

Ideologies in Crisis

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

from 1995 until 2007

photo: Bosphorus, Istanbul,
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Annika Fickers

s0176559

Student BSK-ES

University of Twente

The Netherlands

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UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.

Table of Contents

Preface	1
Introduction	1
Research Design and Measurement	2
Framework for Analysis	5
III.I Social Cleavages and Polarization	6
III.II Party Politics	7
III.III Mass Party Organization as a Solution to Conflict	8
III.IV Non-Concentration of Power as a Solution to Conflict	10
III.V Conclusion	11
Analysis	12
IV.I The Pious-Secular Discourse in the Context of Ideas, Interests, Party Organization and Non-Concentration of Power	12
<i>IV.I.I The Origins of the Conflict in Europe and Turkey</i>	12
<i>IV.I.II Power Sharing and Mass Party Organization in Turkey?</i>	13
<i>IV.I.III Visualization of the General Conflict</i>	15
IV.II Political Polarization between Pious and Secular Turks from 1995 until 2007.....	16
<i>IV.II.I The Development of Pious-Secular Polarization between 1995 and 2001</i>	16
<i>IV.II.II The Development of Pious-Secular Polarization between 2002 and 2007</i>	20
<i>IV.II.III Conclusion</i>	24
Final Conclusions	25
Appendix	28
VI.I A General Table of Guiding Imperatives Behind Group and Ideology Formation	28
VI.II The Turkish Military	28
List of References	30

Preface

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

Introduction

“At the entrance field of secularism, there should be a sign ‘Proceed at your own risk’” stated Ricardo Borges de Castro, a Portuguese Researcher on Turkey, and like that opened a political seminar on “Turkey and the Challenges of Democratic Secularism” in March 2010 at the Middle East Technical University of Ankara.

The meaning and importance of such a statement becomes clearer when interpreting it in the light of Turkey’s historical background. “Once a prime site of geopolitical confrontation between Christendom and Islamic empires, Turkey today, as a predominantly Muslim society with a secular government, remains poised at the crossroads of ideological and geographical divide” (Secor, 2001, p.539).

Turkey’s secularization, as part of Atatürk’s modernization project, caused polarization along the line of modernity and tradition and between “defenders of the Kemalist ideology, [...] [with its] two core principles - secularism (state-control over religion) and nationalism (ethno-cultural homogeneity and territorial unity)” (Patton, 2007, p. 341) and those who have been most at odds with Kemalists over the representation of an Islamic identity.

Political Islam meant to be the first real threat to the state’s orchestrated secularization of society.

The opposing relationship between pious and secular Turks hence has a long tradition in Turkish politics and is one of the most critical issues that frequently dominates domestic politics and steers political actions. It divides political parties into religious Islamist and secular parties and is therefore a salient differentiator at the national level.

Especially the political instability in Turkey during the 1970s and the electoral success of Erbakan’s Welfare Party (RP) in the mid-1990s, form pinnacles of the Islamic threat as a mass movement. Around the turn of the millennium and with the rise of the self-defined Muslim democrat Justice and Development Party (AKP), the conflict had disappeared from the public screen for a short time but came up again in 2002 parallel to a process of change and the almost revolutionary reformist momentum.

In this paper I therefore want to take a closer look at religious cleavages in Turkey’s electoral politics. More specifically, I aim to study the development of political party polarization between 1995, when the fundamentalist Islamic Refah Party came out as the winner of the national elections, and 2007, when the first term of office for the Muslim democrat AK party ended, so that I developed the following research question:

To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?

Prior to the process of answering itself I will introduce a framework for analysis in which I take the opportunity to review some of the scientific work on how societal ideas and interests interact with the behavior of political parties and/or vice versa and on how such an interaction relates to the phenomenon of polarization within a given society.

On the basis of my readings of cleavage studies and party politics published by academic journals and university publishing houses and in particular of my readings of Lipset and Rokkan’s (1967) theories of cleavage formation and party systems and voter alignments and Lijphart’s (1999) theories on

multiethnic democracy and democratic government forms I will identify the four concepts: (1) ideas; (2) interests; (3) party organization and (4) power sharing as most meaningful to my analysis.

Ideas and interests play a significant role as they define the possibilities and limits of party organization, a party's ability to move, and the extent to what power sharing is possible. The last two concepts in turn, are important as they allow for and largely determine the likelihood of social clashes. High power concentration and elite party organization, which is characterized by (1) the party's dependency on ideas, (2) low mobility and (3) hardly any leeway for changes of the political agenda, provoke polarization and the open manifestation of conflict.

As a result, I will study pious-secular party polarization in Turkey in the realm of the four concepts in order to be able to detect pious-secular party polarization when it is there and to come up with conclusions about its strength and the development from 1995 until 2007.

My examination of the development of socio-political/religious cleavages in the space of political competition in Turkish electoral politics from 1995 until 2007 has great contemporary relevance not only for Turkish policy makers but for politicians, academics and scientists all over the world.

First of all, it is generally important to be aware of social divisions and possibilities for polarization within societies of nation states, because social cleavages can constitute a serious menace to the unity of a country, when polarized groups see each other as a threat to their own power and freedom. Moreover, deep polarization renders cooperation impossible so that it should also be considered a major challenge to democracy" (Turam, 2008, p. 492).

For those involved in Turkish politics, my research is further relevant for two reasons. Firstly, it eventually defines the possibilities and limitations of applying social cleavage models to Turkey and secondly, it gives an idea about the prospect of power sharing and polarization in the Turkish context given the Kemalist state ideology and the institutional set-up of political parties.

The broader relevance of my research beyond Turkish borders can be explained by recent socio-cultural developments, which confirm a new rise of nationalist policies and xenophobia against Islamism especially in many European countries. Growing global interdependence and great migration flows generated a cultural washing machine, whereby many Muslim migrants moved to Western secular countries. Failed integration led to the appearance of parallel societies and strong social cleavages, whereby each group felt the need to protect its own culture and ideas against that of the other(s). Like that debates about what role should be assigned to religion in general and the Islam in particular have reached non-Muslim and secular societies as well. Due to its unique combination of a Muslim population with democracy and a secular political tradition, Turkey has faced the challenges of deviant religious groups for a long time already. Therefore it might be a role model for how to deal or not to deal with the challenges of multiculturalism and religious polarization for many Western states.

Research Design and Measurement

Prior to the presentation of my analytical framework and the subsequent analysis, I will clearly explain the different steps I take, what they entail and why I have opted to do so in this intermediate chapter on research design and measurement. In addition, I will justify the logic behind my study, so why I have chosen this path rather than another.

My descriptive research is guided by the core question:

To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?

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

The year 1995 is chosen as a starting point for my analysis because after decades of system-friendly governments in Turkey, the 1995 Parliamentary elections dismantled the increasing popularity for the Islamic, anti-system Welfare Party. In 1996 RP-leader Erbakan became the new Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic and a True Path Party-RP coalition government was formed. Concluding,

1995 constituted an important year for the development of the pious-secular cleavage in Turkish society because the results of the polls allowed for the execution of strongly Islamic policies in Turkey.

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

This study rests upon a single and rather general research question, whereby I opted not to raise sub-questions. That however does not mean that the study at hand consists of only one part of the puzzle. In fact, the opposite holds true.

An elaborate framework for analysis precedes the analysis itself and entails all the information needed in the process of answering my main research question. It leads to the result that I will eventually study the development of pious-secular party polarization between 1995 and 2007 in the light of the four concepts: ideas, interests, party organization and non-concentration of power.

Furthermore, my analysis is divided into two parts, whereby the second part is again split up into two sections. Later, in this chapter, I will come back to and clarify this point.

Within my framework for analysis I first seek to carefully conceptualize my single variable of polarization. This includes a clear definition of its meaning and the explanation how and why the phenomenon of polarization evolves and where it is rooted.

For some time, sociologists have been engaged in theory wars about whether ideas really matter in electoral politics, meaning that supporters are truly convinced that their ideas produce a better society, or whether ideas are simply used as weapons for lasting power and influence in political battles.

The major question hence represents a 'chicken-egg question' wondering what comes first; Is it the idea itself that determines an actor's or a party's interests or are ideas simply the smokescreen for naked interests and therefore used flexibly as an instrument in the contest for resources? In both cases however, ideas and interests seem to be strongly related. Together they play a significant role in a party's course of action and the development of polarization in any society.

Therefore, a variance of three theoretical approaches, the primordial, the instrumentalist and the constructivist approach, is presented in my analytical framework whereby each theoretical approach provides a different explanation how societal ideas and interests may link to the foundation and behavior of political parties and in the larger context to the problem of polarization within the society of a nation state. At a later stage then, I will analyze the development of pious-secular party polarization in Turkish society in the light of ideas and interests as possible guiding imperatives behind group and ideology formation and drivers for polarization.

My framework for analysis further elaborates on possible solutions to the problems of polarization in order to ensure democratic stability and the unity of a country.

Hereby, the two concepts of non-concentration of power and mass party organization are presented as suitable means to control political and social clashes. This tells me not only how to control polarization but also how to detect it when it is there. If non-concentration of power constitutes a means to prevent that two antagonistic groups in society clash, it means in turn that power imbalance between two groups provokes polarization. Something similar holds true for mass party organization. If the answer to the problem of polarization lies in a party's strong social embeddedness and ability to move, it also means that the existence of elite parties with their high reliance on state resources and inability to move increase the likelihood for social clashes.

In the process of answering my research question, Turkish political party polarization is therefore also analyzed in the light of party organization and the presence of power distribution.

In the subsequent analysis chapter, focus rests upon what the pious-secular conflict in Turkish society looks like and how it is reflected in party politics. I intend to find out about the roots of the conflict and about the shape and level of polarization between the secular CHP and its major Islamic opposition parties at different points in time and respectively over time. Further, I want to know about the prospects of power sharing and polarization in the Turkish context given the Kemalist state ideology and the institutional set-up of political parties. My analysis chapter is split up into two parts, whereby the second part consists of two sections.

The first part introduces the evolution of the religious conflict in Europe and Turkey and presents what the major discourse is about. In addition, it is demonstrated to what extent one can find the concept of power sharing applied in the case of Turkey and how the pious-secular conflict is reflected in Turkish party politics, thereby also addressing the issue of party organization. The overall purpose of the first part is that it shall provide for the necessary background information in order to be able to understand and follow the development of pious-secular party polarization between 1995 and 2007.

At the end of part one, a general table of guiding imperatives behind group and ideology formation (see Appendix VI.I) is applied to my conflict of interest in Turkish society. The table includes the four dimensions: reference point, ideas, interests and institutions and visualizes the ideological distance between the two study groups by assigning clear attributes to each side of the table. This helps me at a later stage to detect polarization when it is there. The table enables me to observe, which attributes of which group are present in Turkey at different points in time so that I can draw conclusions about the distribution of power between pious and secular camps and hence the level of polarization between the political parties concerned.

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

The first part of Chapter four only enables me to draw preliminary conclusions about the general potential for religious-based clashes in the Turkish public space. However, it does not allow for any conclusions on the precise shape and development of pious-secular polarization throughout my selected time period. As a result, a second part follows which is much more specific and serves to answer precisely my question about how polarized Turkish pious and secular parties were between 1995 and 2007.

As indicated earlier, I will study the development of pious-secular party polarization in the light of party organization and power distribution. The second part of my analytical chapter is divided into two sections, whereby each section is selected around a big and significant occurrence/development within that time period.

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

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

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

Finally, a fifth chapter concludes with a summary of the most important findings of my study and a list of political implications, which can be drawn from those research results. Furthermore, it entails a short outlook on possible future developments and the prospects of power sharing in the Turkish context given the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic and the institutional set-up of political parties. Eventually, I will come up with some final suggestions for further scientific research.

Note, that there are some limits to my research design. As a result of the descriptive nature of my study, this paper at hand lacks the examination of any relationship between possible causes and the effect of polarization through hypothesis testing or the study of counterfactual interferences

A second limit of my study is that my research findings for Turkey are neither necessarily suitable for generalizations to other countries nor for generalizations to other potentially opposing relationships. Turkey is a very unique country, combining a pre-dominant Muslim population with democracy and secularism. It strongly holds on to Kemalist principles, which creates most of the obstacles to the control of polarization. If other countries apply a less strict definition of secularism or do not adhere to principles of ethno-cultural homogeneity, territorial unity or national sovereignty, they may face very different reasons for social clashes and the open manifestation of conflict but also different challenges and obstacles to control polarization.

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

In this study data gathering methods included the selection of qualitative study material such as scientific journals, books or magazines but also personal communication with academics at the Middle East Technical University (METU) of Ankara in Turkey or at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Data hence means words, collected mainly through reading or listening so that I conducted a document analysis and desk-research.

For my framework for analysis I mostly collected data from books and scientific journal articles and hereby draw special attention to the international recognition of authors and their theoretical propositions. I consulted my supervisor and other academic experts on polarization and party politics at the University of Twente and at METU in Ankara in order to get to know the names of the most important political scientists publishing in my specific field of interest. I further searched for books and online articles at the university libraries and respectively on the internet via the libraries' frequently used databases. Hereby, I considered factors such as "times cited", or the bibliography of a document as good indicators for high quality data.

For my analysis of the development of political party polarization in Turkey between 1995 and 2007 then, I mostly gathered data from scientific books or articles written by Turkish and mostly academic nationals and combined that with a data collection from scientific sources produced by outsiders, meaning that document authors were not themselves citizens of the Turkish Republic and therefore personally affected by pious-secular polarization in Turkey. With the use of data from different sources I hope to increase the objectivity and hence validity and reliability of my study.

Framework for Analysis

The following sections are based on the assumption that ideas and interests matter most to my study of pious-secular party polarization in Turkish society.

My framework for analysis starts with a detailed conceptualization of my single variable ‘polarization’ and in subsequence continues with the presentation of a variety of three theoretical approaches, each stressing a different explanation how ideas and interests link to political parties and political party behavior. Summing up, the interaction of societal beliefs and interests and political party behavior is carefully examined, thereby drawing special attention to the phenomenon of polarization, which imposes a threat to the stability of a democratic system and society at large when democratic institutions are unable to control it.

Diverging perceptions concerning the importance of ideas and interests result in different forms of party organization, which in turn may strongly affect the likelihood for and level of polarization within a given society and within domestic politics of a country.

As a result, a closer look is taken at the three main types of party organization, how they precisely differ and how each type links to the likelihood of social clashes. In the end mass party organization is identified as the best type of party organization for parties competing in strongly heterogeneous societies. Finally, the concept of non-concentration of power is introduced as a means to control political and social clashes.

Concluding, this chapter provides the necessary framework for the process of answering my research question. It tells me to study the development of pious-secular party polarization between 1995 and 2007 in the light of ideas and interests, party organization and the distribution of power in order to detect and measure this phenomenon.

III.I Social Cleavages and Polarization

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

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

In my study I make use of the term polarization next to the concept of social cleavages. In fact, those terms are strongly correlated and polarization is only a special form of reinforcing cleavages. One speaks of a polarized society if a population of individuals “is grouped into significantly-sized ‘clusters’ in such a way that each cluster is very ‘similar’ in terms of the attributes of its members, but

different clusters have members with very ‘dissimilar’ attributes” (Esteban & Ray, 1994, p.820). Polarization means hence nothing else than the existence of strong intra-group homogeneity and substantial inter-group heterogeneity and hints at the presence of a highly polarized spectrum of political opinion. In fact, “its lateral poles are literally two poles apart, and the distance between them covers a maximum spread of opinion” (Sartori, 1976, 135). Theory suggests that three basic features must be fulfilled before one can speak of polarization. Firstly, each group must show a high degree of internal homogeneity. Secondly, across groups there must be a high degree of heterogeneity and finally, the third basic feature requires that there are only a small number of significantly sized groups since groups of insignificant size hardly carry weight (Esteban et al., 1994, p.820).

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

III.II Party Politics

Political scientists over time developed a variance of theories that aim to conceptualize cleavages and explain how societal beliefs and interests but also social conflicts as a whole translate into party systems of democratic countries. Literature encapsulates three main approaches: the primordial view, which understands parties as the mere reflections of pre-existing and underlying cleavages or aggregate preferences; the instrumentalist view, which suggests that parties actively construct social cleavages according to their interests in lasting political power and influence and thirdly, the constructivist approach, which combines elements of the first two areas and suggests that social movements can be formative of political parties and vice versa.

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

Political parties only developed in the 18th century. They outgrew factions in the sense that they were not merely based on interests or affects but also, and principally, on common principle. Lipset&Rokkan (1994) conceptualize parties as “alliances in conflicts over policies and value commitments within the larger body politics” (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.5) and stress in their book *Party Systems and Voter Alignments* that the revolution of party systems is based on what they call the ‘conflict-integration-dialectic’. Through this dialectic, parties serve the expression but also the negotiation of conflict, a process that takes place within the framework of national political competition (Secor, 2001, p.541). From a primordial perspective ideas really matter as they determine the possibilities and limits of a party’s political agenda and the party’s ability to move.

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

On the basis of such criticism, a new theoretical approach evolved; the instrumentalist approach. It suggests that parties do not reflect social cleavages but in fact actively construct them, so that parties are effectively collapsed into different social movements. As a result, instrumentalist supporters view parties as a central force in the constitution of the social due to the fact that they integrate disparate identities and interests into somewhat coherent sociopolitical blocs and thereby assign a specific logic to the reproduction of any social formation. The key element of the instrumentalist argumentation is that cleavages do not by nature carry a political valence but that parties can deploy such valence in order to aggregate majorities (De Leon et al., 2009, p.195). As a result, supporters of the instrumentalist perspective stress the importance of interests and assume that parties actively construct and link societal ideas for the purpose of protecting their political power against rivaling parties and in order to provide resources to its followers.

A third approach called constructivist approach or framing theory, combines elements of the first two perspectives and claims that political parties “can be formative of movements and vice versa” (De Leon et al., 2009, p.198). Parties are able to bring together the various natural constituents of the social, which otherwise always threaten to come apart. Parties are incapable of creating cleavages from scratch. Instead, cleavages occur naturally. However, parties can link those cleavages to the state, which claims to represent them, by forming political groups that articulate the interests of social formations (De Leon et al., 2009, 199).

In the original sense, a political party is responsible to the people and its electorates. At some point however, parties are not only held together anymore by its general principles but also by the electoral advantage of becoming more stable and eventually stabilized in the democratic system. This leads from a responsible government to a responsive democratic government, which has to yield to demands. Eventually protoparties, which were originally internal divisions of the inner and upper circle, start to become parties in the sense of society, meaning divisions of the country at large. In their efforts to gain support, party leaders usually appeal to language, class, ethnic, or religions divisions and make citizens more aware of these differences. Like that they manifest or freeze social cleavages but at the same time increase democratic support in a given country. This is mainly because political parties offer social groups to not only exert influence on government but instead become government themselves. Hence, through political parties, groups can articulate their ideas and interests, compete in elections for government and if successful, take control of government instead of only keeping a foot in the door of government (Newton et al., 2006, 162). Political parties can link state and society by letting society participate in politics and state affairs (De Leon et al., 2009, 199). Addressing the theoretical debate about whether ideas or interests determine political party behavior, the constructivist approach suggests that both can be the case. Ideas can be formative of political party interests and vice versa.

III.III Mass Party Organization as a Solution to Conflict

From previous sections we have learned that there is a strong relationship between parties and society. Having identified political parties as agents of conflict management, as instruments of integration and as institutions, which link state and society, two questions still remain open; how do parties organize themselves and for what reason?

Political scientists tend to distinguish between three traditional stages of organization. (Newton et al., 2006, p.222) They firstly differ in the level of connection between party and society as displayed by a party's power resources and secondly in a party's ability to move.

The issue of party organization strongly links to the debate about whether ideas really matter or whether they are merely used as weapons in the contest for resources by rival groups. Parties that stress the importance of ideas are often organized as largely inflexible elite parties whereas parties to which interests matter most are usually more flexible and known as mass integration or catch-all parties.

The awareness of organizational differences between parties is necessary because variations can strongly affect the level of polarization. Structural differences in party organization produce unequal abilities for a party to move and may result in a huge ideological gap or contribute to a wider gap between two competing political parties.

The following sections will show that mass party organization, thereby referring to mass integration and catch-all parties, decreases the likelihood for polarization, as agendas and the respective position on the political spectrum are more flexible so that parties can relatively easily respond to shifts and changes and like that counterbalance beginning polarization.

Parties that fall under the first type of party organization are called caucus or elite parties. It is the oldest form of party organization and dates back to the 19th century, when parties were hardly more than loose alliances between like-minded people. The major characteristic of elite parties is that they are led by only very few people, who are wealthy public figures, aristocrats or respectively elite 'notables' (Newton et al., 2006, p.222). Those party leaders, the power elite, are in command of the higher party hierarchy. They claim the prerogative to run the machinery of the party and in case of being in government, also the machinery of the state. Like that, the government falls under the control of a small and unified group of more or less self-serving individuals, who execute a rather rigid policy agenda (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.10). The ruling elite exercises disproportionate influence of power over political decisions. Elite parties are known for their follow-the-leader approach. They tend to be exclusive and aim at top-down control of society and the state. Elite parties are based on ideas and sometimes ideologies from which they depart their interests. They usually do not intend to organize people inside the party structure but instead bind people through common ideas, idea-based interests and labeling (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010).

The second stage of party organization produces mass integration parties. This type of parties developed in the 20th century and is mainly characterized by a centralized, bureaucratic and hierarchical form of organization, combined with a broadened electoral appeal that strives for attracting the masses and gaining large membership (Newton et al., 2006, p.222). Mass integration parties provide all kinds of services and alternatives to the state to their followers. They tend to yield to demands, so that the policy stance they take is usually a response to perceived popular preferences rather than being dictated by inexorable forces or by the preferences of a small group of individual power wielders. The policy agenda of a mass integration party is far less rigid than that of an elite party, since multiple choices are available to formal office holders (Klingemann et al., 1994, p.10). They collect and consolidate masses, make interests and identities of people melt together and often take a latent policy. Mass integration parties form a very strong and powerful group in society, which can strengthen polarization. They try to bind voters through clientele policy and the integration of people in political processes (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010).

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

One of the most crucial distinctions between mass and elite party organization is the way each party links to the state and respectively society and whether a party is based on ideas or rather on interests. While mass parties are deeply embedded in society, elite parties strongly link to the state and its institutions.

Weak social integrity and strong idea dependency make the political agenda of an elite party rather inflexible. Elite parties do not rely on society resources but are in exchange very much dependent on state resources and state institutions in order to push through their political agenda and idea-based interests. The only exception is that they are unreasonably wealthy. They seek to control the state but only have few abilities to move.

Mass parties on the contrary have resources that go beyond their control; they rely on society resources. This results in high flexibility. A mass party can be responsive to social demands and yield to changing demands by adapting their political agenda accordingly. It has a choice from a variety of suitable topics for gaining voter support (S.Donnelly, personal communication, 14 October, 2010). This is a clear advantage as it provides a mass party with agenda-setting power and allows the party at the same time to follow the spirit of the time and to quickly adapt to changing hot topics within

society. A mass party is mostly interest-based so that it tends to shape its political agenda according to its interest in lasting power and influence.

The respective organizational structure of all major competing parties within a country's political system clearly affects polarization.

With their ability to gravitate society into a certain direction mass parties can overcome the system of checks and balances. As soon as a mass party moves further to one side of the political spectrum and thereby takes the masses with it, the elite party is unable to follow due to its rigid agenda and dependence on fixed ideas. This has two effects on polarization. On the one hand, the gap between the two parties' political stances and between the elite party and the masses broadens and on the other hand power between the two parties becomes highly unevenly distributed. Both cause growing polarization.

Concluding, it seems as if the presence of mass parties only works best for strongly divided societies in order to prevent strong polarization. A second possibility to minimize the likelihood for social clashes and the violent manifestation of conflict is the concept of power sharing, which is introduced in the next section.

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

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

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

The solution to managing and controlling social cleavages and diverging ideas, beliefs, and interests is hence power sharing. In this paper, power sharing or respectively non-concentration of power is understood as the division of power "between different offices and bodies so that each acts as a check on the other and has its own power balanced against that of the others" (Newton et al., 2006, p.58).

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

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

different peak organizations, whereby binding decisions shall be derived between political actors, interest groups and peak organizations; so-called tripartite pacts.

In contrast to that, political actors are dispersed to separate political institutions when power is divided. Hereby, federalism constitutes the most drastic method of power division because it divides power between whole levels of government. As William H Riker states, federalism can be seen as a political organization, which is divided into many regional and one central government and where each kind of government has autonomous decisive power in some activities (Lijphart, 1999, p.186). In addition, it is important to note that each single government is to be seen as important as any other in a federalist system, so that there is no importance hierarchy at all.

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

III.V Conclusion

Theoretical propositions eventually made me come up with three main assumptions about the appearance and prevention of strong polarization within a given society.

(1) Ideas and interests play a decisive role in the evolution, shape and development of polarization because they set the frame for the institutional set-up of political parties, which in turn contributes to or minimizes the likelihood for polarization.

(2) Polarization itself is not a constantly present phenomenon but reappears periodically and in peaks, dependent on the concentration of power among antagonistic groups and the institutional set-up in terms of political party organization.

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

Overall, the three main assumptions deliver a framework for the process of answering my research question: *To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?*

The previous chapter displayed that polarization should be studied in the context of ideas and interests and that the examination of party organization and power distribution allows me to measure and detect polarization when it is there. My framework for analysis hence provides the necessary background in order to understand the pious-secular cleavage and eventually polarization, what it is about and how it can be studied and observed in a given society.

Analysis

IV.I The Pious-Secular Discourse in the Context of Ideas, Interests, Party Organization and Non-Concentration of Power

The first part of my analysis starts with an introduction to the roots and characteristics of the religious conflict in Europe and Turkey and in a next step it is examined how the pious-secular cleavage is reflected in the Turkish political party system and whether power sharing exists in the case of Turkey. This allows me to develop two tables, which outline the underlying ideas, interests and the institutional set-up of the two competing camps as guiding imperatives for polarization, so that I can later, in the second part of this chapter, measure the respective level of power distribution and ideological distance and detect polarization when it is there.

The following sections will expose that Kemalist principles, on which the Turkish Republic is built, stress ethno-cultural homogeneity, sovereignty and territorial unity and hence do not allow for the implementation of corporatism, federalism or consociationalism in Turkey. Each of the three constructs to achieve non-concentration of power would at least infringe one of Turkey's fundamental principles.

Further, this chapter will find that the Kemalist CHP, as the major secular party in Turkey, is organized as an elite party, which maintains a clearly idea-based, leadership-oriented, top-down style of governing and sticks to a rigid policy agenda. Such findings suggest high conflict potential and an increased likelihood for polarization between pious and secular camps in Turkish society.

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

The conflict over secular principles appeared two centuries ago in European democracies. Political competition took place merely around religious issues and primarily along a church-state axis. The conflict can be described as a conflict between the growing state, seeking to dominate the church, and the church itself, which wanted to maintain its historic corporate rights. In the context of the enlightenment period of the 18th century, a broader trend toward secularism could be watched. In many nations religious institutions started to retreat from the public sphere.

In the early years of the 20th century a law was passed in France, which can be seen as the backbone of the current French principle of *laïcité*. Its basic premise is the "division between private life, where religion belongs, and public life, where religion does not" (Roberts et al., 2009, p.557). The underlying assumptions of the principle of *laïcité* are that attributes like religion or ethnicity might distinguish between individuals and that the state risks treating individuals in an unequal way on the basis of their religious or ethnic belonging. In order to prevent that from happening, the complete separation of church and state was introduced. *Laïcism* is a very rigid form of secularism, where religion is controlled by the state instead of merely privatized (Turam, 2008, p.477). The church and some believers did not simply accept such a strict separation and argued that the Christian values like the protection of the family or charity for the poor needed protection from the corrosive effects of secularism. This eventually led to the formation of religious parties in France and many other countries.

The Ottoman Empire itself was pre-dominantly a Muslim Empire, promoting Islamic traditions and the Sultan's emphasis on his position as a Caliph. The traditional family picture was stressed and Islam was used to foster unity among Muslims in a fight against territorial disintegration (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.10). Its collapse however, in the beginning of the 20th century, allowed for the realization of the Kemalist modernization project.

For Kemalists nothing that was left from the Ottoman Empire was considered worth to be saved. As a result, they dedicated themselves to building a nation out of the ashes of a huge empire of the past on a much smaller territory and to Westernization as a key goal in itself (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.1). The young military official Mustafa Kemal Atatürk eventually founded the Turkish Republic in 1923 and started a huge nation-building process, which included amongst others the abolition of the caliphate, industrialization, the adaption to the ideas of enlightenment, and the shaping of a Turkish identity. The national revolution from above shunted aside Islam in favor of a new secularist regime.

From that time on, Turkish citizens have found themselves in an identity struggle defined as a dualism between the West and the East. The Turkish experience shows that since the early years of the Republic, Turkish elites have adopted the West as their reference point. Modernization, which was

interpreted as being identical to Westernization, included the development of close, organic relations with Europe and a commitment to Western standards not only in terms of scientific or technological developments but also in terms of establishing a secular and democratic political order.

From a historical perspective, the creation and modernization of the Turkish Republic under Atatürk created a discourse between pious and secular Turks about expectations concerning the organization of a state and what tasks shall be assigned to it. For 25 years, starting with the formation of the Turkish Republic in 1923, Turkish citizens witnessed Turkey's ideological transformation and "top-down transition to democracy, [which] perpetuated an elite-driven conception of politics and paternalistic relationship between a 'strong state' and a 'weak society'" (Secor, 2001, p.542). Throughout that time Islam had been erased from the political screen and could only re-enter political life in the 1950s, when Turkey underwent a transition to multiparty politics.

While secular circles proved themselves to be convinced supporters of Kemalism and Westernization, Atatürk's modernization project found its opponents among pious Turks, whose reference point was not the secularist West but the Ottoman Empire with its Islamic values and traditions (Önis, 2004, p.1).

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

IV.III Power Sharing and Mass Party Organization in Turkey?

My framework for analysis earlier introduced power sharing and mass party organization as possible means to alleviate polarization and the problems that stem from this phenomenon.

When looking at the Turkish state organization, power sharing is not given because the Republican state ideology does not allow for it. Corporatism, as one political construct for the achievement of non-concentration of power would infringe the sovereignty of the Turkish nation state. Federalism on the other hand would violate the fundamental principle of territorial unity and consociationalism would involve the recognition of certain parties representing groups and minorities in the country, which officially do not exist due to the principle of ethno-cultural homogeneity.

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

Further problems become distinct when examining and comparing the party organization of the main parties RP, AKP and CHP, which represent the antagonistic camps of my interest in Turkish society.

The Turkish Welfare Party (RP) is a successor of the Islamic MSP, whose existence was brought to an end by the 1980 military coup. The RP's youth favored and supported the traditional radical direction of the MSP and aspired the further politicization of religion, while the party center turned out to be more moderate. Such a combination caused indecisive intermittent attacks against democracy, secularism, and capitalism that were however never made programmatic. Although the RP failed to become the leader of an Islamic Revolution, they nonetheless successfully defined the terrain of Islamic politics (De Leon et al., 2009, pp.207). One explanation for the RP's increasing success is the party's focus on redistributive social justice and its proposed socioeconomic program, which brought about immense urban support of the poor. Under the leadership of Erbakan, the RP successfully managed to aggregate majorities and establish itself as a popular mass integration party in Turkish domestic politics. From 1996 until 1997 the RP formed part of the RP-DYP coalition government,

before the soft military coup of 1997 pushed the Islamist RP first out of government and soon afterwards also out of legal existence (Capezza, 2009, n35).

In 2001, a new pious party called Justice and Development Party (AKP) was officially founded. As a Muslim democrat party it was on the one hand a party with a clear Islamic background and on the other hand a party with a mandate that looked forward to establish itself as a moderate party. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan positioned the party at the center-right of the political spectrum and like that drained the life-line of radical political Islam. By advocating neo-liberal policies and a concept of change while abstaining from any open confrontation of the secular segments in society, the AKP could, like the RP, successfully establish itself as a mass integration party in Turkish politics. With their conciliatory tone, the AKP attracted many voters from all sides of the ideological spectrum and even made a vast number of mildly secular and neoliberal politicians, intellectuals, and voters joining its ranks. The AKP acted as a central force in the constitution of the social by integrating disparate identities and interests into somewhat coherent sociopolitical blocs in order to aggregate majorities. This corresponds to the instrumentalist view how parties link to society and suggests that AKP party leaders prioritize interests in lasting power and influence over rigid fundamentalist Islamic ideas.

While the AKP and its predecessor successfully articulated the Islamic forces of society, the Kemalists lacked an effective party that could articulate street action forces in their fight against Islamism. The main anti-Islamist Party, the CHP, was the first party in the Turkish Republic established by the father of the Turks, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, himself. Until the mid-1960s, the CHP was a secular authoritarian party representing a more or less exclusive coalition of notables, bureaucrats, and professionals, including working classes, Kurds and peasants. Later however, they tried to adapt a more populist platform. The CHP was closed down in 1980 by the military coup but re-opened again in 1983 under the name Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). An incident, which drew negative attention to the SHP and which caused doubts about their credibility was the SHP's corruption at the municipality level. Disappointed by such a behavior and the SHP's return to the CHP's pre-1960s rigid secularist position, informal workers but also pious Turks started to join the Islamists, thereby deserting the center-left. In the course of the 1990s, the original CHP reopened again with the mission of advocating its traditional style of authoritarian secular nationalism. It clearly took an anti-Islamic stance and was further known for their lack of any social vision, which alienated and excluded social democratic leaders (De Leon et al., 2009, p.213).

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

The CHP's structural inflexibility against the RP's and AKP's flexibility in their political agendas and voter attraction leads to a certain imbalance of power between the major competing parties in Turkish domestic politics. Whenever the RP or the AKP, as mass parties, gravitate society into a certain direction, the elitist CHP cannot follow so that polarization increases.

In this context, it is also important that the CHP's emphasis on top-down modernization and a strong leadership-oriented, authoritarian style of governing – principles that find their roots in Kemalism – clearly does not go in line with the concept of power sharing. The CHP did and does not advocate non-concentration of power but instead strives for hegemony.

Concluding, the Kemalist ideology, in which the secular CHP and the Turkish Republic at large are grounded, not only permits the CHP to organize itself as a flexible and mobile mass party and to share

power and but also rules out the implementation of corporatism, federalism or consociationalism in Turkey as possible means to control polarization.

IV.I.III Visualization of the General Conflict

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

The first table represents the underlying ideas, interests and institutions that belong to each of the two competing camps and like that demonstrates what polarization between pious and secular circles is about.

Guiding Imperatives behind the Pious-Secular Divide in Turkish Society

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	Ottoman Empire	The West/ Europe
Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity defined by religion - Identity of Turkey as a Muslim and Middle Eastern country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity defined by Kemalism, based on nationalism, secularism, enlightenment, national unity and sovereignty
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration of religious and emotional issues, such as matters of faith or abortion into the political agenda - Social agenda that includes issues, concerning as the position of the poor and social injustice - Offering ethical and moral guidance drawn from religion - Conservatism - Paternalistic state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Push religious issues off the political agenda and avoid them (Secularism) - Modernization through Isomorphism → Enforcement of Western liberal policies, attitudes and values based on scientific views of nature and human behavior - Strong leadership-oriented, top-down government - Protection of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Caliphate - Mass-integration parties <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the RP, as a nationalist anti-regime party b) The AKP, as a moderate pro-system party 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elite party (CHP), as the political party defender of the Kemalist state - State institutions like <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the Turkish Military, as a guarantor of Kemalism and national security b) the Constitutional Court, as a constraint on parliament and government

The second table is an extract from a table, which was developed by A.J.Secor in 2001 (p.547). It provides a spectrum of religious ideas and provides a good overview on the specific points of debate between the two opposing pious and secular groups.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IV.II.1 The Development of Pious-Secular Polarization between 1995 and 2001

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

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

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

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

Since neither the ANAP nor the CHP found themselves in such a powerful position, which would have allowed them to effectively intervene and stop political anti-regime developments, the Turkish military, as a secular state institution, stepped in to help out. The army saw the latest developments as a clear indication that the Islam started to exert a much stronger role than was assigned to it under the Islamic-Turkish synthesis and hence as a big challenge to the Turkish Republic and the principles on which it is built. In the light of the mid-1990 developments, members of the National Security Council came together on 28 February 1997. During their meeting the military demanded the immediate implementation of policies, which would curtail the spreading of fundamentalist Islam and the increasing power of the RP. At the same time, military officials advised to the Turkish government the regulations necessary for the prevention of extremist religious people, who tried to divide the country

along the lines of religion. On 28 February, the pious-secular conflict entered the open public space and became a fight about the occupation of that space. It was a fight about “who defines public space and who defines identity in Turkish politics” (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.60) and constituted the open manifestation of the clash between the RP’s Islamic ideology and the Republican-secular ideology. Polarization had reached a peak.

The following table visualizes, in the light of ideas, what polarization between pious and secular political parties in Turkish society looked like in 1997, the year of the soft military coup and the open manifestation of conflict in the public space. It demonstrates opposing ideas and interests between the Kemalist CHP and the ruling Islamist RP on the Secularism versus Islamism dimension and hence a great potential for conflict. The ideological distance between the two parties with Level -2 for the CHP and Level 2 for the RP could not be bigger and is literally two poles apart.

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 1997

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

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

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

Once again however, another spin-off party, the AKP had already been founded and was ready to take over. Its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had for long established himself as a well-known but controversial figure in Turkish politics. In 1998, the Diyarbakir court convicted Erdoğan and prohibited him from holding office for his incitation of religious hatred after he had read an Islamist poem at a political rally (Capezza, 2009, n36). This prohibition from politics was only overturned in February 2003. Despite some controversial political moves, Erdoğan was a very skilled politician. When the RP and its successor were banned from Turkish politics, Erdoğan moderated both, his own personal image but also that of his AK party, to limit the likelihood of party closure. He blurred rather than sharply defined the line between pro-Western orientation and Islamism and provided his party with plausible deniability about its goals. In fact, Erdoğan had learned the decisive lesson from the 28 February Process, namely to avoid hardened ideological positions.

Since the AKP abstained “from pressing for change in open confrontation with the secular establishment” (Narbone et al., 2009, p.243), it achieved to reduce the perceived Islamist threat and opened the way for political liberalization in Turkey. Surprisingly, it was hence the establishment of a new party with clear Islamic roots, which moderated the conflict between pious and secular Turks and which, for the first time in a long period, managed to bring moderate secularists and moderate pious

Turks together under one roof, the AKP, so that overall polarization between the two groups decreased significantly.

Erdoğan’s vision turned into a great success. In the 2002 national elections, which are widely referred to as a political earthquake, only two parties, the AKP and the CHP, managed to pass the 10% threshold. 34% of all votes went to the AKP. The high threshold caused a disproportionate representation so that the AKP eventually inhabited two-thirds (363) of all seats and became the first single-party government in a decade. The CHP in contrast, only won 19% of the votes, translating into a number of 178 seats in Parliament (Altunisik et al., 2005, p.64). Erdoğan became the new Prime Minister of the Turkish Republic.

The second table mirrors how polarization between pious and secular groups in Turkey developed and eventually looked like in 2001. It reveals that the two competing groups in society have grown closer together, which can be mainly traced back to changes in party configuration and the foundation of a relatively moderate Islamic party, which did not seek to dethrone the ruling secularist elite and embraced Westernization in the form of EU-accession and democratization.

While the elitist secular CHP remained, due to its structural inflexibility and inability to move, on Level -2 and hence on the very left of the political spectrum, the just founded and more flexible AKP established itself close to the core, somewhere between Level 0 and Level -1. Like that, the gap and ideological distance between the major secular and pious parties shrunk.

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 2001

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

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

The replacement of the fundamentalist Welfare Party by a far more moderate Islamic and system-friendly AKP was not the only significant consequence of the 28 February Process. By the end of the 20th century, Turkish domestic politics were clearly influenced by the perspective of EU membership. Meeting the accession criteria as a prerequisite for Turkey’s acceptance in the Union became one of the major topics and enabled the EU to exert great influence on Turkish domestic politics.

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

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

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

The term ‘globalists’ refers to the support of integrationist and reformist actions. Globalists tend to hold a positive view on globalization and regard Turkey’s EU membership as a means to cope effectively with the process of globalization. Besides that, globalists consider “economic and political

reforms as a necessary condition for capitalizing on the benefits of Europeanization and globalization” (Önis, 2007, p.251).

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

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

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

Around the turn of the millennium, Turkey heavily suffered from a major economic crisis. Erdoğan capitalized on the negative impact of that crisis and responded to perceived popular preferences that favored EU-related reforms and EU membership. By advocating a concept of change and reaping the benefits of globalization but also EU membership and IMF disciplines, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan managed to generate the support on the part of pious Turks but also the foreign financial community and big businesses. Like that, the AKP managed to construct and sustain a broad-based electoral coalition.

Additional explanatory factors for the pro-reformist attitude of the AKP are that the EU seemed to provide an attractive space for those moderate Islamists who turned into Muslim democrats and promoted religious freedoms. EU reforms further constituted the perfect means to protect the AKP from the establishment of secularist forces and hard-core Kemalists in society. Concluding, reforms perfectly served the AKP’s interest to achieve lasting power and political influence so that the pious party eventually “constituted the strongest and most vigorous element of the globalist/pro-reform coalition within the Turkish political party spectrum” (Önis, 2007, p.252).

This stands in contrast to Kemalists, who are traditionally represented by the CHP. Although the party favors EU membership in general since Westernization constitutes one of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic it is most uncomfortable with many of the key political reforms that are sponsored by the EU on the grounds. The reason is simple. As a Kemalist, idea-based party, the CHP is very sensitive to issues concerning secularism and national sovereignty. Party members fear that those fundamental principles would not be protected enough under the roof of the EU. In recent years, the CHP has therefore established itself “as one of the strongest elements of the defensive nationalist bloc and does not show any kind of enthusiasm for democratization reforms (Önis, 2007, p.257).

Concluding, the 28 February Process eventually linked the right-wing Islamic camp in Turkish politics with a pro-reformist and globalist dimension and the left-wing Kemalist camp with an anti-reformist and defensive-nationalist dimension and suggests that for the CHP it is the ideas themselves, which really matter, whereas the AKP seems to understand ideas more as weapons for lasting power and influence.

The following table displays the guiding imperatives behind pious and secular group and ideology formation in 2001 and the respective power distribution between the two social camps at that time. The table points out that both sides of the camp differ in their ideas and idea-based interests but that each group finds some of its elements established or respectively present in Turkish domestic politics so that power is more or less non-concentrated, checked and balanced.

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

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	- Ottoman Empire - European Union	- Kemalist Modernization Project
Ideas	- Interest-based ideas	- Identity based on

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identity defined by religion but combined with neo-liberal thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kemalist principles, such as secularism, national unity and sovereignty
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU Membership - Turkey as a major player in the world - Maintenance of power through strong voter support - Promotion of EU-related reforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Idea-based interests - Protection of Turkey's fundamental principles (Kemalist principles) - Hegemonic power - Against proposed EU-reforms
Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Single party government with moderate mass integration party in power (AKP) - EU, which hugely supports and encourages the AKP's political agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Largest and only opposition party in parliament: elitist CHP - Relatively strong and powerful state institutions (Military & Constitutional Court) to support the CHP

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

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

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

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

IV.II.II.I The Big Reformist Momentum

Many changes to the Turkish constitution and laws took place during the big reformist momentum entailing amongst others the enormous transformation of civil-military relations in Turkish politics. This had serious impacts on the level and shape of polarization in the years from 2002 - 2007 so that the following paragraphs draw closer attention to the scope and content of military reforms and its consequences for the pious-secular conflict in Turkey.

The first paragraph is based on the article *Democratization Reforms in Turkey, 1993-2004* by Özbudun (2007) and presents some of the most significant changes to the set-up of civil-military relations that

took place in the context of the big 2002-2004 reformist momentum in Turkey. A total of nine reform packages were passed in parliament under the common frame of the so-called “harmonization laws”. All those reform packages can be directly related to Turkey’s attempt to become a member of the European Union. They are a consequence of EU conditionality, which requires that a candidate country must fulfill the Copenhagen Criteria and adopt the *Acquis Communautaire* if it wants to become a member of the club.

The Turkish Constitution was prepared in 1982 under the military regime. As part of EU-related reforms, a so-called seventh harmonization package entered into force in 2003. With this constitutional amendment the post of the military’s secretary general underwent significant restrictions in power, meaning that it was freed from most executive duties and assigned to real secretarial duties. The 2003 reform package further stipulated the abolishment of a previously existing secrecy clause in order to make the activities of the secretariat more transparent. Other changes concerned the number of annual meetings of the National Security Council (NSC), which constitutes the most important military organ, composed of an equal number of civilian and military members whenever the president of the Turkish Republic was a person of civilian background. With a reduction of annual meetings from twelve to six, the military was left with only half as many opportunities to micromanage policy. In addition, the Court of Accounts was authorized to supervise the financial activities of the armed forces concerning state properties. In 2004, another amendment led to the abolishment of all State Security Courts, which until then had dealt with cases involving the security of the state. In summary, civil-military reforms of 2002-2004 led to the significant elimination of most of the prerogatives and privileges that were granted to the Turkish Army by the original Constitution of 1982. In fact, the reformist momentum “has liquidated a very large part of the semi-authoritarian legacy of the NSC regime” (Özbudun, 2007, p.195) and severely weakened the power of the military in internal Turkish affairs.

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

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

Throughout history, the military had always been a serious threat to the political power of pious parties and their Islamic agenda. The military’s regular coups together with the Constitutional Court’s little reluctance when it comes to closing down Islamic parties have clearly shown the AKP that secular non-party institutions constitute a much bigger threat to its political power than any opposition party could. Being aware of that, the CHP worried that the AKP would only use EU reforms to shield the “party from likelihood of imminent closure [...], to safeguard [...] an Islamic lifestyle under the rubric of democratic freedoms; and [...] [to broaden] the party’s appeal to liberal-minded voters” (Patton, 2007, p.343), before pursuing truly Islamic interests. From the very beginning, the CHP was hence suspicious about Erdoğan’s true intention behind the reforms.

Concluding, until 2002 and the reformist momentum in Turkey, the weaker position of the elitist CHP against the strong mass integration party AKP was counterbalanced by a strong secularist military, which always stepped in when the CHP proved incapable of protecting the Kemalist principles. With the limited role of the Turkish military in controlling and influencing Turkey’s domestic politics however, the situation changed and the distribution of power between the two antagonistic groups in society became more unbalanced. As a consequence, suspicion and polarization between CHP and AKP started to slowly increase again parallel to the big reformist momentum.

IV.II.II Turkey’s Return to Islamic Policies?

The excessive reformation and political revolution of the Turkish political system mainly took place during the AKP’s first three years in office and then slowed down perceptively in 2005 and very obviously in 2006. Parallel to a steep decline of constitutional reforms, Prime Minister Erdoğan started to advance a more Islamic agenda, which altered Turkish society and clearly expressed the AKP’s

Islamic background (Capezza, 2009, n42). The next few paragraphs section hence focus on the developments in Turkish politics after 2004, when the reformist momentum almost came to a halt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The AKP's new moves in the foreign policy field suggest that the party feels "much more at home in the Middle East and the Islamic world, as opposed to a European-style party committed to secularism and a liberal vision of multi-culturalism" (Önis, 2007, p.256) and provide evidence for a shift in the AKP's political agenda towards more Islamic policies after the big reform period between 2002 and 2004. Such a shift further suggests that Erdoğan uses ideas in a rather flexible way and according to how they contribute most to his naked interests of gaining lasting political power and influence.

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

A Snapshot of Pious-Secular Party Polarization in 2007

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

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

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

	Pious vision of a state	Secular vision of a state
Reference point	- Ottoman Empire	- Kemalist Modernization Project
Ideas	- Interest-based ideas - Identity defined by religion, Identity of Turkey as a Muslim and mainly Middle Eastern country	- Identity defined by Kemalism, based on nationalism, secularism, national unity and sovereignty
Interests	- Lasting power and influence - Stronger focus and orientation to neighboring states and the Middle East - Being a world player and a powerful actor in the Middle East - Pursuing a stronger Islamic policy agenda with attempts to loosen the strict church/state separation - Yielding to citizens' demands in order to keep dominant position and broad voter support	- Idea-based interests - Protection of the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic, → But secularism, national unity and sovereignty threatened by EU-related reforms and the AKP's new foreign policy agenda - Political hegemony → But reality in 2007 reveals the opposite: little voter support, no powerful position in politics
	- Strong AKP (single party government)	- Relatively weak CHP - Restricted secular state

	- Adapted Constitution, which better serves pious interests now	institutions due to military and judicial reforms
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IV.II.III Conclusion

The previous section displayed that Turkey's main pious and secular political parties became more polarized again from 2002 on, mainly due to the CHP's strict adherence of and dependence on Kemalism in combination with the EU's requirement for reforms, which provided for an environment in which the AKP could realize its dominant interest of gaining strong and lasting political power and influence.

The reformist momentum significantly altered the distribution of power between pious and secular groups in Turkish society. EU-related reforms paved the way for the AKP to establish a dominant position in politics. With its globalist and pro-reformist stance around the turn of the millennium the AKP gained strong popular support and the content of reforms itself further guaranteed power and made party closure and military interventions highly unlikely, if not impossible.

The severe restrictions on the Turkish Military did not only guarantee the AKP's political survival but also significantly reduced the power of the CHP and general secular influence in Turkish politics because the CHP had always relied upon strong secular state institutions in order to push through and defend Kemalist ideas and idea-based interests.

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

This gives reason to assume that the AKP has flexible ideas, which can be shaped and may therefore change in the contest for resources by rival groups. When Turkey suffered from a severe economic crisis around the turn of the millennium and polls revealed strong support for pro-reformist Europeanization policies, the AKP capitalized on that and delivered to its followers an almost revolutionary reformist momentum. It further did so in order to protect the party from imminent party closure. When public support for the EU declined and the AKP had sufficiently protected its party against secular state institutions, the AKP changed its political agenda and ideas and started pursuing much more Islamic and Middle East-oriented policies. Such instability of ideas suggests that the AKP uses ideas mainly as weapons in political power battles and as a means to redistribute resources to its followers instead of being convinced that their ideas will lead to a better society.

My analysis of the CHP on the other hand led to opposite results. The CHP is grounded on Kemalist ideas and hence organized as an elite party, which maintains a strong hierarchical order and a top-down style of governing. Further, the party sticks to a highly inflexible policy agenda that hardly allows the party to move. A strong ideological identification represents a big obstacle to becoming an equally powerful player in domestic politics, especially when the underlying ideology does not allow for mass party organization. If ideas would simply be the smokescreen for naked interests, the CHP had long adapted their political agenda and moved further to the core of the political spectrum in order to gain power and influence and to be further able to preserve economic advantages and privileges of status. However, as the CHP stuck to their ideas and idea-based interests, it provides evidence that its party members truly believe that Kemalism makes society a better society. They rather accept growing polarization and a loss in power than adapting ideas and departing from the original ideology.

Concluding, my findings provide evidence that ideas and interests both really matter for polarization as they set the frame for the institutional set-up of political parties and largely determine the extent to what power sharing can be realized in a strongly heterogeneous society. In that context, the CHP could be identified as an idea-based party, meaning that its members and supporters follow Kemalist principles in the belief that it makes a better society whereas the RP and even more the AKP could be identified as interest-based parties, using ideas mainly as weapons in political battles for lasting power and influence. Those findings match constructivist arguments, which suggest that ideas can be formative of political party interests but that party interests can also be formative of ideas and that social movements can be formative of political parties and vice versa.

Further, my findings give reason to assume that especially the presence of mass integration parties in combination with elite parties and without external institutional checks and balances, are most problematic and provoke the open manifestation of conflict. Due to the CHP's organization as an idea-based and therefore inflexible elite party with a weak social anchor and little support from state institutions, the AKP – as a flexible and mobile mass party- could easily gain dominant popular support and pursue huge reforms and a more Islamic policy agenda. This caused a growing ideological distance not only between the two parties concerned but also between society and the CHP and finally resulted in stronger polarization.

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

Final Conclusions

In the course of my framework for analysis, I demonstrated how societal beliefs and interests link to political parties and elaborated on the relationship between society, the state and polarization. On the basis of the content of such framework I decided to study the development of pious-secular political party polarization between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics in the light of ideas, interests, political party organization and the principle of non-concentration of power.

As an answer to my research question: *To what extent did the level of polarization between the main pious and secular political parties change between 1995 and 2007 in Turkish domestic politics?*, I found that from 1995 until 1998, there was a high level of polarization between the Islamic RP and the secularist CHP. Hereby, concentration of power on the pious side, due to a strong RP-regime in government could be revealed as the main reason for polarization. This changed however with the soft military coup of 1997, which caused the ban of the Refah Party and meant the end of radical Islamic policies in Turkey.

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

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

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

In the course of the years, Turkish society witnessed the growing presence of Islamic ideas and interests in domestic and foreign politics so that secular circles started to fear that the fundamental

principles of the Turkish Republic and hence their own ideas and idea-based interests would no longer be sufficiently protected. This increased once again the threat to national unity.

In the process of answering my research question, my findings revealed that the Kemalist state ideology does not allow for the realization of non-concentration of power, which was introduced by my framework for analysis as a suitable means to alleviate problems and to create stability.

The obligation to preserve the national sovereignty of the Turkish state prohibits the implementation of corporatism, whereas federalism would infringe the principle of territorial unity. Finally, consociationalism violates the principle of ethno-cultural homogeneity. Kemalism further promotes the top-down control of state and society and hegemonic ruling instead of compromise seeking. As a result, the Kemalist CHP is organized as an elite and ideology-based party with a highly inflexible policy agenda and little ability to move.

Summing up, my findings suggest that it is the concept of Kemalism itself, which constitutes the biggest obstacle to the realization of power sharing in the Turkish political system and to the CHP to become a flexible and mobile mass party and an equally powerful player in domestic politics. It is hence also the Turkish state ideology, which provokes polarization and the possible dispartment of the county as a whole.

The firm conviction of CHP members that what they follow – Kemalist principles – makes a better society prohibits the party to adapt and respond to changing social demands away from Kemalism and leads to low popular support of the masses and eventually a weak role in domestic politics.

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

This would eventually imply or require the reformulation of Kemalism in order for the CHP to revive and become a serious competitive player in Turkish domestic politics again. If the party has the slightest intention to regain a powerful position in the decision-making process and to influence and shape the political direction of the Turkish Republic, the party must dismiss its rigid policy agenda and become more flexible in order to attract voters. This would also be beneficial for the Turkish country as a whole as it would eliminate or decrease the threat of polarization and hence the danger to political stability and the unity of the country. A reformulation of Kemalism might even strengthen and preserve Kemalist values. When polarization can be controlled, the territorial unity and national sovereignty of the country are much better protected.

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

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

Interestingly, Turkish party politics so far lack the presence of a European-style democratic party with a mass following. The CHP could make use of such a shortcoming and start committing itself to a social agenda and the promotion of social justice. If it would manage to come closer to what one calls a social-democrat party, the party might have the chance to gain a more powerful position again and to compete with the AKP on the same level. Obstacles to such a transformation are however that the CHP would first need to get rid of their dependency on the military and the Constitutional Court. This seems to be quite risky, because the CHP would then first be left with nothing.

Throughout my study I assumed that lasting political power and influence were most important to the political leaders of the AKP. I assumed that they had used ideas merely as weapons in a contest for resources between rival groups and based such an assumption on the observed frequent changes of the

AKP's ideas and the party's shift from Western- to Middle East-oriented policies. However, since I did not test such a hypothesis, it might be interesting for future scientific research to examine whether my assumption had been correct or whether the AKP in fact is truly attached to ideas – Islamic ideas – and used deviating ideas such as pro-European and neo-liberal stances only as a means to achieve the higher goal of implementing truly Islamic ideas without the danger that anybody could prevent AKP politicians from doing so.

Another interesting suggestion for further scientific research, which emanates from my study, is the examination of the EU's and the US' responses to the AKP's recent shift towards a more Islamic and Middle East-oriented policy agenda. The CHP might hope for a more skeptical and suspicious reaction from the West followed by less foreign support for the AKP regime and more pressure and control from the outside.

Finally, my findings prompt to assume that the EU has underestimated the role of the national army as an element of checks and balances in Turkish politics. The European alliance required constitutional changes to the set-up of civil-military relations in order to strengthen the quality of democracy. Those reforms however, extensively weakened the only opposition party with seats in the Turkish National Assembly and allowed for pious dominance and the increasing presence of Islamic ideas and symbols in Turkish politics. This brings up the interesting question whether EU-demands might backfire in the long run, when reforms result in less checks and balances and growing polarization between the pious and secular camps so that eventually the democratic stability is threatened instead of strengthened. If future scientific research can indeed reveal a causal relationship between EU conditionality and growing polarization one could argue that the EU needs to reconsider their enlargement approach and find correcting mechanisms which better fit Turkey. My research findings give reason to assume that the EU needs to apply foreign policy strategies, which are much more country-specific in order to ensure that the overarching goals can be reached by candidate countries.

Appendix

VI.I A General Table of Guiding Imperatives Behind Group and Ideology Formation

On the basis of my own considerations and the content of my analytical framework I have developed a general table of attributes, displaying all possible guiding imperatives behind group and ideology formation. The table introduces the following four dimensions: reference point, ideas, interests and institutions.

It serves as a starting point for my study of pious-secular polarization in Turkey and helps me to organize my analysis. Due to such a table, I can proceed systematically and know what to look at when studying competing camps in a society. With this table I can reveal opposing ideas and interests between pious and secular groups in Turkish society and eventually measure power distribution by applying this general table to the respective situations in Turkey at different points in time. Those specific findings in turn, eventually indicate the chances for a new peak of polarization. Low power distribution increases the likelihood for strong polarization and the open manifestation of conflict in the public sphere.

Guiding Imperatives behind Group and Ideology Formation

Reference Point	Where do I derive my ideas and idea-based interests from?
Ideas	<p><i>Process of Identity formation</i>; how do I define myself? <i>Perception/understanding of identity</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who am I? and What am I there to do? - On which ideas do I base my identity? - What attributes/ideas do we share? What makes us us and the others the others?
Interests	<p>What do I want? What role do I claim for myself? How do I want a state to be organized? → <u>Political Culture</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - System (How are citizens oriented towards the political system?) - Process (What is expected of the political process?) - Policy (What is the appropriate role of government?)
Institutions (framework within which individuals behave, constrain what individuals do but also what they think is possible to do)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Constitutional arrangements and other collections of inter-related rules and routines - Parties which aggregate and articulate interests

VI.II The Turkish Military

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

stalemate of those years could not be resolved by ordinary democratic processes. As a result, the military stepped in whenever the CHP could not effectively protect and preserve the fundamental principles of the Turkish Republic; hence whenever the CHP was not strong enough to stand in as the political party defender of the Kemalist state.

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

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