

The Rise and Decline of the Turkish “Deep State”: The Ergenekon Case

SERDAR KAYA*

ABSTRACT

This article tests Mancur Olson’s theory of distributional coalitions against the case of the Turkish “deep state.” Olson’s theory holds that rent-seeking (or special-interest) groups tend to be exclusive by nature and pursue only the interests of their own members. Since their members account to a very small minority, these groups present their interests as being the interests of larger communities. article argues that the Turkish case confirms the fundamental assumptions of the theory of distributional coalitions. An analysis of the historical process of the newly-exposed Turkish deep state reveals that, when put in proper context, its clandestine activities manifest a pattern which involves systematic efforts of an exclusive circle of group members (1) to impact the workings of Turkish society, and more recently, (2) to reverse the country’s democratization process in an effort to sustain the network’s dominating influence.

On November 3, 1996, a black Mercedes Benz crashed into a truck driving out of a gas station in Susurluk, a small town in northwest Turkey. Of the four occupants in the luxury car, three died at the scene, and one survived. Once the identities of the occupants of the car hit the news, the phrase “deep state” (*derin devlet*) became a part of everyday political debates in Turkey. Because, those deceased were (1) the former deputy head of the Istanbul Police Department, (2) an ultranationalist hitman wanted on Interpol’s Red List, and (3) the hitman’s mistress. Furthermore, the surviving passenger was a member of the Turkish Parliament, and the leader of a Kurdish village-guard clan.

The public reaction to the incident was huge. Accordingly, the media coverage of the developments on the ongoing investigations

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Department of Political Science, Simon Fraser University,
ska99@sfu.ca

was extensive. But despite all the parliamentary, judicial, and civil efforts to expose the extent of extralegal activities within the Turkish state and to identify those responsible, there were no significant findings or convictions in the end.

Approximately a decade after the Susurluk scandal, a series of other shocking events has occurred in Turkey. Most of these events suggest the existence of a collusive organization within the Turkish state. Initial findings of the investigations and legal proceedings indicate that this organization is rooted mainly in the Turkish Armed Forces, and is responsible for a wide range of extrajudicial activities, including false-flag terrorist attacks. This collusive network is commonly referred to as “Ergenekon,” and the legal case investigating it “the Ergenekon Case.”¹

This paper argues that Mancur Olson’s theory of distributional coalitions largely explains this network’s *raison d’être*. The paper first outlines the main tenets of the theory, and then examines the historical roots of the Turkish deep state, as well as the paradigm shift its exposure caused in the public opinion. The network’s (1) exclusive character, (2) impacts on the workings of the Turkish society, and finally (3) efforts to sustain its dominating influence, which is manifested especially in its attempts to reverse the country’s democratization process, demonstrate that the emergence, influence, and the incentives of the Turkish deep state confirm the fundamental assumptions of Olson’s theory.

The Theory of Distributional Coalitions

Mancur Olson’s theory of distributional coalitions holds that, as societies establish themselves, group interests become more identifiable, and subsets of the society organize in an effort to secure these interests. Since these interests are best served by coordinated action, institutions emerge. Yet, such institutions tend to be exclusive by nature, and pursue only the interests of their own members, who account to a very small minority.

This exclusivity factor is of special importance in the way these rent-seeking (or special-interest) groups operate, since, unlike highly-encompassing organizations, exclusive organizations do not have an incentive to increase the productivity of the society. This is due to the disproportion between the sizes of the exclusive organization and the population. To use Olson’s idiom, such organizations are in a position either to make larger the pie the society produces or to obtain larger slices for their members. “Our intuition tells us,” Olson says, “that the first method will rarely be chosen.”² Because, on the one hand, it is very costly to increase the productivity of society as a whole, and on the other, even if this is achieved, the

members of the minuscule organization will accordingly reap only a minuscule portion of the benefits. Therefore, exclusive groups aim to present their own interests as being the interests of their constituencies, and to use all of their organizational power for collective action in that direction. That is still the case even when the organization’s cost to the society is significantly more than the benefits it seeks for its members.

Such behavior is not at all unexpected of exclusive organizations, since it is the very policy of exclusion itself that enables the group to distribute more to its members. In that respect, disproportional allocation of resources goes hand in hand with barriers to entry into the favored areas of the special-interest group. Yet the existence of barriers to entry further damages the society by reducing the economic growth. When coupled with the interferences of the special-interest groups with the possibilities of change in the existing state of affairs, the level of the reduction in economic growth can be large.

In order to achieve their goals, special-interest groups engage in lobbying activities and collusion – both of which, by creating special provisions and exceptions, further increase not only inefficiency but also (1) the complexity of regulation, (2) the scope of government, and (3) the complexity of understandings.

The Formation and the Evolution of the Turkish Deep State

The genesis of the Turkish deep state is traceable to the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP, *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*), a secret society founded in Istanbul in 1889 by a group of medical students who had a passion for reform in the Ottoman Empire.³ The CUP organized so extensively that, in less than two decades, it became a revolutionary political organization with branches inside and outside the Ottoman Empire.⁴ Within the organization existed numerous factions, and the body of membership was ethnically and even ideologically diverse. Yet it was the commonly-shared goal of changing the regime rather than conformity that bound the members together, and they successfully achieved that goal with the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which restored the Constitution of 1876 (*Kanun-ı Esasi*) that restricted the powers of the Sultan, and made the Ottoman Empire a constitutional monarchy again after 32 years of absolutism.

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What makes the CUP extraordinary as a case is that it never fully transformed into a genuine political party even after the revolution it brought about. Instead, it continued to operate as the secret committee it always was.⁵ Back then, in reference to this fact, some of the critics of the CUP had coined the phrase “invisible people” (*rical-i gayb*).⁶ In the end, this code of conduct rendered the committee as a clandestine force that exerted influence by informal means in order to change the course of affairs the way it saw fit.

The reflections of that proclivity are traceable in many of the major occurrences of the time. In what is today commonly referred to as the coup of 1913, for example, a group of CUP operatives broke into the Sublime Porte as the Cabinet was in session, murdered the minister of defense and two prominent government officials, and forced the Grand Vizier, the head of the Cabinet, to resign immediately. The coup of 1913 is also important in that it set a precedent in the country for military interventions and ultimatums, the latest of which occurred on April 27, 2007.

A second example to the code of conduct of the CUP may be the clandestine activities of the Special Organization⁷ (*Teşkilat-ı Mahsusa*). Although the CUP established the Special Organization in 1913, ten months after the coup of 1913, it was in fact the continuation of the Fedaiin, the secret organization the CUP established in 1905 – that is, before the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. The CUP used the Fedaiin to have its political opponents assassinated, among other things, and later on, employed the Special Organization in the mass killings of the Ottoman-Armenians in 1915.⁸

The CUP disbanded in 1918, a year that also marked the beginning of the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. However, many of its members as well as the political culture it created survived within the Republic of Turkey. To this day, “Unionism” (*İttihatçılık*) has persisted in the political culture of Turkey, and has manifested itself primarily in (1) ultranationalism, (2) military involvement/intervention in politics, and (3) justification of extrajudicial activities and violence in the name of the fatherland (*vatan*). Nevertheless, different aspects of this political culture have gained primacy in different periods, and with the influence of the changes in the domestic and international conjuncture, it more or less evolved.

For example, during the One Party Era (1925-45), the influence of interwar-period fascism further radicalized the nationalist ideology of the ruling cadre. Then, in the 1960s, variations of the same⁹ Unionist background found expression

in the rightist and leftist political movements, which, unsurprisingly, entered into violent conflict in the 1970s. In the mid-1980s, the Kurdish question reemerged with the terrorist activities of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK), the separatist guerilla group, which became a source of instability in the southeast region of the country, and in so doing, provided a new fertile ground for the clandestine operations of the Turkish deep state. Of particular importance among these clandestine operations were those by the Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-terror Unit (JİTEM, *Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele*), which is allegedly responsible for thousands of extrajudicial executions and assassinations of PKK sympathizers and supporters. Yet the same decade also marked the time period in which Turkey opened its borders and started to integrate with the rest of the world. As a result, after the 1980s, new social, political and economic perspectives started to emerge. However, this new West that Turkey came to closer contact with during and after the 1980s was fundamentally different from the West of the interwar period in that the former was democratic, and the latter fascist.

The increasing interaction with the West did not instantly trigger the demands for democratization in the country. It was the Susurluk scandal and a combination of other events that occurred approximately a decade later that started to dramatically shift the prevalent paradigms. On the one hand, these experiences created a more profound societal cognizance of questioning authority, and on the other, in line with these experiences, people came to attach new meanings to the nature of the state-society relations in Turkey in a manner which provided a more convenient ground for the democratization process in the country. Apparently, these paradigm shifts also coincided with the developments since the Helsinki European Council of 1999, where the European Union (EU) formally referred to Turkey as a candidate and thus invigorated the country’s accession process.

Examples of Paradigm-Shifting Events: Unionism Alive and Well?

1. *Şemdinli Incident*: The first of the major paradigm-shifting events that followed the Susurluk scandal was probably the Şemdinli incident. On November 9, 2005, a bomb went off in a bookstore in Şemdinli, a small town in southeast Turkey. The owner of the store, Seferi Yılmaz, was a convicted member of the PKK, and had previously been sentenced to and served 15 years in prison for taking part in terrorist activities within the organization.¹⁰ The suspects of the attack, who were caught by passersby, turned out to be low-ranking members of the Turkish Gendarmerie. In his indictment, the prosecutor, Ferhat Sarıkaya, linked high-ranking

military personnel to the incident, and seriously accused the (then) Chief of the Army Staff (and later Chief of the General Staff) Yaşar Büyükanıt, who had served in the area between 1997 and 2000. The prosecutor also alleged that the bombing “was part of a series of similar attacks intended to provoke the security forces into a clampdown on the restive Kurdish region that would then unleash European criticism and jeopardise Turkey’s hopes of joining the EU.”¹¹ Furthermore, the prosecutor accused General Büyükanıt of trying to influence the judicial process – since, when commenting on the incident, he had said that he knew the alleged bomber personally and that he was a “good kid.”¹² In response to the contents of the indictment, the Supreme Board of Prosecutors and Judges (*Hakim ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu*) disbarred the prosecutor on the grounds that he prepared a faulty indictment. These developments not only raised questions about the extent of the covert operations of the Turkish military but also cast doubts once again on the independence and impartiality of the judiciary in Turkey.

2. *Neonationalist Non-Governmental Organizations*: In 2006 and 2007, retired army members established numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) throughout Turkey, registered thousands of members, and in their induction ceremonies made at least some of them pledge to kill traitors. Associating themselves with the concept of *kuvva-i milliye*, the militia forces that fought in the Turkish War of Salvation (1919-22),¹³ these NGOs engaged in grassroots efforts to register more members and to raise awareness about the alleged need to fight for and save the fatherland – this time from the enemy within. The defining characteristics of the organizations within the neonationalist (*ulusalcı*) network were: (1) a strong opposition to the adaptation of the Turkish political system to that of the EU – especially on sovereignty grounds, (2) protesting privatization and (incoming) foreign direct investment, (3) glorification of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as a national hero and political leader, and (4) defiance of Turkish intellectuals who were prosecuted in violation of the Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for “insulting Turkishness.” These inclinations find expression also in the nationalist motto “if it is the fatherland that is at stake, all else are mere details” (*mevzu bahis vatansa gerisi teferruattır*), a phrase the Turkish nationalists attribute to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, and in so doing justify whatever means they deem necessary to “save the fatherland.”

3. *Coup Diaries*: On March 29, 2007, the weekly news magazine *Nokta* published excerpts from the 2000-page alleged memoir of Özden Örnek, a retired Chief of the Naval Staff. The memoir revealed detailed plans of certain four-star generals to stage a coup in 2004. Nevertheless, public prosecutors did not press

any charges on the generals in question – despite a call by Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The Turkish Constitution makes it a crime to plan or attempt a coup; however, all prosecutors were afraid to lose their jobs and licences after what happened to the prosecutor of the Şemdinli incident.¹⁴ Instead, they launched an investigation against the news magazine which published the coup plans on the grounds that the news story violated the Article 318 of the Turkish Penal Code, which makes it a crime to “disaffect people from the military service.”¹⁵ The following week, on April 13, the police raided the headquarters of the news magazine, lined up all the personnel against the walls, searched them, searched their offices, took copies of all the data in the hard drives of their desktop and laptop computers, and not only asked for the original copies of the published memoirs but also searched for other similar documents that might be in the possession of the magazine. The news magazine was able to publish only one more issue after the raid, since its owner was unable to withstand the pressure and decided to close it down the following week.¹⁶

The above developments are some of the most memorable incidents that raised questions about the nature and extent of (1) the operations of the Turkish deep state, (2) the activities of the military as a political actor, and (3) the military-instigated false-flag terrorist attacks. Later on, the Ergenekon investigation (launched on June 2007) connected many of such individual occurrences to one another, and portrayed them as perpetrated by the same clandestine organization.

Ergenekon

The clandestine organization the Ergenekon indictment depicts is a wide network made up of individuals within the military, judiciary, academia, bureaucracy, media, parliament, intelligence agencies, and civil society. The affiliations of individuals in such key organizations liken the Ergenekon network to the Italian Gladio, and the Ergenekon investigation to the Clean Hands (*Mani Pulite*). This is why, the indictment associates Ergenekon, among other things, with NATO’s “stay-behind operations” in member countries as a precaution against a possible Warsaw Pact invasion. According to that line of thinking, like Gladio, Ergenekon is also a corrupted Cold War instrument.

But given its versatile nature and far-flung activities, it is difficult to provide a single portrait of Ergenekon – since, when entered into the equation, each of the different aspects of the question paints a different picture. Each of these major points at issue, such as the existence of a deep state tradition, or the military’s self-imposed role of protecting the secular regime, corresponds to different underlying

mechanisms, beside which NATO's "stay-behind operations" is probably too insufficient a variable *per se* to explain the *raison d'être* of the organization.

From an Olsonian viewpoint, two features of Ergenekon, strong ties to the key institutions in the country and collusive activities, correspond to the two *sine qua non*s of special-interest groups: exclusivity, and the ability to use disproportionate organizational power in order to bring about collective action in support of the group's own interests. Therefore, satisfying these two conditions renders Ergenekon as a powerful clandestine network that has paramount influence on the workings of the Turkish state and society.

The influence of the network on the Turkish state, however, does not necessarily include the government. In fact, in Turkish politics, the state and the government are two dichotomous entities: the former refers to the state institutions controlled by nonelected high-ranking bureaucrats who adhere to the state ideology, whereas the latter involves the elected politicians who represent the public. Moreover, those who belong to the former camp often use the term "public" (*halk*) pejoratively to indicate that the majority is composed merely of common people, for whom the departments and offices of high bureaucracy are for the most part impenetrable. Such oligarchic features of the high bureaucracy that define the Turkish state also exhibit the typical characteristics of a nanny state, which assumes the duty to educate the masses and to politically socialize them along the lines of the state ideology. In contrast, the masses are not in a position to question the extent of the authority of the state or the rationale behind its numerous regulations.

An oligarchic state apparatus with vast extensions is well-suited for the pursuit of narrow interests. Apparently, this line of abstract reasoning, which places the network in the center of many critical activities of the state apparatus, belongs to not only Mancur Olson but also the prosecutors in the Ergenekon case. Furthermore, due to the extreme popularity of the investigation process, the same interpretation of affairs has also shaped public opinion to a very large extent, consequently leading not only to a reinterpretation of the history of the Republic of Turkey through different lenses but also to a dramatic increase in the demands for democratization in the country.

The Realignment in Turkish Politics and the Emerging Paradigm

In the beginning of the 21st century, Unionism surfaced in Turkey once again – this time in reaction to the country's democratization process. This reemergence

not only blurred the lines between the right and the left but also resulted in a realignment in Turkish politics.

What blurred the lines between the right and the left was the unofficial alliance between the nationalist right and the secularist left. Although these two camps were involved in a long-lasting violent conflict in the 1970s, their association was still not all too surprising, since nationalism and secularism constitute the foundations of the Republican Era Unionism.

The formation of this nationalist/secularist bloc was largely a response to the “eight legislative packages adopted by [the Turkish] Parliament between February 2002 and July 2004.”¹⁷ These legislative packages introduced somewhat revolutionary changes to the Turkish political system on issues “ranging from improved civil liberties and human rights to enhanced civilian control of the military.”¹⁸ In other words, the realignment in Turkish politics occurred due to the conflict between status quo and change.

In that context, the status quo perspective is concerned with protecting the founding principles of the Republic, reacts to the EU-leaning policies of the incumbent Justice and Development Party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*), and is represented by the Republican People’s Party (CHP, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP, *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi*), as well as a group of non-governmental political organizations from both the left and the right. In contrast, the proponents of political change demand further democratization, and criticize the discriminatory regulations and practices against conservative Muslims, Kurds, and non-Muslims in the country. This perspective is represented by the AKP, as well as the pro-liberty intellectuals from the left and the right who endorse the conservative AKP due to its support of Turkey’s accession process to the EU.

Although the realignment in Turkish politics is a relatively new phenomenon, opinion leaders on both sides of the fence have been successful in politically socializing large constituencies into their views in a short period of time. That is mainly because both the status quo and the reaction to it were already there before the realignment occurred. The nationalist right and the secularist left had long been in support of the main pillars of the state ideology. But it was the first time for those in reaction to the status quo to empathize with one another and

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demand democratization for the country as a whole. What made it easier for them to achieve that was the paradigm that has emerged in conservative Muslim circles during the February 28 Process,¹⁹ which made them more willing to cooperate with other discriminated segments of the society.

This emerging paradigm involves the idea that the imposition of the state ideology on the general public restricts the freedoms of all who do not conform to it, regardless of the identity or the political ideology of the nonconformist. In that regard, a major characteristic of the emerging paradigm is that it is more inclined to put current questions in the context of the state ideology in order to address the roots of the problem. For example, in the question of state-inflicted violence and injustice against non-Muslims, the emerging paradigm links together notable past occurrences such as the Massacre of the Ottoman-Armenians in 1915, the Thrace Pogroms of 1934,²⁰ the Wealth Tax of 1942,²¹ and the Pogrom of September 6-7, 1955,²² and attributes their causes to the Unionist political ideology. Similarly, in the question of the military interventions in politics, the emerging paradigm distances itself from all of the past coup experiences, and perceives them all as the reflections of the same Unionist tradition that dates back to 1913. This is so unlike the commonplace right- and left-wing views that aim to justify some interventions, and criticize others.

The emerging paradigm also attributes significance to many of the (mostly negative) milestones in the history of the Republic of Turkey hitherto largely overlooked. In the case of the Kurdish question, for example, it deems certain past experiences, such as the Dersim Massacre of 1937-38,²³ or the intense torture practices at the Diyarbakır Military Prison in the early 1980s²⁴ as highly relevant factors that exacerbated the problem. Similarly, due to the same paradigmatic differences, it often finds itself at odds with the traditional arguments. For example, when perceived through the lenses of the emerging perspective, the idea of “external forces” that constantly conspire against the country in an effort to reenact the Treaty of Sèvres²⁵ is merely a typical example of ultranationalist fear-mongering.

In all, the emerging paradigm constitutes a challenge to the basic principles of the Unionist tradition, which is currently at the core of the establishment. In fact, it is this very challenge that unites the different camps within the nationalist/secularist bloc, which, in return, develops a reactionary discourse. In that sense, the

realignment in Turkish politics has the establishment on one side, and a challenging insurgence on the other. Therefore, the polarization it entails is a dangerous one to the extent that it involves the transition of power.

Moreover, in the Turkish case, concerns about the transition of power and influence have not only political and economic but also social and cultural aspects. For example, on the political level, the nationalist/secularist bloc feels threatened by the existence of conservative Muslims or pro-Kurdish politicians in governing bodies, and sometimes goes as far as “calling the army to duty,” with which they mean staging a coup. On the economic level, the established business groups categorize the emerging industrial growth in Anatolia as “green capital.”²⁶ On the social level, the Unionist-leaning bureaucrats and NGOs support the headscarf ban in all state institutions including state and private universities, and thus prevent their opponents from getting a decent education or holding (or even entering) state and government offices.

The roots of such exclusionary practices are traceable to the One Party Era, when police officers did not allow people who were not dressed like Westerners through the checkpoint at the entrance of Atatürk Boulevard in Ankara. Today, this line of thinking finds expression, for example, in the attitudes of the laicist individuals toward women with headscarves. Out of a conviction that women with headscarves do not belong in jazz concerts, laicist individuals in the audience have repeatedly harassed them to such an extent that they can no longer stand it and leave the venue.²⁷

All together, the dichotomous intergroup relations within Turkey points at a widespread effort on multiple levels to prevent the “public” from gaining influence (or even from gaining a presence) in the state institutions or the society. In that respect, it is difficult to explain this exclusionary behavior solely with economic variables, such as issues related to the allocation of resources. Ideology, along with economic and political power, also constitutes a major part of the Turkish case.

Strongly related to that dichotomous relationship are the events surrounding Turkey’s accession process to the EU; because, proponents of the emerging paradigm perceive the democratization efforts that the accession process involves as a way out of the century-old deadlock. According to that perspective, the increasing nationalism and the anti-EU discourse of the traditional camp are merely efforts to reverse that process. This assertion is also in line with the assumptions of the theory of distributional coalitions, which holds that such minuscule yet influential organizations can be terminated only through a revolution, an unsuccessful

war (that removes the political elites from power), or free trade. In that sense, the adaptation of the Turkish political system to that of the EU revolutionizes the existing power structure in the country both by transferring sovereignty to a supranational entity and by helping ensure equality by protecting individual rights and freedoms. In addition, free trade has already led to the rise of a new Anatolian bourgeoisie, which have shown signs of challenging the established corporations, and have criticized some of their business practices, such as the use of state credits.

Overall, it is not too difficult to assert that, in comparison to the traditional perspective, the emerging paradigm is less, if at all, nationalist, and more democratic. In fact, the ongoing transition to a more democratic mindset occurs as a reaction (at least in part) to the developments that implicate the same clandestine organization. In that sense, democratization demands and the exposition of the deep state are two processes that mutually reinforce one another in Turkey. Furthermore, this mutually-reinforcing process triggers another similar dynamic in the opposite direction: as the new paradigm emerges, the adherents of the traditional views not only more strongly embrace nationalism but also become increasingly more suspicious of the country's democratization process, if not of democracy itself. In other words, as the emerging paradigms gains ground, so does Unionist extremism.

Conclusion

Olson describes the main tenets of the theory of distributional coalitions in the form of a set of "implications," each of which can be used as an individual parameter to test the extent to which the Turkish case confirms the theory. Of those that are applicable to the case of the Turkish deep state, all are largely supported: Like Olson's distributional coalitions, the Turkish deep state (1) is small and exclusive, yet has disproportionate organizational power to bring about collective action through manipulation, (2) reduces efficiency and productivity by supporting narrow interests and resisting change, (3) makes political life more divisive, (4) increases the role of government as well as the complexity of regulations, and thus makes it more difficult to understand the existing rules and procedures, and (5) changes the direction of social evolution.

Nevertheless, regardless of the level of congruence between a theory and a case, theories are seldom, if ever, perfect matches for the actual cases they are applied to. Although the robustness of the theory of distributional coalitions is remarkable in the Turkish case, its loose ends still need to be stated. First, there

are multiple rent-seeking exclusive groups in the theory of distributional coalitions, whereas the Turkish case involves one major secret organization with many diverse extensions. The dispersed yet clustered secrecy of the organization further complicates the analysis of its decision-making processes, crowded agendas, or bargaining tables – simply because the organization is everywhere and nowhere, meaning that it has members in many of the state institutions yet does not have an officially-existing entity of its own.

Secondly, although the “distributional” coalitions are, first and foremost, rent-seeking institutions, the economism of Olson’s framework makes it difficult to sufficiently capture the Turkish case, since ideological struggles are also a crucial part of the issues in Turkey. It is true that rent-seeking is a major part of the question. For example, all of the aforementioned examples of state-inflicted violence and injustice against non-Muslims involve significant amounts of capital transfer from a certain segment of the society to the other. But there are no lucid indications which suggest that redistribution of wealth is the one and only goal of the Turkish deep state, and the theory thus needs to be fine-tuned. In sum, the theory of distributional coalitions is highly suitable for use as a frame of reference in the Turkish case; and especially with new findings and developments in the Ergenekon case, future research can revise it accordingly.

Endnotes

1. The name Ergenekon comes from a mythical valley in Central Asia. There are different versions of *The Myth of Ergenekon*; however, all versions share the theme of how a she-wolf “rescued” the Turkish nation. The myth is thus compatible with the prevalent discourse in Turkish politics about saving or rescuing the nation or the fatherland from the enemy.

2. Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 42.

3. M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 17.

4. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir cites the CUP branches in Thessaloniki (today in Greece) and Bitola (today in Macedonia) among the prominent ones within the borders of the Ottoman Empire. Among those outside, Paris branch is probably the most important. Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Tek Adam: Mustafa Kemal 1881-1919. Cilt I* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1963), p. 121.

5. Aydemir, *Tek Adam: Mustafa Kemal 1881-1919. Cilt I*, pp. 124-125.

6. H. Akin Ünver, “Turkey’s “Deep-State” and the Ergenekon Conundrum,” *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief*, No.23 (April 2009), p. 4.

7. Taner Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006), p. 58.

8. Akçam, *A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility*, p. 59.

9. The violent Turkish left of the 1970s had the similar nationalist and violent elements in its discourse. Also visible in the same discourse was the identification of the violent activities as the country's Second War of Salvation, which aimed to cleanse the country this time from the fascist enemy within.

10. "Seferi Yılmaz ile Röportaj" Yüksekova Haber, (Ocak 2, 2008) retrieved October 13, 2009, from <http://www.yuksekovahaber.com/haber/seferi-yilmaz-ile-roportaj-6311.htm>.

11. Pelin Turgut, "Senior general 'stoked Kurdish conflict to keep Turkey out of EU,'" *The Independent*, March 8, 2006.

12. Then Chief of the Army Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt's comments also included that he got to know the alleged bomber when they worked in the same military headquarters in southeast Turkey. He also said in the same statement that the alleged bomber would face the consequences if found guilty.

13. Aydemir, *Tek Adam: Mustafa Kemal 1919-1922, Cilt II* (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1964), pp. 78-79.

14. Ümit Kardaş, "Halkı Askerlikten Değil, Demokrasiden Soğuttu!," *Zaman*, April 11, 2007.

15. "Nokta editor in chief: Coup Plans cannot be Concealed," *Today's Zaman*, April 10, 2007.

16. Onur Burçak Belli, "Nokta Weekly to be Shut Down," *Turkish Daily News*, April 21, 2007.

17. 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession (Commission of the European Communities, Brussels, October 6, 2004), p. 15.

18. 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession (Commission of the European Communities, Brussels), p. 15.

19. On February 28, 1997, the National Security Council issued a number of decisions that aimed to break the wave of Islamization in Turkey. These decisions involved the implementation of authoritarian measures, such as the ban on the Islamic headscarves in all state institutions as well as in the state and private universities. In the process, with the cooperation of the (then) President Süleyman Demirel, the military also ousted the elected coalition government led by the conservative Welfare Party.

20. The Thrace Pogroms of 1934 was a series of antisemitic events that simultaneously took place in some of the northwest provinces of Turkey in June and July 1934. The events were led by the Nazi-sympathizer wing of the Turkish nationalists, including Nihal Atsız and Cevat Rifat Atilhan. The incidents involved breaking into Jewish homes and stores, vandalizing and looting Jewish properties, and beating and raping people of Jewish origin. Rifat N. Bali, *1934 Trakya Olayları* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2008), p. 185.

21. The Turkish Parliament imposed The Wealth Tax of 1942 on the fixed assets of the property owners. However, the government levied the capital tax in such an arbitrary fashion that it specifically harmed the Jewish, Armenian and Greek minorities, whose business operations constituted a large portion of the national economy at the time. In fact, for many of the taxpayers, "no rate of taxation was ever announced, [and] no declaration of income or capital was ever required. The local tax boards made their estimates, and posted the lists of payments to be made. Their decisions were final, and not subject to appeal." Those who were not able to make the extremely high amounts of tax payments within a month were arrested, and sent to forced labor camps. Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 297-298.

22. On September 6, 1955, the state radio and *İstanbul Ekspres* daily disseminated fabricated news, according to which the house in which Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was born in Thessaloniki, Greece was bombed. News spread quickly, and in a matter of hours, people gathered for a rally in the Taksim Square of Istanbul, and shortly afterwards scattered to the neighborhoods where Greek minorities lived. Organized mobs made up of approximately 20 to 30 people started to vandalize and

loot Greek homes and businesses, but as the events escalated, almost 100.000 people got involved. In the end, dozens were killed, and hundreds were wounded. 60 women were hospitalized for complications due to rape, but not all cases of rape were reported. Dilek Güven, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Azınlık Politikaları ve Stratejileri Bağlamında 6-7 Eylül 1955 Olayları* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2006), pp. 25-32, 54-55.

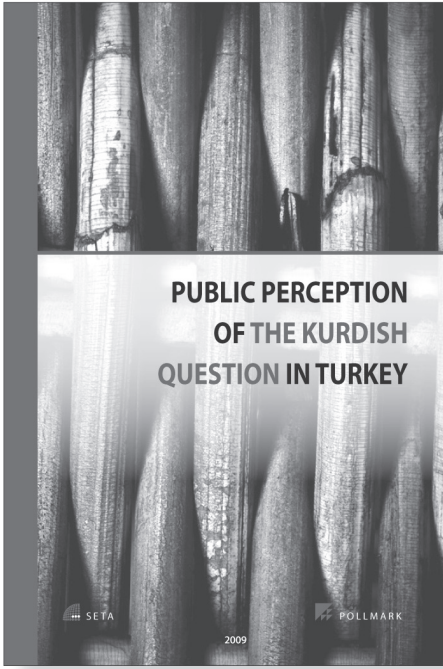
23. The Alevi Kurds in the province of Dersim, now called Tunceli, had long enjoyed an autonomous rule, and thus reacted once again in 1937 to the efforts of the Party to centralize the governance of the region. The government response to this rebellion was violent. An estimated 40,000 to 70,000 people in the region were killed, and 7,000 to 12,000 were taken into exile. Hüseyin Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskan: Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar* (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2009), p. 117.

24. The junta regime, which overthrew the elected government in 1980, used the Diyarbakır Military Prison for torturing people of Kurdish origin. Due to the continuous and intense torture, some of the inmates died, some were crippled, and some committed suicide. After their release, many of the inmates joined the PKK, the pro-Kurdish separatist guerilla group. Hasan Cemal, *Kürtler* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2003), pp. 15-36.

25. The Treaty of Sèvres is a peace treaty signed after World War I between the Allied Powers and the Ottoman Empire, and involved disadvantageous terms for the latter. The treaty was annulled by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

26. Their sympathizers refer to the same manufacturers in question as “Anatolian Tigers” (*Anadolu Kaplanları*).

27. Etyen Mahçupyan, *Bir Demokratın Gündemi* (İstanbul: Hayy Kitap, 2007), pp. 156-157.



Public Perception of the Kurdish Question in Turkey

by Bülent Aras, Ertan Aydın, Selin M. Bölme,
İhsan Dağı, İbrahim Dalmış, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu,
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Turkevi Research Centre

Postbus 58070, 1040 HB Amsterdam, The Netherlands
info@turkevi.nl