSM more actively, to which Kalkavan replied with “We won’t disappoint you” (T24 2014). When the leaked tapes were revealed, Erdogan defended his meddling and claimed that it was natural for him to act on behalf of the state when it came to such high-stakes tenders (HDN 2014). In another instance, Koc Holding’s Otokar, the country’s most well-known military vehicle company, won the bid in 2008 to design and develop prototypes of the first indigenous battle tank, called Altay, under a 500-million-dollar contract. The first prototype was revealed in 2012 in a grandiose ceremony where Erdogan praised the tank and Otokar. By early 2016, Altay passed the required tests and two prototypes were completed. Otokar was given the opportunity to provide an offer to the SSM for the tank’s serial production and it was thought to be a foregone conclusion that the company would be selected. Otokar’s offer, however, was declined by the SSM who decided to open a multi-billion tender for the production of 250 Altay tanks. The tender was eventually won by BMC Turkey, half-owned by a notable member of the Islamic business network, Ethem Sancak, who is a close friend of Erdogan and an executive board member for the AKP. The other half belongs to the Qatari state. Sancak is known for buying up seized media companies to turn them to pro-government mouthpieces as a self-professed way of supporting the government, and the Qatari state has been an emerging ally of the AKP, most notably known for its gifting of a luxury jet to Erdogan and a promise to bail out Turkey in the case of a currency crisis (Yesil 2016, 90). Otokar had accumulated experience and know-how about the tank during a decade-long development phase, as well as appropriate infrastructure and staff, and would have been the most natural partner to carry out the serial production phase. The company lacked, however, not only the political connection but also, more crucially, the personal linkage to Erdogan.

As the security sector was re-shuffled and the police were given more coercive capacities, the defence industry became another opportunity space for the rising Islamist capitalists who cultivated their relationship with Erdogan. Apart from winning the tank project, BMC’s production was experiencing a

steady rise by 2016 and the company kept on supplying both the TSK and the police with mine-resistant armoured vehicles (Demir 2016). Another company Katmerciler, owned by an ex-AKP deputy, became the prime supplier of armoured water cannons to the police. Since the Gezi in 2013 and the police's urgent purchases of more than 100 brand-new water cannons in the months following the protests, the company increased its profit steadily and in 2016, it declared that the profits had broken company records (Hurriyet 2016b). Another significant development in the arming of the new security sector concerns drone technology. Headed by the ambitious computer engineer Selcuk Bayraktar, a family-owned machinery component company Baykar Makina ventured into drone development in the early 2000s. A bright and devout Bayraktar found it hard to convince the secular military brass, distrustful of families like his, to test armed drones with live ammunition (Farooq 2019). By 2014, he had managed to work his way inside the system after the hardliner cadres were eliminated, and succeeded in convincing the TSK of the capabilities of Baykar's indigenous design. The company proceeded to serial produce surveillance drones and then armed drones shortly after. By 2016, the armed TB2 model recorded its first kill against the PKK and started to be actively used in counter-insurgency operations in Turkey's south-east and in counter-terrorism operations in Northern Syria. In the same year, the company's relationship with Erdogan was cemented with Bayraktar marrying Erdogan's favourite daughter. Within a few years, Baykar Makina produced 86 armed drones, each costing around 6 million dollars; they were shared between the TSK, which has the majority of them, the police, the Gendarmerie and even the MIT (Baykar 2019). These examples demonstrate that as Erdogan's discretionary powers increased in the economic arena, the defence industry also emerged as one of the areas where political and personal linkages became paramount since the president became a key agent of state resource distribution. The endowment of the new security sector played a dual role: empowerment of the new economic elites in this area significantly aided in breaking the organic bond between the old bourgeoisie and the military, and the contracts for the security sector became a profit-making area for the AKP-dependent class who would then have a stake in the health of the emerging competitive authoritarian regime.

7.1.3 Securitised wealth

As mentioned in the previous section, the elite alliance started to loosen up in 2012, was severely damaged after 2013, and had almost dissipated by 2016. The 2016 coup attempt was the cut-off point for eliminating those who did not implicitly or explicitly declare their loyalty to the AKP government vis-à-vis the coupists. The aftermath of the coup reveals an aggressive process of punishing the “losers” via various means, including financial. At the same time, under a “state of exception”, the AKP government became the sole decision-maker over key economic policies as a result of an accelerated process of taking over the economic domain of the state. This section investigates these processes to argue that by the end of 2017, wealth was securitised, meaning that both private and public resources could potentially come under the domain of “extraordinary”, giving the state the authority to circumvent acceptable procedures to manage it.

Sustaining elite cohesion is critical part of authoritarian regime stability, especially in the early stages of a newly established rule (Lagace and Gandhi 2015). Elites then act collectively for the benefit of the regime, depending on the distribution of material resources and power. A leader will have the motivation to power-share at the beginning to guarantee his rule’s survival and set up a “ruling coalition”, or an elite alliance as this thesis calls it, but it is likely that such a union will fail as the regime becomes increasingly personalistic and authoritarian (Svolik 2012). This is due to the fact that the regime leader will have the desire and the opportunity to acquire more power at the expense of his allies. As Turkey approached 2016, the most vital actor in the elite alliance, the Gulen movement, not only lost its political clout but also its financial resources. Especially after the corruption revelations of 17 to 25 December 2014, the financial strength of the Gulenists, which had been the fuel of its expansive operations, was in an increasingly desperate condition. The aftermath of the Gulen-supported corruption probe implicating the Erdogan clique was when the Gulen movement was formally securitised; Erdogan signalled through his speech acts that the 2014 probe was “a coup attempt” and that he would “go into their den and destroy them”, as previously

mentioned (Ozbudun 2014, 159). Consequently, “the battle against FETO” [Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation], as Erdogan describes it, involved directly taking over Gulen-connected businesses. Indirectly, Gulenist capital was excluded from the rent distribution system controlled by Erdogan and his close circle of associates. The ally opened many doors to the regime but at the end was not allowed to share the spoils.

Allies do rebel in authoritarian settings if the leader reneges on his initial motivation to share the spoils, which can be taken as an effective threat to stop him from doing so (Svolik 2012). The 2016 coup attempt can be seen as an example of such rebellion; the Gulen movement pushed back to reclaim its sources of power, including and most importantly financial, by attacking the AKP government with the last force it could muster. Indeed, the literature shows that the most predominant political conflict in similar settings is of intra-elite nature over power-sharing (ibid). If the former allies had succeeded, it is easy to argue that the rewards would have been significant. They would not only have toppled Erdogan, but also retrieved previously lost streams of revenue and generated new avenues of income via their capture of the state’s economic mechanisms. When the coup attempt failed, the AKP government – as the victor of the abortive putsch – not only punished the rebels by jailing them, but also by taking over their resources.

Five days after the coup attempt, a state of emergency was declared, which paved the way for an accelerated process of executive aggrandisement by allowing Erdogan to practically govern by decree while bypassing the already weak legislative arena. These executive decrees effectively securitised the issues they aimed to deal with. The idea of executive decrees under such conditions is about tackling threats more swiftly but precisely this characteristic also makes them susceptible to transforming into a tool for executive aggrandisement as well as political vendetta. The decrees passed within the week after the coup attempt were of encompassing scope and punishing nature. They listed full names of officers and state officials fired and organisations closed. More crucially, decrees no. 667 and 668 ordered the seizure of all property and assets of entities closed down due to their existence as “national security threats”. These entities included media houses, private schools, private hospitals, NGOs, and unions. All assets, including immovable

and moveable property, cash, documentation, and debt owed were automatically transferred to the Treasury. The Treasury was also absolved of all debt responsibility that these entities might have. Within a month, the minister of environment and urbanisation declared that only the immovable property taken over from “terrorism-connected” entities was valued to be around 12 billion lira [3.6 billion euros] (Sabah 2016). There is no aggregate data revealing the total amount of immovable property and/or total assets seized or their estimated value as of the end of 2017. Considering, however, that the number of organisations shut down only increased in the following months, it is safe to assume that the value also increased.

Another part of the post-coup securitisation process involved the seizure of private companies. According to official numbers, by the end of 2017, the state had taken over a total of 1022 private companies with total assets approaching 47 billion lira [13.9 billion euros] (TMSF 2017, 29). In 2015 the AKP government revived a clause in the Criminal Code that had rarely been used before to take over Koza Ipek Holding, as discussed in the previous chapter. This clause allows the court to assign special administrators (state employees with specialised knowledge in business management) to companies that are suspected of funding criminal activities via seemingly legitimate business activities. The aim is for administrators to take over to cease the criminal activity and collect evidence for the court. The law was designed to stop mafia-like groups, as well as traffickers, but it has been almost exclusively applied to companies suspected of having connections to Gulenists. Securitisation processes do not exactly need securitising actors to act above or outside of the law (Floyd 2015; Sarat 2010). They can quite effectively use existing legal structures to expand the interpretation of the law. Since the threat uttered as part of the securitising act is presented as an existential one, such liberal use of the law will not be easily challenged, which is indeed the power of securitisation. The aim of these wealth seizures became not about preventing crime, or revealing it through collecting evidence, but solely about expropriation. With another executive decree (no. 674) the authority to manage special administrations was transferred to the Security Deposit Insurance Fund (Tasarruf Mevduatı Sigorta Fonu – TMSF), the state’s banking insurance agency. TMSF is technically an independent entity but under the

AKP has been used as a tool for “hostile takeover”, especially of media companies deemed to be unstable, which were then sold to Erdogan’s business allies (Irak 2017, 248). In 2017, an ex-AKP party member was appointed by the Erdogan-led Cabinet as the head of TMSF, further loyalising the institution. The special remit given to the TMSF to manage a capital faction consisting of a variety of companies made the institution’s financial power comparable to Turkey’s biggest conglomerates. The same decree no. 674 also handed the TMSF the authority to sell the assets of these companies if it deems them unsustainable and transfer the proceedings to the accounts of the Ministry of Finance.

Private individual wealth has also been targeted in this process. This undertaking has involved not only those of high profile who openly supported the Gulenists but also a swathe of military officers, civilian public employees, and regular citizens with no tangible links to the movement. By the end of 2017, TMSF had taken over the management of the private assets of 125 high-profile individuals who had already had criminal proceedings started against them in court for their involvement in the coup attempt (TMSF 2018, 28). For these high-profile personalities, the takeover decisions sometimes expanded to their first-degree family members too. This number grew to include other high-profile names including writers and journalists, some of whom had been released from prison (Bianet 2016). For other individuals, the expropriation measures did not allow such a streamlined process, nevertheless they were still aggressive. The courts handed down blanket decisions to block the assets of lower ranking military officers who were suspected of participating in the coup attempt and were being investigated. This meant that the criminal courts issued cautionary judgments to prevent suspects from selling or transferring their private assets (including cash savings, real estate, vehicles etc.). The legal reasoning behind the state’s meddling with private property was based on the criminal code allowing the court to expropriate assets gained through terrorism or criminal activity. Under the state of emergency, however, both the cautionary judgments and direct expropriation orders did not require previously necessary evidence that would have to be obtained from certain regulatory and investigatory entities to associate the wealth with the purported crime. These cautionary judgments were afterwards expanded to include not

only coupists, but all those suspected of having “connections, membership or communications with the Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation which poses a national security threat”, as per the court orders. Shortly after, executive decree no. 667 ordered the Ministry of Interior to draw up lists of such individuals and the Ministry of Finance to block their assets, once again bypassing the judiciary and any due process. Being named in such lists meant that one could still hold assets but could not sell them and could not withdraw cash more than their last salary each month. There was no possibility of appealing to the decision during the state of emergency. If the individuals are convicted, their assets are automatically transferred to the Treasury. A month after the coup attempt, a lawyer involved in these proceedings estimated the number of people affected by these measures to be roughly around 100,000 (T24 2016).

The criteria to be associated with a “national security threat” were arbitrary at worst and vague at least. For example, the funds of all those who deposited cash into Bank Asya between 1 January 2014 and 3 February 2015 were automatically blocked by the TMSF’s orders under the institution’s newly expanded authority. This start date corresponded with the immediate aftermath of the corruption scandal that hit the AKP’s top echelons and the official terrorist designation of the Gulen movement. The vice PM announced that 369 million lira (92 million euro) of 46,600 people were blocked under this practice (Hurriyet 2017b). For military officers, an additional measure announced via another executive decree prevented them from accessing their pension funds. As per regulations, every officer contributes 10 per cent of their monthly salary to the military’s special pension fund OYAK and has the right to access it upon leaving service. It was announced that the blocked funds of only the high-ranking officers (general and colonel level) totalled 83 million lira (20.7 million euro), not including lower ranking officers (Hurriyet 2017a). If the officers are convicted, the amounts are automatically transferred to the Treasury.

Regarding securitisation of public wealth, the example of discretionary funds is an illustrative one. The discretionary fund was set up to be an off-budget mechanism at the service of the prime minister to be spent, as the law states, on “extraordinary services” concerning “the state’s national security,

high interests, and necessities pertaining [to] the state’s reputation”. Since the AKP came to power and especially after their second term in government, discretionary expenditures gradually rose. As the elite alliance began to dissolve and the new coercive sector setup was under construction, utilisation of these funds became more frequent. After Erdogan was elected as the president in 2015, the law was changed to give him access to the funds together with the prime minister, which witnessed a spike in the spending of the funds (Figure 7).

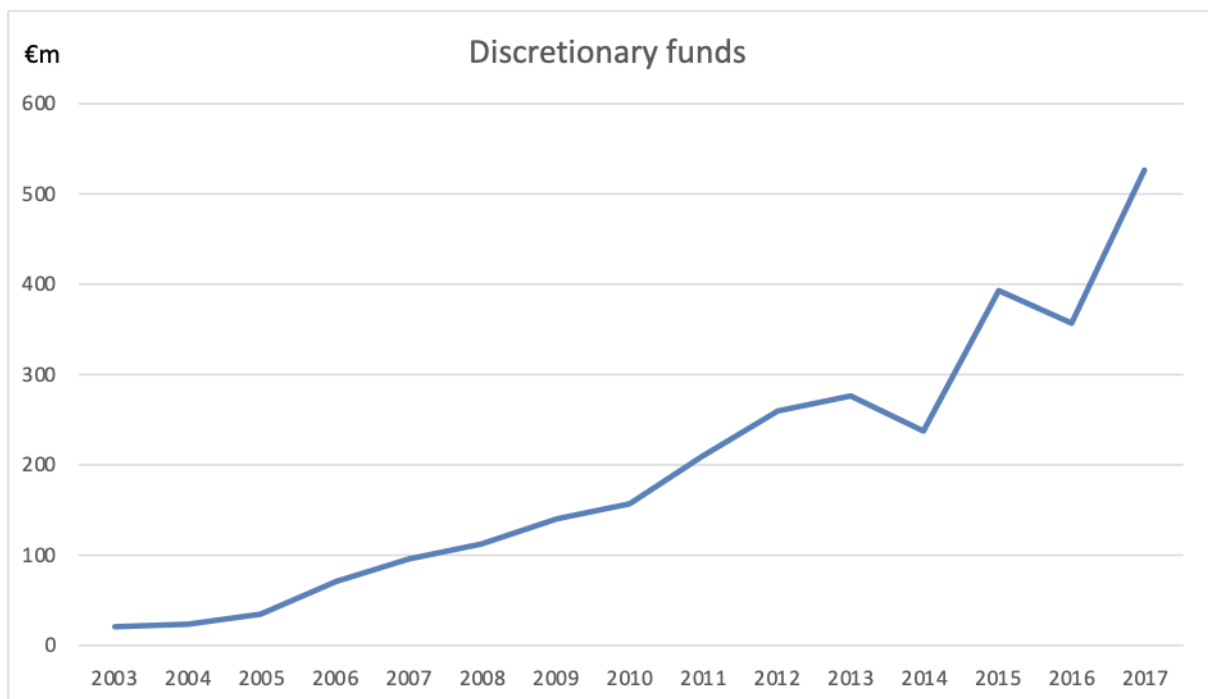


Figure 7. Discretionary funds between 2003–2017 in million Euro. (Data collected from Ministry of Finance’s BUMKO department monthly bulletins.)

In 2017 alone, almost 2 billion lira (525 million euros) was spent for “national security” issues as decided by Erdogan and the prime minister; an amount that had quadrupled in ten years (BUMKO 2017). This amount is also equal to the MIT’s entire departmental budget for the same year. Discretionary funds have always been a contentious issue in Turkish politics due to their entirely unaccountable nature, but this also put a certain degree of pressure on prime ministers not to overspend. As the AKP unprecedentedly centralised political power, broad use of discretionary funds became less controversial. Certain security practices, especially extraordinary ones, have the ability to be

completely excluded from open discussion because they are legitimised through security rhetoric which enables “black security boxes” to be created in the political process (Buzan et al. 1998, 28). Due to the AKP’s expanding definitions of “terrorism” and “national security”, which broaden the possibility for a variety of actors to be treated as a threat, legitimising such increases in unaccountable security expenditure through public funds becomes less cumbersome. In this way, the government successfully solidifies the existence of a black security box that is free of any political liability and immune to any type of scrutiny. And this is in fact done not despite the law or by suspending it, but *through* it. The undefined “extraordinary services” that the president requires and pays plenty for through public resources to uphold “national security” become an unquestionable part of the ordinary political process and institutional structure. Public wealth becomes an area whereby the one-person executive can not only re-distribute these resources through formal state mechanisms to bolster internal security vis-à-vis the military but also unprecedentedly take advantage of opaque distribution processes in the name of security.

The implications of insecure property rights on economic development are well established (Apolte 2019). Politically, the deterioration of these rights and the extended reach of the executive in this area can be seen as elements feeding off and driving the autocratisation process. When expropriation practices are legitimised through security discourse, any kind of dissent can be turned into a potential security threat as well, so it becomes unimaginable to challenge the systematised wealth grabbing publicly. Institutionally, under “normal” circumstances legislation signals the commitment of the government not to expropriate, therefore alleviating associated risks to economic and political systems (Wright 2008). Similarly, institutional constraints on the executive lessens expropriation risks, therefore lowering the risk of potential political instability (Jensen 2008). The judiciary would similarly act as a constraint to prevent executive overreach and to signal that property rights are properly enforced (Lagace and Gandhi 2015). Under post-coup circumstances, however, “the state of exception” became the political operating ground in Turkey. Already weakened institutional restraints could not hold off against the securitising expressions, punishment by expropriation, and unaccountable

security spending, regardless of their potential grave damage to economic or political systems. While the legislative arena was largely bypassed, the judiciary became supplementary to the executive rule. The result was a hybrid institutional setup, into which Turkey's neoliberal capitalist system was consolidated but without the expected protections from the potential volatilities of the executive. The market is supposedly competitive, but having public and private resources remaining under the heel of the executive is distinctly authoritarian.

7.2 Increased control over the socio-political domain

This section is on the second auxiliary mechanism that establishes how the AKP government restructured the socio-political domain to increase oppression, delegitimise new political discourses, and ultimately securitise dissent. This mechanism goes in parallel with the security sector mechanism, triggered in 2007 when the old hegemony and the new elites had a visible confrontation. In steps, it illustrates the reactive sequences that enhanced the AKP's power at the expense of other relevant actors. It also demonstrates how a failed promissory coup can aggravate an autocratisation process, and the ways in which post-coup securitisation can be utilised as a tool to both eliminate dissent and source legitimacy to be able to sustain a competitive authoritarian regime.

7.2.1 Old hegemony's extra-parliamentary ways

In parallel to the military's e-memorandum in 2007 threatening an intervention over Islamist politician Abdullah Gul's presidential nomination, the Kemalist hegemony organised and mobilised its supporters to take to the streets. The Kemalist circles were growing increasingly suspicious of the AKP government's "real" intentions and felt heavily threatened by the possibility of political Islamists controlling both the legislative and executive branches (Gursoy 2017, 151). They were clearly also fearful of losing political power. The office of presidency was designed to be symbolic but the institutional setup regarding this political position, especially strengthened during military

government times, endowed the president with broad discretionary powers over high-level appointments as well as certain veto powers (Hale and Ozbudun 2010, 40). The military's distrust for the multiparty system resulted in an institutional order whereby a politically, in fact also criminally, unaccountable president became the mechanism of constraint over elected civilians. This system not only enabled hardline Kemalists to take office but it also worked to co-opt politicians from the semi-periphery of Turkish politics (such as the Democrat Party tradition) by including them into the power centre. This way, the existence and the powers of the presidential office became one of the constitutional guarantees for the preservation of the hegemony. The Kemalist system enabled an unelected office to amass considerable political power but did not anticipate the holder of such power one day emerging from the opposite camp that was deemed unco-optable. As this office of tutelage came under the risk of being captured, the old elites fervently presented it as "the last citadel" of the republic that "should not be surrendered" (Ozbudun 2007).

As the political arm of the hegemony, the CHP, was fighting in the parliament against the AKP's presidential aspirations, millions were called onto the streets as a show of force by various civil society organisations. The so-called Republic Marches took place in major cities such as Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir in the spring of 2007, and drew millions of participants, largely from middle-class urban backgrounds. The organisers called people to the streets "to protect the republic" and the pro-secular masses responded. The protests were distinctly anti-AKP but the aims of the crowds were at times ambiguous. Although some supported the military's fresh e-memorandum and called for a military intervention to "save the secular Republic" (Hale and Ozbudun 2010, 40), many chanted "Neither Sharia nor a coup, a democratic Turkey". It was observed that many speakers at the rallies seemed to argue extreme nationalist and secularist views (Sommer 2007, 1275). Many attendees, however, seemed to agree on their anxiety over the AKP's emerging and future policies but without demanding extreme action from the hegemonic bloc. There were no major fissures among the group but it can be said that the movement was disharmonious and ad hoc, which arguably prevented it from developing into a tool for long-term dissent against the AKP as it appeared in 2007.

Nevertheless, the protests were the first “mass mobilisation of secularism” in Turkey where masses were successfully galvanised under the republican banner (ibid). By 2007, there had been no major AKP policies aiming to capture fundamental institutions but there were issues arising over staffing of state agencies with partisans, and pro-religious expressions over the management of daily life by AKP politicians, which were seen as subtle signs of increasing Islamisation (Somer 2018). The Kemalist elites harvested the worries of large groups of urban constituents over the Islamised socio-political sphere and capitalised on the republic’s growing rift between the secular and the Islamist to use against the rising AKP. Suspicions over the AKP’s Islamic past were vigorously expressed by the CHP, and the mainstream media as well as the Kemalist intelligentsia consisting of nationalist-secular journalists, members of the judiciary, academics, and civil society groups joined in.

Political Islamists in Turkey do not come from a tradition of protest or “street action” and their political strategy has been mainly about working within the system to change it. It is possible that this fact makes it more difficult for politicians such as Erdogan to perceive protests as a legitimate expression of dissent. But it also makes it easier to convince their similar-minded constituents that the protests are affairs manipulated by elites rather than standard political events reflecting genuine grievances. Erdogan described the protestors as “manufactured crowds” controlled by those who “want to play ideological games” (Haberturk 2007). It was explained in detail in section 5.4 of the thesis how the AKP used the tactic of agitation to galvanise its constituents as a response to the reaction of the Kemalist hegemony in 2007. In addition to already mentioned soundbites, the argument of “manufactured crowds” also came up frequently during the election rallies in reference to the Republic Marches. Erdogan drew a clear distinction between those masses and the people who “walk with love and passion” to his rallies, implying that his supporters are not forced by higher forces to attend but do it out of their own devotion to the party (Hurriyet 2007b). I emphasise the argument regarding agitation due to its, perhaps unexpected, success against entrenched institutional behaviour. Veto players are defined as such because they are powerful owing to their access to broad veto capabilities regarding formal and informal rules. Though, however broad these capabilities are, they

will not be all encompassing or absolute. This means that these actors might not enjoy their veto strength vis-à-vis certain institutions as much as they do with others (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 19). For the AKP, this promising arena in which to manoeuvre was “the streets”. Although, as discussed before, the AKP came to power through a successful elite alliance, it was not a powerful enough coalition, yet, to displace existing institutional rules in favour of the incumbent. So, the AKP’s underdeveloped political clout did not suffice to challenge the Kemalist status quo. One institution where the AKP had the prospect of legally and legitimately implementing a promising strategy of change in their favour, however, was elections. Therefore, they adopted effective campaigning tactics of which Erdogan’s oratory skills and rhetoric were the most evident. During the rallies for the 2007 elections, Erdogan mostly directed his attention towards consolidating the AKP’s core constituents, which consisted of the urban working class and provincial underclass, through emphasising the party’s subaltern history and qualities. By also consistently emphasising the AKP’s democratic characteristics as opposed to the Kemalists’ “ideological games”, Erdogan depicted the old hegemonic bloc as undemocratic and presented himself as the counter-hegemonic leader. Analysing these rally speeches demonstrates that Erdogan’s references to the AKP’s democratic credentials do not stretch far and are largely about being winners of elections. Nonetheless, in an environment where veto players have a history of institutional meddling, he did not need to appeal to voters with thick descriptions of democracy. At the end, the AKP not only won the 2007 elections but it also increased its share of the vote by 12 per cent.

The AKP’s electoral victory in 2007 is a good example of failed securitisation. Political Islam had already been a securitised issue, as discussed before, so it was not a complicated exercise for the elites to signal danger in a dramatic way and move to deploy an urgent response to take on the issue. The AKP’s rise was declared as a threat to the existence of secular and republican order, and people were called to defend it through street marches. Although the call was answered, it was not enough to result in policy or behaviour change. Securitisation can be deemed successful if there is an observable change or action at the end against the threat that was raised (Floyd 2015).

Considering that the military did not follow up on their memorandum and the elections were lost by the Kemalist bloc, one can talk about a failed securitisation exercise here. It also shows that the acceptance of an existential threat by an “audience” does not always matter for securitisation to be successful or complete, as opposed to what some literature argues (e.g. Buzan et al. 1998). Additionally, what happened afterwards, which was a reactionary autocratisation process, is also a good case demonstrating how the “winners” of a failed securitisation can divert their attention to pacifying or capturing institutions the securitising actors utilise or are embedded in, so as not to be confronted with such challenges again.

The Republic Marches were only one branch of the extra-parliamentary forces the old elites gathered to slow down or halt what drives their existential anxiety from becoming a reality. Following the 2007 elections, they continued to utilise veto players to be able to manoeuvre in the political arena. The CHP was forced to the opposition ranks, without any possibility of regaining incumbent status in the foreseeable future, while the AKP had the parliamentary majority. The party simply did not have the required numbers or the political influence to challenge the AKP and its policies in the legislative arena. To contest the AKP, the party instead continued to lean on tactics such as judicial activism and maintaining close ties with the military, which were characterised as undemocratic but nevertheless rational as they allowed the CHP to display a degree of power (Ciddi and Esen 2014). Engaging actively with the Constitutional Court was the most visible of these tactics.

Established after the 1960 coup d'état, the Turkish Constitutional Court was designed as the highest judicial body, which was to be insulated from political pressure of elected officials (Shambayati 2004). It had been, however, a distinctly political institution. Under the Kemalist hegemony, it allied with the military and claimed the judicial guardianship role of the regime (Tezcur 2009). So much so that it preserved the borders of acceptable political activity by having the authority to oversee political parties and the power to dissolve them on an ideological basis, which it had done a few dozen times (Kogacioglu 2004). With “the last citadel” of the republic in AKP hands, the Constitutional Court was increasingly seen as the only remaining institution that the CHP could employ to leverage the AKP and block change. Considering that the

judiciary is one of the actors charged with interpretation of rules, it has an especially large role to play in shaping institutional evolution (Mahoney and Thelen 2010, 14).

The headscarf ban for women studying in universities was one of those issues where the Court, at the behest of the military, used its legal authority to controversially interpret the laws to render, several times, the ban to be constitutional. Following its major electoral win, the AKP revived the issue in early 2008 and added a minor wording change to the existing equality law, effectively lifting the ban. The CHP took it to the Constitutional Court claiming that it contravened the unamendable articles of the Constitution regarding the secular nature of the republic. A few months later, the Court decided in favour of the CHP and declared the AKP's amendment null and void. In addition, as the headscarf case was under review, a prosecutor submitted an indictment to the Court demanding the closure of the AKP and the political ban of 71 of its members, including Erdogan and Gul, arguing that it had become the centre of anti-secular activities. Although the CHP was not directly behind the indictment, the party implicitly supported the process through various public statements (Ciddi and Esen 2014). The Court issued a swift majority judgment with ten out of 11 judges concluding that the party indeed acted in contradiction to the principle of secularism and exploited religion for the purposes of political influence. It fell short, however, of the supermajority required to order the party's dissolution with only six out of 11 judges ruling for the closure. As a sanction, the Court ordered the AKP's state funding to be cut by half. Considering the AKP's parliamentary dominance, the case was the most controversial and politically invasive closure case reviewed by the Court, and was one of the last serious attempts of the old hegemony to defend the Kemalist institutional setup in a direct way. During the legislative period covering between 2007 and 2011, the Court handled 44 cases brought by the CHP challenging AKP policies on constitutional grounds, and mostly ruled in favour of the CHP on diverse issues ranging from pension reforms to municipal student scholarships.

The consequence of winning the elections but fighting the combative hegemony was twofold. Through agitating and galvanising its constituents, the AKP continued to increase its legitimacy through elections thus its power to

alter the status quo in various ways, but it also increased oppression towards dissent while becoming more inward-looking. Firstly, the AKP saw the extra-parliamentary means of challenging its power as a fight for survival and the closure case as a “judicial coup d’état” so it engaged all its capabilities to be able to endure it (Kuru and Stepan 2012, 110). The party relied on what the veto players tried to undermine but could not directly affect, which is the constituent power. The hegemony’s strict approach to issues and securitisation attempts failed to weaken the approval of the AKP’s policies by its supporters, and even alienated some of the CHP constituents. As a result, the AKP had the leverage to publicly undercut the Court and the CHP’s authority. It did so in two ways: with public statements portraying the CHP, therefore the opposition bloc, as the undemocratic allies of the tutelage coalition, and with institutional layering. For example, regarding the headscarf ban, the AKP government could not legally appeal the court ruling so it instructed the Higher Education Board, which regulates universities, not to take any adverse measures against universities allowing these students in. The Board’s ultra-secular president had been replaced with an AKP ally a few months before. Therefore, the ban was de facto lifted without any structural changes to the existing rules. Although it does not displace old institutions, such institutional layering can be quite effective in bringing incremental but significant change if rule or behaviour revisions compromise the reproduction of the original core (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). While the Kemalist hegemony managed to preserve the status quo over the secular nature of the republic via court rulings, it could not prevent the introduction of new behavioural changes regarding these judgments making them obsolete under socio-political realities. As these changes accumulated and became multi-sourced, they disrupted the systematic reproduction of the old order. This does not mean, however, that the AKP was hesitant to directly engage in institutional shuffling; it used both mechanisms. If direct change seemed costly or unnecessary, it resorted to institutional layering and once it became “safer” to engage in a more hands-on fashion, it did so too. By 2010, as the old hegemony’s extra-parliamentary ways kept on failing to produce real change, a more confident AKP initiated constitutional amendments to tweak the judicial order to curb the hegemony’s remaining powers. Approved through a referendum – once again the AKP

resorting to its constituent power – the legal changes restructured the Constitutional Court and enabled the President and the AKP government to appoint new judges. As a result, the Court swiftly became “friendlier with the AKP political line” and the insiders argued that there was “no entry opportunity for new Kemalist judges”, practically eliminating the hegemonic power and therefore the veto player status, of the Court (Celep 2012, 387-8). By doing so, it also effectively dismantled the symbiotic bond of the Court with the CHP, facilitating parliamentary dissent to be marginalised in the political arena.

The consequence of this reactionary process between the AKP and the old hegemony during this time was the AKP’s sobering realisation that the opposition elite groups were a “significant threat to its security and well-being” with the potential to deploy extra-parliamentary measures by mobilising their supporters as well as loyal institutions (Gursoy 2017, 155). Claiming that it was focusing on its survival without any energy to devote to auxiliary issues, the AKP abandoned the EU reform process never to restart it (Lagendijk 2012, 175). It instead became more inward-looking, polarising, and less tolerant towards dissent. Although the AKP managed to deconstruct the old hegemony, its own hegemonic project failed to fully materialise. A subaltern group taking power should not only “dominate” but also provide cultural and moral “leadership” to fulfil any hegemonic aspirations and create conditions for the ruled to accept and adopt its worldview (Gramsci 1971, 57). While the pre-2007 era could be counted as a time period where the AKP’s hegemonic appeal was more visible due to its political and economic reformism, later it shifted its political strategy to establishing a “limited hegemony” (Ozden et al. 2017). Meaning, “dominating” became the more salient characteristic of the AKP’s rule and concerns over garnering consent became secondary. Concomitantly, utilising coercion as a tool of domination became less problematic. As explained in section 6.2 of this thesis, in this same period of time laws were redesigned to increase the authority and the material capabilities of the police. Coupled with judicial restructuring and the weakening of the military, the rise of the police gave the government the ability to define the borders of the socio-political realm and punish those who did not adhere. The police violence during May Day celebrations of 2008 and 2009, similar shows of force by the

police during Women's Day marches, the Tekel protests in early 2010, and the 2011 Hopa protests, among others, and all associated court trials of these protests could be counted as the first incremental steps towards securitising dissent. These are in addition to the "natural" enemies of the state such as the Kurdish movement, which had also seen increased criminalisation of its activities as the laws were expanded to include a wide range of political expressions under illegal acts.

With the expansion of the definition of "terrorism" in the penal code, the prosecutors and the police started to act as a unitary institution not only to punish those deemed to be terrorists but also to define which person or what action could be constituted as such (Aydin 2011b). As the legal changes gave unprecedented discretionary power to both prosecutors and the police, the indictments were not required to be bulletproof with an abundance of evidence to prosecute for a grave crime like terrorism. Instead, insubstantial evidence, anonymous tips, or statements from secret witnesses started to fill both police files and legal indictments. This kind of extraordinary discretion and legal flexibility is possible largely due to the weight notions such as "national security" and "terrorism" carry. As these crimes against the state's existence are claimed to be committed, it becomes possible for a "state of exception" to be created whereby "the terrorist" falls within the scope of an exceptional legal order (Agamben 1998, Akca 2014). Securitisation literature already showed that such exceptional orders can indeed be established within un-exceptional legal systems (Floyd 2015). The restructured laws established the groups/actors who would be included in and excluded from "regular" socio-political life. As the new ruling class's threat perception and law-making powers expand, the excluded expand too. The political adversary is criminalised, which results in delegitimising a variety of actors including bureaucrats, journalists, academics, students, etc. (Akca 2014). The police, with its increased coercive and institutional powers during this period, became an actor charged with distinguishing between the regular citizen and the terrorist. Under such circumstances, the AKP moved further away from any possibility of power-sharing or negotiating, overturning the effects of initial political reforms. Coupled with these developments, this time period, which Erdogan described numerous times as the era of "new Turkey", witnessed

serious attempts to strengthen the government's control over social life through anti-abortion laws, stricter press freedoms, absorption of religion into the national education system, anti-alcohol regulations, and internet censorship, on top of unrelenting dispossession of natural and public spaces. These political and social interventions of the AKP's decade-long rule eventually brought about a bottom-up movement, the Gezi protests, which the next section will delve into.

7.2.2 Uprising, new discourses, new enemies

This section will examine the subparts of the causal mechanism concerning the increased control over the socio-political realm following the AKP's increasing oppression around 2013, which culminated in collective action in the summer of 2013 when the government's newly enhanced security apparatuses presented themselves in all their grandeur. The uprising failed to emerge as a genuine counter-hegemonic movement or create substantial political change for several reasons but it revealed the existence of a desire for engaging with certain new discourses in the socio-political arena such as green politics, gender equality, civil rights, expansion of liberties, and among others. 2013 was also the most serious cut-off point for the AKP government to attempt to appeal to a broader set of political groups. After this point, all pretence of reform was abandoned, to be replaced with authoritarian means to control the socio-political sphere. The AKP concentrated on centralising its power and fully consolidating its conservative constituent base. Attacking all discourses and actors that emerged out of Gezi bolstered the AKP's polarising rhetoric, facilitating delegitimisation, and paving the way for securitisation, of all political dissent.

The Gezi protests started on 28 May 2016 in the centre of Istanbul in the Gezi Park adjacent to Taksim Square, and turned into the largest and most politically significant anti-government uprising in Turkey's recent history. Social movements do not emerge out of a vacuum. As in all social processes, a variety of incidents, which in their individuality have little significance, can accumulate to attain a critical mass to trigger change (Pierson 2004, 13). By 2013, the AKP government had effectively curbed the political power and

institutional reach of the military and other auxiliary veto players, but had failed to replace them with an arrangement that would enable meaningful political power-sharing. Instead, as demonstrated so far, the state institutions were taken over and the security sector was restructured and empowered to both aid this process and subdue the backlash. As the academic world and the foreign media were still resisting to understand the early signs of authoritarian behaviour for what they are, those inside Turkey were grappling with an emerging socio-political reality remoulded in the AKP's majoritarian-conservative vision. Local antecedents of the Gezi protests include the effects of both neoliberal transformation of economic relations and attempts to shape societal and state-society relations (Koc and Aksu 2015, 8). These attempts could be non-exhaustively listed as state-sanctioned police violence in peaceful gatherings, most specifically the May Day celebrations, Erdogan's aggressive rhetoric on reproductive rights and attempts to ban abortion, introduction of anti-alcohol regulations, policy changes to increase religion in school curricula, crackdowns on local movements working to stop fast dispossession of natural resources, increasing censorship and pressure on the media, brutal suppression of workers' rights movements such as the Tekel workers resistance, selling off cultural heritage sites, and radical gentrification processes especially in Istanbul that displaced masses, among many other separately inconsequential events. It is also important to note the global context and the Arab Spring and Occupy movements that were sweeping across countries in the early 2010s. Although what propelled them was fundamentally localised grievances, the Gezi protests could be placed and understood in this international milieu of anti-system movements against both inequality and limited liberties.

The Gezi protests did not start as an anti-government movement, but made a mark in Turkish political history like no other collective action. When the AKP government announced that the Gezi Park was going to be demolished to make way for a shopping mall designed to look like Ottoman military barracks, there was no country-wide backlash. By now, urban restructuring and such mega-projects of the AKP had become everyday realities. This specific project, however, was also "symbolic of the neoliberal-Islamic engineering of society and space under the AKP government" with its

insistence on tearing down one of the last green spaces of central Istanbul to build yet another shopping mall contracted to the new economic elites (Gurcan and Peker 2015, 57). A few dozen locals who were already active in the urban grassroots movement set up tents to prevent the demolition of the park in late May 2016. The reaction of the police attempting to disperse the crowd was in fact not out of the ordinary. By 2016, as discussed before, the police had accumulated enough material capability and legal remit to violently dispel crowds. Taksim Square was an especially contested area where police presence was almost constant and political gatherings had previously been banned. However, unlike other mass gatherings such as May Day where unions and civil society show their full force, the quiet sit-in in the park was small and innocuous, which made the police's response to it especially disproportionate. As soon as the protestors started their sit-in and set up their tents, the police charged in with pepper spray and water cannons. Hess and Martin (2006) argue that such repressive events can lead to "backfire" if these events are publicised and perceived as unjust, which can result in greater mobilisation for the movement. Similarly, police violence can specifically unite previously separate groups who would collectively perceive the presence and actions of the police as "illegitimate and alien" (Reicher 1984, 13). The photographs from the first day of the sit-in and the police crackdown were widely shared through social media and other domestic and international communication networks, which resulted in capturing the moral outrage that galvanised the movement (Anisin 2016). The government's strategy to defuse the mobilisation involved more repression, which resulted in failure to control the backfire. Such failures and the early group actions signal opportunity to others by revealing the degree of discontent and potential for action which were not previously evident (Tarrow 1998). The use of digital tools aided the protestors in conveying their message not only domestically but also internationally, and to rapidly amass large numbers of other protestors, which empowered the Gezi movement (Tufekci 2017). Within a few days, almost all cities in Turkey had solidarity protests and marches, while the numbers grew exponentially in Istanbul. At the end, the official numbers suggested that around 2.5 million people attended the protests around the country.

If the perceived injustice over a peaceful sit-in to save trees sufficed to

bring people onto the streets, what kept on mobilising the masses after the early days were over but the anti-riot police teams continued to be deployed? Scholars argue that perceptions of injustice, social identity, and belief that such action can resolve grievances propels collective action (van Zomeren et al. 2008). Gezi evolved to become a movement bringing together a variety of grievances resulting from perceived injustices, and created a larger social identity (“the Gezi protestor” or *Gezici* in Turkish) encompassing, but not devouring, other identities. The movement successfully integrated diverse perceptions of disparity, discrimination and disadvantage under a common injustice frame (Sofos 2014, 139). The protestors were mostly young but came from a variety of backgrounds, political affiliations, and social strata. The masses largely consisted of a mixed-class generation who had spent their formative years under the AKP and who were promised the fruits of the party’s economic miracle but instead found themselves in an increasingly precarious economic existence. More importantly, their already limited liberties were being curtailed further by a government that seemed to insist on altering the societal fabric in their image of morality and “proper citizenship”. And it sought to enable these alterations through increasing coercion rather than consent or consensus. Whereas such coercion was visible in the pre-2013 period, it was limited to select groups of dissenters. With the Gezi, however, the peaceful tactics of the protestors were responded to by excessive police force, taking the AKP’s coercive structure right into the heart of Istanbul and the capital Ankara for all to see and for unified dissent to be embraced.

What happened in the summer of 2013 was unexpected for the AKP government. As it continued to lean on its constituent power for legitimacy and to equate majoritarianism with democracy, it failed to perceive the growing dissent. Dismissing the movement was the first tactic and these tactics only grew more aggressive afterwards. In the first days, Erdogan declared: “Do whatever you want in Gezi Park. We have made our decision and will implement it” and “I do not need permission for these [plans] from the CHP or from a handful of looters. Those who voted for us have already given us that authority” (Hurriyet 2013). By 2013, the AKP had already abandoned the EU-anchored liberal reform agenda so it did not have anything tangible to gain (but possibly a lot to lose) from addressing this emerging collective resentment

and engaging in dialogue with those who essentially wanted less AKP and a freer society. Additionally, now the threat the party perceived against its survival was not just elite-based but a mixture of elite and mass-based. Therefore, it resorted to placing the Gezi movement in a framework of conspiracies that enabled it to completely reject the existence of popular grievances (Gurcan and Peker 2015). The protestors were accused of being paid by certain civil society organisations, such as the Open Society Foundation, as well as foreign governments, such as the UK and Germany, also by the CIA and private capital groups; of being deceived through mind-control techniques; of collaborating with Jewish conspirators and an ominous “interest rate lobby” that worked from international power centres to destroy Turkey. Erdogan utilised polarising and securitising language that gradually intensified and relied on his oratory power and galvanising rhetoric. He held National Will rallies where he identified the protestors as terrorists and his own supporters as the true citizens ready to also flock to the streets, to which the crowds responded in chants such as, “Lead the way and we will crush Taksim” (Milliyet 2013). The pro-government media aided in this agitation and repeatedly depicted the events as a “civil coup”. Erdogan’s approach to demobilise the movement focused on an Islam-based rhetoric stigmatising the protestors (mostly as drunken deviants) and the polarisation became “self-propagating, personalized, and based on negative partisanship and fear” (Somer 2018, 54). Two sides were created: those who supported the AKP’s understanding of national will, and all other enemies of the state, whether real or imaginary. This perception was separated far from what the movement was about and also from reality in general, but was nevertheless successful in creating a cognitive universe where “every critic became an evil conspirator” (Gurcan and Peker 2015, 123).

In addition to the magnitude of the unrest, it is likely that the sources of this mass-based threat rattled Erdogan the most and consequently triggered his strategy to strengthen the pro-AKP bloc while marginalising all “other”. Unlike the Republic Marches that were spearheaded by the Kemalist elites, the Gezi movement was unique in its plurality. It brought together ideologically opposed and even conflictual groups “that were not just agnostic of each other but also antagonistic with one another” (Ors and Turan 2015, 456). These

groups included Kurds, Alevis, Kemalists, liberals, environmentalists, various civil society organisations, feminists, Muslim socialists, LGBT, nationalists, blue- and white-collar workers, among others. This also meant the group was virtually “leaderless”, which bolstered its legitimacy (all people(s) vs the government) and the emergence of a variety of new discourses but also hindered its capability to turn into a political movement, which will be discussed later.

For two weeks in June, the police withdrew from the small Gezi Park, but not Taksim Square, allowing the protestors settling in the park to create a temporary community, seeing it as “an ideal image of life in a dream world” where dissent was unified under the Gezi banner and political rivalry was transformed into solidarity against a common opponent (ibid, 457). The rosy scene of a postmodern self-regulating commune in the middle of Istanbul did not last long; the police intervened, demolishing and burning the tent city and violently dispersing the settlers. Protestors’ attempts to reclaim the park have been aggressively rebuffed. The Gezi Park and Taksim have become areas of absolute police control. It became impossible to use disruptive tactics on the streets and the violence seemed to be unceasing. After the police emptied these contentious spaces, officers were instructed to hang two giant Turkish flags on the square while chanting “All for the motherland, our blood is for the motherland”, almost like reconquering lost lands, demonstrating the government’s perception of the events as a battle (Temiz 2013). Within a month of the start of the Gezi uprising, at least eight protestors were killed by the police and thousands were wounded. The government’s unprecedented use of excessive police force to suppress the movement where it started and take control of the public spaces compelled the movement to spread out throughout the city(s) and re-consider its tactics.

In an attempt to sustain the movement without daily clashes with the police, the idea of public forums emerged. Protestors began to meet in neighbourhood parks all around the main cities to discuss local problems, vent frustrations over wider issues, and talk about possibilities for future political action. This was a logical alternative to organise and keep up the momentum without the loud action street protests caused. In these forums, many ideas were discussed and decisions were made. They provided a space where the Gezi

groups started “learning to talk to each other” after decades of ideological separation (Bakiner 2014, 73). The forums in big cities, held at night, were lively and portrayed the diversity of the Gezi identity. Many expressed their acute realisation of abuses long experienced by the country’s minorities, such as Kurds and Alevis, now that they experienced it too. Forums made it clear that both the economic and socio-political transformation of the country and the coercive restructuring to sustain it have been well understood by all those who witnessed it first-hand. It became also evident both with the Gezi and the forums that there was an enormous eagerness to talk about a band of political agendas; not only green politics (as the primary idea ignited by the Gezi) but also gender equality, civil rights and liberties, and press freedom, among others. With the Gezi, these ideas (some of them being previously ignored as fringe) became properly visible in a society where political debate had hitherto been based on binary orders of Kemalist-Islamist, leftist-rightist, etc. Both the protests and the forums not only held together a variety of political agendas but also expanded the limits of these agendas through an unprecedented level and intensity of dialogue (ibid).

By September 2016, the intensity of the movement had waned and participation in forums dwindled. The excessive violence and the inaccessibility of “the street” created a defeatist mood. The plurality of the movement and the colourfulness of the forums became one of the elements hindering the movement’s ability to institutionalise and persist as a serious counter-hegemonic organism vis-à-vis the incumbent AKP. The reason is twofold, and due to both the movement’s participants and the existing political parties. In the forums, for example, motions regarding creating a political party out of the Gezi movement were consistently rejected. This was largely due to people distrusting or disregarding the extant party system as a means to resolve their grievances as well as certain groups’ larger than life ideas, such as a revolution. Although the solidarity did not cease, the heterogeneity that helped the movement to flourish inhibited it once everybody sat at the table to decide on the future. Therefore, a party like Syriza in Greece or Podemos in Spain, which were born out of popular movements and successfully articulated their anger and demands, could not emerge in Turkey (Ozen 2015). Secondly, the parliamentary opposition completely failed to capitalise on the movement.

The CHP, as mentioned before, had no organisational role in the Gezi and did not participate in the protests as a party. Although the CHP expressed its support to the movement and its deputies occasionally visited the protests, support felt and remained superficial with deputies arriving for photo-ops and usually leaving when police intervention started, despite protestors' pleading for them to stay in solidarity, hoping that the presence of parliamentarians would dissuade the police from using excessive force. Ultimately, the CHP could not genuinely connect or interact with the protestors, who already largely felt alienated by them, and missed its chance at this critical point to provide a vehicle for alternative voices and common dissent (Sofos 2014). The CHP proved to be unwilling to articulate a broader political discourse that would go beyond the secularist-Kemalist ideology and that would utilise the momentum of the movement, which could have significantly grown its constituent base. Instead, the CHP remained a conservative actor wary of these emerging discourses and opted to defend its existence through its traditional means of conducting politics.

The only political group that managed to tap into the momentum and, although in a complicated way, engaged with the Gezi was the Kurdish political movement. A popular politician from the pro-Kurdish party, Sirri Sureyya Onder, was the first high-profile figure to present himself in the park on the very first day of the protests when there were only a small group of environmentalists, and physically stood in front of the bulldozers poised to tear down the park. In his now famous words, he declared that he was “also the deputies of these trees” and encouraged everybody on social media to come to the park, which provided the protests with the required visibility by forcing the media to report on the events (Genc 2016, 46-47). The sentiment was not immediately shared by the Kurdish political movement as the Kurdish peace process between the PKK and the government was still ongoing and the party presumably wanted to tread carefully not to dismantle years of excruciatingly slow-moving progress. The HDP (Halkların Demokratik Partisi – Peoples' Democratic Party) had been established in 2012 to bring a variety of Kurdish and socialist political groups under one banner but did not yet have a clear electoral strategy. In October 2013, it officially announced its establishment during the first party congress and revealed its logo – a big tree. On the stage

next to the logo, a motto appeared: “This is only the beginning”, which had become one of the most heard slogans during the Gezi protests. There were repeated references to the Gezi; the speaker Onder said to the crowd: “Our salvation should come from within. It is now the era of barricades. We were beautiful when angry [during Gezi], now are even more beautiful when unified” (Onus 2013).

The Kurdish movement shifted its priorities from strict identity politics promoting minority rights to establishing wider support through a broad-agenda party encapsulating many of the Gezi-legacy discourses. The HDP is still fundamentally an ethnic party with a core aim of accomplishing Kurdish rights and increased regional autonomy. But the party’s manifesto prominently features not only minority rights, but also environmental activism, workers’ rights, animal rights, gender equality, LGBT rights, refugee rights, a pro-science stance, and disability rights, among others (HDP 2014). Campaigning with the slogan of unity in diversity, the HDP fielded a uniquely diverse pool of candidates for the 2015 elections, including devout Muslims, socialists, and minorities, and established a 50% quota for female and 10% quota for LGBT candidates (Czajka 2016). This strategy of grasping the momentum of the protesting masses and attempting to institutionalise Gezi’s grievances markedly benefitted the HDP in the first post-Gezi general elections, when it won 13.1% of the votes and broke the AKP’s majority in the parliament. The HDP managed to make significant gains not only in its traditional bases in the Kurdish south-east but in all major cities, which was unprecedented for a pro-Kurdish rights party. But it also captured the ire of the AKP and paved the way for re-securitisation of the Kurdish issue and concomitantly the securitisation of all dissent in general, which will be elaborated on in the following section.

7.2.3 Securitised dissent

This section introduces the last subpart of the auxiliary mechanism and delves into how the AKP government increased its control over the socio-political sphere as part of its autocratisation process. When the AKP was threatened by the emerging discourses in the Gezi coupled with the magnitude of the

protests, it leaned on coercive tactics to demobilise the protests and used securitisation to de-legitimise these discourses and the grievances. While demolishing what was left of its alliances with the liberal bloc, it created new enemies out of the Gezi movement. As a result, the following years witnessed further executive aggrandisement and the emergence of a bipolar socio-political arena. The failure of the parliamentary opposition to create appropriate strategies to combat the process of autocratisation aided the AKP government's aims to strengthen its rule. The coup attempt of 2016 hastened the course of autocratisation by solidifying "the state of exception" where securitisation of dissent became one of the main pillars defining the AKP's governmental *modus operandi*.

The Gezi protests in 2013 were a threshold in the sense that the combination of elite attacks, which the AKP had been battling seriously since 2007, and a mixed-class movement significantly increased the AKP government's threat perception and consequently its reliance on openly authoritarian policy instruments (Gursoy 2017, 155). The movement shifted the dynamics of the AKP's "coercive dilemma": it went from perceiving the Kemalist elites and the military as the dominant threat and eliminating them accordingly to perceiving masses as part of the threat and optimising the coercive institutional network appropriately. As discussed in previous chapters, after the Gezi, laws were redesigned to expand the definition of terrorism and to increase the authority of both the police and prosecutors to discipline and punish dissent. Calculating that the AKP needed the coercive support of institutions such as the police and MIT, especially after the elite alliance completely dissipated, the government faced strong incentives to invest in them. The police's material capabilities were increased to control physical spaces of dissent and prevent the re-emergence of a mass movement. The securitising rhetoric during Erdogan's counter-Gezi "National Will Rallies" presented the protestors as "looters", "vandals", "plunderers", "rascals", and "terrorists" to be dealt with. In contrast, Erdogan portrayed himself as the leader of the "average Turk" demonised by the elites, the moral opposite of those who were protesting: "According to them we are uneducated, ignorant, the lower class, who has to be content with what is being given; meaning, we are a group of negroes," he exclaimed, drawing on his familiar

populist script aiming to appeal to his constituents' feelings, self-branding himself as one of them, and creating a sense of victimhood (Ferguson 2014, 78). Erdogan successfully mobilised his supporters and, on an increasingly unlevel playing field marred with electoral fraud allegations, continued to win elections after Gezi. This way, through its "ballot-box reductionism", the AKP managed to interpret the election results as a clear vindication of its authoritarian reactions in the socio-political arena and as a licence to carry on its survivalist agenda and policies (Gurcan and Peker 2015, 159). The consequent actions to bolster the coercive and surveillance capacities of the state demonstrated that the government did not need to rely on the military's coercive capabilities to sustain order, and pushed itself further from democratisation, even when political demilitarisation was fully achieved.

When the country entered the election process in 2015, it was a tension-filled, polarised socio-political environment with anti-terror laws excessively being used to prosecute political opponents. The number of terror suspects almost doubled and the police continued to be deployed to quash civil gatherings, sometimes to deadly ends (Atak 2015). Despite the suppression, there was a clear gap to be filled by a social force that could fuse together the perceived grievances and dismay of the dissent. As discussed before, the HDP attempted to fill this gap. The party's charismatic, tech-savvy, and young co-presidents Selahattin Demirtas, a lawyer, and Figen Yuksekdag, a female journalist, carried out a campaign that promised an egalitarian new deal while directly targeting Erdogan as their opponent. Demirtas announced the party's campaign motto during a statement that was only, deliberately, a few seconds long: "With one sentence I would like to remind all Turkey the key to resolving all issues, and I want to make a promise on that. Dear Recep Tayyip Erdogan, we will not make you the president," referring to Erdogan's plans to capture the parliamentary majority with the elections to be able to change the constitution to implement a presidential system (HDN 2015). The HDP did not completely abandon its ethnicity politics and indeed campaigned on them in the south-east, but overall it appeared to have transformed the Kurdish political movement into an almost catch-all party aiming to unify voters beyond identity politics. With the HDP gaining 13.1% of the votes in the June 2015 elections, despite winning with 41% the AKP lost its parliamentary

majority for the first time since 2002. What followed was a short but intense process of re-securitising of the Kurdish issue, re-igniting a military conflict, delegitimising political opposition, and the subsequent re-capturing of the votes through a successful securitisation act.

Due to the AKP's portrayal of the ballot box as the only arbitrator in politics, winning the elections was crucial. More important, however, was sustaining the now consolidated institutional system and the concomitant networks of power the AKP established and ruled over. Therefore, one should understand the effects of a lost parliamentary majority of the AKP from this perspective. Although the elections were won, the loss of votes was perceived as the declining legitimacy of AKP rule, which signalled insecurity and uncertainty for the AKP elites. As its source of legitimacy stemmed solely from the votes, the AKP could not dismiss the election results. It is argued that if authoritarian regimes are aware of their declining legitimacy, they can deploy various strategies to remedy the situation, such as references to ideology, nationalism, performance, tradition, or charisma (Lambach 2019). The election itself provided the AKP with reliable information about the level of dissent and unpopularity so it had the opportunity to respond with a mixture of modes of legitimation. During the campaigning process, Erdogan relied on long-established ideological rifts, as usual, but it also clutched onto nationalist rhetoric to undermine the HDP. This meant that the Kurdish peace process, started in 2009 by the AKP government, had to be sacrificed. The AKP had initiated the peace process, dubbed "the Kurdish Opening", with the goal of complete disarmament of the PKK and resolving the long-lasting Kurdish issue. Rather than a genuine democratic resolution, however, it could be argued that the AKP's aim was to co-opt the Kurdish population, increase its voter base, and transform the state's policy of denial of the Kurdish identity into a policy of control through recognition of it (Aktan 2014). Still, although it has been limited in its results, the Opening process witnessed the de-securitising of the Kurdish issue, de-tabooing of certain matters – such as the Kurdish language – and some degree of normalisation in state-minority relations (Kayhan Pusane 2014).

Prior to the 2015 elections, as Erdogan became more aware of the rise of the HDP, his formerly de-securitising language emphasising commonalities

between the Kurds and the Turks was swiftly replaced by a more traditional security language. The AKP gradually disowned the peace process and Erdogan outright rejected the agreement that was reached between the government and the PKK in February 2015. After losing the AKP's majority in the elections, instead of dismissing the election results Erdogan used parliamentary tools to block coalition negotiations and used his executive powers to launch a military campaign in the south-east against the PKK. In the meantime, he portrayed the HDP as "a project of foreign powers" and an existential threat to the state, and emphasised that an HDP electoral victory would mean the downfall of the country (Kurgan 2018, 315). Securitising actors do not usually refer to themselves as the referent objects in danger, as it is rarely successful to do so, but they often present themselves as the defender of a bigger object whose existence is threatened (Buzan et al. 1998, 40). Although the HDP was clearly only a political threat to the AKP, Erdogan characterised the HDP as an adversary to the country as a whole by equating his party with the state. Pro-AKP vigilantes attacked and destroyed HDP offices in several cities and many HDP members were taken into custody due to being accused of terrorism-related activities. The re-ignited conflict with the PKK, as well as the terror attacks carried out in major cities by ISIS during this period, created a climate of uncertainty and anxiety in Turkey where the AKP could persuade the population that political continuity and the strength of the AKP would be the only formula for the situation not to deteriorate further. For example, Erdogan stated that if the AKP had managed to form a single-party government as a result of the elections, "we would not be having these events today", referring to the political violence witnessed right after the election (quoted in Kurgan 2018, 319). Justifying it with the failed coalition talks, Erdogan called for a snap election, in which the AKP regained its parliamentary majority by capturing 50% of the votes.

Here, it is important to emphasise the role of the parliamentary opposition in aiding both the successful re-securitisation of the Kurdish issue and the delegitimising of dissent. From the beginning of its tenure as the main opposition party in 2002, the CHP failed to create policy alternatives to those of the AKP and depended on demonising all that was the AKP, resulting in a perception that the CHP became an advocate of "opposition for the sake of

opposition” (Ciddi and Esen 2014, 422). In 2007, the Constitutional Court opened closure procedures for one of the HDP’s predecessor parties, the DTP (Demokratik Toplum Partisi – Democratic Society Party) which was represented by 21 deputies in the parliament, due to its alleged links to the PKK. During the closure process of the DTP, the AKP, although it was dealing with the same undemocratic veto player, remained mute about the case and the CHP tacitly backed the Court, emphasising that the party acted as “a political arm of a terrorist organisation” (DW 2007). The DTP was permanently closed in 2009. As a result of repeated bans on the parties it establishes, the Kurdish political movement opted to designate independent candidates to overcome the 10% electoral threshold during the 2007 and 2011 elections. Although clashing with the AKP on major ideological fronts, the CHP did not refrain from forming ad hoc pacts with it to attempt to pass legislation that would restrict Kurdish politicians from running as independent candidates. In the same way, it never seriously challenged the 10% threshold rule itself in the parliament. The CHP, under heavy-handed leadership, remained rigid in its anti-Kurdish and ultra-secularist agenda, and saw any liberal position towards issues of minority rights and identity as “heresy and challenging the holy writ of Kemalism” (Ciddi 2009, 147). The CHP’s ideological inflexibility and opportunistic outlook to preserve power at the expense of other opposition groups became productive conditions under which the opposition failed to tackle the rising power and the pernicious authoritarianism of the AKP early on.

Even under a new, more progressive leader since 2010, the CHP could not truly transform itself; it continued to be perceived as pro-status-quo, radically Kemalist, reactionary, and heavily bureaucratic, which resulted in its continuous stagnation at the ballot box. As discussed before, the CHP failed to capitalise on the Gezi movement and the emerging discourses. Following the Gezi, however, there were some bottom-up attempts to rectify the CHP’s blemished image and modernise the traditional mechanisms of the party. In early 2014, young members of the CHP declared intra-party disobedience, citing a growing internal democratic deficit and marginalisation of progressive candidates. Certain party bureaucrats picked up on the dissent and invited CHP members to “occupy” the party headquarters, which they did for several

days (Draege et al. 2016). The Occupy CHP movement was not suppressed but was rather co-opted, with its figureheads experiencing the party leaders “assimilating [them] into their own agenda” without implementing any of the intra-party changes the members were protesting for (ibid, 7). Eventually, the Occupy CHP dissipated as its organisers distanced themselves from the party and it did not result in any structural changes in the party’s core.

Instead of revitalising the party by naming progressive candidates, creating a reformist discourse and innovative campaign strategies, the CHP leadership resorted to politicking that attempted to discipline not only the AKP but also the rest of the political arena. In early 2016, following the intensified military campaign against the PKK in 2015 and the HDP’s loud dissent against it, the AKP government introduced legislation that would strip elected deputies of their parliamentary immunity. The proposed amendment aimed to temporarily revoke the immunity of parliamentarians who already had criminal charges against them. The law undeniably targeted the HDP lawmakers and Erdogan made it clear in his speech that the law was not about wanting “to see guilty lawmakers in this parliament, especially the supporters of the separatist terrorist organisation” (Yeginsu 2016). The amendments could not pass without the non-AKP parties’ support in the parliament and the CHP lent a hand by announcing it would support the bill, ensuring its effortless passing. This parliamentary pact resulted in criminal investigations being opened on dozens of HDP deputies and 14 of them were removed from their positions. It also paved the way for a number of HDP politicians, including the party’s co-presidents, to be arrested on anti-state charges following the coup attempt in July 2016.

Overall, the CHP not only failed to advance itself as an institutionalised vehicle capable of unifying or vocalising dissent, it also failed to shed its illiberal roots and improve its undemocratic credentials. This is not to argue that the political responsibility for the autocratisation process solely rested on the CHP. It is, however, safe to argue that its impermeable and unadaptable institutional character prevented it from becoming an effective social force against the ruling party that would merge non-AKP voters as well as convince AKP voters, which contingently enabled the AKP to capture state institutions unchallenged and exert increasing power over the socio-political arena. This

case is also a good example showing how inviolable established political behemoths can be and how historical legacies affect institutions. Although the CHP describes itself as a social democrat organisation, it is a deeply nationalistic and statist party, as so far demonstrated. As the republic's first party, it delineated the borders of acceptable politics in Turkey. In other words, it never had to resort to revisionism or transform itself to challenge the status quo, as the party itself was the status quo, and therefore it became ideologically rigid (Ciddi 2009). A legacy that can be traced all the way back to the end of the Ottoman times, the preservation and aggrandisement of the state has become the core of the CHP, preventing it from adapting its promises or strategies in accordance with the emerging political realities and changing voter preferences. The conservative institutional makeup of the party has been so resistant to change that neither innovative actors, such as Occupy CHP, nor progressive leaders could make a meaningful dent in its entrenched core norms and behaviour.

As described so far in this section, the socio-political environment in Turkey preceding the July 2016 coup attempt was already defective. Especially after 2013, human rights reports consistently documented criminalisation of dissent, prosecutions against political opposition, arbitrary use of vague anti-terrorism laws, mass incarceration of journalists, and abuses of the police (Bakiner 2017). The military tutelage's grip on the socio-political arena was effectively replaced with the increasing control of the executive branch, which used its restructured judicial system and coercive apparatuses as a tool to exert and maintain that control. When the coup attempt took place in July 2016, the legislative and behavioural groundwork for securitising opposition against the AKP government had already been established. The aftermath of the coup and the prosecution in the military ranks have already been discussed in Chapter 6. Here, I will focus on the mechanism that ended with securitisation of all dissent in the time period of approximately one year following the abortive putsch.

The dramatic and violent nature of the coup presented an excellent platform for an "authoritarian performance" by Erdogan to legitimate extreme

steps.⁶ Securitising actors portray the issues they aim to securitise as threatening the breakdown of the referent object, such as the state (Buzan et al. 1998). A coup is such an event that is easily portrayable in a drastic manner as a threat of drastic nature. On the night of the coup, Erdogan prompted his supporters to take to the streets and defend democracy. Erdogan's spirited call to the masses was accompanied by the mosques, through loudspeakers on minarets, summoning people to public places to show strength and protect the president in the name of Allah and the Quran (Gambetti 2016). Thousands heeded the call and flocked to the streets. Encouraged by this president-sanctioned appeal to stop the coup, people jumped on tanks and attempted to lynch soldiers. Erdogan demanded that people not leave the streets, even after the coup had failed, resulting in weeks-long pro-government show of force demonstrations in major cities. Within a few weeks, with the announcement of the state of emergency, many executive decrees were passed, to punish not only the coupists and Gulen-affiliated institutions but a variety of dissident actors. Although a coup is an extreme event with an abrupt result (success or fail), Erdogan portrayed it as an incessant fight: he declared that the decrees were "to take measures against the terror threat that our country is facing" as part of "a battle of cleaning out viruses" inside institutions (DW 2016). Securitisation requires this kind of specific and dramatic way of using language to emphasis the urgency and importance of the issue so that acting in extraordinary ways can be easily legitimised. As of the end of 2017, the state of emergency had been extended five times and more than 115,000 public employees were dismissed from public duty for life for posing a national security threat, without being allowed to access any of their accrued employee benefits (Akca et al. 2018, 7). In addition, a total of 5,822 academics were expelled from universities, usually due to the deans of departments informing the authorities of suspected criminality of their staff. These academics were not only banned from public duty for life but were also prohibited from applying to private educational institutions.

As of the end of 2017, according to official numbers, 168,800 civilians had terrorism investigations against their names and 50,500 people were in

⁶ I thank my student Lukas Jung for coming up with this illustrative term in the context of Erdogan's authoritarianism.

jail for their terrorism connections (CNN Turk 2017). The number of people in prisons jumped by 163% between 2002 and 2014, and another 46.8% between 2014 and 2017 (TUIK 2019). With its 232,000 prisoners in 2017 (a number that has continued to increase), Turkey occupies the top spot for the highest prison population in Europe. In addition to jail time, the criminal courts increasingly resort to the legal mechanism, originally developed to protect underage offenders, called “deferment of the announcement of the verdict” which allows courts to defer by five years the jail time of defendants who received less than two years of sentencing. If they do not re-offend, the sentence is automatically dropped. According to Justice Ministry numbers, this mechanism was used almost for half a million cases in 2017. The system is a win-win for the state: it allows prosecutors to file terrorism charges against even minor acts of dissent (such as anti-government social media posts) and the courts to punish the act without sending regular citizens or higher profile academics/journalists/etc. to prison. The accused citizen, generally a first-time “criminal”, gets intimidated by the process and the potential prison sentence, which usually results in effective self-censoring of dissenting opinions.

As already seen with the examples provided above, I argue here that the securitisation process not only targeted the small number of coupists who were in fact present during the day of the coup and its planners. The coup and the subsequent state of emergency provided an opening for the government to amalgamate all of the threats the AKP government perceived and present them as one unified national security risk to handle them with all the executive and coercive authority “the state of exception” brings. This process of merging was quite literal: “We have countless statements, documents and information showing how deep the cooperation between FETO [Gulenists], PKK and ISIS is (...) The abortive coup is trying to be revitalised through the PKK” (TCCB 2016). These types of statements Erdogan made in the wake of the coup demonstrated his intention to pursue the Kurdish political movement. Not long after, 24 municipalities run by the HDP were taken over by the state due to the allegation that the mayors had provided logistical or financial aid for terrorism. New mayors and administrators were assigned to these municipalities by the state. This practice was used for the first time in Turkish

political history, including the military government eras, where elected local officials were replaced by appointed bureaucrats. By the end of 2017, 94 such municipalities were run by appointed administrators and 68 of the ousted mayors were in prison. Shortly after the coup attempt, nine high-profile HDP elected politicians, including the co-presidents, were also arrested under anti-terrorism act for their speeches on the parliament floor. Two CHP deputies would also be arrested later on.

Through creating a punitive state and punishing thousands of civilians belonging to a variety of professions and socio-political backgrounds, the AKP managed to create an environment where the citizens either support the government or risk being accused of taking part in terrorism if they do not. Under “normal” circumstances, it would be farcical, for example, to imagine a reputable university professor logistically aiding a genuine terrorist organisation, but securitising rhetoric helps bridge the gap between real and imaginary when “reality becomes no longer sufficient” (Lipschutz 1995, 9). It is important for securitisation to be successful and meaningful that an “other” is created to help specify the actors and conditions of insecurity (ibid). This “other” represents what is different, thus, what can be marginalised and dehumanised, so their political expressions can be delegitimised and punished. As demonstrated in this section, as the AKP government expanded the definition of terrorism, the “other” included a myriad of groups and came to be equated with “terrorist” – a loaded term that certainly signals danger and therefore eases securitisation. Erdogan’s accumulated power and capacity to represent the state means he can be the one defining who “terrorists” are (“Sovereign is he who decides on exception”) and does so in his speech acts: “Fight against terror is a matter of life and death, we are not dealing with only one terror organisation. All those who stand against this nation’s values are terrorists,” he declared (Torun 2017). Through punishment, sacking, or merely going through criminal investigations, these “terrorists” are reduced to “bare life” that is amenable to the sway of the executive’s power and are excluded from the socio-political realm while still being included in the communities they live in (Agamben 1998; Vaughan-Williams 2008). It is indeed the power of the sovereign to exclude and abandon “the included” to continue to exert coercive power on these groups and reproduce order in the overall socio-

political realm.

While establishing its punitive state, the AKP government expects active participation of its citizens, engages them in the building of the new limited hegemony, and creates “proper citizens” who will decrease their risk of turning into bare life if they participate. As discussed before, community policing programmes that were enhanced are good examples of the AKP’s citizen-building efforts. After the coup attempt, the police announced that it had set up special phone apps and websites where citizens could inform them about online users, provoking fear, panic and chaos. Erdogan urged citizens to come forward with information: “I am telling you to out them. Tell about them to prosecutors. This is a patriotic duty. Intelligence agencies can’t know about everybody, police can’t know about everybody” (Sozcu 2016). Following this statement, the police and MIT collaborated on creating and managing a tip line specifically designed for citizens to report on terrorism suspects. During rallies, Erdogan greeted supporters who told him about their suspicious neighbours. Certain pro-government newspapers set up their own terrorist tip lines and informed their readers about how to properly collect and provide information to the police on their family members, co-workers, and acquaintances. After Erdogan urged mukhtars, who are elected village or neighbourhood heads, to “know who lives in each house of your neighbourhood and tell the nearest police station if they are terrorists or not”, the Ministry of Interior issued an order for all mukhtars to have “security meetings” with their respective governors each month to report on the security status of their areas (Tartanoglu 2016). All these state-driven lateral surveillance mechanisms that bring the state into one’s home became part of the authoritarian AKP government’s toolkit to increase its control over the socio-political sphere (Yesil and Sozeri 2017). It is, however, not just about the state’s encroachment on personal life to suppress dissent; it is also about creating and reproducing dutiful and moral citizens, therefore defining what it means to be a disobedient and immoral one – the other.

As the last point, I briefly discuss the “myth-making” aspect of the coup and its impact on the restructuring of the socio-political arena. Securitising actors also contextually mobilise heuristic artefacts while securitising, such as metaphors, analogies, policy tools, stereotypes, and emotions to incite feelings,

sensations, and thoughts about the vulnerability of the referent object (Balzacq 2011, 3). When the coup attempt was underway, Erdogan and the AKP government, accurately, interpreted and portrayed the events as an effort to topple the government and the president. When the dust settled, the interpretation widened: in Erdogan's speeches, a grander picture of a conquest attempt and heroism began to be depicted:

In previous incidents of betrayal, the target was directly us or the government. This time, our nation, with its flesh and blood, was targeted. We should say it as it is: On 15 July, Turkey experienced a coup attempt, a series of terrorist acts, as well as an undercover invasion attempt (...) It was an attempt by those under the shadows to invade the last piece of homeland we have (...) Nobody should have any doubt that Turkish nation not only prevented a coup but saved its homeland from an invasion (...) This is our nation's second Independence War (TCCB 2016).

These types of emotion-filled speeches define the theme of Erdogan's rhetoric after the coup when the state of emergency was continuously extended. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the Independence War is the foundational myth of the republic and one of the historical imprints that empowered the military to exert political power. By expropriating this myth, Erdogan manufactures a war with enemies, an embattled leader and his people, and a victorious state. As the authoritarianism takes root and fundamental changes take place in the socio-political arena, the AKP government's need for legitimacy to sustain the regime increases. Reinventing legitimising resources, such as symbols and discourses, provides an opportunity in such cases of transformation (Lambach 2019). In the case of the AKP, this myth-making over the abortive coup as a thwarted invasion serves as a legitimacy tool to mobilise supporters, gain active consent, and consolidate AKP rule. The AKP is not a mere subaltern anymore but is the real and valorous owner of the country that saved it from collapse. The effectiveness of the new security complex over the society ensures that those who are not convinced by the new foundational myth would have to provide no less than their passive obedience. In this way, not only does it become possible to securitise all dissent and present it as a threat to be urgently dealt with, but also the entire socio-political system gets transformed to construct and reproduce this newly established order.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the auxiliary mechanisms this thesis aimed to develop to explain the autocratisation in Turkey and the emerging competitive authoritarian state setup. Through empirical evidence, I presented these two corresponding mechanisms showing how the economic and socio-political realms were restructured in parallel with the main security sector mechanism. The outcome of these two mechanisms is securitised wealth and securitised dissent, which merge with the phenomenon of full control of the security sector to provide a minimally sufficient explanation to understand the puzzling political trajectory of Turkey between 2002 and 2017.

Two auxiliary mechanisms discussed were triggered around 2007 when the old hegemony felt increasingly threatened by the rising new elites. Both mechanisms demonstrate a reactionary process where two actors resorted to whichever institutional tools they had to attain or maintain power. Starting from 2007, becoming acutely aware of the elite-based threat it was facing and thus wanting to resolve its “coercive dilemma”, the AKP started to invest in its own coercive complex to ensure loyalty and protection of civilian apparatuses such as the police and the MIT. As the economic resources of the military were taken away by the same government, the process of empowering a civilian coercive network became straightforward. Both the police and the MIT, and later on the Gendarmerie, benefitted from not only generous increases in material capacities, but also the laws that were passed to expand their authority and discretion. The strategy of bolstering coercive abilities of the new security complex became more easily observable following the Gezi protests in 2013, when the government’s threat perception shifted from an elite-based one to an elite and mass-based one.

When the AKP government sufficiently invested in internal security and its own security complex, it became more comfortable in breaking the elite alliance that had carried it to power. As these alliances loosened, the AKP centralised power around itself, which made more room for self-benefitting budgetary decisions. To build an economic network that would sustain its political power, the AKP focused on distributing rents to those who overtly supported the new regime. It is argued that democratising transformations can

succeed only if the cost-benefit calculations of the relevant actors make it rational for them to opt for a democratic system (Merkel and Wagener 2019, 45). Both the old and new economic elites had an opening to push for a more liberal system with advantages of institutionalised rule of law protecting their capital from arbitrary political interference, but ultimately they perceived that loyalty to the state elites in the form of maintaining close and personalised relationships would provide more benefits and wider access to state resources and major contracts.

As the economic decision-making gradually concentrated around the executive branch, it enabled the government to become the primary rent distributor, thus having the ultimate power to include or exclude certain economic actors from attaining wealth during the resource-sharing process. As the strongest of the former allies, the Gulen movement lost its financial resources on top of its political reach; it attempted to push back via a coup to reclaim its sources of power. When the coup attempt failed, the government not only punished those who had rebelled but also started an aggressive process to take over their resources. By the end of 2017, arbitrary expropriation of wealth became one of the tools used to punish the defiers of the regime and discipline dissent in the name of national security. In this way, wealth was securitised, which means that both public and private resources could potentially be handled under “national security”, therefore could become the purview of the state.

The second auxiliary mechanism demonstrated how the AKP restructured the socio-political domain to increase oppression, delegitimise new political discourses, and ultimately securitise dissent. As of 2007, the AKP increasingly utilised Erdogan’s mobilising rhetoric to agitate and galvanise, therefore increasing its electoral legitimacy vis-à-vis the old hegemony. The old hegemony and its associated institutions, on the other hand, resorted to extra-parliamentary measures and relied on veto players to impede the rise of the AKP. Such strategy had its advantages for the old hegemony’s party CHP as it allowed it to project a degree of power over the AKP but the AKP had the benefit of reaching certain domains where the old hegemony could not, such as voters, and being innovative enough to utilise institutional layering as a tactic to bypass veto players. Through legal restructuring, it tweaked judicial

order to take courts under its control, therefore eliminating a major leftover veto player. The extra-parliamentary mechanisms failed to impede the growing political power of the AKP, but the government became more inward-looking while increasing coercion towards dissent by using its newly structured security complex.

As a response to increasing social control and coercion, the Gezi unrest took place in 2013 as a collective street action against government policies that were perceived to be exclusionary, corrupt, and oppressive. The experiences with both collective street action via protests and direct democracy via forums provided an informative signal about not only the existence and intensity of anti-AKP sentiment, but also the existence and aspirations of groups who wanted to engage with broader political ideas and goals. While entrenched parties like the CHP failed to capitalise on the Gezi, other actors such as the HDP managed to take advantage of the desire for a new political deal. In the meantime, the AKP abandoned the EU-anchored reform agenda and continued to focus on centralising power and on buttressing its security complex to suppress expressions of dissent. Following the coup attempt in 2016, the government successfully managed to securitise not just coupists but all dissenting groups through anti-terror legislation under the discretion that a state of emergency confers on the government and the judiciary. Ultimately, through various institutional devices, the government increased its control over the socio-economic sphere. And through its expanded disciplining capacities, the government and its coercive apparatuses punished, intimidated, and surveilled those who did not fit the description of the AKP's dutiful and moral citizen. In this way, not only has dissent been fully securitised, but also a new socio-political order engineered by the AKP has been generated and reproduced.

8 Conclusion

This study's purpose was to examine a case of a transformation that scholars and observers alike have found puzzling. On the one hand there was a country located in the Middle East with institutionalised secularism and capitalism, and with strong linkages to the west but with a defective democracy, and on the other hand a non-hegemonic party that promised a democratic vision and economic growth. According to both modernisation and culturalist theories, these provided ripe conditions for potential democratisation. The AKP's economic programme yielded incredible results, such as an almost 200% increase in GDP per capita in a mere nine-year period, and was coupled with the party's reformist agenda consisting of ending military tutelage, which was of high importance for the proper working of a truly democratic system. The country's indicators of growth, wealth, urbanisation, industrialisation, economic security, and socio-economic development all pointed towards a "perfect take of economic modernization and globalization leading to democratization in a Muslim-majority country" (Sarfati 2017) and scholars, especially in Turkish academia, praising the early tenure of the AKP were explicitly or implicitly inspired by such a modernisation approach. On paper, Turkey should have remained autocrat-proof but in reality it became a "potentially theory-busting specimen" of an otherwise politically healthy regime becoming authoritarian (Brownlee 2016). What went wrong? In fact, nothing *went* wrong. Rather, the scholarly analyses failed to acknowledge *how* growth and modernisation via democratisation project took place. Modernisation theory falls short in explaining indicators that reveal a complex web of historical and institutional realities interacting.

Using a theoretical framework incorporating historical institutionalism, autocratisation, and securitisation, this thesis was an attempt to open the black box of causality between the beginning (2002) and the end (2017) of political transformation in Turkey, and explain the *how*. How did democratisation not follow political demilitarisation in Turkey? The analysis of the *how* explained the *why*. Why did the restructuring of the security sector, in parallel with restructuring economic and socio-political domains, result in an autocratisation process and the eventual establishment of a competitive

authoritarian order? I argue that the political demilitarisation process triggered a reactive sequence whereby the democratisation agenda was taking place in the form of institution capturing and institutional layering to the benefit of the AKP and at the expense of the old hegemony. This meant that while the civilian government self-empowered vis-à-vis the military and eliminated the tutelage system, which is imperative for democratisation, the concomitant executive aggrandisement meant that the process failed to produce markers that would be associated with democratisation. The gradual institution-grabbing by the civilian government and its victories over the hegemonic resistance generated more power for the AKP, which provided it with tools to capture more institutions, therefore political power. While the government centralised power, it became aware of the need to have its own coercive structure to be able to handle threats to the regime. It solved this “coercive dilemma” by fully restructuring the security sector: while the military’s powers were curbed, the police, the intelligence services and the paramilitary gained significant power, material capabilities, and institutional space. This restructuring enabled and augmented the autocratisation process. As the AKP was engaging in executive aggrandisement and elimination of accountability mechanisms, the coercive apparatuses were utilised in punishment of rivals or dissent, and in normalisation and reproduction of a new order. This thesis has established a causal mechanism which encompasses these steps in a systematic way.

The main security sector causal mechanism demonstrated the ways in which power was taken from the old hegemony, illustrating that from the beginning the political demilitarisation process involved a reactionary power struggle between the new subalterns and the actors of the old hegemony. This power struggle culminated in the outcome of a full takeover of the security sector where the civilian government, or the president, became the sole decision-maker. Although a prerequisite for it, this takeover did not produce democratisation as the historical prerogatives bestowed upon the military, including unaccountability, non-transparency, and power to securitise, remained untouched under the civilians’ control. Not only did the security sector’s workings remain opaque, but no power was shared among any relevant actors to prevent security-related decisions from being centralised in one all-

powerful actor. This process, although central to it, by itself is not sufficient for the explanation of emergence of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey. For this reason, I built two auxiliary mechanisms that complemented the main one. These mechanisms showed how, in parallel to security sector restructuring, the government increased control over the economic and socio-political spheres through executive aggrandisement and utilisation of the new security sector, resulting in securitisation of wealth and dissent. In these domains, through securitisation, potential actors of change are co-opted and loyalised, and everyone else is pacified. When they come together, these one main and two auxiliary mechanisms depict a sufficient picture illustrating the unprecedented autocratisation process in Turkey and the failure of democratisation in a hybrid regime. Ultimately, this thesis examines the instance of a civilian government subverting civilian control to accumulate power, and unfolds the incremental steps defining this process.

8.1 Summary of the study

To begin with, the causal mechanisms this study built operate within certain contextual conditions. Establishing such conditions set the socio-political and historical environment in which mechanisms take place, therefore providing the context, and providing social structures that have the capacity to constrain and enable agents of change (Beach and Pedersen 2016a; Kurki 2008). These conditions that produce “legacies” having causal impact on the recent autocratisation process in Turkey are defined as the imperial history of Turkey and its absolutist legacy, the experience of a revolution from above, and the military’s guardianship system. These three specific conditions are together necessary for the causal mechanisms of this study to be able to function. Firstly, the legacy of the Ottoman Empire was one of an army-oriented state in which power was extremely centralised and all political and societal functions were to reinforce the army. The army not only had control over the social sphere, it also wielded influence over the ruling elite. Although the republican revolution in 1923 came as an extra-legal anti-empire takeover of the state apparatuses, it was neither a bourgeois nor a peasant revolution; it was a revolution from above led by military-bureaucratic state elites seizing power

and ending the absolutist regime. As it was a top-down modernisation process, the subsequent state restructuring did not involve any confrontations or compromises that could potentially occur between societal forces and the power centre – as it did in Turkey’s European counterparts – therefore power remained centralised as it changed hands. The army, as the victor of the Independence War, remained at the heart of the state- and nation-building processes, and accumulated institutional prerogatives. The revolution from above brought about a system of guardianship, which gave the Turkish military the authority and the institutional capacity to “guard” the republic, its revolutionary ideals, and its foundational ideology. The military intervened multiple times to preserve the Kemalist regime, entrenching itself into the fabric of the state further with each intervention through institutions. The Kemalist hegemony made the military omnipresent and politically strong, without any power being dispersed, through a variety of actors that could provide checks and balances to the all-encompassing security structure. Ultimately the Kemalists built a strong state in an ideological sense but a weak institutional structure that would restrain centralisation or the emergence of a strongman. This is why, during the autocratisation process, acts of executive aggrandisement have been relatively uncomplicated for the AKP as Turkey’s constitutional makeup historically allowed arbitrary political power, repression of dissent, and restriction of rights.

If Turkey has been historically undemocratic with a problematic constitutional arrangement, then what is different with the AKP? The autocratisation process in Turkey between 2002 and 2017 is a distinct phenomenon whereby a popularly elected government subverted a democratisation agenda which then degenerated into a competitive authoritarian regime. Turkey did not revert to the authoritarianism of the single-party era, but into a competitive authoritarian state that maintains electoral institutions but erodes whatever democratic qualities the state possessed at varying degrees through the power it garners through them. Throughout this process, formal and informal institutions that either brought the party to power or regulated political power have been modified to firstly replace the old hegemony and then to sustain and reproduce a new regime setup. This is the novelty of the AKP’s tenure, which took Turkey into

uncharted political territories.

How was this process triggered in the first place? I argue that there were several interconnected explanatory variables resulting in a critical juncture and driving the mechanisms. For the causal model of this study to function, these actors should be at play: failed political elites culminating in a crisis of hegemony, an outside actor to work as an anchor, a repressed subaltern group, and elite alliances. These factors prompted the causal mechanisms while the transformative event, the critical juncture, of the 2002 elections provided conditions for these factors to have causal effect. Firstly, several decades of ineffective governing, corruption, and an economic crisis led to the Kemalist hegemony's first serious failure of garnering consent. The 2002 elections resulted in this failure turning into a crisis of hegemony whereby structures loosened up and increased the causal power of agency, hence prospects for divergence. Secondly, there should be an outside entity linked to the polity to serve as a political anchor. In the Turkish case, this was the EU and the membership course. The EU provided a platform for the AKP to run on, a tool for legitimacy, and a productive condition to take on security sector reforms to curb the military's powers. It continued to have a causal influence as the EU linkage was used as a populist device to bolster Erdogan's image as a leader vis-à-vis Europe after the EU-led reform process lost its momentum and functionality for the AKP. Thirdly, I argue that there should be a subaltern group to take advantage of a crisis of hegemony and take over. The AKP, consisting of political Islamists, formerly oppressed therefore experienced in political manoeuvring and survival, was such a group. It demonstrated exceptional adaptation skills and ideological flexibility that carried it through political ascension. And once in power, it subjugated opponents that could impede its institutional ascent. Lastly, an elite alliance is necessary for the subaltern to takeover state apparatuses. The AKP not only captured votes from a diverse group of constituents, it also managed to bring together a coalition of diverse and cross-ideological social and political forces consisting of actors with varying degrees of power. This exceptional and unconventional alliance formation bolstered the AKP's political demilitarisation agenda and many of the elite groups continued to support the AKP despite signs of autocratisation.

The critical juncture that started off the causal mechanisms was the

2002 general elections when the AKP came out victorious, capturing 34.28% of the votes but 60% of the seats, and wiping all other established parties except for the CHP off the political arena. My understanding of a critical juncture in this study is a more parsimonious one than those of other scholars examining Turkish political history. There is a tendency to describe each turbulent or surprising event as a critical juncture, which stretches the concept too thin. A critical juncture should signify a point of divergence from an established path so a new path can be taken, which becomes gradually more difficult to return from (Pierson 2004; Levi 1997). Otherwise, the concept would not have a connection to historical institutionalist discourse and could be used for virtually any decision-making point. The 2002 general elections and the AKP's consequent rise to power is an ideal critical juncture to study. It was the trigger moment denoting the point when the institutional setup started to diverge in discernible ways with significant consequences. There has been no other moment in Turkey's recent history that institutional divergence can be observed in such a clear fashion. During critical junctures, the role of agency becomes vital and there is more space for relevant actors to act as structures loosen up (Capoccia and Kelemen 2007; Hall 2016). The crisis of hegemony provided the permissive condition by easing up structural constraints, and the general support for the EU reform process and membership acted as the productive condition aiding the actors in picking the divergent option. As a subaltern repressed by the Kemalist hegemony, managing the military has been a crucial task for the AKP. During this critical juncture, several options emerged: it could accept the tutelage regime, it could attempt a confrontational approach, or it could initiate a civilianisation process by framing it as part of an overall democratisation agenda. The AKP picked the latter option and began an unprecedented legislative process of balancing civil-military relations in Turkey. There had been initial tit-for-tat between the AKP and the military, who had been wary of political Islamists holding office, but the AKP became aware of the futility of such confrontations and strategically utilised the institutional tools it had in its possession that the military did not have a direct authority on, which was the parliament, to initiate change. An expeditious legislative process of enacting several harmonisation packages containing hundreds of law amendments marked the end stages of the critical

juncture in 2003. These amendments paved the way for a significant decrease in the military's political power through diminishing the institutional reach of key tutelary entities, such as the National Security Council (MGK). By the end of the critical juncture, the decisive and swift action of the AKP drew the irreversible path toward political demilitarisation.

What followed the critical juncture was a reactionary process. A path-dependent mechanism following a critical juncture is not always linear; it can consist of an amalgamation of reactionary events whereby an actor gains power over others (Mahoney 2000). Considering that institutions are generally resistant to change (Pierson 2004; Jepperson 1991), and entrenched ones even more so, it was predictable that the military did not wish to go gently into that good night but still had to tread carefully against an increasingly popular party. In previous instances of military interference, the party was either popular but overtly authoritarian (such as the Democrat Party), popular but overtly Islamist (such as Erbakan's Welfare Party), or not widely popular (such as communist/labour movements). In this case, the AKP did not fit the bill; it was openly rejecting the political Islamist roots, committing to democratisation, and was popular among constituents. It took a hardline chief of military staff to openly react to the AKP in 2007, and civil-military relations started to become more confrontational. As the AKP was fighting in the parliament to nominate one of the top party elites to the presidency, which had been a crucial veto player institution for the Kemalist hegemony, the TSK announced in the form of an online memorandum that it would not shy away from performing its guardianship duties to protect the secular order. The military opted for this softer version of an intervention as a warning sign to the AKP. It did, however, miscalculate the fact that the critical juncture had already put civil-military affairs on a divergent path, and the balance was tipped towards the civilians to the point of no return. This meant that the military's capacity to successfully intercede in the regular flow of politics had been substantially curtailed, so the e-memorandum had the opposite effect and empowered the AKP further. Instead of directly confronting the military at the institutional level, the AKP opted for early elections to take matters to "the street", where the party's clout was considerably higher; a domain that the military could not directly influence. This type of behaviour can be considered

part of a calculated strategy that weaker actors take vis-à-vis strong veto players to be able to implement change (Mahoney and Thelen 2010). During the campaigning process, Erdogan heavily relied on agitating his constituents to mobilise them to vote and emphasised the undemocratic meddling “they” (Kemalist elites) were engaging in against “us” (people). Focusing excessively on the unfair treatment the AKP received reinforced its victimhood status against the old hegemony and garnered the sympathy of voters. The AKP won by winning 46% of the votes in the 2007 elections, becoming the first party in Turkish political history to have captured such a high portion of votes and confidence of the public to govern. Strengthening its parliamentary position and electoral legitimacy, the AKP then also started to build its own security complex by elevating the institutional position of the police through passing a set of laws widening its authority and reinforcing its capabilities while taking steps to civilianise the Gendarmerie forces.

The second part of the main security sector mechanism examined the period between 2009 and 2017 when the AKP became increasingly emboldened by its victories at the ballot box and pushed for further civilianisation reforms while firstly substantially weakening the bond between the hegemony and the military, and secondly eliminating potential threats to its rule. By 2009, the EU momentum was visibly lost but the EU-initiated agenda of balancing civil-military relations continued aggressively. The government not only took legislative steps to press on with political demilitarisation, it also took steps to actively punish the old hegemony. Together with its political and judicial allies, the AKP played an active role in the sensational chain of trials that witnessed the ending of the decades-long military tutelage. With the Gezi unrest shaking up Turkish politics and the AKP’s rule, the government’s threat perception shifted from being elite-based to a combination of elite- and mass-based. In order to reduce the cost of suppression, it enacted an expansive security bill to give unprecedentedly widened authority to the police with no oversight. This came hand in hand with financial endowments to the police forces that enabled their expansion and militarisation. At the same time, as the AKP centralised power around itself, it did not need the support of a wide coalition of social forces to govern. Moreover, it increasingly saw them, who had grown in power under the

auspices of the AKP, as a threat. After effectively eliminating the Kemalist hegemony, the AKP went after its erstwhile allies. The most formidable of these was the Gulen movement, with its noteworthy financial sources and public relations prowess, which was one of the key actors enabling the AKP's political ascent. Through a fierce battle over institutions, the AKP successfully curbed the ally threat, or so it thought, while loyalising the intelligence services (MIT) and the police forces in the process. These organisations then started to play an increasingly visible role as a coercive extension of the AKP by implementing the government's progressively more authoritarian policies and aiding the suppression of non-AKP actors. In 2016, the former ally Gulen movement, severely resource-strapped and disgruntled due to its exclusion from power- and rent-sharing, together with its backers in the military staged a coup d'état against the Erdogan government as a last resort to cling onto power. On the surface, it was a promissory coup with the undemocratic Erdogan clique as the main target. It was an explosive event, but not a critical juncture; it merely hastened the autocratisation process and did not diverge the AKP from its political course. Due to the lack of military unity or any elite and mass support, the coup attempt failed. What followed was a swift and aggressive process of taking over the remaining institutional privileges of the military, enabling full-fledged civilianisation. Ruling by decree, Erdogan proceeded to end the autonomous nature of the TSK, fully civilianised the Gendarmerie, shut down military hospitals and schools, took the MIT under his direct command, further bolstered the police, and took steps to strengthen para-police forces. Within a year, the AKP government had established full but undemocratic control over the security sector. Using Croissant et al.'s (2013) conceptualisation of civilian control over key decision-making areas, it can be argued that pre-2002 demonstrated a low degree of control of the armed forces. With the EU-led reforms, the civilianisation process took the degree of control to medium levels between 2003 and 2016. After the coup attempt and the executive decrees, the degree of civilian control increased to high with the government having control over essentially all aspects of the armed forces and its management. The high degree of civilian control and full political demilitarisation equalled undemocratic control in the Turkish case, as the change took place as a power struggle, while the lack of accountability

mechanisms and power-sharing remained.

The main security sector mechanism put the restructuring of the security sector at the heart of the government's agenda to increase its political power and coercive capabilities, which paved the way for competitive authoritarianism to take root. Through their restructuring of the security sector by curbing and overtaking the military's power, the civilians became the *real* decision makers in civil-military relations, which for Turkey meant they have become the *real* owners of political power. Through building a strong civilian security complex loyal to the government, it then ensured the establishment of its own coercive structure, which was easily co-optable, entirely controllable, and independent of any historical ties, unlike the military was with the Kemalist elites. The bolstering of this new security complex significantly lowered the cost of suppression for the new elites, therefore enabling and easing the autocratisation process. The security sector mechanism by itself, however, is not sufficient to provide a satisfactory explanation for the emergence of the competitive authoritarian regime setup. For this reason, I built two auxiliary mechanisms that complement the main one. These two mechanisms were both triggered around 2007 and are temporally parallel to the main mechanism; at the end they merge to reveal the outcome which is a competitive authoritarian Turkey. The mechanisms explain the two other domains that remain connected but outside of where *real* political power lay, which had been already captured by the AKP through security sector reform. They are built to illustrate that institution-grabbing was a multi-level process. Without a wider scale subjugation of institutions and actors, subverted civilian control per se does not suffice to explain how and why competitive authoritarianism surfaces, at least in the Turkish context.

The first auxiliary mechanism took a snapshot of the economy under AKP rule with a specific focus on security expenditures, co-optation of business elites, and centralisation of economic decision-making. It demonstrated how investing in its own security complex made the AKP comfortable in confronting the old hegemony as well as breaking the alliances that had carried it to power. Due to the fact that the AKP had the parliamentary capacity to control budgets of coercive institutions, it was a relatively quick process to tweak financial allocations to police and the intelligence agency's benefit and

at the military's expense, which ensured the new security complex's further loyalisation. As the hegemony crumbled and the alliances were loosened up, the AKP centralised not only political but also economic power around itself and became the main rent distributor. This meant that both the new and the old economic elites had to engage in cost-benefit calculations regarding their place in a changing regime. Large industrialists whose economic might precedes the AKP and who obtained privileges under the Kemalist hegemony had to manoeuvre on a treacherous road; the repercussions of their initial resistance to the AKP have been damaging to their economic interests so they devised new ways to handle the party and its increasingly controlling leader. The new economic elites, on the other hand, moulded inside an institutional legacy where historically the political elites actively worked to benefit the business groups they were ideologically attached to, anticipated the same perks from the AKP.

Ultimately, both groups were co-opted; the old elites remained generally mute while the new ones zealously worked to maintain the AKP in power through various spheres they could directly influence, such as the media and civil society. Instead of agitating or pressuring for a more open government and society that would be accompanied with diminished chances of corruption and arbitrary government interference, these actors of change opted to maintain their often personalised relationships with the government to be able to access state resources. Naturally, then, they had a stake in the regime's survival, which makes it difficult to argue that at any point in the AKP's tenure the rising elites could have generated a democracy-generating middle class, as has been theorised and established in democracy studies by Moore (1966) and the like. The fact that the AKP government became the primary resource distributor meant that it could include or exclude economic actors from the resource-sharing process, which the Gulen movement faced especially after 2012. This was one of the reasons that drove it into staging a coup, and when it failed, the government used expropriation of assets as one of the punishment measures, mainly against the followers of the movement but also for a variety of other dissenting individuals or entities. By 2017, arbitrary takeover of wealth in the interest of national security and anti-terrorism had become one of the salient characteristics of the AKP's

competitive authoritarian regime. This involved securitisation of wealth, which denotes that both public and private resources could potentially come under the domain of national security therefore could be treated with immediate and extraordinary measures directly by the state.

The second auxiliary mechanism illustrated how the AKP restructured the socio-political domain to widen repression, delegitimise alternative political discourses, and ultimately securitise dissent. Starting from 2007, as part of the reactive process, the old hegemony and its corresponding institutions resorted to extra-parliamentary measures and relied heavily on veto players to impede the rise of the AKP. The AKP, on the other hand, relied on Erdogan's mobilising rhetoric to galvanise the electorate and strengthen its electoral legitimacy while layering on institutions without overhauling them. Both sides innovatively utilised the institutional tools they had the capacity to exploit, but ultimately it only worked for the benefit of the AKP, which had the advantage of being able to frame its anti-hegemony efforts as democratisation. The extra-parliamentary tactics failed to impede the rise of the AKP but turned the party into an actor that is more inward-looking, polarising, and less tolerant of dissent. As part of its institutional capture, it also tweaked the judicial order to take courts under its control, thus stamping out another veto player.

Coupled with the judicial restructuring and the weakening of the military, the rise of the police gave the government the ability to define the borders of the socio-political realm and punish those who do not adhere. In 2013, the Gezi unrest emerged as a collective street mobilisation against the AKP government's increasingly authoritarian and corrupt policies. Although established parties such as the CHP could not meaningfully take advantage of the anti-AKP sentiment and its street manifestation for its benefit, other actors such as the HDP managed to create a discourse over the emerging desire for a new deal that is more inclusionary and more attuned to the demands of the marching masses. A threatened AKP, on the other hand, opted to further fortify its security complex by strengthening the legal and material capacities of the police forces and the intelligence agency. As the anti-terrorism laws expanded the definitions of the word "terrorism", paving the way for securitisation of a wider group of dissenting voices, the brutal suppression of the Gezi protests

demonised one of the last spaces for opposition – the street. The failed coup attempt of 2016 accelerated the autocratisation process by enabling the government to securitise all dissent, paving the way for a socio-political domain increasingly in the tight grip of the government with a loyal security complex acting as its coercive extension. Overall, the processes outlined here demonstrating the struggle over political, economic and societal institutions reveal a hard-fought battle of the AKP and Erdogan to undermine and ultimately replace the old hegemony. The AKP did not being its political adventure with the aim of establishing a competitive authoritarian state but the mechanisms it empowered to expropriate the military’s power and subjugate oppositionary forces culminated in a competitive authoritarian regime layout where spaces of democratic contestation are compromised, elections are free but unfair, civil liberties are violated, and the incumbent uses the powers of its office to have uneven access to state resources which he then utilises remain in power.

8.2 Evaluating an alternative scenario: a counterfactual exercise

Scholars defend counterfactual experiments as a useful tool to strengthen a causal explanation in a within-case analysis (Tetlock and Belkin 1996; Fearon 1991). The idea is that a researcher should justify why a specific variable or event or action caused the outcome in question by invoking counterfactual arguments about what would have happened in a hypothetical situation (Tetlock and Belkin 1996, 6). Although it is not a substantial weakness, small-n or single-n studies cannot control for variables or conduct large comparisons in the same way large-n studies can, which is a gap that can be closed by counterfactual reasoning (ibid). As elaborated in the methodology chapter, a counterfactual analysis is mainly a thought experiment, a “what if” probe, to assess whether or not the outcome would have emerged if one part of a mechanism or one aspect of the case is manipulated. It is a rewrite of the history but in a way that is as logical and as minimal as possible. A good counterfactual can look into “minimal rewrites of history” that take antecedent conditions into consideration (Lebow 2010). In other words, the thought experiment should be a conservative one, ideally not disturbing all the other

factors in an explanation while making as few historical changes as possible. Similarly, it should be consistent with “the empirical world” in which the events take place, and in line with logic, that is, “objective possibility” in Weberian terms (Kiser and Levi 1996, 187). In a quantitative study that has many interconnected variables and moving parts, such as this one, it might become cumbersome to formulate a coherent counterfactual, and the benefits could only be minimal (George and Bennett 2005, 230). Bearing in mind its limitations, I attempt a counterfactual play by manipulating the AKP’s electoral victory in 2002, which this study takes as the critical juncture that triggered the security sector mechanism (and others later) that evolved into an autocratisation process ending with a competitive authoritarian state setup. I put forward this exercise as cognitive tool supporting my analysis and acknowledge its possibly only minimal contribution to my mechanistic explanation.

“Events” are one of the aspects of the empirical world that can be altered in a counterfactual attempt (Kiser and Levi 1996). For this study, it is logical to handle the 2002 elections as the important event to be altered as the analysis put a heavy emphasis on its effects and the causal power it transferred into the variables. To be able to imagine that the AKP did not win the elections, one should imagine the non-existence of the reformist cadres within the Islamist bloc who would insist on establishing a catch-all party. In this case, Turkey would go to the 2002 general election with the three existing coalition parties as well as the political Islamist Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi – SP) belonging to the Erbakan tradition, the oldest party CHP, and a newcomer Young Party (Genç Parti – GP). The polls conducted prior to the elections indicated that the three coalition parties (DSP, MHP, ANAP) were frequently referred to by the electorate as “parties they would not vote for under any circumstance” (Erder 2002). Considering that the economic issues resulting from the 1999 and 2001 economic crises were at the top of voters’ agenda (Kalaycioglu and Carkoglu 2007), this attitude was not surprising. These parties were largely seen as being responsible for the economic downfall of the country and the heavy austerity measures that followed. It is then logical to assume that none of the coalition parties would have collected enough votes to pass the 10% threshold, regardless of the AKP’s existence. Although it did not belong to the crisis-

inducing coalition, the political Islamist SP was doing even worse at the polls, scoring a mere 2% (it received 2.49% at the election), which indicates it did not and would have not appealed to the electorate, as a party run on a purely religious-ideological platform.

This leaves the CHP and the GP. It was obvious prior to the elections that the CHP was going to cross the threshold and find seats in the parliament. The party, however, also ran on a mostly ideological platform emphasising the Kemalist ideals and the fundamentals of republicanism during the campaigning under an ideologically rigid career politician Deniz Baykal who had an outdated and conservative understanding of politics and a tendency to maintain a tight grip on the party (Ciddi and Esen 2014). Due to the fact that the CHP was a party representing Ataturk's legacy and the only social democrat one, and was largely seen as "clean" of the mess of the economic crisis, it is plausible to imagine that it would increase its votes to above 20% in the absence of the AKP. It is not plausible, however, to imagine a scenario where the CHP would collect above 30% to rule as the majority party as it did not present a credible and convincing economic recovery scenario, either during the crisis period or before the elections, that would attract large proportions of the population. It also always had an ambiguous stance towards EU membership, which would not have helped its prospects when the EU negotiations were increasingly seen among Turks as a positive pathway towards solving the country's economic and socio-political problems. There could have been one alternative, and this is manipulating an additional variable but I will engage with the idea nevertheless. The CHP could have presented a "new" face or a renegade could have emerged from within the CHP ranks to mobilise the party officials around themselves. This person could have organised their election agenda around the economic grievances while distancing themselves from the ideological rifts. The established party mechanisms could have been mobilised behind this new actor and a successful campaign to reform the CHP under a new leader could have galvanised the voters. This could have brought the electoral success that, for example, the Peronist outsider Nestor Kirchner experienced in 2003 general elections in Argentina when the electorate was equally ready to dismiss entrenched political actors but was successfully gathered around a charismatic leader who

promised an anti-establishment political and economic alternative (Sanchez 2005). Considering the disdain Turks had in 2002 for politicians with decades-long tenures and accompanying issues, this could have been a viable option for the CHP under the favourable climate of the era if the party had demonstrated a will or capacity to, even slightly, adapt.

This brings me to the last actor that would have had a shot at governing if the AKP did not exist – the Young Party (GP). The right-wing populist party was founded in the summer of 2002 by charismatic 37-year-old business tycoon Cem Uzan and was the “dark horse of the elections”, successfully capitalising on the anxious mood of the electorate (Ozel 2003, 81). The party had no real organisational structure but had seemingly vast resources through the personal wealth of Uzan which was used for mass advertisement and elaborate rallies for the party. His speeches were filled with populist promises that blended anti-establishment and anti-neoliberal rhetoric with nationalism (Kalaycioglu and Carkoglu 2007, 54). During the rallies, famous popstars would hold concerts and free meals would be distributed; Uzan unabashedly showed off his riches and promised the same to those who would vote for him. He was a young, extremely wealthy, and charismatic personality with no political history who had the means to undertake a well-designed election campaign that focused on seizing the moment and exploiting the climate of distress stifling the people. The GP’s audacious message found a sizeable audience: in the polls the party was scoring as high as 18% prior to the November elections. By the end of September, the pollsters were expecting the GP to be the only party managing to pass the threshold after the AKP and the CHP (Milliyet 2002). This success also corresponds well to research showing that in 2002 almost half of the population studied said a new party was needed in Turkey and 72% said a new leader was also needed (Erder 2002). So clearly, the key element here was the idea of politically untainted faces that could offer alternatives. This is why I believe that the GP would have entered the parliament with ease in the absence of the AKP, considering that it was the only newcomer offering anti-establishment policies packaged with nationalism. The GP at the end managed to capture 7.2% of the votes and failed to pass the threshold. Interestingly, a study showed that almost half of those who said they intended to vote for the GP in fact voted for either the AKP or

the CHP on the day of the election (Kalaycioglu and Carkoglu 2007, 175). The majority of the votes went to the AKP. Right before the election, the polls suggested that the GP was right at the 10% mark so it is argued by Kalaycioglu and Carkoglu (2010) that voters strategically switched their votes to the AKP, after having considered the possibility of the GP not passing the threshold. This further strengthens my argument that the GP would have comfortably won the votes of right and right-of-centre voters who were mobilised by the populist promises of Uzan. Overall, I argue that in the absence of the AKP, the only parties that would have managed to gather enough votes to pass the 10% threshold would be the CHP and the GP. A third party, such as the centre-right establishment True Path Party (Dogru Yol Partisi – DYP) coming from the DP tradition, which was in the previous government as the fifth party but not part of the ruling coalition therefore in the opposition ranks, could have possibly managed to just jump through the threshold. It polled at around 9% prior to the elections and captured 9.5% of the votes, losing them mostly to the AKP.

In all these combinations, with no one party strong enough to achieve a majority in the parliament, one can discern the likelihood of a coalition government if the AKP had not existed to enter the 2002 elections. This means that even if such a government would commit to the EU membership path, after all the previous coalition government did initiate the process, imagining a swift security sector reform like the one the AKP triggered is difficult. The CHP comes directly from within the Kemalist hegemony, so it is not logical to assume that it would have engaged with any action that would have disturbed the status quo and the guardianship system which had benefitted it since the establishment of the republic. The GP's Uzan had a conciliatory tone about the military during his campaigning and emphasised its crucial role in fighting terrorism. Uzan was a man whose wealth flourished under the Kemalist hegemony and who did not have deeply seated resentment or ideological quarrels with the regime hence it is not plausible to envision a sequence of events where his party would have pushed for the overhaul of the security sector. Uzan seemed more interested in seizing power and using it for self-enrichment rather than transforming the overall institutional structure. Similarly, although the relationship became more lukewarm towards the early 2000s, the DYP's leader Tansu Ciller, who served as prime minister between

1993–1996, was always regarded highly by the military command. One chief-of-staff found her to be the easiest civilian to work with, calling her “a tiger” (Cizre 2002, 92). Her tenure was marked by significant hikes in the defence budget. In short, she had a positive history with the military and a hawkish stance, which can inform one’s expectations regarding how her party would have behaved as a possible coalition partner.

Whatever the coalition partners would be, though, one striking aspect that would have prevented the security sector reforms from occurring in the first place would have been the coalition itself. The AKP used its parliamentary majority effectively to use the legislative arena to its advantage and managed to enact EU harmonisation packages in a straightforward and swift fashion. There has been no stalling and no back-and-forth, which would not have been possible with a coalition government. Once the AKP took on the role of the majority party, the legislative structure, almost akin to a winner-takes-all system, enabled it to use its majority status to garner more power to take on the veto players, which put the Turkish political history on the divergent course which ultimately produced the outcome I have explained in this thesis.

8.3 Limits of the study and avenues for further research

As discussed in detail in the methodology chapter (see section 3.1.2), the external validity of this study is weak due to its case-centric nature. Single-n studies and their “scientific” value have been subject to some scholarly debate (King et al. 1994; Gerring 2006; Bennett 2008). It is acknowledged that while such in-depth studies offer rigorous and robust explanations, they suffer when it comes to generalising from the single-n to a wider group of cases, therefore failing to generate externally valid inferences. This study took one specific case that took place under specific circumstances within a specific time frame, which means that it does not possess any authority to generalise its studied mechanisms beyond these confines. This is a limitation of the study, especially when the nascent debates on autocratisation or democratic backsliding are argued to be too fragmented and highly particularistic due to the prevalence of small-n studies (Cassani and Tomini 2019, 19; Lust and Waldner 2015, 1). It is indeed disappointing to be part of the general criticism regarding the

widespread presence of particularistic studies but it is perhaps natural to imagine that the early studies of a relatively new and growing strand of political science will include such in-depth studies to firstly make sense of the cases and the mechanisms involved. Once it is established that a case is indeed an instance of autocratisation, such as this one hopefully convincingly does, then a natural progression would be to compare it with the aim of pinpointing common determinants of the process which would lead to better theorisation. In this way, the growing literature would benefit from understanding whether a certain case, for example Turkey, is in fact an outlier among recently autocratised polities or if it fits well into a broader phenomenon. This study admittedly offers no such explanation, but a future study could build upon it to compare it with cases to see if the mechanisms developed here are replicated elsewhere.

My precise aim with this study was to produce a thick and systematic explanation of such a case which has high explanatory value and internal validity, but increasing the number of case studies as part of future work would also arguably remedy the external validity issue. I argue that the contextual conditions of Turkey make it a rather idiosyncratic case where many legacies are at play, but easing these conditions as well as reducing the number of “moving parts” in the mechanisms would enable meaningful comparisons with cases of autocratisation such as Hungary, Brazil, or Poland where executive aggrandisement can be observed whereby anti-establishment strongmen have been involved in highly effective institution-grabbing and institutional layering through securitising discourse and action. One interesting possibility would be to examine why, in Turkey, the autocratisation was an almost two-decade reactive process whereas in Hungary and especially in Brazil, the backsliding took place in a much swifter fashion. Comparing such cases through opening “the black box of causality” could potentially reveal the specific intervening mechanisms that determine the variety in the speed of autocratisation.

Similarly, my argument over the police’s role in the autocratisation process as the new protectors of the competitive authoritarian regime would benefit from being compared to other cases. Do autocrats always tend to boost their civilian coercive apparatuses such as the police, the intelligence services,

and the paramilitary or para-police? If yes, how does this play out in different contexts? For example, in Turkey, due to the extremely centralised structure of the police, the government has a tight grip on the institution therefore it is easier to tinker with it. It would be a fruitful line of research to see whether this is similar in other autocratising countries and if such structural legacies have any role in giving an autocratic incumbent the motivation to loyalise them for regime survival – if indeed this is a phenomenon that happens.

Another limitation is that my research focus on the rise of the police forces and the intelligence agency in Turkey is built on scant literature. This area of research has not been widely explored in Turkey, which is a reason why it interested me in the first place, but it does come with its own burden. Additionally, these institutions have been historically opaque so it is difficult to collect official data that would demonstrate their institutional ascent under the AKP regime in a “clean” and methodical way through an abundance of quantitative data. I remedied this by relying on the existing official data that illustrate major markers (such as officer numbers, budget increases, certain weaponry procurements, etc.) as well as speech acts by the political elite. Reliable and open data on all weaponry purchases, all operations, training manuals, curricula, correspondence, bylaws, and parliamentary commission reports would result in an empirically much richer analysis further demonstrating the value the AKP government bestowed upon the new security complex. A future study could even take a more ethnographic approach involving fieldwork combined with interviews and collecting archival material at source to delve into the changes in the culture of policing and the police-state relations in Turkey.

8.4 Future prospects

The Turkish case illustrates that full civilian control of the military does not guarantee democratisation. It is, of course, important for civilians to genuinely be able to control and direct the military. What is even more important, however, is if proper democratic control over the armed forces can be established. This would require authorities in charge of the military themselves being subject to the democratic process. And as the Turkish case also showed,

the democratic process does not end at winning elections. There should be real oversight mechanisms and accountability practices in place to not only manage the military but also provide checks and balances to all branches of the government, which Turkey currently does not possess. As institutions are captured and authoritarian policies take root in a variety of domains, the government cannot be held accountable, in the same way the Kemalist hegemony and the military could not be. Especially with the presidential system in place as of 2020, all security-related matters are decided predominantly by one man behind closed doors. The opaque system that benefitted the old hegemony and its armed guardians for decades now benefits the new elites. It seems unlikely that the workings of the security sector would be reversed by the party elites themselves. This, however, might have a negative effect on how the military performs its main task, which is, in fact, fighting. It is argued that implementing “good” control through “top-level direction and general oversight guidance” leads to improved effectiveness (Bruneau and Matei 2008, 921). Turkey’s recent incursions into Syria and Libya, however, revealed that the combination of an autocrat and a timid military that went through heavy coup-proofing measures might not produce the desired successes in the battlefield, and might prove to be bloody and costly. It is also certain that, despite his tight grip on the institution, Erdogan will always be suspicious of the military as frequent demotions and rotation of generals show. But at least for the foreseeable future, the TSK’s coup-making capabilities seem to have been curbed, and the officers will have their hands full with Erdogan’s military adventures in the Middle East and North Africa.

The AKP government realised quite early on that, bereft of the military’s backing, it would need a coercive complex to protect itself and further its political interests. With each threat it perceived, the AKP expanded and strengthened this complex while insulating it from answerability. After 2017, the government continued to prop up these institutions, and they remain crucial elements of Erdogan’s rule to this day. The police ranks continue to grow; in 2020, there were around 306 thousand active police officers which indicates a 17% increase since 2017. The para-police neighbourhood guards are another group whose capacity and capabilities have been expanded. In 2020, with a 23% increase from the previous year, the number of guards were

increased to 26 thousand while new laws were passed to broaden their coercive authority bringing it closer to the regular police's. In the summer of 2020, Erdogan signed an executive decree to create a directorate for "an auxiliary security force" (Birgun 2020). The force will initially consist of 500 police officers ready to be deployed during potential mass protests to aid anti-riot teams and the decree's wording implies that this group will receive their orders directly from the president. The share of the budgets of Gendarmerie, the police force, the MIT together in the overall state budget (5.9%) was higher than the Defence Ministry's (5%) both in 2020. In addition, official justice statistics show that there is a significant increase in citizens using the tip-off lines of both the police and the MIT to inform on suspicious activities of other citizens. Moreover, the economic crisis that hit Turkey in 2018 not only proved that the AKP's applauded "economic miracle" was no more than an illusion, it also showed the government the importance of a fortified security complex that would suppress any potential mass mobilisation the crisis might breed. Considering the overall authoritarian policies but especially the tumultuous economic environment, it is safe to imagine that the new security complex and its accompanying institutions, especially the police force, will remain key actors for the implementation of the AKP's policies and the maintenance of its rule.

After being extended for seven times following the coup attempt, the state of emergency was lifted after two years in 2018. Many of its decrees, however, remain in effect as of 2020, bringing "the state of exception" into the realm of regular politics and daily life. Erdogan's tenure as executive since 2018 has been marked by his presidential decrees regulating myriads of aspects of politics, economy, and the socio-political life. The party and its elites continue to play a critical role in propping up the regime and organising support in the local level but in terms of policy-making, the only place that matters is the presidential palace. As of 2020, Erdogan continues to have control over many of the country's institutions -whose takeover processes have been discussed in length in this thesis- and so he, so far, successfully kept them from emerging as pockets of political resistance. In this sense, institution-grabbing and institutional layering continue to be vital weapons in Erdogan's authoritarian arsenal.

The fast-paced institution-grabbing, especially in the wake of the failed coup, was so alarming that labelling Turkey as “competitive authoritarian” does not seem to satisfy the scholars of Turkish politics anymore. One can find the Turkish system in the very recent literature described as a dictatorship (Phillips 2017, Ugur 2018), neo-fascist (Demir 2016), on the verge of a dictatorship (Oktem 2017), possessing major elements of a totalitarian state (Topak 2017), full authoritarian (Caliskan 2018), and even hard totalitarian (Tugal 2016a). Although I understand that personally experiencing and living through autocratisation makes scholars attentive to each and every authoritarian practice and their accumulated effect over society, it is easy to see that conceptually competitive authoritarianism still defines the Turkish system the most accurately. Compared to real totalitarian polities, it is evident that Turkey is not totalitarian.

The AKP still sources its legitimacy predominantly from the elections it wins so it seems unlikely, at least in the foreseeable future, that Erdogan would attempt to cancel them. Of course, the playing field is uneven and will remain so as the AKP’s competitive authoritarian regime takes proper hold in the institutional setup. Maintaining elections and a multiparty system also gives the Turkish system the appearance of a, however minimal, functioning democracy and signals legitimacy. Similarly, the party organisation itself will remain extremely crucial for the AKP as a tool to penetrate into society, to mobilise constituents in times of potential crisis against a regime threat, and to show regime strength. Although it has virtually ceased to be the core institution of decision- and law-making, the Parliament will also likely stay as a party machinery for the AKP in order to co-opt elites by providing them with career advancement opportunities and the perks that come along with being a deputy, who then will have a vested interest in the regime’s survival. It is plausible to envision that the AKP will continue in its attempts to employ deliberate institutional tinkering and layering as a primary source of competitive authoritarian persistence.

It is true that “something has permanently changed in Turkey” and that the competitive authoritarian’s path-dependent patterns seem to have already permeated deeply into the institutional structure as well as the societal psyche (Gozyaydin 2017, 262). As these institutional arrangements become more and

more entrenched, reversion to the old system or proceeding towards democratisation are processes that are difficult to imagine. And it is accurate that these arrangements eliminate most avenues for political contestation. But not all. The competitive authoritarian nature of the system still provides an opposition space to manoeuvre. It is within this minuscule contestation space that a different future can perhaps be envisioned. After learning its lesson the hard way, the CHP has been playing a more conciliatory role, embracing other opposition groups, since 2017. The local elections in 2019 witnessed an unprecedented unification of opposition forces, including the Kurdish political movement, under the umbrella of the CHP, which resulted in the defeat of the AKP in major cities including Istanbul. Although it was only a local election, the failure of the AKP to retain key regions might have major implications for the regime's sustainability in the long run (Esen and Gumuscu 2019). The opposition is not without blame when it comes to the current state of affairs in Turkey, as this study also discussed, but its most recent campaign strategies show that it is acutely aware of its need to confront the AKP with promises of an open and tolerant society, fairer and anti-cronyist economic policies, transparent and anti-corrupt state practices, and an embracing rhetoric. This might make one very cautiously optimistic that if the opposition can be kept unified and mobilised against the AKP, its promises might attract larger segments of the population and hence generate a change of government in a mostly peaceful way. The real question would then be whether a change of government would open a path towards democratisation. Although the AKP's competitive authoritarian system appears indelible, there might be an opening due to future governments' need to be attuned to the wishes of the growing non-AKP electorate. After all, a country can diverge from an established path, and no path goes on forever, as history has shown repeatedly.

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