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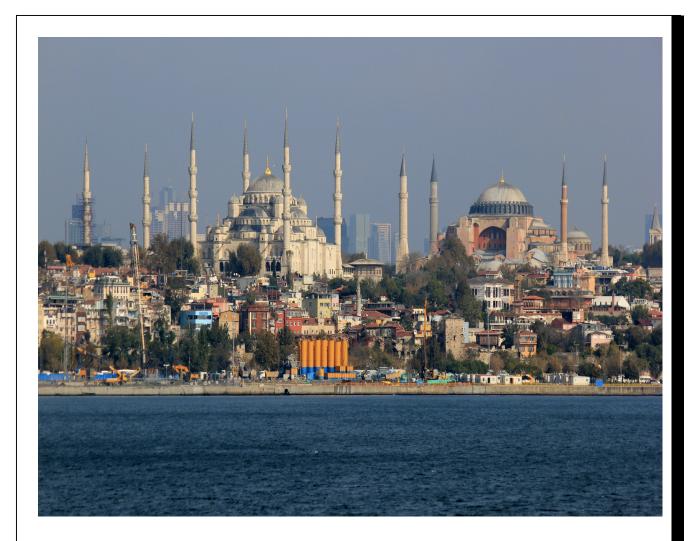
Repression, Civil Conflict, And Leadership Tenure: A Case Study of Turkey

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REPRESSION, CIVIL CONFLICT AND LEADERSHIP TENURE: A CASE STUDY OF TURKEY

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TURKEY CASE STUDY

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Executive Summary

Turkey's geo-political position between traditional Eastern and Western powers has made its political situation complicated. Moreover, like many countries, it still experiences ramifications from outside Western involvement in drawing borders. After World War I, Western powers divided up the Ottoman Empire into Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, forcing the Kurds to straddle the borders between these new nation-states. To avoid colonization or undue outside influence, Atatürk led a fight for Turkish independence. He then instituted his particular form of democratic government—Kemalism—which emphasized secularism, modernization and liberalization. Atatürk pursued nationalistic, secular policies that were meant to help Turkey fit into the neighboring European community. But these same Kemalist goals also alienated the Kurdish population in the southeast, which did not consider itself Turkish, having been split up across several countries with the Ottoman division. Today, we still see the ramifications of Atatürk's nationalistic policies and reforms. The Kurds are still fighting against Turkish nationalism, and Islamists have come to power to reverse Turkey's secularist government and constitution.

Turkey's present political situation is precarious. In recent years, the government, led by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and his political party, the AKP, has moved increasingly toward Islamism, and censorship of academia and press is frequent. The government has often shut down social media and has blocked internet content in an attempt to limit the interaction of its citizens. The AKP decided, in the past few years, to reopen offensive military action against the Kurds in southeastern Turkey, and is emptying and destroying many Kurdish villages under the guise of rooting out the Islamic State (ISIS). Moreover, the military, which has periodically exercised power to overthrow the government, or has forced it to resign, seems to have lost its influence and potency over Erdoğan and the Turkish Parliament following the failed July 2016 coup. Amid all of this lurk the conflicts in Syria and the threat of ISIS, which have destabilized the area.

To complicate matters further, the recent referendum in April 2017 has fundamentally changed the Turkish constitution. Erdoğan has converted the constitution from a parliamentary one to a presidential one. Moreover, he and his party have eliminated opposition within government, from the military, in the media, and in academia. They have continued to politicize the judiciary and have often governed with corruption and impunity. They have consolidated power in Erdoğan's hands, which many Turkish citizens accept as a necessary step in fighting the threat of military intervention in government, and in fighting ISIS terrorism.

Q1. Do citizens respond differently when confronted with political repression, violent repression or a mix of repressive tactics?

Political repression has been the more common form of repression in Turkey in the past century. Beginning with the Ottomans, the millet system ensured that ethnic and religious minorities were subservient. Atatürk, in an effort to conform to the nation-state model, espoused a new "Turkishness" designed to secularize, modernize, and liberalize the country. The Kurds, in particular, were culturally and economically repressed during this time. This systematic repression prompted the formation of the PKK, which espoused a radical and militaristic ideology of rebellion. The Turkish government retaliated with increased violence, and since the PPK's formation, the cycle of violence between it and the Turkish government has been nearly constant.

Aside from the violent repression of the Kurds, much of the contemporary repression in Turkey centers on controlling the flow of information, both through the press and through education. This has led to the jailing of many journalists, and self-censorship in other instances. Academics have been removed from their university posts because they supposedly espouse and teach subversive ideas pose a threat to the government. Internet freedom is on the decline in Turkey as the government attempts to control what people see and share. Political repression has led to protests for several years, bolstered by other uprisings across the Arab world. However, the government permits the police and security forces to deal harshly with protestors, and often dismisses the responsible actors without punishment. The most notable example was the violent response of the Turkish security forces to the peaceful Gezi Park protests in 2013.

Q2. Do officials use different types of repression in response to different types of civil conflict?

Yes. Violence from the PKK has most often been met with violence from the military in response. It could be argued that the violence from the PKK was only a response to the political and economic repression they experienced under Kemalist policies. However, their violent protests have been dealt with viciously by the Turkish government, and when responding violently to PKK actions, the government often gives little thought to preventing civilian harm. This violently repressive behavior only serves to further enrage Kurdish dissidents, and continues a cycle of violent rebellion being answered with violent repression.

When the rest of the citizenry is political repressed, as often happens in Turkey, it has usually responded with protests. A potential turning point in the relationship between rebellion and repression came with the 2013 Gezi Park protests, in which people protesting the destruction of a neighborhood park were harshly disbanded. This led protestors to decry that their right to peacefully assemble was being violated, launching widespread protests across the country. These uprisings were again handled brutally by police and little has been done to punish officers who used excessive force. Protests do not typically degenerate into widespread violence, although deaths and injuries were reported after the attempted coup. The protests following the referendum have resulted in large numbers of opposition voters being jailed without specific charges.

Q3. Does the use and type of repression (whether political, violent or some combination) increase the likelihood that rulers retain power?

Although Turkey has many of the trappings of a democratic country, President Erdoğan has often relied on various forms of repression to quiet different groups. Though violent repression against the Kurds has been common for many years, more recently the government has begun using political and occasionally violent repression against Gulan's followers, secular liberals, academics, and the press. In the case of the Kurds, the government initially engaged in political and economic repression. The Kurds eventually responded with violence and the PKK was formed to continue the fight. Violent rebellion and violent repression still characterize the relationship between the Turkish government and the Kurdish minority. However, that relationship is now complicated by the rise of ISIS; the Kurds have been instrumental in fighting ISIS, and so the United States has been arming the Kurds much to the dismay of Ankara.

In addition to the historically violent repression of the Kurds, the Turkish government under Erdoğan has also begun repressing many other groups in society. When we began this project proposal in 2013, Turkey was still considered democratic (even if an illiberal democracy). Although historically, democratically elected leaders in Turkey have needed to worry more about intervention from the military than from a disenchanted electorate. However, that focus has begun to change since the Arab Spring. Widespread protests in 2013 looked as though they may affect a shift in power. However, Erdoğan and the AKP have found ways of squashing dissent, usually through jailing or exiling protestors, journalists, academics, etc. Thus, political repression has been the primary method of maintaining power for the AKP over the past several years, and the government has occasionally turned to violent repression as a means of curbing protest. The recent referendum was merely a political tool to help in the AKP's consolidation of power.¹

¹ For this case study, we requested interviews from numerous Turkish academics and NGO workers, some in Turkey and others in Europe or the United States. Unfortunately, due to the present crackdown on dissenters, very few experts responded to our requests for interviews. This is likely due to their fears over their personal safety and that of their families. We were able to secure two anonymous interviews, one from a Turkish academic currently working at a university in Turkey, and another from an NGO worker at a prominent NGO operating out of Istanbul. Both spoke to us only on the condition that their names be kept private. Full, confidential, transcripts are available for both interviews.

I. Turkey Overview and Recent History

Modern Turkey came into existence in 1923 when Atatürk (Mustafa Kemal Pasha) defeated the Ottoman Empire (CIA Factbook: 2017). Placed on the Eastern edge of the Mediterranean Sea, and to the south of the Black Sea, Turkey forms a geographic, and cultural, bridge between Europe and the Middle East, with the land to the west of the Bosporus considered part of Europe (Alexander, et al. 2008; Göl 2009). The country is bordered by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Iran, Iraq, and Syria (CIA Factbook: 2017). Turkey's primarily Muslim population is concentrated in Istanbul and Ankara, with some cities scattered along the Mediterranean and the interior of the country. About of one third of the population is employed in agriculture (Alexander et al. 2008). The country's official language is Turkish, though about 19% of the population are Kurdish and speak Kurdish (CIA : 20170. Turkey has a long history of volatile internal and international politics, including a decades-long dispute with Greece over northern Cyprus, and recent upheavals in the country due to the government's increased repression, bolstered by the Arab Spring. The country has also experienced a number of successful military coup attempts in the past 50 years and one failed attempt in 2016 (CIA: 2017). These coups have generally been orchestrated to promote modernization or to prevent Islamization in government (Rothman 2016). The country is also home to a large and fairly young population, which has often acted as a catalyst for more progressive politics (Alexander et al. 2008).



TURKEY AND THE SURROUNDING COUNTRIES

Taken from the online CIA Factbook on Turkey. Last updated on January 12, 2017.

After World War I, the allied forces divided up the Ottoman Empire and occupied the territories. In response, the Turkish people revolted against the allied occupiers, with Ataturk leading the rebellion

(Alexander et al. 2008). Ataturk quickly initiated a number of reforms, including the establishment of a secular legal code and the expansion of women's rights (Kramer 2000; Alexander et al. 2008). Ataturk also encouraged social reforms aimed at making Turks act and dress more like Europeans. Such political, legal and social reforms came to be known as "Kemalism," and the ideology has dominated Turkish culture for decades (Kramer 2000; Alexander et al. 2008; Axiarlis 2014). According to Alexander et al. (2008), the Kemalist reform that most stunned the Turkish people and their leaders was the strict separation between the republic and Islam. He notes, "The abolition of the Caliphate ended any connection between the state and religion. The Islamic religious orders were suppressed, madrasas were closed, public education was secularized, and the sharia was revoked" (Alexander et al. 2008; 5). These reforms required the Turkish population, who hitherto viewed themselves as Muslim subjects of a sultan, to radically alter its collective identity into that of citizens of a republican nation-state (Kramer 2000). However, somewhat paradoxically, these secular, republican initiatives were accompanied by Ataturk's willingness to crush any political opposition to his ideological reforms with authoritarian tactics (Kramer 2000). As such, much of modern Turkish history reflects this tension between liberalization and authoritarianism, secularization and traditional Islam. Moreover, as will be discussed in the section on the rise of Islamism, Axiarlis (2014) notes that the very same pressures to liberalize and secularize Turkey's politics have contributed to the Islamist backlash of recent years.

In addition to these tensions, often played out through military coups and cycles of secular and Islamist rule, Turkey's political landscape also is shaped profoundly by the country's Kurdish minority. The Kurds are a tribal people, originally from the Zagros Mountains in Iran (Yildiz 2005). After World War I, the Kurds were denied the opportunity for self-rule, and instead, their traditional homeland was divided among Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey (Yildiz 2005). For a century, they have been viewed with suspicion and have endured repression in each of the states mentioned above. Turkey's Kurdish minority gave birth to the Kurdish Working Party (PKK) in 1974, and the group has been involved in an insurgency against the Turkish state ever since (Bozarslan 1996). The following sections will outline the history and development of the various cleavages in modern Turkey.

1. The History of Modernization and Reform in Turkey

Turkey's geographic, cultural, and economic position as a bridge between the Western and Eastern worlds has made it an epicenter for differing approaches to economics, forms of government, religiosity, and human rights, among other considerations (Rouleau 1993; Rouleau 1996; Göl 2009). After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's establishment of a secular, modern Turkey ushered in a new political and social era for the country. However, the recent resurgence of Islamism has challenged Atatürk's vision. As Axiarlis notes, "[T]he Republic fits neatly into neither the Western nor the Middle Eastern civilizational paradigm, and is, in fact, a singular and inexplicable amalgam of both. This dichotomy has fostered the polarization of Turkish society and has led to ongoing repercussions for the problematized cultural identity of it citizens" (2014: 2). We briefly explore some of these cultural and religious cleavages in the following two sections, paying particular attention to secular Kemalism, leaving the recent movement toward Islamism during Erdogan's rule for part 4 of this section.

The Fall of the Ottoman Empire

Scholars consider contemporary Turkey a developing, or immature democracy, which was part of the second wave of democratization (Adamson 2001; Oniş & Türem 2002). "A broadly open polity has existed, albeit with certain interruptions, over a period of four decades, yet the democratic order falls considerably short of being fully consolidated judged by the norms of western-style liberal democracies" (Oniş & Türem 2002: 439). Turkey falls short of the ideals of a "western-style" democracy, in part, because of its "bridge" status (Göl 2009; Axiarlis 2014). However, its history of Ottoman rule, and intervention from Western powers after World War I, has also contributed to its slow liberalization and democratization.

Though commentators and scholars generally identify the beginning of period of modernization in Turkey with the rise of Atatürk, Aksan argues that "[M]odernization, or westernization, of the Ottoman empire as a truly radical enterprise began with the destruction of the imperial army, the Janissaries, in 1826" (Aksan 2005/6: 20). This first attempt at modernization, by Sultan Mahmut II, incorporated French military organization and training to replace the imperial Ottoman military (Aksan 2005/6). Moreover, during this period (called the *Tanzimat*, or "reorganization," period) two reform documents were published outlining equality of all citizens before the law, for both Muslims and non-Muslims (Aksan 2005/6). In practice, the Ottoman Empire still functioned under the *millet* system, which privileged Muslims over non-Muslims (Aksan 2005/6; Bayir 2013). Despite this de facto practice of favoring Muslim communities and individuals, "the legal thrust of constitutionalism inspired by the reform documents created social forces that challenged sultanic absolutism" (Aksan 2005/6: 22). After the Tanzimat period, Sultan Abdulhamit II rolled back some constitutional reforms, reframing the empire as a Muslim caliphate, thereby alienating religious and ethnic minority groups (Aksan 2005/6). At the same time, however, Abdulhamit also opened the first Ottoman parliament at Domabahce Palace in March 1877 (Citino 2008). Though still an Ottoman sultanate at the time, this marked a step toward the progressive politics that led to the Turkish Republic a few decades later (Kili 1980).

The birth of the Turkish Republic was set against the backdrop of the First World War and the Armenian genocide. During the early years of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire, like other governments of the time, struggled with growing nationalist sentiments. As Onar notes, Turkish leaders rejected Ottoman Islamism in favor of "nationalism as the best recipe for survival in a Europe-dominated Westphalian world" (Onar 2009: 230). Military careerists formed the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, also called the Young Turks or the Unionists) in order to push for constitutional restoration under the Abdulhamit II regime (Aksan 2005/6). After 1909, the CUP overthrew the Ottoman sultan and began a process of nationalist purification (Aksan 2005/6). During this period, and with Europe on the threshold of war, militants from the CUP and its unofficial henchmen murdered at least one million Armenians between late summer 1914 and mid-1916 (Bloxham 2003; Aksan 2005/6).

Following World War I, in 1920, the national pact of the final Ottoman parliament established independence and sovereignty for Turkey, despite opposition from the British, who had been occupying Istanbul since 1918 (Aksan 2005/6). Turkey managed to avoid colonization, but in doing so, consolidated disparate ethnic and religious groups (among them, the Kurds), which has led to ongoing tension ever since (Onar 2009; Bayir 2013). Indeed, the contested nature of the Ottoman past, shaped the Turkish

Republic at its founding, continues to shape politics in the country. As Onar (2009) notes, "The Turkish debate over the nature and legacy of the Ottoman past is, at one level, an enactment of the tension between European and post-colonial narratives. It pits a westernized, secularist elite which rejects the Ottoman-Islamic past as a locus of barbarity against an Islamist counter-elite which eulogizes that past as a site of authenticity" (229).

In the 20th century, Turkey has always been home to a leftist, progressive contingent. Despite the periodic popularity of traditionalist politics in Turkey, leftist groups have enjoyed some success for more than a century. As Durgan (2015) notes, "The origins of left-wing politics and the popularity of the word 'socialism' in Turkey date back to the late nineteenth century. The formation of an Ottoman left under the influence of Ottoman intellectuals, most of whom were in close contact with the non-Muslim people and westerners, grew with the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia" (9). Secular leftists found a way to incorporate a more progressive agenda into Turkish politics with the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Following World War I, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk began uniting the various religious and ethnic components of the Ottoman Empire into a secular, modern state. "Atatürk, by force of personality and clever maneuvering, rallied Turks (Muslims) from all over Anatolia, and challenged the rump sultanate under the Istanbul occupation, even as the victorious allies were devising the redistribution of the remaining Ottoman territories among the Armenians, Greeks, and Kurds after the treaty of Sèvres of 1920" (Aksan 2005/6: 24). The democratization process began, in earnest, with the creation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 (Alexander et al. 2008; Onar 2009; Turkan 2012; Axiarlis 2014).

Atatürk and Kemalism

At the turn of the twentieth century and during the early years of World War I, Turkey's CUP activists began a process of secularization and started promoting greater Turkish nationalism. "Initially an amorphous body of officers with reformist intentions, the CUP was radicalized by Abdulhamit's countermeasures. The defensive reform movement of the Ottomans had engendered the Turkish nationalists, who pressed their agenda through the CUP after 1909" (Aksan 2005/6: 23). Atatürk recognized the possibilities to remake Turkey on the basis of self-determination for citizens of the crumbling Ottoman Empire (Aksan 2005/6). Atatürk organized a resistance movement against colonization after Turkey's surrender to the Allies in 1918 (Kili 1980). Leading a new army in the Turkish revolution, Atatürk defeated Greek forces, controlled the city of Izmir, and negotiated a peace with the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 (Kili 1980; Aksan 2005/6; Onar 2009). Thus, in October of 1923, the Turkish Republic was born (Onar 2009; Turkan 2012). Onar (2009) argues that the republican founders believed that the only way to avoid hegemonic control from Europe was to conform to Western ideals and governmental structures, primarily through the nation-state model. "Through persuasion, but also by draconian decrees and repressive measures, he succeeded in imposing an identity that sought to be monolithic, a culture of Western inspiration" (Rouleau 1993).

Atatürk's vision for the Turkish nation-state came to be known as Kemalism (Bayir 2013). It began in the form of a Turkish resistance to outside control and colonization, and developed into a set of political reforms aimed at modernization and secularism (Kili 1980). As Kili notes, "These reforms were directed, in the main, to strengthening the new central authority, to nation building, to secularization of Turkish

state and society, to realizing political participation, and to bringing about changes in the socioeconomic structure of the country" (384). The Western model of the nation-state and Englightenment rationality influenced many particular policy positions. However, Kemalism also emphasized secularism and a statist economy (Rouleau 1996). "From the Soviets, it adopted in its early decades an authoritarian, single-party rule and a statist economy; from the French, a strict secularism and the concept of a centralized nation-state wherein citizenship is based on the rights of the individual rather than on ethnic or religious identity" (Rouleau 1996: 70). The emphasis on individual rights, in contradistinction to group rights, meant that cultural, religious, and ethnic minorities often felt marginalized. This was particularly true with regard to the Kurdish minority. "Secular citizenship was meant to forge a homogenous nation dedicated to modernity and irrevocably tied to the Europe of the Enlightenment" (Rouleau 1996: 70). Although the Kemalist enterprise was largely successful, the Kurds often remained attached to their own ethnic and cultural identity (Rouleau 1996).

Despite its inability to satisfy the demands of the Kurdish minority, and its nationalistic enforcement of "Turkishness," Kemalism was also successful in a number of important ways. The *millet* system was effectively abolished through Kemalist reforms that, ostensibly, gave all citizens equal rights, regardless of religion (Azak 2010). After World War II, the Turkish elites and university students argued that the establishment of the multiparty system was the logical conclusion of Kemalism (Kili 1980; Karaosmanoğlu 2000). "After the Second World War, democratization became an indispensable element of Westernization. The first significant development, in this regard, was Turkey's transition to a multiparty regime in 1950 and its alignment with NATO in 1952" (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 209). Kemalism also introduced Western ideas about a woman's role and appearance, liberalizing traditional gender roles while maintaining female modesty (Azak 2010). So, while Kemalism offered several advancements in social and political norms, it fell short of fully integrating all citizens into a "Turkish" identity. This meant further reforms were necessary if Turkey was to be fully accepted into the European community of which it wanted to be a part.

The EU and Constitutional Reform

For economic reasons, and because of Istanbul's inclusion as part of Europe, Turkey has long sought European Union membership (Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Türkmen 2008; Tezcür 2010). However, the dream of Turkish accession seems to be over (Zeynalov 2015; Emmott 2017), and the tone of Erdogan's comments on the EU has changed markedly in recent years (Butler & Karadeniz 2017). Indeed, ahead of the recent constitutional referendum, Erdogan "cast Europe as a 'center of Naziism" (Butler & Karadeniz 2017: np). It seems that years of rejection have caused Ankara to turn away from the West and toward Russia as a more beneficial ally (McCleary 2017; TNGO confidential interview 2017).

Beginning in the 1990's, Turkey began informally pursuing EU membership, and accession talks began in 2005 (Emmott 2017). But the EU has been reticent to grant Turkey membership because it fails to meet several of the criteria required for admission into the Union. The EU's enlargement policy is clear that any state wishing to apply to be an EU member state, must 1) be a European state, and 2) must respect and promote common EU values (European Commission ND). In particular, any applicant for membership should demonstrate respect for "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of

law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities," which is listed in Article 2 of the EU Treaty (European Commission ND: np). To prove adhesion to these values, a state must go through a pre-accession period (which can vary in length), during which it must adapt its institutions to meet the obligations required for EU membership.

In an effort to meet the criteria for membership in the European Union, the Turkish government undertook a series of reforms to liberalize and democratize. "Two series of constitutional amendments and eight reform packages, comprising more than 490 laws" were adopted after Turkey's candidacy was confirmed in December 1999 at the Helsinki Summit (Türkmen 2008: 147). Some of the reforms involved expansion of individual and minority rights, and others were constitutional reforms to curb the power of the military. Specifically, the military reforms have been aimed at curbing military involvement in civilian political affairs (Tezcür 2010).

Since 1998, Turkey has been under pressure to reform the State Security Courts by acting in conformity with the decision of the European Court of Human Rights, which concluded that the presence of a military judge in the State Security Court was a violation of the principle of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, provided by the European Convention of Human Rights, of which Turkey is a signatory. In June 1999, the Turkish Parliament revised the Law of the State Security Courts and put an end to the presence of military judges and prosecutors (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 215).

The military reforms helped Turkey's cause for admittance, but the government also had to address issues with its protection of minority rights (Tezcür 2010).

The Turkish government was particularly careful to expand the rights of the Kurdish minority in response to concerns from the European Community about Turkey's treatment of ethnic and religious minority groups.

The years between 1999 and 2004 were one of the most ambitious reform periods in modern Turkish history. The impetus came from the EU, which approved Turkey's candidacy in its Helsinki Summit held in December 1999. The Turkish parliament amended the Constitution in October 2001 and enacted eight 'harmonization packages' between February 2002 and July 2004. The packages abolished the death penalty; liberalized the political parties, press and association laws; improved imprisonment and custody regulations; facilitated broadcasting and education in languages other than Turkish (i.e. Kurdish); recognized the legal standing of the European Court of Human Rights; increased civilian control over the military; reduced the scope of the military courts; abolished the State Security Courts; extended greater rights to non-Muslim minorities; and revoked a highly restrictive sentence of the Anti-Terror Law (Tezcür 2010: 778).

All of these constitutional changes were welcomed by the European Community, but Turkey was still unable to gain membership (Emmott 2017). This was due, in part, to the continued violence from the Kurdish resistance, even in the face of reforms meant to signal greater respect for the minority and its cultural heritage. From the outside, it appears that Turkey is still susceptible to volatility and military usurpation. Karaosmanoğlu (2000) has argued that this volatility is the result of the nationalism dating

back to the Ottoman Empire. "The Turkish Republic is still threatened by ethnic separatism and irredentism. Syria's territorial claims over the province of Hatay and the PKK's separatist terrorist actions are, to a considerable extent, the legacy of the 19th century's nationalism" (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 203). The EU likely remains the best hope for Turkish development and democracy (Schenkkan 2014; Zeynalov 2015; Emmott 2017). However, many consider the dream of Turkish membership in the European Union to be well and truly dead (Zeynalov 2015; Emmott 2017). If this is the case, Erdoğan's turn, in recent years, away from the West and toward Russia, makes sense (McCleary 2017; TNGO Confidential Interview 2017). If the Turkish government senses that EU accession is a failed effort, then they have little impetus to behave in a manner desirable for EU member states, like allowing freedom of assembly and expression, controlling corruption, and ending impunity. Erdoğan has made it clear that Turkey will not wait at the door of the EU indefinitely, and seems to be seeking alliances elsewhere (Emmott 2017; TNGO confidential interview 2017).

2. The Marginalization of the Kurdish Minority

Though Turkey had become increasingly democratic over the past few decades, it has taken several steps backward in the past few years, and the country still struggles with fully incorporating minority groups into the public and political spheres (Lowen 2016). Bayir (2013) notes that "the state's tendency is to treat differences as 'folkloric' particularities, while continuing to push for unity under the umbrella identities of 'Turkishness' and Sunni Hanefi Islam" (3). The most obvious example of Turkey's difficulty with minority groups is its complicated relationship with the Kurdish population within its borders. While, on the individual level, most Kurds are not actively discriminated against in places like Istanbul and Ankara, the rights of the Kurds, as a group, are contested and unclear. "The Turks reproach the Kurds for ingratitude. It is true that assimilated Kurds rarely suffer any discrimination," but "about one-third of Turkey's 12 to 15 million Kurds have not been fully integrated and are living in the poor and underdeveloped provinces of the southeast" (Rouleau 1996: 76). Like the other countries investigated in our case studies, the Turkish government's economic discrimination against the Kurds has led to rebellion from the Kurds against the government, most notably via the PKK.

One reason for the consistent rebellion from Kurdish nationalist is their lack of representation. When Erdogan's party (the Justice and Development Party [Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi], or AKP) came to power, they began syphoning off Kurdish support from the PKK, thereby leading to an increase in violent tactics from the group. The electoral system "discriminates against parties that fail to cross a 10-percent threshold of the national vote. This effectively keeps regionally based (read "Kurdish") parties from getting into parliament unless deputies stand as independents or in an electoral pact with another party" (Finkel 2012: 107). Another reason for continued discontent among the Kurdish population results from the constitutional reforms begun in 1999 meant a greater competition over control of the Kurdish community (Tezcür 2010). Tezcür makes the novel assertion that the Kurdish nationalist movement was radicalized when democratic reforms were introduced, rather than moderating, because the reforms introduced competition from other organizations, which challenged the PKK's control over its ethnic constituency (Tezcür 2010). In the past three years, the Kurdish nationalist have reengaged in rebellious behavior, with the Turkish government turning, again, to violent tactics to suppress any uprisings.

The History of Kurdish Repression

The history of the Kurdish people in Turkey is a long and complicated one. The Kurds traditionally occupied the lands along the border of the old Ottoman and Persian Empires, and they generally maintained autonomy during that time (Yildiz 2005). After World War I, Western powers divided up the Ottoman Empire into Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, forcing the Kurds to straddle the borders between these new nation-states (Yildiz 2005). According to Bozarslan, the Kurds had lived relatively autonomously under the Ottoman empire, the Kurdish nationalists began to campaign for a proper Kurdish state around 1918 (2003: 15). Only through the creation of modern nation-states in the region did the Kurds come to be seen as a "problem" (White 2000). Though provisions were made to allow Kurdish independence within a year, the Turkish government never followed through on this promise, and the international community did not demand it (Yildiz 2005; Bayir 2013). Indeed, the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne generally ignored any Kurdish claims to self-determination, ensuring protection for religious (but not ethnic) minorities (Marcus 2007). Prior to World War I, the Kurds had been fairly autonomous, but were treated with distrust once their traditional homelands became incorporated into four different countries in which they became non-Arab minorities (Yildiz 2005). Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey were all new nation-states and each was keen to preserve its national unity. (Yildiz 2005).

In Turkey, the government brutally dealt with its Kurdish population. From the time of the Lausanne treaty, Turkey has cruelly repressed the Kurdish population, and even fought a military campaign against them from 1984 to 1999 (Yildiz 2005; Marcus 2007). Any uprisings from the Kurdish minority were dealt with militarily, with villages burned and communities dispersed (Yildiz 2005). The government also engaged in cultural repression by insisting on policies of linguistic and economic nationalism. The Turkish government removed the word for Kurdistan from all textbooks, translated Kurdish town names into Turkish, and banned the Kurdish language, through de facto policies, if not through de jure ones (Marcus 2007: 18; Bayir 2013: 55ff). Since Ataturk's reign, Kurdish newspapers were forbidden from being published, and the Koran has been prohibited from being published in Kurdish (Bucak & Düchting 1996). This linguistic nationalism bled into the economic realm, as Turkish became the mandatory language of all business transactions as well, thereby limiting Kurdish involvement in boardrooms (Shaw & Shaw 1997; Bayir 2013).

These attempts by the Turkish government to curb Kurdish nationalism were largely successful. However, because the Kurdish population was distributed across four new nation-states, Turkey could not control nationalism outside its borders in places like Iraq (Marcus 2007). Kurdish nationalism in other countries slowly prompted a shift in Kurdish opinion within Turkey's borders, acting as a catalyst in toward more liberal minority rights (Marcus 2007). From the Ottoman Empire onward, Kurds did enjoy many individual rights, but international law did not stipulate the protection of their group rights (Bayir 2013). Rather, the Ottoman *millet* system stipulated a hierarchy that privileged Muslims above non-Muslims, and non-Muslims' lives and property were protected only as long as they pledged allegiance to the Ottoman Empire (Bayir 2013: 23). However, as Bayir (2013) notes, "The concepts of 'equality', 'nondiscrimination', or 'rights and freedom' were alien to this mindset" (36). Although most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, the Kurdish people do not share a universal religion, with some identifying as Shi'ite, and still others practicing Christianity, Judaism, and Baha'ism (Yildiz 2005). Thus, Kurdish nationalism spreading into Turkey from outside, became a problem, as it provided a sense of identity that transcended the Turkish emphasis on Islam as the most important distinguishing characteristics of its citizens.

Geography, combined with Turkey's linguistic, economic, and political tactics kept the Kurdish population in relative poverty. While the government worked to keep Kurdish nationalism in check, the Iraqi Kurdish struggle spread, ideologically, into Turkey after the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in 1958 (Marcus 2007: 19). A small segment of Kurds formed a nationalist party in 1965, and called for a Kurdish federation within Turkey, even if it meant armed rebellion (Marcus 2007: 20). Throughout the 1960's, young Kurds, like other young Turks, were intrigued by the radical movement burgeoning within the country at the time (Marcus 2007). Abdullah Öcalan, who would become the leader of the PKK, arrived in Ankara in 1966 to a blossoming of Kurdish nationalism among the Kurdish youth living there (Marcus 2007). Öcalan was first arrested in 1972 during a protest in Ankara. While in prison, he met other motivated and nationalistic young Kurds who were disillusioned with the Turkish process of liberalization (Marcus 2007). However, his arrest had the opposite affect authorities hoped it would. "Being arrested for joining a peaceful demonstration convinced Öcalan there was little room to act in Turkey's democracy; what he heard from the other prisoners made him think that armed revolution was the only answer" (Marcus 2007: 25).

In Iraq, the Kurdish leader Mulla Mustafa Barzani was forced to surrender, and this marked a turning point for Öcalan and his efforts in Turkey. The defeat of Barzani prompted greater efforts by Öcalan to radicalize young Kurds in Turkey, as he blamed Barzani, Kurdish tribal leaders in Turkey, and other wealthy or influential Kurds for engaging in action that propped up traditional power structures (Marcus 2007). Therefore, in 1977, Öcalan and some influential followers began outlining the PKK's official party program. According to Marcus (2007),

Öcalan's supporters shared a Leninist-inspired outlook that saw rival groups as impediments to the one-party rule they believed necessary for a successful revolution. While other Kurdish groups tried to prepare peoples' consciousness for the revolution by holding meetings, Öcalan's followers tried to clear the field so they could start the revolution. This included targeting the rightist groups that promoted a militant Turkish nationalism, the leftist groups that opposed Kurdish nationalism, and the Kurdish groups that refused to make way for Öcalan's group (40).

The PKK would successfully destabilize southeast Turkey, though the conflict often evolved in ways they could not control (Marcus 2007). Though Turkey had transitioned to democracy at this time (as described above), the regime was unstable, experiencing four coalition governments from 1975 to 1980 (Marcus 2007). In response to the dual threat of a weak government and the Kurdish movement, the military executed a coup in 1980, and dealt brutally with dissidents, putting many to death (Yildiz 2005; Marcus 2007; Harrington 2011; Hale 2014). The military instigated a new constitution in 1982, which rolled back many of the quasi-liberal reforms from the 1960's, and began martial law in southeast Turkey, once again renaming Kurdish villages and prohibiting the Kurdish language (Yildiz 2005).

Over the next 15 years, the Kurdish population was devastated by fighting between the Turkish military and the PKK. In 1984, just as Ankara was beginning to lift martial law and shortly after nominally democratic elections were held, the PKK attacked two Turkish military instillations (Marcus 2007). Over

the next several years, the situation deteriorated in the Kurdish regions, and the Turkish Parliament declared a civil State of Emergency in 1987 (Yildiz 2005). This declaration "provided for the establishment of an emergency civil administration and the appointment of a Regional Governor in which all powers of the State of Emergency administration were vested (Yildiz 2005: 16). There was little limitation on the power of the office and little judicial oversight, which generated violence and distrust in Kurdish regions of Turkey. Moreover, the Turkish government enlisted villagers to act as the "Village Guard" in the Kurdish regions, and numerous human rights violations were reported as a result of inadequate supervision of the Village Guard (Yildiz 2005). The government also instituted a resettlement policy designed to disperse the Kurdish population throughout Turkey, thereby eliminating its geographical consolidation in the southeast (Yildiz 2005; Bayir 2013). However, these efforts at dispersion broke up extended families--further contributing to Kurdish discontent (Bayir 2013). As Yildiz observes,

By 1999, it was estimated that 3,500 villages had been evacuated and around 3 million people, mainly Kurds, were displaced. The economic infrastructure of the Kurdish countryside had been decimated, and agricultural livelihoods lay in ruins. The per capita income in the Kurdish regions was, by the 1990's, less than half that of the rest of Turkey. The rationale of the village evacuation program was not only to root out the PKK, but also to forcibly disband Kurdish dominance in the region (2005: 17).

Thus, the Turkish government's repressive tactics against the Kurds were cultural, physical, and economic in nature. Even after the arrest of Abdullah Öcalan in 1999, state security forces still targeted those they believed to be sympathetic to the PKK. According to Yildiz (2005), only Turkey's attempts to gain European Union membership prompted it to institute new legislation on the protection of minority rights.

Changing Repression: The Effect of Turkey's Push for EU Accession

The difficulty in Turkey's dealing with its Kurdish minority has come to the attention of Western leaders, primarily due to Turkey's efforts to lobby for EU membership. The country has undergone economic and political liberalization in an effort to make itself more attractive as a possible member state (Geyikdagi & Geyikdagi 2009). However, the country has faced difficulties in doing so. Though Turkey has been party to an associative agreement with the European Economic Community, through the so-called Ankara Agreement, since 1964, its future as part of the European Union proper is uncertain (Alexander et al. 2008). Turkey's desire to gain full membership in the EU has been undermined by its norms of human rights repression and militarization in government (Kramer 2000; Yildiz 2005; Alexander et al. 2008; Bilgiç 2009; Yavuz 2009; Toktas & Aras 2009). Various European Council resolutions against membership have pointed out Turkey's history of human rights abuses, particularly with regards to the rights of the Kurdish minority. Violations of physical integrity rights, economic rights, and social and cultural rights were among the primary concerns listed in these resolutions from the European Council (Alexander et al. 2008: 223-37).

Despite the litany of concerns, Turkey was given candidate status at the 1999 Helsinki Council Summit (Toktas & Aras 2009-10). Turkey has claimed that it protects minority rights, placing emphasis on its respect for non-Muslim minority groups (Armenians, Greeks and Jews), but the EU has deemed this emphasis incomplete, focusing instead on Turkey's continuing neglect of other minority rights— specifically those of the Kurds (Toktas & Aras 2009-10). However, in an effort to appease the European Commission, in 2002, Turkey passed a series of non-specific constitutional reforms, including those directed at allowing the Kurds to once again use the Kurdish language in schools and in broadcasting (Toktas & Aras 2009-10). Since the victory of the AKP, in 2002, concerns have arisen over the government's new Islamist bent. Initially, there were conflicting views about the trajectory of Turkey under the rule of the AKP. As a pro-EU party, many felt the AKP would successfully uphold secular policies and would work to improve minority rights; others, such as the army, the People's Republic Party, and the Kemalist elite, believed the AKP was engaged in anti-secular efforts (Göl 2009).

With the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS) and the conflict in Syria, the Turkish government has consolidated power and is using the threat of terrorism to continue repressing Kurdish rights (NGO confidential interview). With support from the United States, Turkey had often bombed PKK strongholds in Northern Iraq for much of the early 2000's (Sly 2015). The last strikes took place in 2011, and the Turkish government signed a truce with the PKK (Economist 2015; Sly 2015). However, in July of 2015, in conjunction with strikes on ISIS, Turkey began bombing PKK strongholds (Economist 2015; Sly 2015; Cumming-Bruce 2017). According to the New York Times, the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights has accused Turkey of numerous human rights violations beginning with the strikes against the Kurds in July 2015, and lasting until the end of 2016 (Cumming-Bruce 2017). In particular, the U.N. Commission "verified a variety of abuses by the security forces, among them extrajudicial killings, disappearances, torture, violence against women and the prevention of access to medical care, food and water" (Cumming-Bruce 2015). While one might argue that the PKK itself is a terrorist organization (White 2000; Alexander et al. 2008), it isn't clear that the military strikes were directed solely at the PKK, but rather, may have been designed to more generally destabilize the Kurdish population (Cumming-Bruce 2015). With EU membership becoming increasingly unlikely, and with the threat of conflict contagion from Syria, the future of Kurdish minority rights is unclear.

3. Coups and Militarization in Turkey

Turkey's history of coups stems from its tradition of militarization within the Ottoman Empire. "In the 19th century, the primary objective of Ottoman foreign policy was to avoid being an object of European great power rivalries as a land ripe for partition" (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 204). Atatürk's Kemalism retained this foreign policy objective, but attempted to transfer the locus of power from the military to consolidated civilian government. However, Kemalism was unsuccessful in squelching the Ottoman tradition of military involvement in politics (Kili 1980). Tachau and Heper (1983) assert that the Turkish military's power stems from its elite position during the Ottoman era, in which social and cultural values were reflected in the power and elitism of the military. At the same time, as the Empire began to decline, the Republic continued to emphasize freedom from Western colonization or exploitation.

In the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire was reduced to a secondary power and became increasingly dependent on Western European powers in its struggle against the military

imperialism of Austria and Russia. From this time until 1952, when Turkey joined NATO, military and diplomatic isolation subjected Turkey to bargaining between the great powers over the Empire's territory. So the fear of loss of territory and the fear of abandonment became a major aspect of Turkish security culture in the Empire, and the same fears were strengthened by the Treaty of Sèvres, which provided for the partition of the Ottoman territories among the European Powers after the First World War. Inherited by the Republic, these fears continue to haunt some of the elite and public opinion (Karaosmanoğlu 2000: 202).

Fears of outside control meant that the Republic was formed with a strong central government and the military retained a good deal of the power it had wielded during the Ottoman period.

During the beginning of the Republican period, as Kemalism was taking hold, the Turkish political elite held paradoxical views about the West. While the Turkish elites were distrustful of the motivations of Western actors with regard to Turkey, they also sought integration into the Western community, as evidenced by Kemalism's commitment to individual rights and secularism (Karaosmanoğlu 2000). The Turkish military walked a fine line with the civilian government, usually choosing to exert control via constitutional means (Sakallioğlu 1997). At times, however, the military has either used the constitution to grant itself greater authority, or subverted the constitution to engage in political affairs.

The country's army has used its power to periodically overtake or influence government and policy in the country. Prior to 2016, Turkey's military, the *Türk Silahli Kuvvetleri* (TAF), had intervened four times in government functioning.

In 1960 and 1980 the military staged coups and overthrew the government. In 1971 the TAF issued a memorandum and asked the government to step down. In 1997 they intervened indirectly by forcing the incumbent government to resign. Each time, the armed forces went back to their barracks, but not before they had widened their prerogatives, thus increasing the military's political power more than ever before (Bilgiç 2009: 803).

The 1960 coup resulted in the creation of the Turkish National Security Council (NSC), which included the President, the Prime Minister, and the military force commanders, among a few other ministers (Karaosmanoğlu 2000; Bilgic 2009). At that time, the NSC was permitted to make national security recommendations, but with each subsequent coup, its powers were expanded (Bilgiç 2009). In 1971, its authority was extended to making broader policy recommendations, and in 1980 the number of civilians on the NSC was reduced, equalizing authority between the civilian and military elements (Bilgiç 2009). The 1997 coup was considered a "postmodern coup" and led to the resignation of the government (Cilliler 2016: 500).

Cilliler (2016) notes that between 1980 and 2007, power often fluctuated between the civilian and military components of government, but that since 2007, civilian authorities have gained supremacy. With Turkey's efforts to secure a place in the European Union following its naming as a "candidate" state by the European Council in 1999, many scholars and policymakers believed that the long history of military involvement would end (Bilgiç 2009; Cilliler 2016). Scholars seem to have thought any future coups were unlikely, even on the eve of the July 2016 attempt to seize power (Cilliler 2016). As Cilliler

(2016) notes, the reduced chance of a coup resulted from increasing levels of civilian control over the armed forces since the 2007 presidential election. Such prognosticating proved inaccurate, and on 15 July 2016, the Turkish military again attempted to overthrow the government.

If we believe scholars such as Cilliler (2016), who makes the argument that the military sees itself as a protector of Turkish secularism, the July 2016 coup makes sense. He writes, "Regarding itself as the guarantor of Kemalism and its principals, the military fought a battle against traditionalism, salient among people and indoctrinated secular, modern and Western ideals by designing necessary societal institutions" (505). However, according to the government and President Erdoğan, this coup was led by Gülenists loyal to self-exiled cleric Fethullah Gülen (Torun 2016). Some commentators think it is unlikely that Gülenists were actually behind the failed coup attempt (Fuller 2016). Though Gülen is often seen as moderate, secular and pro-United States (Luttwak: 2016), other accounts suggest that he too advocates Islamism and that he has denounced the United States in the past (Filkins 2016). However, for years, Gülen has suggested that his followers infiltrate various government and educational posts in order to preserve Turkey's moderate and democratic tradition (Filkins 2016; Fuller 2016). For decades, the military has seen itself as the guardian of Atatürk's secular, democratic state, and so the ideology of the Gülenists aligns with that of the military (Filkins 2016; Fuller 2016). Thus, we may never know to what extent Gülenists may have influenced the coup, or not. Regardless of whether the coup was led by Gülenists, the military intervention in the summer of 2016 was an effort to maintain Turkey's democratic status in the face of Erdoğan's efforts to erode Turkish democracy (BBC 2016; Cilliler 2016; Filkins 2016: Luttwak 2016). This objective was evident in the statement news anchors were forced to read the night of the coup: "The secular and democratic rule of law has been virtually eliminated" (Filkins 2016: np). In the face of Erdoğan's slow push toward Islamism and a consolidation of power, it's no surprise that the military felt the need to intervene (unsuccessfully) for a fifth time in civilian government.

As Doruk Ergun notes, "the belief had begun to set in that the government had established a firm control over the military and therefore coups were a thing of the past. The events of July 15 gave younger generations a glimpse of one of Turkey's long-standing problem" (2016: np). Though the coup was a short, unsuccessful example, it did cause thousands of casualties (Shaheen 2016). During the coup, Turkey's top counter-terrorism official was killed and the interior minister inadvertently evaded a plot to capture him (Shaheen 2016). Most importantly for the fate of the coup attempt, President Erdoğan escaped capture or killing twice—once when he left the resort of Marmaris twenty minutes before the arrival of the coup plotters, and once when his airplane pilot convinced fighter jets not to fire on his plane, telling them it was a Turkish Airlines flight (Shaheen 2016). A crucial turning point in the coup attempt came when the President and the religious affairs Diyanet ministry both called on people to take to the streets in protest (Shaheen 2016). Erdoğan went on CNN Turk to denounce the military action as illegal, and people responded to his plea for action (Torun 2016).

Though it resembled many of the earlier military coup attempts, the July 2016 coup was different. It failed. It failed, in part, because Erdoğan had received word of the impending coup and took measures to try to stop it (Torun 2016). The coup also failed because mobile military forces were not incapacitated or immobilized, which meant retaliatory forces were available when the coup began (Luttwak 2016). Moreover, the army did not seize Erdoğan at the outset, leaving him to act as an actual and symbolic

figurehead (Luttwak 2016). Many Turkish military officers blamed "Erdoğan and his AKP followers for dismantling Ataturk's secular republic; for having built up the murderous Sunni extremists of Syria who are now spilling back into Turkey to conduct suicide bombings; and for deliberately restarting the war against the country's Kurds in 2015" (Luttwak 2016). As such, opposition from within the army prompted the military to act as it often has over the past five decades, and it attempted an intervention.

4. Contemporary Turkish Politics and the Rise of Political Islam

The contemporary political situation in Turkey is a complicated and ever-changing one. Turkey's President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan came to power in 2003. His party, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* (AKP), an Islamic party, won a landslide victory in the 2002 legislative elections (Wakim 2014). "Because its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was banned from politics, his fellow AKP founder, Abdullah Gul, became prime minister for an interim period, until 2003, when the ban was lifted and Erdoğan became prime minister" (Wakim 2014: 189). Over the next several years, the AKP began to resurrect Turkey's Islamic heritage and reopened dialogue with the Arab world (Wakim 2014). At present, the secularism that Atatürk worked so hard to institute seems to be falling out of favor with the Turkish political elite, as Erdoğan and the AKP push the country back toward more Islamist policies (Luttwak 2016).

Erdoğan's AKP saw itself as the successor of the earlier Islamist parties, namely the Welfare Party (WP) and the Virtue Party (VP). Both of these parties had moderate success in the 1990's, but were banned by the Supreme Court for anti-secular activities (Delibas 2009). The parties rose in popularity primarily because they focused on providing social programs for the underprivileged and urban poor, as well as immigrants (Delibas 2009). The Islamist parties were able to establish links with religious networks, thereby tapping into preexisting senses of solidarity among these groups (Delibas 2009). "The WP/VP, then, voiced demands for equality, justice, and democracy for the millions of urban poor badly affected by the neoliberal agenda promoted by the globalization process" (Delibas 2009: 98). Thus Islamism, like Kurdish nationalism, may be a reaction to the Turkish nationalism foisted upon the country in an effort to Westernize in the 20th century. As Axiarlis has stated:

Islamist parties in Turkey, irrespective of their idiosyncratic policy positions and methodologies, are motivated principally by the desire to alleviate the effects of the hard-line Kemalist administration. Paradoxically, then, Islamist parties in Turkey exist because of the staunchly secular system, or in other words, the staunchly secular system is prone to producing Islamist parties (2014: 3).

However, among the Islamist parties that have emerged in Turkey, only the AKP has been able to fully take advantage of Turkish discontent.

The rise of the AKP happened quickly. Building upon its landslide victory in 2002, the party has increased its ruling majority in each subsequent election (Fradkin & Libby 2013). Where Erdoğan's AKP has differed so drastically from preceding Islamist parties has been its success. Under the reign of the AKP,

Turkey's economic growth has been extraordinary by historic standards. Ever mindful of the obstacles that his Islamist roots faced in Turkey's secular order, Erdogan has worked over his last decade in power steadily—but also cautiously, especially early on—to eliminate Ataturk-inspired restrictions on Islam and to undercut the old judicial and military order that guarded against the Islamization of Turkey (Fradkin & Libby 2013).

Critics of the AKP argue that Erdoğan has worked to systematically undercut Turkey's democratic norms and its secular mindset, and they assert that Erdoğan has inculcated a growing culture of fear (Fradkin & Libby 2013; Fuller 2016). Specifically, in recent years, Erdoğan has attacked and worked to delegitimize the military, while promoting Islam throughout the Turkish bureaucracy, and mishandling the grievances held by the Kurds (Fradkin & Libby 2013: 44).

When the Syrian uprising began in 2011, Turkey quickly became involved, offering support to insurgent fighters, and allowing Southern Turkey to be used as a training ground (Wakim 2014). But with the support of powers such as Iran, China and Russia, Assad maintained his hold on power longer than many expected. When Erdoğan began attacking Assad on ethnic grounds, he alienated his own ethnic minority groups and they voted against the AKP in the June 2011 elections (Wakim 2014). "This change in the political wind in Turkey meant a drop in the number of AKP members in Parliament to 326. Hence, Erdoğan was five members short of the total he needed to amend the Constitution and make the Turkish political system a presidential one as part of his intent to run for president when the opportunity came" (Wakim 2014: 194). However, Erdoğan eventually found a way to achieve this goal.

In mid-April 2017, Turkish citizens voted on a constitutional referendum to expand President Erdoğan's powers. The constitutional amendments radically altered Turkey's form of government, changing the system from a parliamentary one to a presidential one. The reforms abolished the position of prime minister, instead vesting those powers in the presidency (Jacinta 2017). The vote itself has not been without controversy. As the Economist (2017) reports, one of the main pro-Kurdish "no" voices was jailed on "trumped-up" terror charges. Moreover, the EU, "which encouraged open markets and civil rights" seems to have pushed Erdoğan to reject Western liberalism, instead aiming for autocracy (Economist 2017). One Turkish academic, who agreed to be interviewed under conditions of confidentiality, states that "no" voters are likely to be repressed in their opposition, and that their objections to the oversight and outcome of the election have been rejected by the High Council of Elections (TA confidential interview 2017). Unverified videos quickly emerged showing officials adding ballots by the handful to ballot boxes, or validating piles of voting slips hours after they were meant to be validated (Kingsley 2017a). Within days of the referendum, many of Turkey's political opposition were arrested for questioning the outcome of the referendum, and protestors have been arrested by the dozens (Kingsley 2017b). Moreover, there are ongoing purges within the police and security forces, which are aimed at removing any opposition to Erdoğan from within their ranks(Kingsley 2017c; TA confidential interview 2017).

The referendum, along with the accusations of fraud that accompanied the result, has led some commentators to speculate that Turkish democracy is dying (Friedman 2017; Kingsley 2017a). But this decline isn't constant or monolithic. While Erdoğan and the AKP seem to be undermining Turkish democracy by consolidating power, restricting pluralism, and repressing political freedom, they are also

supporting democracy by limiting the ability of the military to intervene in government as it has in the past (Friedman 2017).

The future of Turkish democracy is unclear. The 2019 election may also prove pivotal. The Turkish academic interviewed notes that if the AKP retains the presidency in that election cycle, the repression will only get worse (TA confidential interview 2017). As this scholar notes, "[T]he collective social and political memory is changing. [N]ew generations growing up with AKP have different knowledge which is socially and politically constructed and reproduced by today's raison d'Etat" (TA confidential interview 2017). That is, many young people cannot remember a time before AKP, which may provide the party with greater latitude when consolidating power in the future. However, the Gezi Park protests in 2013 also suggest that young people may be willing to challenge such consolidation.

II. The Nature of Repression in Modern Turkey

In 2013, we chose Turkey as a case of a democratic regime with high levels of political repression, based on the quantitative data collated from the Polity index and from the Cingranelli Richards Human Rights dataset (Lowen 2016; Kenner 2017). Since then Turkey has both become less democratic and more repressive—relying upon different types of repression for different groups of citizens. At the time of the research design, among our nine country case studies, Turkey constituted a highly repressive, democratic regime with high levels of socio-economic development. However, since then, repression in the country has increased and its status as a democracy has been questioned (Schenkkan 2014). The use of repression in modern Turkey has varied in cycles, but has often centered on repression of the Kurdish minority in the southeastern part of the country. However, since 2011, Turkey has begun a process of repression that has focused on silencing dissenting voices from the press, academics, and secular, liberal protestors (Lesser 2016).

As has been outlined, understanding repressive tactics in Turkey requires an understanding of the Ottoman military tradition, and of the complicated Kurdish situation. For much of Turkey's recent history, repression has been synonymous with repression of ethnic and religious minorities, beginning with the *millet* system used by the Ottomans, and continuing with the repression of all nationalistic identities that were not explicitly "Turkish" (Rouleau 1996; Aksan 2005/6; Azak 2010; Bayir 2013). In recent years, however, the situation has become more complicated, owing to the contentious relationship between the Turkish government and the West, the conflict in Syria, and the Arab Spring protests. For many years, Europe and the United States tended to overlook repression in Turkey, instead arguing that it was the best example of the marriage of Islamist politics and secular democratic ideals (Jones 2016; Lesser 2016). In 2011, the same year that Erdoğan and Gülen had a falling-out, Erdoğan's government began to increase its pressure on opposition groups (Lesser 2016). Not until the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the international consensus has begun to shift, with journalists, heads of state, and NGOs noting the uptick in repressive action from Erdoğan and the AKP (Jones 2016; Lesser 2016). The increase in public dissent began in Gezi Park as a small protest against the park's destruction. However, protestors were cleared violently from the park by police sparking concerns about the government's violation of its citizens' rights to assemble peacefully (Amnesty 2013). Since then, the government has focused on

rooting out opposition, whether Gülenists, or secularist protestors, or Kurdish dissidents, and it has used the threat of radical Islam to institute anti-terror legislation which aids in its efforts (Jones 2016; Lesser 2016; Amnesty 2016/17).

1. Political and Economic Repression

Political and economic repression in Turkey has come in two primary forms. First, the Kurds have been repressed both economically and politically (and violently) since the formation of the Turkish Republic. Second, the AKP, in particular, have repressed their political opposition. Likewise, the military often engages in repressive action against both citizens and government officials. However, conversely, the military has also acted to preserve the secularism of Kemalism, and so Erdoğan and the AKP could be said to act repressively toward the military elite. Since the Arab Spring has begun to foment protests in Turkey, the military and government have dealt more harshly with protestors (Fradkin & Libby 2013; Wakim 2014). The government seems to be in a period of transition the end of which is unclear at present. The consolidation of power in the executive has been building for several years (HRR 2014)², culminating in the April 2017 referendum, in which there were allegations of fraud and ballot-stuffing (Kingsley 2017a). A confidential interview with an NGO worker suggests that the military coup in July 2016 provided the impetus for the April referendum (NGO confidential interview 2017).

a. Repression of the Kurds

The primary victims of political and economic repression have been the Kurds. The history of Kurdish repression dates back to the founding of the Republic under Atatürk, when cultural practices, the Kurdish language, and economic opportunities were severely limited (Bucak & Düchting 1996; Shaw & Shaw 1997; White 2000; Yildiz 2005; Marcus 2007; Bayir 2013). Each of the forms of cultural repression has led to greater political and economic repression. Moreover, as will be discussed below, violent repression has also affected economic opportunities for the Kurds. In his effort to unite citizens behind a new Turkish patriotism, and to avoid Western colonization, Atatürk banned the Kurdish language and demanded that all ethnic minorities conform to his Kemalist vision (Marcus 2007; Bayir 2013). This led to fewer economic opportunities for Kurdish speakers (Shaw & Shaw 1997). The lack of economic opportunities was exacerbated by the location of the Kurdish region of Turkey, which was in the southeast of the country, far removed from the commercial and political loci of power (Rouleau 1996). The forced removal of Kurds from their towns and villages only worsened the situation. When trying to gain access to the EU, the government rolled back some of its positions on allowing Kurdish language and culture in the public sphere (Tezcür 2010). However, in recent years, with the AKP in power, the tension between the government and the Kurds has again increased.

After the attempted coup in July 2016, Erdoğan and the AKP have used the resulting state of emergency to engage in systematic censorship of media outlets, including magazines, publishing houses, and

² For the sake of brevity, we have used HRR throughout, instead of United States State Department Human Rights Report.

newspapers. "On September 28, 2016, Turkish authorities used the same emergency decree to order the shut-down of 23 TV and radio stations popular among Kurds, Alevis and supporters of opposition parties" (HRW 2016: np)³. Moreover, "Human Rights Watch has also extensively documented the problem of arbitrary and abusive terrorism trials of mainly Kurdish political activists, journalists, lawyers, and students for their alleged links with the armed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)" (HRW 2016: np). These moratoriums on Kurdish language media outlets in particular has meant a return to old modes of treating the Kurds as second-class citizens without any minority or group rights. In the lead-up to the April 2017 referendum, many Kurds were jailed, including "13 members of the pro-Kurdish democratic opposition in parliament on terrorism charges" and the government took "direct control of 82 municipalities in the Kurdish southeast region, suspending and incarcerating elected mayors" (HRW 2017: np). The past two years have, thus, marked a move back toward repressing Kurdish voices, both in the media and in elected office. The United States is now arming Kurdish fighters to resist ISIS, which has further complicated the relationship between Turkey and the U.S. and has led to increased militarization in the Turkey-Kurdish tensions (Gordon & Schmitt 2017; NGO confidential interview 2017).

b. Repression of the Opposition, Press Freedom and Academic Freedom

Political and economic repression is not limited to the Kurdish minority. Non-Kurdish journalists and academics now also face repression from Erdoğan's government. Some believed that after the April 2017 referendum, the impetus to censure journalists might subside (TA confidential interview 2017). However, that has not proved to be the case. "Arrest warrants have been issued for more than 100 journalists, and, according to P24, an independent journalism platform, 149 journalists and media workers now languish in Turkish jails – all but 18 of them in pretrial detention pending trial – making Turkey once again the world leader in locking up journalists" (HRW 2016: np). The Turkish academic interviewed for this report said that those journalists who remain in work are now auto-censoring in an effort to preserve their employment and their freedom (TA confidential interview 2017). "While Turkey has a long tradition of misusing terrorism laws against journalists, the past year has seen journalists from mainstream media organs targeted. Many have been jailed or prosecuted on spurious terrorism charges" (HRW 2016: np). In April of 2017, Amnesty International ran a campaign in which journalists from around the world united to demand the release of more than 120 jailed journalists in Turkey (Amnesty 2017). It is important to take note of the crackdown on journalists. Though human rights organizations have monitored the situation and reported on unwarranted or spurious intimidation and prosecution, we may well see such abuses decline empirically, as journalists begin auto-censoring. That is, the Turkish government's tactics of intimidation may seem to decline in the coming months and years, as fewer journalists are being prosecuted and jailed. However, the threat of such actions may promote journalists to censor their work in an effort to avoid retaliation (TA confidential interview 2017). As such, political repression would still be present, even if it is not reflected in the quantitative and qualitative data collected.

³ For the sake of brevity, we have used HRW instead of Human Rights Watch.

In addition to silencing journalists, the Turkish government has also begun a purge of academics at Turkish universities following the July 2016 coup attempt (Pamuk & Toksabay 2017). For example, the academic with whom I spoke about repression in Turkey, would only do so under conditions of confidentiality, as s/he feared retaliation from the government. "Ankara University's political science and law faculties were stripped of more than 70 of their teachers in a February decree on dismissals" (Pamuk & Toksabay 2017). Some academics are holding impromptu "lectures" in public spaces as a way to protest their firing from university positions (Pamuk & Toksabay 2017). In addition to academics, Erdoğan has also released other public servants from service. The dismissals, which spanned the education ministry, gendarmerie, security services, as well as the ministries of the interior, economy and foreign affairs, came on the heels of a phone conversation between the Turkish president and new U.S. President Donald Trump (Shaheen 2017a). For the past three years, the U.S. State Department has identified interference with freedom of expression and assembly as key curtailments of civil and political rights (HRR 2014, 2015, 2016). Erdoğan anticipated more freedom to behave in an authoritarian manner with Donald Trump leading the United States than he saw when Barack Obama was President (TNGO confidential interview 2017). The Turkish government has been estranged from the U.S. in recent years, as Obama supported Kurdish militants in the fight against IS and refused to removed Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad (Shaheen 2017a). The purging of journalists, academics, public servants, and the military elite in the past year may only be the beginning now that the new constitutional referendum has expanded Erdoğan's executive authority.

c. Online Repression

The government has also cracked down on internet freedom in recent years. Turkey has an internet saturation rate of about 57% (IWS 2016). It also has relatively high rates of social media usage, as measured by access to Facebook (IWS 2016).⁴ As far back as 2014, the government began taking measures to block users from social media and censoring online material without any independent oversight (HRW 2014a). Following the coup attempt, the government has begun to restrict internet freedom even more broadly. Freedom House rated Turkey "Not Free" in the year following the coup, as internet access was shut down regularly in cities in the Kurdish southeast. It also asserted that social media (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) were routinely blocked in the aftermath of terrorist attacks (FH 2016). According to the one report, Erdoğan has said in the past that he is increasingly against the internet and would like to shut it down in Turkey (Mesoznik 2016). Recently, after detaining pro-Kurdish members of Parliament, many social media sites were made unavailable, likely in an effort to hide any detainment footage that Erdoğan did not want made public (Mesoznik 2016). The internet is indispensable for contemporary journalism, and social media is used to share ideas and to organize protests. As such, the AKP's crackdown on media websites, and its use of social media to mobilize citizens against the attempted coup in July 2016, has contributed to an erosion of internet freedom in Turkey.

⁴ For the sake of brevity, we have used IWS instead of Internet World Service.

d. Inadequate Governance and Corruption

In Turkey, issues of impunity are closely tied to problems of inadequate governance and corruption. We treat them separately here, though there is considerable overlap among the three issues. Since December 2013, corruption has been recognized as a major problem in Turkey. Specific areas of concern range from corruption in elections and campaigning, to violations of international sanctions. For example, "post-election reports by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which highlight a lack of transparency in campaign financing and practices overshadowing the fairness of elections" (Kucuksahin 2016). In addition, "Reza Zarrab, an Iranian-Turkish businessman [has been] accused of violating sanctions on Iran with the help of Turkish politicians and bureaucrats. Zarrab was a central figure in a huge bribery and graft scandal in December 2013, which Ankara quickly covered up through a massive purge in the police and the judiciary" (Kucuksahin 2016). The corruption scandal dominated headlines at the end of 2013, and the police launched a massive investigation into said scandal (Arango 2013). The Economy Minister and the Interior Minister stepped down, after their sons were implicated, but Erdoğan refused to follow suit, blaming Gülenists for plotting his downfall (Arango 2013). In response to the corruption investigation, Erdoğan began purging the police, military, and judiciary of those involved in the investigation (Jones 2016). Human Rights Watch confirmed both the investigation and the subsequent purge:

In December 2013, a major corruption scandal came to light when police announced arrests and criminal investigations in cases implicating senior government officials and members of their families. The government responded by attempting to limit police powers and increase executive power over the institution that administers the judiciary; by reassigning judges, prosecutors, and police officers, and more recently by arresting police officers involved in the investigations; and by seeking to silence social media and traditional media reporting on the issues (HRW 2014b: np).

The aggregate trends in perception of corruption in Turkey are also worsening. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Turkey 65th in 2002, 53rd place in 2013, and 66th in 2015. In its 2016 analysis, Transparency International ranked Turkey 75^{th,} out of 176 countries included in its annual Corruption Perceptions Index (Transparency International 2017). A prominent example of this lack of transparency was the AKP's secrecy regarding public spending, and their attempts to keep it largely hidden from representatives and constituents. "The reports of the Court of Accounts, the top public auditor that — by law — works on behalf of parliament, are no longer submitted to parliament itself, meaning the legislature's means of reviewing and checking public spending is now largely limited" (Kucuksahin 2016). A report funded by Gülen (and, as such, to be approached with caution) and conducted by British lawyers "estimates that approximately 40,000 police officers, civil servants, judges and public prosecutors have been removed from their posts since the December 2013 corruption investigation into Erdogan's close circle" (Bowcott 2015).

Much of the political repression that is taking place occurs against the backdrop of the AKP's feud with the Gülenist movement. Fearing the infiltration of Gülen supporters in all levels of government, Erdoğan and the AKP have attempted periodic purges of those they believe could be Gülen supporters. It has, in

particular, manifested itself within the judiciary, which is highly factionalized (HRW 2014b). Thus, it is unclear to what extent an individual with known political affiliations can get a fair trial before a judge with strong, opposing political beliefs. The lack of judicial independence is a serious problem, and the Turkish government has done little to remedy the issue (HRW 2014b). The U.S. State Department has noted problems with due process in recent years, and issues of impunity. Specifically, the 2015 Human Rights Report states, "Wide leeway granted to prosecutors and judges contributed to politically motivated investigations and court verdicts that were not consistent with the law or with rulings in similar cases" (HRR 2015). When the police and prosecutors have tried to counteract corruption within government, they are restricted in doing so, as the government has attempted to limit the ability of the police to investigate government officials (HRW 2014b; HRR 2015).

The State Department's Human Rights Reports confirms such behavior, noting, "The government also indicted six judges and prosecutors involved in investigating alleged corruption of high-level government officials, a move interpreted as an attempt by the executive branch to intimidate members of the judiciary" (HRR 2015). Moreover, as Human Rights Watch notes, "[T]here has been near total impunity for police violence during the widespread anti-government Gezi protests in Istanbul and other Turkish towns and cities in May and June 2013" (HRW 2014b: np).

After the July 2016 coup attempt, the government began imprisoning thousands of people that it deemed terrorist threats, though the actual charges against these individuals were often unclear (HRR 2016). This was particularly true for journalists and those of the political opposition, who were often held in a pretrial phase, without charges, under Turkey's state of emergency following the coup.

The empirical data tells a similar story. Since 2010, nearly all forms of governance, as indicated by the World Bank's World Governance Indicators have declined. The World Bank's "Voice and Accountability" and "Stability" measures are of particular concern, as the latter measure places Turkey in the bottom 25th percentile among all countries in 2015. For a democratic country on the borders of Europe, such numbers are woefully low. Similar concerns are outlined by the State Department in their recent yearly reports, in which they particularly cite violations freedom of expression and problems with impunity as major problems in the country.

WORLD GOVERNANCE INDICATORS RANK (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015)

Indicator	-+ Country	Year		F	Percentile (0 to 1	_		
Voice and Accountability	Turkey	2000				,		
		2005				-		
		2010			_	•		
		2015		-				
Political Stability and Absence of Violence/Terrorism	Turkey	2000	-		•			
		2005	•	_	-			
		2010	-	<u> </u>				
		2015						
Government Effectiveness	Turkey	2000			-			
		2005						
		2010					•	
		2015					-	
Regulatory Quality	Turkey	2000					-	
		2005						
		2010				-	•	
		2015					-	
Rule of Law	Turkey	2000			-	_		
		2005				<u> </u>		
		2010				<u> </u>		
		2015			-	-		
Control of Corruption	Turkey	2000						
		2005				-		
		2010						
		2015			-	-		
			0 2	20	40	60	80	100

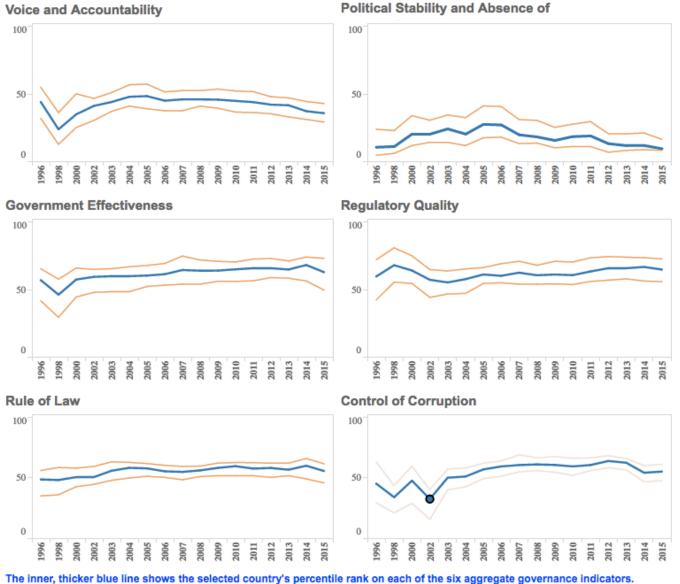
Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi (2010), The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues

Graphs created online at: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports

Over time, most of the measures of governance have remained fairly flat. The exception is the "Voice and Accountability" time series graph, and the "Political Stability" time series graph. Though there are no wild shifts in accountability or stability during the past twenty years, there does seem to be a slow, downward trend in both. Each measure peaks around 2004 or 2005, shortly after Erdoğan gained power. Since that time, both measures have fallen slowly, meaning that there have been gradual decreases in government accountability and political stability in Turkey. Moreover, once these indicators encompass the 2016 and 2017 measures, which will capture the AKP's response to the July 2016 coup attempt, we are likely to see further declines in several of these measures, as indicated by the press and NGO reports cited above.

TIME SERIES OF WORLD GOVERNANCE INDICATORS (1996-2015)

Income Group, Region, or Country: Turkey



The outer, thinner red lines show the indicate margins of error.

Source: Kaufmann D., A. Kraay, and M. Mastruzzi (2010), The Worldwide Governance Indicators: Methodology and Analytical Issues

Graphs created online at: http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.aspx#reports

The current situation is volatile. The government claims that it is cracking down on the PKK and other Kurdish separatists, as well as the Gülenists that it claims were responsible for the coup attempt. However, as *Guardian* columnist Kareem Shaheen notes,

[C]ritics say the purges have turned into a witchhunt targeting the political opposition. Several opposition lawmakers including the two heads of the pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic party (HDP) have been arrested on terror propaganda charges. Some of those dismissed from universities are leftists who have little to do with the Gülen movement. One of those dismissed in the last round of purges . . . was İbrahim Kaboğlu, a prominent constitution professor who opposed the recently announced changes to the constitution (2017a).

It seems that the AKP's crackdown has begun to encompass any opponents of its policies, rather than focusing on its traditional Kurdish opposition. Likewise, though Erdoğan has blamed the Gülenists for the attempted coup in July 2016, the subsequent purges have not been limited to known Gülenists. Academics and media members have been targeted and are often punished for simply expressing opposition to government policy (a statement anecdotally supported by the unwillingness of our academic and NGO interviewees to speak on the record).

e. Issues of Impunity

In its 2014 Human Rights Report, the State Department noted that among the most significant problems protecting the rights of Turkish citizens were problems with impunity and the weak administration of justice (HRR 2014). Likewise, Amnesty International has pinpointed impunity, particularly among the police and military, as a key problem in Turkey (Amnesty 2016/17). Amnesty's most recent report on Turkey notes that "authorities failed to investigate allegations of widespread human rights violations in the southeast," and that "[m]ore than three years on, investigations into use of force by police at Gezi Park protests had failed and resulted in only a handful of unsatisfactory prosecutions" (Amnesty 2016/17: np). Turkish ministers linked to the 2013 corruption scandal were given immunity, further contributing to the perception of impunity for AKP members (Transparency International 2015). Amnesty also notes that the government has made little progress in combating violence against women, despite ratifying the Council of Europe Convention calling on countries to do so (Amnesty 2016/17). The reason for such impunity seems to rest on political loyalty rather than adherence to the law (Zeynalov 2015).

2. Violent Repression

Turkey's violently repressive tactics have tended to center on the Kurdish dissidents in the southeast of the country. However, the military has also used violence against the government and the police have often used violence against the citizens it is charged with protecting. The military coup of July 2016 is just the most recent military intervention in civilian government for the ostensible purpose of maintaining a secular democracy. During that coup, violent protests erupted against the military. This came just two years following the outbreak of protests against the government in 2013, in which police violently repressed protestors across the country without repercussions (HRW 2014b; Göksel 2015).

The most problematic source of violent repression comes from Turkey's southeast. In this region, where the majority of Turkey's Kurds live, there are frequent renewed clashes between the military and the

PKK. The government does little to distinguish between the innocent civilian population and those it deems to be linked to the PKK. The State Department Human Rights Report has noted that the Turkish government does not adequately protect civilians when there are violent confrontations with the PKK (HRR 2016). Moreover, it seems that the government has actually used the terrorist threat from ISIS to bomb these Kurdish regions, and the PKK has asserted that the government is responsible for ISIS attacks in the area (Göksel 2015).

Unfortunately, the infiltration of ISIS has instigated an end to the two-year ceasefire between the government and the PKK. Until 2015, it seemed that a more lasting peace might be possible. However, the United States was also funding Kurdish dissidents to fight ISIS, further complicating the situation

Geopolitics also seemed opportune: the PKK (with its "Syrian offshoot", PYD) and the Turkish state arguably needed each other to contain the Islamic State ([ISIS]) threat. A peace process breakthrough was also more important than ever for Washington; though the U.S. considers the PKK a terrorist organization, the anti-IS coalition needs to cooperate tactically with PKK-linked Syrian Kurds while also needing Ankara's agreement to use military assets in Turkey such as the Incirlik Air Base for anti-IS airstrikes (Göksel 2015).

However, the peace didn't last. Following a two-year ceasefire, the PKK and the government have resumed hostilities. It is unclear who is responsible for the reestablishment of belligerence. The Turkish government claims that the PKK recommenced terrorist activity (HRR 2016), while independent observers claim that the government acted aggressively without provocation (Cumming-Bruce 2017). According to the International Crisis Group, the PKK was linked to the death of several Turkish soldiers, and the government began air strikes in northern Iraq and inside Turkey (Göksel 2015). However, the PKK accused the government of prompting the attack. This reopened animosities between the government and the PKK, producing one of the most deadly years of the conflict (Mandiraci 2016). From July 20, 2015 to July 20, 2016, "more than 1,700 people have been killed" (Mandiraci 2016).

At the end of April 2017, the Turkish government attacked ISIS fighters on the border of Turkey and Syria (Shaheen 2017b). However, the attack also killed a number of Kurds, and the PKK exchanged fire with government forces (Shaheen 2017b). It is unclear to what extent the Turkish government is using its attacks on ISIS as a way to squash the PKK in the southeast. Given that Western leaders tend to welcome any attempts to curb or halt ISIS fighters, such military operations within Turkey, or along the border with Syria, would provide cover for efforts to eliminate Kurdish dissidents. With the results of the referendum in April 2017, and Erdoğan's consolidation of power in the executive, it is unclear what continued forms of violent repression will be used. The fight with the PKK does not seem to be waning, and the violence in Syria continues to destabilize the region.

III. The Relationship between Civil Conflict and Repression

The relationship between repression and conflict is a chicken and egg problem in Turkey. Going back to the foundation of the Turkish Republic, it seems that the repression of minority rights to culture and language first contributed to discontent among the population, namely the Kurds. In his effort to

inculcate a secular, modern, Western society, Atatürk alienated the Kurds in the southeast of the country. That alienation has never subsided. Since the Kurds formed an armed rebellion under the PKK, Turkey has seen decades of intermittent fighting. The government seeks to repress the possibility of Kurdish uprisings, but this only serves to further enrage Kurdish nationalists. "Turkey, then, has not been able to avoid the vicious circle of terror-repression-terror. Villages and hamlets suspected of collaborating with the guerrillas or of serving—voluntarily or otherwise—as sanctuaries are systematically evacuated and in most cases burned" (Rouleau 1996: 72).

We observe that a similar relationship is experienced by the Turkish population at large. The country's "bridge" status has constantly meant that its population is torn between Western secular ideals and Eastern religious ones (Göl 2009; Axiarlis 2015). Historically, it was torn between the old French democratic ideals and former Soviet authoritarian ones (Rouleau 1996), which replicates its current position between the EU and Russia. These dualities in Turkey have led to a constant push and pull between secularists and Islamists, between those who want to further liberal, democratic norms, and those who wish to see greater cohesion between politics and Islam. Thus, different portions of the Turkish population react to different political maneuvers. Liberal, urban citizens have protested the AKP's moves to consolidate power (Sanchez 2017). As mentioned earlier, the Gezi Park protests in 2013 were a response by young, urban citizens to an infringement on their freedom of assembly (HRW 2014b; Jones 2016; Lesser 2016). More conservative, religious citizens protested against the army's attempted coup, and supported Erdoğan and the AKP's actions to strengthen the state apparatus, when prompted to do so (Torun 2016). Thus, within the past four years, there has been civil unrest from both the left and the right, suggesting a stark divide in Turkish society. It is difficult, therefore, to ascertain one particular response to repressive government actions. Different factions within the country react differently depending upon the source of the repressive actions and the goals of the action. In general, however, political repression has certainly led to a response from the citizenry in most instances. Similarly, violently repressive action, particularly against the Kurds, has led to a violent response from the PKK. At the moment, the government seems to have the upper hand, as it has frequently resorted to shutting down the internet and social media, imprisoning individuals without charges, and using the threat of terrorism as a guise for force against the Kurdish dissidents in the country and across the border in Iraq and Syria.

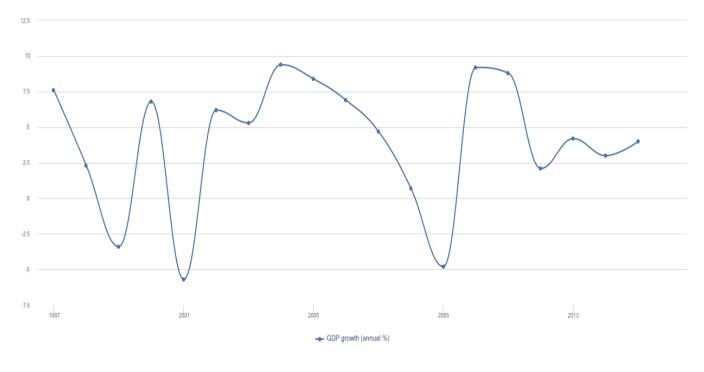
IV. The Economic and Political Consequences of Turkish Repression

1. Economic Consequences

We can see from the graph below that Turkey's economy, like most of the world's economies, collapsed after the 2008 financial crisis. However, it's recovery was rapid, compared to languishing Western economies (Kirişci 2013). In 2011, the year in which Erdoğan was reelected as Prime Minister, the country suffered another drop in GDP growth. It is possible that this drop in economic fortunes also resulted from the Arab Spring and the instability it created in the region. As Kemal Kirişci notes,

Turkey increasingly became embroiled in the regional conflicts rather than an arbiter of them. The worst of this turnabout occurred in the case of Turkey's relationship with Syria, once presented as a resounding success of Turkey's "zero problems" policy at its best, which has deteriorated into virtual undeclared warfare. Practically all the gains achieved with respect to visa liberalization and economic integration has collapsed (2013: np).

Since 2011, Turkey has seen some moderate economic growth, but has never recovered to its 2004 level, due largely to the uncertainty in the wider region and the disruption of trade flows caused by both internal and external conflict (Kirişci 2013; World Bank 2017).



TIME SERIES OF TURKEY'S GDP GROWTH

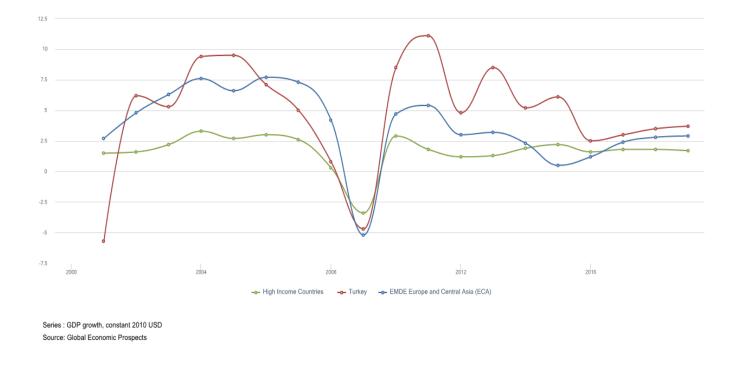
Country : Turkey Source: World Development Indicators

Created from the World Bank Data page: http://databank.worldbank.org/data//reports.aspx?source=2&country=MLI&series=&period=

However, if we examine the graph below, we can see that Turkey's economic stagnation is typical of high-income economies and of European and Central Asian countries. Turkey's recovery was more pronounced in 2011, but has also been more volatile since then, compared to other regional countries and to countries with similarly high incomes. The economic projections for the next few years show moderate growth, with Turkey still slightly outperforming regional and similar-income countries (World Bank 2017). The most recent dip in GDP growth came from the volatility after the failed coup attempt in 2016 (Ant 2016; World Bank 2017). The economy shrank in the third quarter of that year (Ant 2016). However, the country did manage to recover somewhat despite decreased consumer and business confidence that followed the attempted coup (Ant 2016; World Bank 2017). Likewise, tourism to the

country has dropped 36% from the previous year, due to volatility in the country and wider region (World Bank 2017).

TURKEY'S GDP GROWTH COMPARED TO HIGH INCOME COUNTRIES AND EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA



From the World Bank's Economy and Region Specific forecasts and data page: http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=global-economicprospects&Type=CHART&preview=on

2. Domestic Political Consequences

At this point, the domestic political consequences of recent repressive actions are unclear. Erdoğan has been strategic in his use of repression in the past few years. He has avoided widespread violent conflict, only facing armed rebellion from the long-standing clash with the PKK and from some IS fighters spilling over the borders. Though he has faced political protest, most notably the Gezi Park protests in 2013, the dissents have been summarily quelled and many protestors jailed (Amnesty 2013; Bowcott 2015; HRW 2016; Amnesty 2017). Erdoğan and the AKP have played on fears of instability following the July 2016

coup and have used anti-terror legislation to target those who oppose their policies (Jones 2016; Lesser 2016; TNGO Confidential Interview 2017). The government has engaged in political repression (and occasional, pointed acts of violent repression), but has also managed to increase and consolidate its power without widespread opposition. When opposition has arisen within government, those individuals have often been jailed. When opposition emerged from the military, Erdoğan managed to avoid the coup by appealing to supporters among the Turkish citizenry. When opposition has emerged among the people, the police have dealt with protestors fairly harshly, and the government uses impunity to ensure the police are not held accountable (HRR 2014; Jones 2016; Amnesty 2016/17).

Our two confidential interviews suggest that the Turkish situation is volatile. A general election is set to take place in 2019, and if the AKP retains power, it may continue or intensify its increasingly repressive tactics (Kenner 2017; TA confidential interview 2017). The army likely has exhausted any chance it may have had of checking the growing power of Erdoğan and the AKP because of its failed coup attempt in 2016 (TNGO confidential interview 2017). Though independent organizations are keeping a close eye on the situation in Turkey, there is little they can do at the moment to negotiate the release of jailed journalists or reinstate banned academics, though Amnesty has had some success (Amnesty 2017). The conflict in Syria has generated enough insecurity in the region that Erdoğan can push for new anti-terror legislation and convince a majority of the population that strong leadership and consolidated power is the only way forward (TNGO Confidential Interview 2017).

3. International Political Consequences

The international consequences of Turkish repression are difficult to disentangle. One flashpoint has come from the question over whether to arm the Kurdish militia to fight ISIS in Syria. Advisers in the Obama administration were deeply divided over whether to do so (Gordon & Schmitt 2017). The Obama administration eventually supported arming the Kurds in their fight with ISIS, despite the Turkish government's insistence that the Kurdish militia is linked to the PKK (Gordon & Schmitt 2017; TNGO confidential interview 2017). This created tension between Ankara and Washington. The tension was exacerbated when Erdoğan reengaged in hostilities with the Kurds in southeastern Turkey. Since taking office, President Trump has decided to continue the policy of arming Kurdish fighters, much to Ankara's dismay (Gordon & Schmitt 2017; TNGO confidential interview 2017). As a result, Turkey has begun to turn toward Russia as a possible ally instead of the United States (McCleary 2017; TNGO confidential interview 2017). This could create a further landscape in which Russia-United States tensions play out in the region. Moreover, it remains to be seen how the ongoing conflict in Syria will affect Turkey, with whom it shares a long border.

Turkey's candidate status for EU membership seems likely to remain just that—candidate status (Zeynalov 2015; Emmott 2017). The desire to join the EU was one of the limits on human rights repression—Kurdish repression, in particular—and military involvement in civilian affairs. Without the promise of membership to limit the government's action, we anticipate continued political repression of dissidents and violent repression of the Kurds.

V. The Turkish Public's Response to Repression

Over the past few years, Turkish citizens have responded in various ways to different modes of repression. The cyclical violence between Ankara and the PKK has resumed since 2015 (HRR 2016; Cumming-Bruce 2017). In the context of the Arab Spring, Turkish citizens reacted with widespread protests in response to perceived limitations on their freedom of assembly, as evidenced by the Gezi Park protests in 2013 (Amnesty 2013; Jones 2016; Lesser 2016). Yet within the past year, Turkish citizens seem to be ambivalent about the direction of government power. There have been protests of the recent constitutional referendum (Sanchez 2017). Independent observers and Turkish citizens have charged the government with rigging the election (Sanchez 2017). Protests erupted in liberal urban neighborhoods immediately after the results of the election were announced and lasted for several days (Sanchez 2017). Yet different segments of the Turkish population also protested the army's effort to overthrow Erdoğan in July 2016 (Torun 2016). This is an indication that Turkey is a divided country. Recent repression has turned to the press and academics (Pamuk & Toksabay 2017). Fearing retaliation for disagreeing with the AKP on policy issues, the journalists and academics have begun auto-censoring to avoid being fired or imprisoned (HRR 2016; HRW 2016; Amnesty 2017; TA confidential interview 2017). In an effort to curb influence from the fighting in Syria, the AKP has enacted sweeping anti-terror legislation, which has been used to silence opposition (Jones 2016; Lesser 2016; TNGO Confidential Interview 2017). The July 2016 coup exacerbated tensions, increased nationalist tendencies among some of the population, which provided support for the constitutional referendum (Butler & Karadeniz 2017). Except for the Kurdish southeast, there has been little reaction from Turkish citizens in recent months. The 2019 election may prove pivotal in determining the direction of democracy in the country (TA confidential interview 2017). However, there are no guarantees that the election will be free and fair, and without a free press, an active academic culture, or access to Internet and social media, it seems unlikely that the election can be properly overseen and challenged.

VI. Turkish Repression, Civil Conflict and Leadership Tenure: Answers to our 3 Questions

Q1. Do citizens respond differently when confronted with political repression, violent repression or a mix of repressive tactics?

Political repression has been the more common form of repression in Turkey in the past century. Beginning with the Ottomans, the millet system ensured that ethnic and religious minorities were subservient. Atatürk, in an effort to conform to the nation-state model, espoused a new "Turkishness" designed to secularize, modernize, and liberalize the country. The Kurds, in particular, were culturally and economically repressed during this time. This systematic repression prompted the formation of the PKK, which espoused a radical and militaristic ideology of rebellion. The Turkish government retaliated with increased violence, and since the PPK's formation, the cycle of violence between it and the Turkish government has been nearly constant.

Aside from the violent repression of the Kurds, much of the contemporary repression in Turkey centers on controlling the flow of information, both through the press and through education. This has led to the jailing of many journalists, and self-censorship in other instances. Academics have been removed from their university posts because they supposedly espouse and teach subversive ideas pose a threat to the government. Internet freedom is on the decline in Turkey as the government attempts to control what people see and share. Political repression has led to protests for several years, bolstered by other uprisings across the Arab world. However, the government permits the police and security forces to deal harshly with protestors, and often dismisses the responsible actors without punishment. The most notable example was the violent response of the Turkish security forces to the peaceful Gezi Park protests in 2013.

Q2. Do officials use different types of repression in response to different types of civil conflict?

Yes. Violence from the PKK has most often been met with violence from the military in response. It could be argued that the violence from the PKK was only a response to the political and economic repression they experienced under Kemalist policies. However, their violent protests have been dealt with viciously by the Turkish government, and when responding violently to PKK actions, the government often gives little thought to preventing civilian harm. This violently repressive behavior only serves to further enrage Kurdish dissidents, and continues a cycle of violent rebellion being answered with violent repression.

When the rest of the citizenry is political repressed, as often happens in Turkey, it has usually responded with protests. A potential turning point in the relationship between rebellion and repression came with the 2013 Gezi Park protests, in which people protesting the destruction of a neighborhood park were harshly disbanded. This led protestors to decry that their right to peacefully assemble was being violated, launching widespread protests across the country. These uprisings were again handled brutally by police and little has been done to punish officers who used excessive force. Protests do not typically degenerate into widespread violence, although deaths and injuries were reported after the attempted coup. The protests following the referendum have resulted in large numbers of opposition voters being jailed without specific charges.

Q3. Does the use and type of repression (whether political, violent or some combination) increase the likelihood that rulers retain power?

Although Turkey has many of the trappings of a democratic country, President Erdoğan has often relied on various forms of repression to quiet different groups. Though violent repression against the Kurds has been common for many years, more recently the government has begun using political, and occasionally violent repression, against Gulan's followers, secular liberals, academics, and the press. In the case of the Kurds, the government initially engaged in political and economic repression. The Kurds eventually responded with violence and the PKK was formed to continue the fight. Violent rebellion and violent repression still characterize the relationship between the Turkish government and the Kurdish minority. However, that relationship is now complicated by the rise of ISIS; the Kurds have been instrumental in fighting ISIS, and so the United States has been arming the Kurds much to the dismay of Ankara.

In addition to the historically violent repression of the Kurds, the Turkish government under Erdoğan has also begun repressing many other groups in society. When we began this project proposal in 2013, Turkey was still considered democratic (even if an illiberal democracy). Although historically, democratically elected leaders in Turkey have needed to worry more about intervention from the military than from a disenchanted electorate that focus has begun to change since the Arab Spring. Widespread protests in 2013 looked as though they may affect a shift in power. However, Erdoğan and the AKP have found ways of squashing dissent, usually through jailing or exiling protestors, journalists, academics, etc. Thus, political repression has been the primary method of maintaining power for the AKP over the past several years, and the government has occasionally turned to violent repression as a means of curbing protest. The recent referendum was merely a political tool to help in the AKP's consolidation of power.

VII. Concluding Thoughts

We are not optimistic about the future of Turkish democracy. The army has lost its ability to reset the political scene because of its failed coup attempt last year. Although interference from the military is not ideal, without that threat, Erdoğan seems poised to have his way in grabbing more and more power in the coming years until the 2019 elections. Human rights in the country are under threat from several directions, and portions of the citizenry, namely the liberal, urban elite, are dissatisfied with the increasing Islamism of their nation's leadership. The conflict with the Kurds has no end in sight, and the country is continually susceptible to contagion conflict from Syria. The United States is now arming Kurdish militiamen, against the wishes of Ankara. As such, and because of the perpetual tension between Turkey and the EU, we have seen Erdoğan turn away from the West and toward Russia. The threats of Kurdish nationalism, ISIS, and dissenting opinion only further serve to help Erdoğan consolidate power under the guise of national security by enacting anti-terror legislation with broad interpretive borders. The 2019 elections may be the last opportunity for the electorate to affect a change of course.

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INTERVIEWS:

- Confidential Interview with Turkish Academic. 27 April, 2017. (I agreed to conditions of confidentiality for this interview, since the scholar works in Turkey and was concerned about government censure or retaliation for the comments provided.)
- Confidential Interview with NGO worker in Turkey. 3 May 2017. (I agreed to conditions of confidentiality for this interview, since the NGO employee works in Turkey and was concerned about government censure or retaliation for the comments provided.)