İSTANBUL BİLGİ UNIVERSITY
A Member of Laureate International Universities
European Institute

TURKISH PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MILITARY AND ERGENEKON: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

Yaprak Gürsoy
2012

Working Paper No: 5 EU/5/2012

İstanbul Bilgi University, European Institute, Dolapdere Campus,
Kurtuluş Deresi Cad. Yahya Köprüsü Sk. No: 1
34440 Dolapdere / İstanbul, Turkey
Phone: +90 212 311 52 40 • Fax: +90 212 250 87 48
e-mail: europe@bilgi.edu.tr • http://eu.bilgi.edu.tr

TURKISH PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MILITARY AND ERGENEKON: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

This Working Paper is part of a project entitled "Armed Forces and Society in Turkey: An Empirical Approach" (project number 110K462) funded by **The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK)** under the Support Programme for Scientific and Technological Research Projects (1001). The project is carried out under the leadership of **Asst. Prof. Dr. Zeki Sarıgil from Bilkent University,** in collaboration with Asst. Prof. Dr. Yaprak Gürsoy from Istanbul Bilgi University. The project, which began in April 2011, is expected to conclude in June 2012.

Description of the Project "Armed Forces and Society in Turkey: An Empirical Approach"

Since the 1990s, many opinion surveys have demonstrated that the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) are the most trusted institution among the Turkish public. In the academic literature as well it is a commonly shared view that Turkish society trusts and values its military. Despite this widely shared argument, there is still limited empirical knowledge of the factors and dynamics behind the relations between the military and society in Turkey. The project aims to fill this gap in the literature by conducting a public opinion survey that focuses only on military-society relations in Turkey and carrying out in-depth interviews that analyze the perceptions of the elite toward the military.

More specifically, the project intends to find answers to the following questions: How much does Turkish society trust the military? What are the perceptions of society on military interventions in politics? What do the public and elite expect from the TAF? What are the perceptions of the public and elite toward conscription? What is the dominant view in Turkish society on the question of transition to a professional military? What do people think about the recent developments in civil-military relations in Turkey? Several factors which might shape the answers to such questions are investigated in the project. These factors include income and education level, religion, religiosity, secularism, religious sect, ethnicity, ideology, political party support, military service, martyrdom, urban/rural division, region etc.

Apart from its contributions to the academic literature, the project also has significant widespread effects. Since Turkey is located in an important geopolitical region, a study that focuses on the various aspects of relations between the TAF and society is expected to produce results that enhance our understanding of political stability and, consequently, national security. The project provides important insights on democratic consolidation in Turkey by developing inferences on the possibilities of creating more democratic civil-military relations in Turkey on the road to European Union membership.

Information on the Author

Yaprak Gürsoy received her PhD from the University of Virginia, Department of Politics. Her dissertation is a comparative study of Greek and Turkish political regimes, civil-military relations, and businessmen's political attitudes. For her dissertation, Dr. Gürsoy conducted more than 100 interviews with Greek and Turkish military officers, politicians, and businessmen. Her research in Greece was funded by the State Scholarship Foundation of Greece. Currently, Dr. Gürsoy is an Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at Istanbul Bilgi University, teaching subjects such as Civil-Military Relations, Comparative Politics, Political Transformation in Europe, and the European Union. She has participated in a project on international influences on democratization headed by the CDDRL at Stanford University and an EU FP6 project on Reconstituting Democracy in Europe. Her articles have appeared in *Democratization*, *South European Society and Politics*, *Turkish Studies*, *Journal of Political and Military Sociology*, *Journal of Modern Greek Studies,* and *East European Quarterly*.

TURKISH PUBLIC ATTITUDES TOWARD THE MILITARY AND ERGENEKON CASE: CONSEQUENCES FOR THE CONSOLIDATION OF DEMOCRACY

May 2012

Yaprak Gürsoy

Abstract: A quick glance at the Eurobarometer surveys indicate that after 2008 there is drop in the number of respondents who declared their trust in the Turkish Armed Forces. Indeed, in the 2010 survey, the Turkish public does not seem to differ from its European counterparts and trusts the military at around the same level as western democracies. The critical event that seems to have led to the drop in trust levels is the court case known as *Ergenekon*, which has implicated hundreds of lower- and higher-ranking current and retired officers in attempts to stage coups against the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Given the importance of civil-military relations and the public's attitudes toward the armed forces for democratic consolidation, is it possible to argue, then, that the *Ergenekon* case is contributing to democratization in Turkey? In order to answer this question the paper analyzes Turkish public opinion on the trials, based on an original nation-wide opinion survey designed to understand attitudes toward the military. The results of the survey show that Turkish politics is polarized on the *Ergenekon* case. This type of polarization is indicative of an unconsolidated democracy where actors mutually suspect each other's intentions. Thus, instead of contributing to consolidation by altering the public's attitudes toward the armed forces, the *Ergenekon* case is leading to polarization and threatening the prospects of further democratization.

Introduction

Turkish politics has been going through an important transformation since 2007, due to the start of an investigation known to the public as Ergenekon.[1] The inquisition can be traced back to March 2007 when the alleged diaries of a former commander of the navy published by a weekly magazine exposed coup plans against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government in 2003-2004. In the subsequent years, other plots were revealed, such as the "Action Plan to Combat Islamic Fundamentalism", "Cage" and "Sledgehammer".[2] Since the start of the official investigation in June 2007, more than 300 people, including journalists, academics and retired and active-duty military officers from various ranks have been implicated in the coup plans and have been put on trial. Up until 2011, 18 operations were conducted, 318 individuals were formally charged and 15 indictments were prepared.[3] The accused individuals are said to have established a terrorist organization called Ergenekon with the purpose of inciting chaos and opposition against the ruling AKP. The charges have included attacks against religious minority groups, planting explosives in mosques, assassinating prominent individuals or bombing a newspaper with the purpose of creating the right circumstances for the military to stage a coup and intervene against the government.

I ask in this paper what the effect of this unparalleled court case in Turkish history is on Turkish democratic consolidation. The investigation and the trials are unprecedented because high ranking officers, including a former deputy chief of the General Staff and commanders of the armed forces, are put on trial for the first time for allegedly plotting coups to topple an elected civilian government. In a country that has witnessed two direct military coups (1960, 1980) and two indirect interventions (1971, 1997), these developments are expected to have an impact on democratic consolidation. I attempt to analyze such an impact by using the dataset on the Survey on the Armed Forces and Society in Turkey (SAFST) conducted in October 2011 by face-to-face interviews with 2775 people.[4]

The quantitative analysis based on SAFST data indicates that the Ergenekon case has two contradictory effects on Turkish democracy. First, the investigation makes a positive contribution to democracy by decreasing the level of trust in the military, which can lead to de-legitimization of the military's interventions in politics and its tutelage. Yet, the second effect of the investigation on democracy is negative, since the survey results indicate that Ergenekon leads to polarization among political groups, which is not conducive to consolidation.

In order to make these arguments, in the first section of the paper I examine the connection between positive popular attitudes toward the Turkish military and the political powers and prerogatives of the armed forces. Previous research on Turkey and theories of democratization

---

1 Even though the investigation and the trials of Ergenekon are two different issues, for reasons of simplicity I use the terms "investigation," "inquisition," "operation," "case" and "trial" interchangeably when referring to Ergenekon.

2 The Sledgehammer investigation started as a separate inquisition in January 2010 and hundreds of officers have been accused and put on trial since July 2010. Arguably the Sledgehammer plot also had a significant impact on public views regarding the Turkish armed forces, but because there was no specific question on the SAFST on Sledgehammer, this article focuses only on the consequences of the Ergenekon case.

3 "318 Sanık Hakkında 15 İddianame Hazırlandı." *Hürriyet*, 5 March 2011, p.25.

4 The survey is part of a project entitled "Armed Forces and Society in Turkey: an Empirical Approach" funded by The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) under the Support Programme for Scientific and Technological Research Projects (1001) (Project Number 110K462). The survey was conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy Company under the supervision of the director of the project Asst. Prof. Dr. Zeki Sarıgil from Bilkent University and Asst. Prof. Dr. Yaprak Gürsoy from Istanbul Bilgi University.

indicate that high levels of public trust in the military have negative consequences for democratic consolidation. In the second part of the paper, I look into the impact of polarization on democratic consolidation and discuss the recent increase in polarization among the political parties as a result of the Ergenekon case. In the third part of the paper, I test the hypotheses derived from these theoretical discussions by using the SAFST data. The conclusions from the empirical analysis indicate that, overall, the Ergenekon investigation is not contributing to (and perhaps even damaging) the consolidation of democracy in Turkey.

Democratic Consolidation and Trust in the Military

According to both general theoretical assessments of democratization and research related to Turkey, there is an association between the level of trust the public has toward the military and democratic consolidation. In terms of theoretical considerations, the definitions of a liberal democracy and democratic consolidation highlight the importance of the political powers of the military and its popularity in society. In order to consider a country fully democratic, the armed forces and other unelected institutions should not have powers and prerogatives that would challenge and restrict the decision-making capabilities of elected officials, such as the government and parliament.[5] If the military has tutelary powers and policy domains in which it makes decisions on its own, it is not possible to refer to that country as a liberal democracy.

Although related to the procedures of liberal democracy, the concept of consolidation is different and refers to the cultural dimension of democratization.[6] For democratic consolidation, all significant actors and, in countries where the military historically had political powers and prerogatives, also the armed forces should attitudinally and behaviorally endorse democracy.[7] If a group of actors with potentially significant force to disturb the political system does not consider democracy the best regime suitable for the country, then democracy is not consolidated.[8] While on the one hand, such beliefs among the personnel of the armed forces could be threatening to democracy (especially if these officers have the necessary resources to stage a coup d'état), on the other hand, the existence of civilian groups in society that lend support to regimes other

---

5 For definitions of democracy, see Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), p.3; Juan Linz, "Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes," in *Handbook of Political Science, v. 3: Macropolitical Theory*, eds. Fred I. Greenstein and Nelson W. Polsby (Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishers, 1975), pp.182-3; Juan J. Linz, Alfred Stepan and Richard Gunther, "Democratic Transition and Consolidation in Southern Europe, with Reflections on Latin America and Eastern Europe," in *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation: Southern Europe in Comparative Perspective*, eds. Richard Gunther, Nikiforos P.Diamandouros and Hans-Jürgen Puhle (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p.78; Phillipe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is…and Is Not," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 2, no. 3 (1991), pp.76-82; On the conceptualization of civilian control of the military and its significance for democracy, see Aurel Croissant, et al., "Beyond the Fallacy of Coup-ism: Conceptualizing Civilian Control of the Military in Emerging Democracies," *Democratization* vol. 17, no. 5 (2010), pp.950-75.

6 Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1996), p.5. The move from democratic transition to consolidation does not always take place smoothly and sequentially. Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* vol. 13, no. 1 (2002), p.15; Carsten Q. Schneider and Philippe C. Schmitter, "Liberalization, Transition and Consolidation: Measuring the Components of Democratization," *Democratization* vol. 11, no. 5 (2004), pp.81-4.

7 Richard Gunther, Hans-Jürgen Puhle and P.Nikiforos Diamandouros, "Introduction," in *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation*, pp.1-32.

8 Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.26.

than democracy and consider military coups as an alternative is also detrimental to democratic consolidation. Democracy also fails to consolidate when there are significant actors in the polity that defend the tutelage of the military over elected officials and advocate that the armed forces should (continue to) have political powers.

Since support for the political role of the military can be detrimental to democratization, it is important to analyze public opinion on the military. Yet, the association between anti-democratic attitudes and trust in the military is not always clear. Trust in the armed forces and attitudes toward democracy can be separate issues in countries where the military historically had no political role. In the case of Turkey, however, the two questions are related because the military had been a political actor since the foundation of the Republic in 1923, with increasing importance after the 1960 coup. Until the last decade, the significance of the military in political decision-making had continued and, aside from direct and indirect military interventions, the armed forces also had exercised tutelary powers through several institutional mechanisms, including the National Security Council (MGK).[9]

Given this history of civil-military relations, it is not surprising that research on Turkey has found that there is an important association between the public's opinion on the military and democratic attitudes. However, ironically, quantitative research has suggested that confidence in the military and support for democracy are positively related.[10] Two studies that have analyzed World Values Survey results conducted in Turkey in different years have demonstrated that among those who lend support to democracy, confidence in institutions of order, including the military, is higher.[11] The observation that democratic individuals in Turkey trust the military, which has staged coups and intervened against it, makes sense once it is considered that the armed forces had justified its intrusions as attempts to protect democracy and guard it against internal threats.[12] Based on their findings in a survey conducted in 2006, Çarkoğlu and Toprak conclude that "…although the majority of the public does not agree with the idea that only a military regime can solve Turkey's problems, it is clear that the public supports a unique role for the military in the context of Turkish politics."[13] This finding is paradoxical, especially when the conditions under which democratic consolidation thrives are considered. As explained above, in consolidated democracies the tutelage of the military should be undesirable for all significant groups in a society. If the link between support for democratic institutions and confidence in the military can only be explained by the tutelary functions of the armed forces, then it is clear that trust in the military is a symptom of an unconsolidated democracy.

The inconsistent association between support for democracy and confidence in the military is also a result of the way democracy is conceptualized among the public. While the majority of society tends to agree with claims such as "democracy is a good way of governing Turkey" or

---

9 Ümit Cizre-Sakallıoğlu, "The Anatomy of the Turkish Military's Political Autonomy," *Comparative Politics* vol. 29, no. 2 (1997): 151-166.

10 In this article, "confidence" and "trust" are used interchangeably. In all of the surveys mentioned in this article the same Turkish word, "güven", was used to measure confidence/trust in various institutions.

11 Mark Tessler and Ebru Altınoğlu, "Political Culture in Turkey: Connections among Attitudes toward Democracy, the Military and Islam," *Democratization,* Vol. 11, No. 1 (2004), p.34; Zeki Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," *Armed Forces & Society* vol. 35, no. 4 (2009), pp.719.

12 Ergun Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics: Challenges to Democratic Consolidation* (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), p.123; Tessler and Altınoğlu, "Political Culture in Turkey," 34; Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," pp.719-20.

13 Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2007), p.83.

"democracy is better than any other form of government," when it comes questions regarding political liberties, most individuals do not posses democratic values. According to the analysis of Tessler and Altınoğlu, among those who give high importance to democratic norms such as freedom of speech, confidence in the military is lower. Then it is fair to say that "true democrats" tend not to have confidence in institutions of order, while "superficial democrats," who advocate the continuation of an unconsolidated democracy, support the military more. The "superficial democrats" probably define "democracy" as a regime where free and fair elections take place regularly, but attitudinally and culturally they do not support the liberal principles of democracy. As Tessler and Altınoğlu argue,

> [W]hile confidence in institutions of order tends to increases support for a pattern of governance on whose behalf the military frequently intervened…it tends to *decrease* support for the more fundamental norms of political culture that are necessary for democracy to mature. Democratic consolidation, in other words, depends in the final analysis on a supportive political culture, not on military intervention, and those who possess political values conducive to democracy are more likely than others to see a contradiction in relying on anti-democratic institutions to ensure democracy's survival.[14]

Many analyses of Turkish civil-military relations also contend that the positive attitudes society accorded to the military had legitimized the direct and indirect interventions of the armed forces in politics.[15] There are two ways in which societal support for the armed forces has contributed to a more active role for the military. First, military interventions did not result in widespread opposition among the public. Especially after the first military intervention of 1960, which ousted from power the Democratic Party government, it was seen that the armed forces returned to their barracks relatively quickly and did not have the intention to establish authoritarian regimes. This belief was perpetuated by subsequent military interventions in 1971 and 1980, which contributed to the positive image of the military as the guardian of democracy and resulted in the quiet acceptance of the tutelary role of the military in Turkish politics.[16] Indeed, the so-called postmodern coup of February 1997, during which the military pressured the coalition government of the pro-Islamic Welfare Party and the True Path Party to resign from office, was done with the cooperation of several civil society organizations and the acquiescence of the majority of society.

The second reason why positive images of the armed forces in society contributed to the military's legitimization of its political involvement was the timidity of the politicians to oppose the military and curtail its political powers. Until the reform process that started in 1999, civilians hesitated to restrain the tutelary powers of the military not only because of their own pro-

---

14 Tessler and Altınoğlu, "Political Culture in Turkey," p.38.

15 Nilüfer Narlı, "Civil–military Relations in Turkey," *Turkish Studies* vol. 1, no. 1 (2000), pp.107-27; Gareth Jenkins, *Context and Circumstance: The Turkish Military and Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), pp.16-17; Tanel Demirel, "Türk Silahlı Kuvvetleri'nin Toplumsal Meşruiyeti Üzerine," in *Bir Zümre, Bir Parti: Türkiye'de Ordu*, eds. Ahmet İnsel and Ali Bayramoğlu, (Istanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2004), pp.345-381; Tanel Demirel, "Soldiers and Civilians: The Dilemma of Turkish Democracy," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 40, no. 1 (2004), p.128; Ersel Aydınlı, Nibat Ali Özcan and Doğan Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March toward Europe," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 85, no. 1 (2006), pp.77-80; Özkan Duman and Dimitris Tsarouhas, "'Civilianization' in Greece versus 'Demilitarization' in Turkey: A Comparative Study of Civil-Military Relations and the Impact of the European Union," *Armed Forces and Society* vol. 32, no. 3 (2006), p.411; Gareth Jenkins, "Continuity and Change: Prospects for Civil–military Relations in Turkey," *International Affairs* vol. 83, no. 2 (2007), p.355; Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," p.710.

16 Ersel Aydınlı, "A Paradigmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* vol. 63, no. 4 (2009), pp.584-586.

military attitudes or fear of another military intervention, but also because it was believed that such reforms would be unpopular.[17] Only after 1999, when the prospect of European Union (EU) membership was popular both among the public[18] and within the ranks of the military,[19] did the politicians start to reform civil-military relations as part of the set of legal amendments which were required by EU conditionality.[20] Thus, in one sense the possibility of EU membership balanced out the prospective negative effects of introducing reforms. Nevertheless, many analysts of Turkish politics feared that given the popularity of the military, such amendments in civil-military relations would remain only on paper and military tutelage would continue.[21] Such skepticism was a result of the belief that the military derived its legitimacy not only from the constitution and the legal framework that allowed it to exercise political powers, but also because of the acceptance of such a role among the public. The popularity of the military was seen as an impediment standing in the way of substantively reforming civil-military relations.

In conclusion, both quantitative analyses of public opinion and qualitative research on civil-military relations suggest that in the Turkish context, societal trust in the military is related to democratization. First, high levels of public confidence in the armed forces have the potential to legitimize the military's direct interventions in politics and to validate its tutelage and political prerogatives over elected officials. Naturally, such outcomes run counter to the conceptualization of liberal democracy. Moreover, as long as societal support for the military continues, democratic reforms in civil-military relations could be under threat because in practice the military might continue to exert influence on political decisions. Second, in terms of democratic consolidation, analyses of surveys demonstrate that trust in the military and postures on democracy are associated. Those individuals who trust the military do not advocate democratic values. In oth-

---

17 Demirel, "Soldiers and Civilians," 128; Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," 711.

18 On the popularity of the EU since 1996, see Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism in Turkey* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.122-9.

19 Several authors explain the acceptance by the military of these reforms by the fact that they were part of EU conditionality. See Ümit Cizre, "Problems of Democratic Governance of Civil–military Relations in Turkey and the European Union Enlargement Zone," *European Journal of Political Research* vol. 43, no. 1 (2004), pp.107-8; Aylin Güney and Petek Karatekelioğlu, "Turkey's EU Candidacy and Civil–military Relations: Challenges and Prospects," *Armed Forces & Society* 31, no. 3 (2005), pp.452-5; Aydınlı, Özcan and Akyaz, "The Turkish Military's March toward Europe"; Zeki Sarıgil, "Europeanization as Institutional Change: The Case of the Turkish Military," *Mediterranean Politics* vol. 12, no. 1 (2007), pp.39-57; Tuba Ünlü Bilgiç, "The Military and Europeanization Reforms in Turkey," *Middle Eastern Studies* vol. 45, no. 5 (2009), pp.803-24; Tanel Demirel, *2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset: Kontrollü Değişim ile Statüko Arasında Türk Ordusu* (Ankara: Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı (SETA), 2010), pp.6, 12; Şule Toktaş and Ümit Kurt, "The Turkish Military's Autonomy, JDP Rule and the EU Reform Process in the 2000s: An Assessment of the Turkish Version of Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DECAF)," *Turkish Studies* vol. 11, no. 3 (2010), pp.392-3.

20 The amendments in civil–military relations due to the EU accession process have been documented well in the literature. For examples, see Hale Akay, "Avrupa Birliği: Güvenlik ve Sivil-Asker İlişkileri" in *Almanak Türkiye 2006-2008: Güvenlik Sektörü ve Demokratik Gözetim*, eds. Ali Bayramoğlu and Ahmet İnsel (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2010); Ümit Cizre, "The Justice and Development Party and the Military: Recreating the Past After Reforming It?" in *Secular and Islamic Politics in Turkey: The Making of the Justice and Development Party*, ed. Ümit Cizre, (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), pp.132-72; Linda Michaud-Emin, "The Restructuring of the Military High Command in the Seventh Harmonization Package and Its Ramifications for Civil–military Relations," *Turkish Studies* vol. 8, no. 1 (2007), pp.25-42; Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Impact of EU-Driven Reforms on the Political Autonomy of the Turkish Military," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (2011), pp.293-308.

21 Cizre, "Problems of Democratic Governance," Ünlü Bilgiç, "The Military and Europeanization Reforms," Michaud-Emin, "The Restructuring of the Military High Command."

er words, as long as there is high confidence in the armed forces, it would be difficult for attitudinal support for democracy to flourish.

Changing Levels of Turkish Public Trust in the Military

There is reason to believe that societal level of trust in the Turkish military has recently decreased. Even though the results from the 1990s and early 2000s indicate high public confidence in the military among all social classes and demographic groups,[22] Eurobarometer surveys demonstrate that since 2008 there has been a significant drop in the level of trust in the Turkish military. From 2004 to 2010, the Eurobarometer surveys asked respondents in the EU member states and Turkey how much trust they have in the military. The timing of the surveys gives a unique opportunity to compare levels of confidence in the military in the 2000s and observe if there has been any drop in trust levels. Similar to other surveys conducted in the early 2000s, the Eurobarometer surveys also show that in these years, the Turkish public attitude was in general supportive of the armed forces, with on average close to 87 percent of the respondents saying that they tend to trust the army, and close to 11 percent declaring that they tend not to trust it. These results were relatively higher than the trust respondents accorded to other institutions, such as the government (ranging between 63 and 80 percent), parliament (64-76 percent), the legal system (63-69 percent), and political parties (19-31 percent). Moreover, compared with the attitudes in European member states, the Turkish public trusted the army more than the European publics trusted their militaries.[23] Between 2004 and 2007, on average 69 percent of the respondents in European member states declared that they tend to trust the military, whereas 21 percent said that they tend not to trust (see table 1).

Table 1. Trust in the Army[24]

	Turkey			EU member states		
	Tend to trust	**Tend not to trust**	**Don't know**	**Tend to trust**	**Tend not to trust**	**Don't know**
2004.10	89%	10%	1%	69%	22%	9%
2005.10	88%	9%	3%	68%	22%	10%
2006.09	86%	12%	2%	69%	21%	10%
2007.10	84%	12%	4%	71%	19%	10%
2008.04	82%	16%	2%	70%	20%	10%
2009.11	77%	20%	3%	64%	26%	10%
2010.11	70%	27%	3%	70%	21%	9%

Source: Eurobarometer Survey, European Union 1995-2010. Available online at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/

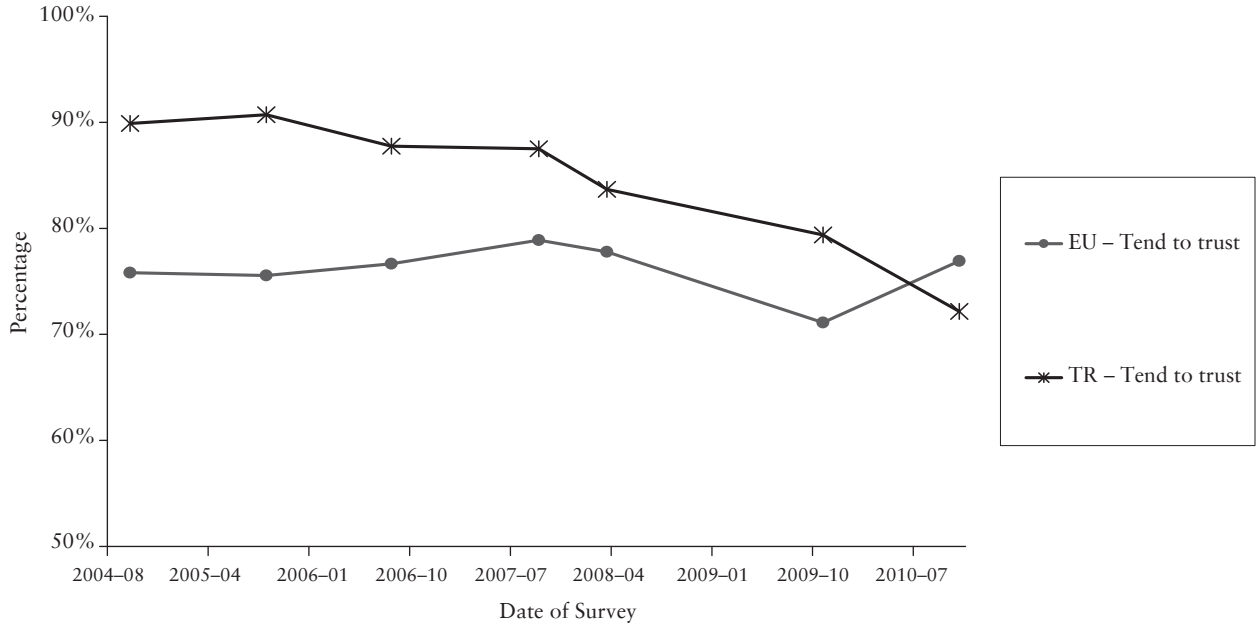
22 Yılmaz Esmer, "Islam, Gender, Democracy and Values: The Case of Turkey, 1990-2001," in *Changing Values, Persisting Cultures: Case Studies in Value Change*, eds. Thorleif Pettersson and Yılmaz Esmer (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), pp.291-3. For surveys cited in Turkish dailies, see, for instances Şükrü Elekdağ, "Halkta Güven Bunalımı," *Milliyet*, 08 November 1999, p.16; "Anketten 'Ordu' Çıktı," *Milliyet*, 06 December 2005, http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2005/12/06/siyaset/siy02.html; "AKP Anketi: En Güvenilir Kurum Ordu," *Hürriyet*, 18 January 2005, http://hurarsiv.hurriyet.com.tr/goster/ShowNew.aspx?id=289761.

23 Surveys conducted in 1990 and 1997 also show that the Turkish public had more confidence in the military than on average in European countries. Yılmaz Esmer, *Devrim, Evrim ve Statüko: Türkiye'de Sosyal, Siyasal, Ekonomik Değerler* (Istanbul: TESEV Yayınları, 1999), p.45.

24 The following question was directed to the respondents: "I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it?" The army was one of the institutions that the surveys asked about.

Even though the Turkish military seemed to have a special relationship with the public in the early 2000s, the results of the surveys started to change after 2007. In 2008, 82 percent of the respondents declared that they tend to trust the military, while the percent of the people who declared that they do not have confidence in the military increased four percentage points. The number of people in Turkey who asserted that they tend not to trust the military increased further to 20 percent in 2009 and 27 percent in 2010. Conversely, the trust people accorded to the military decreased to 77 percent in 2009 and to 70 percent in 2010. Once the respondents who gave a "don't know" answer are omitted from the calculations, it can be seen that that by 2010 the Turkish public trusted its army even less than the EU societies (graph 1).

Graph 1. Trust in the Army in Turkey and EU Member States[25]

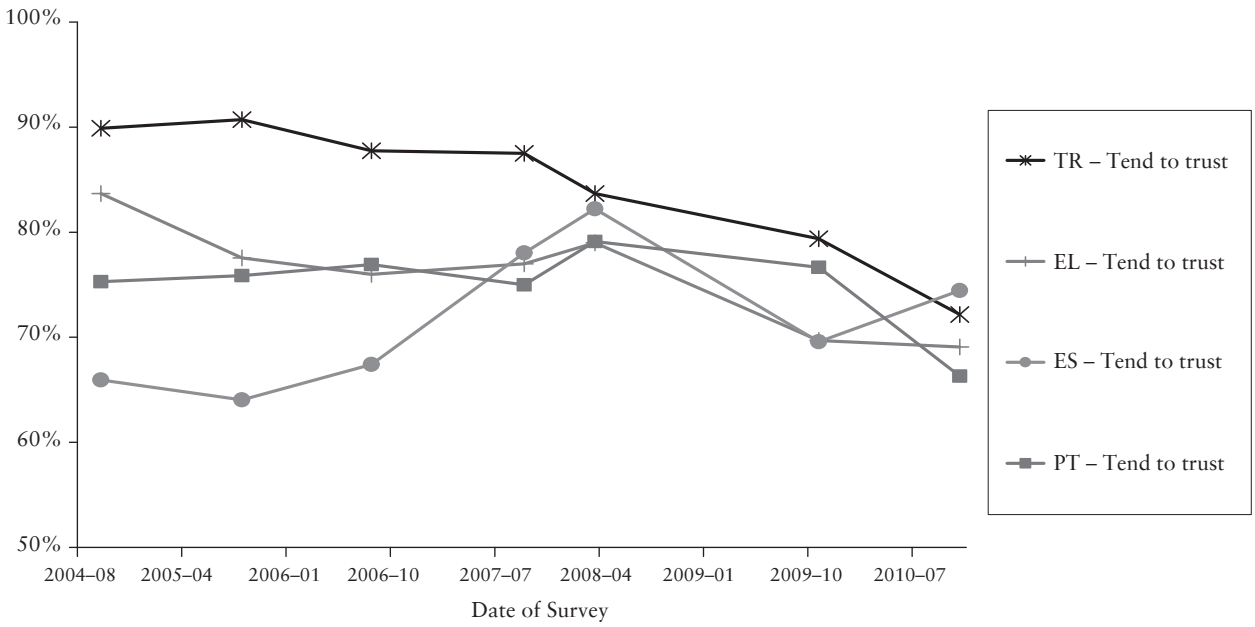


Source: Eurobarometer Survey, European Union 1995-2010. Available online at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/

The conclusion that trust in the Turkish army dropped to similar levels with the EU democracies holds true even when the Turkish results are compared with public opinion in Spain, Greece and Portugal (graph 2). These EU countries had authoritarian experiences and unpopular military plots in their pasts and therefore, are expected to have more negative attitudes toward their national armies than the EU average. Although the Turkish public in 2010 tended to trust its army at higher levels than the Portuguese (66 percent), it had similar levels of trust to the Greek public (69 percent) and lower than the Spanish respondents (74 percent). Thus, the Eurobarometer survey results clearly indicate that after 2008 there is a drop in the trust Turkish public has in the military, which does not differ from its European Union counterparts.

25 Frequencies were re-calculated without the "don't know" answers.

Graph 2. Trust in the Army in Turkey, Greece, Spain and Portugal[26]



Source: Eurobarometer Survey, European Union 1995-2010. Available online at http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/cf/

Several international and domestic factors explain the transformation of the Turkish public's attitudes towards the armed forces.[27] Previous studies conducted by Esmer[28] and Sarıgil[29] pointed out the following factors that influence public confidence in institutions of order and the military:

(1) Demographically the likelihood of observing trust in the military is higher among women, in rural areas, and among older individuals. As education levels increase, however, trust in the military decreases.

(2) The likelihood of observing high levels of confidence in the armed forces increases among nationalists, pious Muslims, those who have higher levels of trust in civilians, and those who believe that democracy is the best form of government.

(3) The likelihood of observing lower levels of trust in the military increases among those who vote for pro-Islamist and pro-Kurdish parties.

From the analysis of the SAFST data, I also hypothesize that similar demographic and political factors have an impact on public trust in the military. However, in addition to these factors, I examine the influence of the Ergenekon trials on confidence in the military. When we consider the timing of the drop in military trust levels in the Eurobarometer survey results and the

26 Frequencies were re-calculated without the "don't know" answers.

27 See the following resources for a discussion on the changing attitudes among the public and elites toward the armed forces in the 2000s and possible reasons, Aydınlı, "A Paradigmatic Shift," pp.586-7; Nilüfer Narlı, "EU Harmonisation Reforms, Democratisation and a New Modality of Civil-Military Relations in Turkey," in *Advances in Military Sociology: Essays in Honor of Charles C. Moskos (Contributions to Conflict Management, Peace Economics and Development, Volume 12)*, ed. Manas Chatterji (Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2009), pp.447-65; Demirel, *2000'li Yıllarda Asker ve Siyaset*, p.8-10, Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Changing Role of the Military in Turkish Politics: Democratization through Coup Plots," *Democratization* (2011) DOI: 10.1080/13510347.2011.623352.

28 Esmer, *Devrim, Evrim ve Statüko*, p.50.

29 Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," pp.717-21.

start of the investigation (in 2007), there is reason to suspect that attitudes toward Ergenekon have an effect on public confidence in the military. In particular, Ergenekon is expected to explain some of the decrease in the popularity of the military.

Thus, among those individuals who have positive attitudes toward Ergenekon, the popularity of the military is hypothesized to be lower. If this hypothesis is correct, this is good news for democratic consolidation in Turkey. But this is only one side of the coin. An examination of Turkish politics also shows that the Ergenekon trials are leading to polarization in society, which is not conducive to democracy. This is the other side of the coin that I will consider now.

Democratic Consolidation and Polarization in Turkey

Few scholars of democratic consolidation would disagree with the argument that polarization in politics is unfavorable to democratic consolidation.[30] Widespread support for democracy means that there should be consensus among political groups and especially the elites on the basic rules of the regime.[31] Polarization threatens this basic characteristic of a consolidated democracy. It can lead to severe conflicts and radicalization among groups both at the elite and mass levels. Intense political disagreements, in turn, may result in the questioning of the rules of the regime and eschewing of democratic norms and attitudes.[32] More specifically, as Sani and Segatti argue for the Italian case, polarization might jeopardize the two basic values of democracy: "(1) the notion that competition is the very essence of democracy, and (2) recognition that the winner of this competition is rightfully entitled to rule."[33] The existence of actors who challenge these fundamental elements of democracy makes the regime an unconsolidated one, *by definition*.

Apart from damaging democratic consolidation through attitudinal changes, polarization also alters the behaviors of the actors. As a result of polarization, actors might view a risk for their interests, not commit to the regime, and sustain anti-democratic exit options.[34] In other words, when conflict is intense, actors "look for other, frequently illegal and antidemocratic ways to shore up their positions, engaging in democratic processes only as long as such activities are useful in advancing their interests."[35] Centrifugal tendencies breed more conflict, since rival groups mutually suspect each other's intentions and question their commitment to democracy. Thus, as the government (or one group) attempts to suppress the opposition (or the rival group), the end result is a vicious circle of continuing polarization.[36] In fact, such spirals of polarization could even contribute to the collapse of a democratic regime altogether.[37]

---

30 See, for instance, the figure in Michael Burton, Richard Gunther and John Higley, "An Introduction: Elite Transformation and Democratic Regime," in *Elites and Democratic Consolidation in Latin America and Southern Europe*, eds. John Higley and Richard Gunther, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.23.

31 Ibid, p.5.

32 Leonardo Morlino, "Political Parties and Democratic Consolidation in Southern Europe," in *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation*, pp.349, 359.

33 Giacomo Sani and Paolo Segatti, "Antiparty Politics and Restructuring of the Italian Party System," in *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation*, p.163.

34 For some examples of what might constitute such exit options and mechanisms of "hedging" see Gerard Alexander, *The Sources of Democratic Consolidation* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p.60.

35 Gunther, Puhle, Diamandouros, *The Politics of Democratic Consolidation*, p.10.

36 Ibid..

37 See for instance the collapse of the Greek regime in 1967 and the Pakistani political system in 1999, respectively, in Thomas C. Bruneau et al., "Democracy, Southern European Style," in *Parties, Politics, and Democracy in the New Southern Europe*, eds. P.Nikiforos Diamandouros and Richard Gunther (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), p.58; Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (New York: Times Books, 2008), p.58.

Turkish democracy broke down after intense conflicts among political groups two times, in 1960 and 1980. Since then, polarization has been an important characteristic of politics, in part explaining the failure of Turkish democracy to consolidate.[38] While before the 1980 coup, polarization among leftist and rightist groups damaged democracy, since the intervention, centrifugal tendencies on two other cleavages, namely secularism-religious conservatism and Turkish-Kurdish nationalism, have dominated politics.[39]

The first cleavage is between pro-Islamist and secularist groups.[40] Islam has always been an important aspect of politics in Turkey and the military has always been a central player in this cleavage, protecting the secular foundations of the Republic and taking action against pro-Islamist parties. The armed forces justified their military interventions in 1960, 1971 and 1980 in part by the favors political parties gave to Islamic currents.

With the crashing of the leftist groups after the 1980 intervention, the visibility of Islam in politics significantly increased. The rise of the Welfare Party (RP) in the 1995 elections accentuated the cleavage between secularists and pro-Islamists. Necmettin Erbakan, who had led parties with similar outlooks before the 1980 coup, became the Prime Minister in coalition with the center-right True Path Party (DYP) in June 1996. Within a year of the foundation of the government, however, Erbakan was pressured to resign by the military, which used its tutelary powers in the National Security Council (MGK) and gave an implicit ultimatum to the government on the issue of Islamic fundamentalism.[41] The RP and its heir, the Virtue Party (FP), were closed down by the Constitutional Court with the charges of violating the constitution and engaging in activities against secularism.

After the closure of the FP, the movement split into two factions.[42] The more moderate group of politicians founded the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in August 2001, which received the largest vote share in the 2002 elections. The party renewed its mandate to rule in the 2007 and 2011 elections. Although the leaders of the party have at times claimed that the AKP does not carry out politics based on religion, given that it descended from organizations that were closed down because of their Islamist divide, there is considerable suspicion among secularist circles that the AKP has an ulterior motive, which is to turn Turkey into an Islamic Republic.[43] Since the 2002 elections, the secularists are represented in parliament by the main opposition Republican People's Party (CHP). The CHP is the party that founded the Republic in 1923 and since then, despite changes in its ideology, it has stalwartly defended secularist principles. Studies that have examined the bases of support for the AKP and CHP show that the voters of

38 Özbudun, *Contemporary Turkish Politics*, p.99.

39 For an overview of Turkish party system polarization, see Ergun Özbudun, *Türkiye'de Parti ve Seçim Sistemi* (Istanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 72-9. For the importance of these two cleavages on the party preferences of the voters, see Ali Çarkoğlu and Melvin J. Hinich, "A Spatial Analysis of Turkish Party Preferences," *Electoral Studies* vol. 25 (2006) 369-392.

40 For more on this polarization in public opinion, see the analysis of a 2006 survey in Ali Çarkoğlu and Binnaz Toprak, *Religion, Society and Politics in a Changing Turkey* (Istanbul: TESEV Publications, 2007), pp.32-4, 101.

41 For the process see Metin Heper and Aylin Güney, "The Military and the Consolidation of Democracy: The Recent Turkish Experience," *Armed Forces and Society* vol. 26, no. 4 (2000), pp.642-7 and Jenkins, "Continuity and Change," pp.342-6.

42 On the split of the National Outlook movement and the birth of the AKP, see Fulya Atacan, "Explaining Religious Politics at the Crossroad: AKP-SP," in *Religion and Politics in Turkey*, eds. Ali Çarkoğlu and Barry Rubin (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), pp.45-57.

43 William Hale and Ergun Özbudun, *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey: The Case of the AKP* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), pp.20-9.

the two parties are distinguished from each other by their stance on the pro-Islamist versus secularist cleavage.[44] Thus, both in terms of their ideologies and bases of support, the two parties represent two ends of the political spectrum, the CHP being the main party of the secularist camp and the AKP being the dominant party of the pro-Islamist camp.[45]

The second cleavage that dominates politics since the 1980 coup is based on ethnicity, which polarizes Turkish and Kurdish nationalists. Similar to the pro-Islamist versus secularist cleavage, this issue goes back to several decades earlier, its antecedents lying in the creation of the Turkish nation-state in the 1920s. The visibility of Kurdish separatism increased substantially in the 1980s with the rise in the activities of the PKK terrorist organization. Again similar to the secularist versus pro-Islamist, the military was a dominant player in this issue area as well. The combat against Kurdish separatism in the southeastern regions was primarily led by the Turkish armed forces in the 1990s.

In the political arena, the polarization between Kurdish and Turkish nationalists is visible along party lines. Kurdish voters tend to support the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which is heir to several parties that were closed down by the Constitutional Court due to their links with the PKK and their activities against the indivisibility of the Turkish state. Although the primary party of Turkish nationalism is traditionally the Nationalist Action Party (MHP),[46] there is evidence to suggest that nationalists also vote for other parties, including the AKP.

Recent research shows that polarization along ethnic lines is worrisome not only because it creates tensions among political parties, but also because the Turkish public is increasingly becoming intolerant and xenophobic.[47] Indeed, both religiosity and nationalism are important components of Turkish conservatism, which seems to be on the rise. The analysis by Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu based on the findings of a survey conducted in 2006 demonstrated that close to 70 percent of the public placed themselves at the religious end of a scale running from 0 to 10 (10 being very religious), around 75 percent scored more than 50 points out of a 0 to 100 scale measuring xenophobia, and 68 percent were positioned higher than 50 on a political intolerance scale.[48]

---

44 In fact, levels of religiosity have been associated with party vote since the 1990s. On the 1990s, see Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, "Elections and Party Preferences in Turkey," *Comparative Political Studies* vol. 27 (1994), 420-1. Since then, several public opinion studies have agreed that positions of the voters on the Islamist-secularist cleavage is linked to party preference. See Yılmaz Esmer, "At the Ballot Box: Determinants of Voting Behavior," in *Politics, Parties & Elections in Turkey*, eds. Sabri Sayarı and Yılmaz Esmer (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), pp.105-9; Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Religion, Society and Politics*, p.83. The analysis by Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu of the 2002 elections show that religiosity and issues concerning religious freedoms especially have an impact for the AKP and CHP constituents, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp.190-1, 202-3.

45 This is not to say that the voter bases of the AKP and the CHP can be reduced only to this issue. Indeed, as Hale and Özbudun argue, "the AKP appears to have successfully…[brought] together former center-right voters, moderate Islamists, moderate nationalists and even a certain segment of former center left," *Islamism, Democracy and Liberalism in Turkey*, p.37.

46 For the indicators of the MHP vote in the 1999 elections, see Esmer, "At the Ballot Box," p.109.

47 The analysis of Çarkoğlu and Toprak shows that there is a social cleavage that can be described as one that juxtaposes "us" (meaning Turkish-Muslim-Sunni) against "others" (Kurdish, Alevi, and non-Muslim). See *Religion, Society and Politics*, p.103.

48 Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu, *The Rising Tide of Conservatism*, pp.35, 47, 52. Previous research has also shown that the Turkish public is increasingly moving to the right of the left-right spectrum and becoming more religious while people have low levels of interpersonal trust and high levels of intolerance. See, Esmer, "At the Ballot Box," p.97-9; Çarkoğlu and Toprak, *Religion, Society and Politics*, p.101; Ali Çarkoğlu and Ersin Kalaycıoğlu, *Turkish Democracy Today: Elections, Protest and Stability in an Islamic Society* (London and

Once the party system and the results of elections and public opinion surveys are analyzed it is clear that Turkish politics is polarized along the pro-Islamists versus secularist and the Turkish versus Kurdish nationalist cleavages. The majority of the population seems to be located towards the pro-Islamist and the Turkish nationalist ends of these spectrums, however, considerable segments of the public are placed in the secularist and Kurdish ends of the two cleavage lines. While the AKP represents the Islamists and, to certain extent the Turkish nationalists along with the MHP, the CHP voters tend to come from secularist groups and the BDP stands for the Kurdish nationalists.

Given the centrifugal characteristics of Turkish politics today, this paper hypothesizes that the Ergenekon investigation contributes to polarization. As it will be shown below, there is reason to believe that the trials are especially intensifying the conflict between the AKP and CHP as well as the pro-Islamists and the seculars.

Polarization among Political Parties Due to the Ergenekon Case

The Ergenekon investigation and the subsequent trials have been interpreted differently by the AKP and the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP) and the National Action Party (MHP). Among the national press, intellectuals and civil society groups as well, there is considerable controversy over the inquisition and the court case. [49] More specifically there are three interrelated issues of tension between the supporters of the trials and those who raise concerns.[50] The first controversy is over the existence of the Ergenekon terrorist organization and whether or not the accused individuals are in fact guilty. Although the indictments consist of thousands of pages, opposition groups believe that they have not proved the existence of a clandestine organization beyond reasonable doubt. Moreover, the individuals who have been charged with being members of Ergenekon are not only military officers, but also others coming from diverse backgrounds, such as journalism, academia, civil society and business. The seemingly unconnected past experiences of the individuals leads to doubts over whether or not they could have been operating as part of the same organization.[51]

The second argument against Ergenekon is related to the legal procedures that are being followed by the prosecutors and the police. Since the judicial process has been moving slowly, the trials have not been concluded, leading to the detainment of some accused individuals for four years even though they might be proven innocent in the end. Since for a number of critiques, the proof that is provided to accuse these individuals is fictitious, the long duration of the trials keep innocent people in prison for fabricated evidence. The problems are compounded since some of the suspects have been imprisoned without being formally charged for months and a few individuals with medical problems have been detained, which resulted in the worsening of their health conditions.

New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), pp.113-20; Esmer, "Islam, Gender, Democracy, Values," pp.293-298.

49 Şule Toktaş and Ümit Kurt, "The Turkish Military's Autonomy, JDP Rule and the EU Reform Process in the 2000s: An Assessment of the Turkish Version of Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DECAF)," *Turkish Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (2010), pp.397-8.

50 For an overview of these controversies see Akın H. Ünver, "Turkey's 'Deep State' and the Ergenekon Conundrum," *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief*, 23 April, 2009, pp.12–4; Gareth Jenkins, "Between Fact and Fantasy: Turkey's Ergenekon Investigation," *Silk Road Paper*, August 2009, http://www.silkroadstudies.org/new/docs/silkroadpapers/0908Ergenekon.pdf (accessed 21 July 2010), pp.78–83; Soli Özel, "The Back and Forth of Turkey's 'Westernness', *German Marshall Fund of the United States: Analysis*, 2009, p.2.

51 For such a view see for instance Türker Alkan, "Aşinalık ne zaman aşka dönüşür?" *Radikal*, 6 Temmuz 2008, www.radikal.com.tr.

Finally, there is considerable debate in Turkish public opinion whether or not the AKP government is using the Ergenekon case to its advantage in order to round up the opponents to its rule. Although for three consecutive terms since 2002 the AKP has been elected to power, the opposition believes that the party has become increasingly authoritarian and gradually tightened its grip on critics. The fact that the accused individuals are from various differing backgrounds and are known to have opposed the AKP provides evidence for these claims. Part of the dispute also results from the belief that the AKP has a religious and anti-democratic agenda. According to a number of people, for instance, the AKP is closely related to an Islamic order which also controls the police, segments of the judiciary and the bureaucracy. Seen from this perspective, the true purpose of Ergenekon and the arrests are to eliminate the secular opposition.[52] The fact that the overwhelming numbers of the accused individuals are well-known secular activists does not help ease minds. As explained above, the military has been the defender of the secular Republic and has justified its interventions in democracy by referring to the rise of Islamic political activities. Thus, the arrests of the officers and the Ergenekon trials are perceived as attacks against the guardians of secularism.[53]

The diverse stances of the ruling AKP and the main opposition party CHP can be best captured by the polemical debate that their leaders had in the summer of 2008, when the first indictment was being revealed. The leader of the CHP, Deniz Baykal, announced that if Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan was the prosecutor of Ergenekon, then he was the attorney of the suspects. In return, Erdoğan declared that he was indeed the prosecutor of the nation.[54] Despite this radical statement, the official policy of the AKP on Ergenekon emphasizes that the investigation is not controlled by the government and that the judiciary and police forces are acting on their own. Indeed, Erdoğan criticizes the opposition for attempting to interfere in the judicial process. [55] The party maintains that it upholds the rule of law and therefore chooses not to meddle with the process. [56] Implicit in the discourse of the AKP, however, there is also the belief that the suspects are guilty. Following the arrests of journalists under the Ergenekon investigation in 2011, for instance, the AKP leadership insisted that the reporters were held in prison because of their involvement in possible coup plots and terrorism.[57]

Since the beginning of the investigation and under the leadership of Baykal, the official line of the CHP had been critical of the case. The party had questioned the existence of an organization named Ergenekon and accused the AKP of controlling the inquisition and the legal process in order to eliminate its rivals. Under its new leader, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, since 2010 the CHP has continued to maintain the same position.

The debate over Ergenekon intensified prior to the June 2011 elections due to a new wave of journalist imprisonments in February and March.[58] After the arrests, Kılıçdaroğlu argued that

---

52 Soner Çağaptay, "Behind Turkey's Witch Hunt," *Newsweek*, 16 May 2009 http://www.newsweek.com/2009/05/15/behind-turkey-s-witch-hunt.html (accessed 05 June 2011) and "What's Really behind Turkey's Coup Arrests?,"*Foreign Policy* vol. 25 (2010).

53 Amberin Zaman, "Receding Power of Turkey's Military: A Leap for Democracy or Another Power Struggle?', *German Marshall Fund of the United States: Analysis,* (2009), p.2.

54 "Baykal: Ergenekon Savcısı Başbakan'sa, Avukatı Benim," *Radikal*, 5 July 2008, p.1, 7; "Erdoğan: Millet Adına Savcıyım," *Milliyet*, 16 July 2008, www.milliyet.com.tr.

55 "'Nerede Bu Örgüt Üye Olacağım' Sözü Yargıya Müdahale," *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2011, p.22.

56 "Yargıya Başbakan Bile Telkinde Bulunmamalı," *Hürriyet*, 17 February 2011, p.22; "Yargının Tasarrufu Bize Çamur Atmayın," *Akşam*, 5 March 2011, p.12.

57 "Gazeteci Kılıklı Kişiler İçin Ayağa Kalktılar," *Hürriyet*, 14 March 2011, p.24; "Sistematik Karalama Kampanyası," *Hürriyet*, 15 March 2011, p.24.

58 For an overview of the positions parties had on civil-military relations during the 2011 election campaign see

the AKP was creating an "empire of terror,"[59] repressing and censoring the press,[60] and infringing upon the rule of law and establishing a system based on the "law of the rulers."[61] The party leadership also agreed with critics who questioned the existence of the Ergenekon terrorist organization. Kılıçdaroğlu even implied that he wanted to become a member of the organization, but did not know where to apply because he could not find its headquarters.[62] The CHP showed its belief in the innocence of at least some of the accused by nominating four Ergenekon suspects in the 2011 general elections. When, after the elections, the court did not release from prison the members of the parliament who were also Ergenekon suspects, the CHP party group as a whole decided not to take the oath in the national parliament as a protest.[63] During the crisis Kılıçdaroğlu issued a "democracy manifesto" and blamed the AKP for the predicament and asked the government to release its control on the judiciary and the legislature.[64]

Even though the AKP and the CHP are involved in debates regarding Ergenekon, the other two parties in parliament, namely the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), are less inclined to comment on the investigation. Given its pro-Kurdish policies, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) approaches all security organizations and the judiciary with suspicion. As a result, the party's stance toward the case is mixed; on the one hand, it approves of the weakening of the political power of the armed forces, however, on the other hand, it argues that the AKP is using the investigation only to eliminate its opposition.[65] The party leaders suggest that the judiciary refrains from dealing with important issues, such as exposing the unsolved murders, tortures and abductions carried out by some officers in the Kurdish dominated regions.[66] In general, the BDP believes that the investigation does not go deep enough and does not touch upon sensitive issues, such as revealing the political arm of the organization[67] or come to terms with violations of Kurdish rights.

Since the start of the investigation the second opposition party, the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) also has criticized developments in Ergenekon, however the party has denounced the case from a different angle, less frequently and in a milder fashion than the CHP. The MHP is traditionally pro-military due to its nationalist ideology and it especially values the status, honor, and reputation of the armed forces. The MHP condemns the Ergenkon case mostly from this ideological position and regards it as an unfortunate incident that would jeopardize the prestige of the military. In July 2008, the leader of the party, Devlet Bahçeli, described Ergenekon as a "systematic slander campaign" executed both within the country and outside it. Bahçeli argued that the military should not be left alone against these accusations that could wear it down and

Yaprak Gürsoy, "The Final Curtain for the Turkish Armed Forces? Civil-Military Relations in View of the 2011 General Elections," *Turkish Studies*, forthcoming; for more information on the election campaigns of the parties, see Senem Aydın-Düzgit, "No Crisis, No Change: The Third AKP Victory in the June 2011 Parliamentary Elections in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics*, DOI: 10.1080/13608746.2011.640426.

59 "Baskılar Halkı Patlatır," *Hürriyet*, 15 Feburary 2011, p.24.

60 "Kılıçdaroğlu'ndan Savcılara: Hesap Vereceksiniz," *Radikal*, 11 March 2011, www.radikal.com.tr.

61 "Üstünlerin Hukuku," *Hürriyet*, 13 Feburary 2011, p.21.

62 "Nerede Bu Örgüt Üye Olayım," *Hürriyet*, 16 February 2011, p.23.

63 "Balbay ve Haberal'a da Parlemento Yolu Kapalı," *Radikal*, 24 June 2011; "Yemin Krizi Çözüldü," *Radikal*, 11 July 2011.

64 "A Democracy Manifesto from the CHP Leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu," dated 7 July 2011, available on the CHP website at http://www.chp.org.tr/en/?manset=a-democracy-manifesto-from-chp-leader-kemal-kilicdaroglu (accessed July 30, 2011).

65 "DTP de Tepkili: Ergenekon AKP Karşıtlarına Yöneldi," *Radikal*, 14 April 2009, www.radikal.com.tr.

66 "DTP: Savcı, Ergenekon Soruşturmasını Magazinselleştiriyor," *Radikal*, 26 March 2009.

67 "BDP: Darbe Planlandıysa Siyasi Ayağı da Ortaya Çıkarılmalı," *Radikal*, 02 March 2010.

affect its resolve to combat terrorism.[68] Similarly, when commenting on another incident, Bahçeli asked the AKP not to mess with and tarnish the image of the military, while demanding a quick ruling so that those who had planned coups could be cleared out of the military and the institution could be freed from the controversies.[69]

According to the descriptive results of a survey conducted in 2010, public opinion is split in two regarding the Ergenekon case, which indicates that the attitudes of the people parallel the debates among the political parties. While 56.5 percent of the respondents believed that the government was fighting against gangs, 43.5 percent thought that the government was punishing its opponents. These results differed substantially among AKP and CHP supporters, suggesting the existence of polarization in public opinion. 87 percent of AKP voters held the former view, while 83 percent of the CHP voters agreed with the latter opinion. Among the BDP supporters, those who believed that the government was fighting against gangs was 52 percent.[70]

Such results from surveys support the argument that the discourse of the political parties with regards to the Ergenekon investigation and the debate in intellectual circles is contributing to polarization in Turkish politics. The nature of the cleavages in Turkey leads to the further hypotheses that among the AKP voters and pro-Islamists the likelihood of observing pro-Ergenekon attitudes is higher, and conversely, among CHP, MHP and BDP voters, secularists, Kurdish and Turkish nationalists the probability of discerning positive attitudes toward Ergenekon is lower.

Data and Dependent Variables

This article has two main hypotheses with regards to the Ergenekon investigation: first, it is decreasing public confidence in the military; second, it is leading to polarization in society. In order to test these hypotheses, I use the Survey on Armed Forces and Society in Turkey (SAFST) data based on interviews conducted by close to 3000 individuals in October. The main purpose of the survey was to examine the attitudes of the Turkish public on the armed forces, and therefore, it asked several questions that could be used as dependent variables, such as trust in public institutions, attitudes toward military interventions in politics, and opinions on military professionalism and conscription. The survey also posed questions measuring economic, political, sociological, ideological, ethnic, religious and conjectural factors that could be utilized as independent variables.

The sample for the survey was determined by using the method of stratified multi-stage sampling design. In the first stage, primary sampling units (PSU) were decided by the population sizes and the demographic characteristics (education level and density) of districts based on the Address-Based Population Registration System data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT). In the second stage, these PSUs were grouped into 12 different strata, in accordance with the geographical classifications used also by TURKSTAT. Finally 154 PSUs were randomly selected by a computer program and 18 individuals were surveyed per sampling unit. The survey has a 2% margin of error at a 95% confidence level.

The dependent variables to test the hypotheses are twofold. First, trust in the military is measured by the SAFST question that asked the respondents to agree, somewhat agree or disagree with the statement "I trust the military." The second dependent variable, attitudes toward the Ergenekon case, is measured by the SAFST question asking the respondents to agree, somewhat agree or disagree with the statement "I believe that the Ergenekon terrorist organization exists."

---

68 "MHP: Cumhurbaşkanı Göreve," *Radikal*, 04 July 2008, www.radikal.com.tr

69 "Darbe Heveslisi Kim Varsa TSK'dan Temizlensin," *Radikal*, 07 August 2011, www.radikal.com.tr.

70 Bekir Ağırdır, *Polarization in Politics and the Society* (Istanbul: Konda, 2010).

The descriptive statistics of the dependent variables are given in tables 2 and 3. The SAFST measured similar levels of trust in the Turkish military with the Eurobarometer results. While close to 67 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "I trust the military," 15 percent disagreed with the same statement. The controversies over Ergenekon are reflected in the public's opinion toward the case. While close to half of the respondents (49 percent) agreed that the Ergenekon terrorist organization exists, a significant number disagreed and asserted that they believed that such an organization did not exist. At first glance, this result implies that some of the tensions identified above have affected and divided the general public's opinion about Ergenekon.

Table 2. Trust in the Turkish Military

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Disagree	406	14.79
Somewhat Agree	505	18.39
Agree	1,835	66.82
TOTAL	2,746	100.00

Table 3. Belief in the Existence of Ergenekon

	Number of Respondents	Percent
Disagree	871	33.59
Somewhat Agree	461	17.78
Agree	1,261	48.63
TOTAL	2,593	100.00

Unlike some other studies, such as the World Values Survey (WVS), the SAFST questionnaire used a three-level Likert scale when measuring the dependent variables and some of the independent variables.[71] The first draft of the survey questions, indeed, was based on a five level Likert scale, similar to the WVS. These questions were then tested in four neighborhoods in Istanbul and Ankara and in two neighborhoods in Diyarbakır, with the direct participation of the researchers of the project. The tests of the draft survey indicated that most of the respondents could not utilize the five-level scale and instead answered the questions in three levels, such as "yes," "no" or "a little bit." Taking this experience into consideration, it was decided that a three-level scale would be a better option. Respondents who did not provide answers or declared that they "did not know" were recorded as missing values. Respondents who declared that they "somewhat disagreed" or "neither agreed nor disagreed" were recorded as "somewhat agreed."

Thus, in the end, an ordinal categorical scale was used to measure the dependent variables, with the assumption that the categories can be ordered but the distances between them are not equal. One of the most appropriate methods to be used for this type of dependent variable is ordinal logistic regression, which was utilized in this paper.[72] In each of the two models that were used to analyze trust in the military and attitudes toward the Ergenekon case, collinearity was checked and in both models the variance inflation factors (VIF) and the tolerance values indicated that collinearity was not a problem.

71 See Appendix for the questions from the survey that were used to operationalize the independent variables.

72 J. Scott Long, *Regression Models for Categorical and Limited Dependent Variables* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1997), pp.114-6; Scott Menard, *Applied Logistic Regression Analysis* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).

Analysis and Findings

Table 4 presents an overview of the demographic, political and ideological factors that have a statistical impact on trust in the military. The independent variables of the model were chosen based on the hypotheses derived from previous studies that have looked into the factors that influence confidence in the military. The following conclusions can be reached from the model.

(1) As expected, demographically, trust in the military decreases as education levels increase. There are also interesting findings with regards to income levels, since trust in the military decreases among affluent individuals, which is an outcome that was not observed in earlier analyses of trust in institutions. Moreover, contrary to previous studies, neither age nor gender seems to have a significant impact on confidence in the military and there is no significant difference in attitudes toward the military among rural and urban areas.

(2) In terms of party association, the armed forces seem to be more popular among those who voted for the Republican People's Party (CHP) and the National Action Party (MHP) in the 2011 general elections. Voting for the ruling AKP does not have a significant impact on trust in the military. This result somewhat contradicts the results of a pervious study conducted by Sarıgil, who found out that among individuals who voted for the pro-Islamist party, the likelihood of observing confidence in the armed forces was lower.[73] Yet, the WVS data that was used in Sarıgil's study was collected in the year 2000, before the AKP was founded. Thus, the study measured the negative association between Virtue Party (FP) voters and trust in the military. Given that references to Islam in the AKP are less pronounced than they were in the FP, the results do not seem to necessarily oppose this previous finding.

(3) As hypothesized, among those who identify themselves as Turkish nationalists, trust in the military is higher. An unexpected result, however, is evident among those who identify themselves as religious. While Sarıgil's study conducted by data from 2000 indicated that religious individuals tended to have higher levels of confidence in the military, there is no significant association between the two variables in the analysis derived from the SAFST data.

(4) Support for democracy is positively related with confidence in the military. Both the studies of Tessler and Altınoğlu and Sarıgil explain this somewhat paradoxical finding by the guardian role the armed forces have assumed for themselves.[74] In addition, as explained above, the Turkish public's understanding of "democracy" is different from the theoretical description of a consolidated democracy, where political liberties are also seen as an essential component of a democratic regime. Seen from this perspective, it is no surprise that trust in parliament is also positively associated with trust in the armed forces.

(5) One final expected result is the negative association between pro-Kurdish voters and trust in the military. Confidence in the armed forces is lower among those who have voted for the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP). This is an anticipated finding, since the military has viewed Kurdish separatism as a major internal threat and the armed forces have been the primary institution that has fought against Kurdish terrorism.

---

73 Sarıgil, "Deconstructing the Turkish Military's Popularity," pp.717-9.

74 Ibid., 719, Tessler and Altınoğlu, "Political Culture in Turkey," p.35.

Table 4. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis of Trust in the Turkish Military

Predictors	**Coefficient (standard errors)**
Demographic Variables:	
Age	-0.00763
	(0.00470)
Education	-0.0641***
	(0.0163)
Place of residence	-0.0385
	(0.0724)
Gender	-0.270
	(0.196)
Income	-0.0887**
	(0.0435)
Military Service	-0.157
	(0.199)
Party Vote in the 2011 National Elections:	
Justice and Development Party (AKP)	-0.234
	(0.292)
Republican People's Party (CHP)	0.568*
	(0.320)
Nationalist Action Party (MHP)	0.885***
	(0.341)
Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	-1.130***
	(0.387)
Leftist	0.0116
	(0.199)
Nationalist	0.284***
	(0.0871)
Trust in parliament	1.042***
	(0.0833)
Support for democracy	0.794***
	(0.0833)
Religiosity	0.0892
	(0.0969)
Belief in the existence of Ergenekon	-0.450***
	(0.0753)
τ_1	-0.424
	(0.486)
τ_2	0.961**
	(0.487)
Observations	1,809
LR χ^2 (16)	401,54
Prob > χ^2	0.0000
Pseudo R^2	0.1304

Notes: ***p>0.01, **p>0.5, *p>0.1

(6) For the purposes of this paper, an interesting finding is the impact of the "belief in the Ergenekon case" on military trust. Holding important predictors including party vote in the 2011 elections and demographic variables (such as age, education, place of residence, gender, and income) constant, it is possible to see that there is a strong association between trust in the military and attitudes toward the Ergenekon case. Indeed, among those who believe that the Ergenekon organization exists, there are significantly lower levels of trust in the armed forces. Even though the SAFST was conducted in 2011 and cannot provide a comparison with previous years, this can explain the relative drop in army trust after 2008 observed in the Eurobarometer surveys.

Table 5 provides an analysis of belief in the existence of the Ergenekon terrorist organization by using the ordinal logistic regression model. The results of the model suggest that there is polarization among the public on Ergenekon.

(1) The stance of the political parties toward the Ergenekon trials since the investigation began in 2007 and their 2011 election campaigns are reflected in the opinions of the voters. People who voted for the ruling AKP in 2011 are more likely to have positive attitudes toward the investigation. Being an AKP voter increases the likelihood of being convinced that the terrorist organization is in fact a reality, holding all other variables constant. The exact opposite conclusion can be made with regards to the CHP electorate. Casting a ballot for the CHP in the 2011 elections decreases the likelihood of believing in the Ergenekon organization. This result suggests that the CHP supporters have negative perceptions of the trials and think that the accusations rest on fabricated evidence. The model also shows that those who have a leftist ideology are less likely to have a positive perception on trials than others.[75] Since voting for the other opposition parties, the MHP and the BDP, do not have a statistically significant effect on attitudes toward the case, the analysis implies that polarization on Ergenekon is especially acute among the ruling party and its main opposition CHP.

75 A significant number of the respondents claimed that they did not identify with any of the ideologies on the left-right spectrum (993 out of 2773), making it impractical to use the whole scale as a predictor variable. In any case, no significant results were observed when both the whole scale and "right," "center," and "no ideology" categories were run separately.

Table 5. Ordinal Logistic Regression Analysis of Belief in the Existence of the Ergenekon Organization

Predictors	Coefficient (standard errors)
Demographic Variables:	
Age	0.0392
	(0.0204)
Age^2	-0.000491**
	(0.000232)
Education	-0.0392**
	(0.058)
Place of residence	0.0270
	(0.0644)
Gender	-0.438***
	(0.105)
Income	-0.0361
	(0.0451)
Party Vote in the 2011 National Elections:	
Justice and Development Party (AKP)	-0.606**
	(0.274)
Republican People's Party (CHP)	0.771**
	(0.300)
Nationalist Action Party (MHP)	0.128
	(0.305)
Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)	0.404
	(0.388)
Leftist	-0.329*
	(0.174)
Trust in police	0.284***
	(0.0713)
Ethnicity and Nationalism:	
Turkish nationalism	-0.126
	(0.895)
Kurdish ethnicity	0.102
	(0.207)
Position on Kurdish language rights	-0.0411
	(0.0629)
Secularism and Religiosity:	
Religiosity	0.308***
	(0.878)
Position on public officials wearing headscarves	0.311***
	(0.676)
Position on primary and middle school	0.201***
children wearing headscarves	(0.0686)
Position on legal system and laws being based on religious rules	0.159**
	(0.0695)
τ_1	1.426**
	(0.570)
τ_2	2.340***
	(0.572)
Observations	1,857
LR χ^2 (19)	567,89
Prob > χ^2	0.0000
Pseudo R^2	0.1523

Notes: ***p>0.01, **p>0.5, *p>0.1

(2) Another salient finding is that trust in the police increases the likelihood of belief in Ergenekon. This is perhaps expected since the police forces play an important role in exposing the coup plots, carrying out the investigation, and arresting the suspects. Those who trust the police would also think that Ergenekon is real and that the security forces are only doing their jobs uncovering a terrorist organization. The significance of trust in the police takes on a new meaning, however, once it is considered that according to some of the critiques the police forces are controlled by the ruling party and a religious organization, and that they are deliberately tarnishing the image of the military. Indeed, the issue of whether or not the police are trustworthy is at the center of the debate on Ergenekon. Thus, the results from the SAFST demonstrate that this dispute has its repercussions in public opinion as well, leading to a divergence of attitude toward the investigation among those who hold different perspectives on the police.

(3) As explained in the above paragraphs, opinions regarding secularism are one of the main political cleavages in Turkey. Table 5 shows that polarization on Ergenekon runs parallel to this cleavage. Even though religiosity does not dictate that an individual would also have anti-secular opinions, nevertheless it is important to note that religiosity changes opinions on the court case. Among those individuals that are more religious, belief in the existence of Ergenekon is higher. In order to measure the attitudes of secularist and relatively non-secularist individuals, three predictor variables were taken into account: (a) Position on judges, prosecutors, teachers and police officers wearing headscarves; (b) Position on primary and middle school children wearing headscarves in school; and (c) Position on the legal system and laws being based on religious rules. Table 5 shows that all of the predictor variables had significant influence over attitudes toward Ergenekon. Agreeing to these positions increase the likelihood of believing in the existence of the terrorist organization. Thus, while secularist individuals tend to regard the accusations of coup plots as a sham, non-secularist people have positive opinions toward the trials. It is clear from these results that the Ergenekon investigation is increasing polarization along the secularist versus pro-Islamist cleavage.

(4) The same conclusion, however, does not hold with regards to ethnic cleavage. It is not possible to deduce statistically significant changes in attitudes toward Ergenekon either among those who identify themselves as ethnically Kurdish or among those who have voted for the pro-Kurdish BDP. Moreover, promoting Kurdish cultural rights, such as positive stances toward education in Kurdish, does not necessarily have an influence on point of view about the investigation. This result indicates that the ambiguous attitude of the BDP toward the case is also reflected among its voters. Similarly, Turkish nationalism does not seem to be associated with positive or negative opinions toward the case. As explained above, the MHP criticizes the case more mildly than the CHP and in a manner stressing the honor and prestige of the armed forces. It seems that the party's moderate critiques are mimicked by its support base. Thus, despite the fact that ethnic politics in Turkey is closely related to issues involving the military and the role of the armed forces in politics and society, the Ergenekon investigation does not seem to deepen the Turkish versus Kurdish cleavage.

(5) Apart from political predictors, several control variables that were used in the model led to important results that are worth mentioning. Demographically, age, education and

gender have an impact on attitudes toward Ergenekon, whereas place of residence and income do not. More specifically, holding all other variables constant, with each additional 10 years of age, belief in Ergenekon is expected to increase by 0.4 points although the positive effect of age decreases after around 40 years, as the age^2 variable suggests. Education is also related to attitudes toward Ergenekon: as the years of education of individuals increase, belief in the existence of the terrorist organization is also expected to increase. Finally, women tend to be more skeptical towards the case than men.

Conclusion

What are the consequences of the Ergenekon investigation for Turkish democracy? This paper attempted to find an answer to this question. The first conclusion is that the operation and trials can be seen as favorable developments that would lead to further democratization. There is evidence suggesting that the Ergenekon investigation is leading to lower levels of trust in the Turkish military among the public. Such decrease in public confidence in the military could lead to democratization for two reasons. First, a military stripped of its popularity might find it more difficult to intervene in politics and resist reforms that would curtail its political powers. Indeed, in practice, the coup investigations have strengthened the AKP government vis-à-vis the military and led to the second-wave reforms in civil-military relations in 2010, after the first wave that started in 1999.[76] Second, the fact that suspected individuals are accused of coup plots might lead to the conclusion that non-democratic individuals are sorted out of the armed forces and that the institution behaviorally and attitudinally supports democracy, substantially decreasing the likelihood of staging coups in the future and exercising tutelary powers with threats of such possible interventions. The same argument can be made for the Turkish public in general, as well. Decreases in public trust in the military might go hand in hand with attitudinal and cultural changes in society. Increasing numbers of "true democrats" would support not only holding regular elections, but also the indispensable norms of liberal democracy, such as individual freedoms.

Despite these hopeful conclusions with regards to the effects of the Ergenekon operation on democracy, the analysis of the SAFST data has also shown that the investigation leads to polarization in Turkey. Since the 1990s, it is possible to observe a split among political party voters, between pro-Islamists and seculars, and Turkish and Kurdish nationalists. Attitudes toward the Ergenekon investigation parallel the former two cleavages. Given the different discourses of the party leaders on the trials, it is clear that the Ergenekon case is deepening the cleavage among AKP and CHP voters and between the pro-Islamists and seculars. This type of polarization is not conducive to democratic consolidation for two reasons. First, it makes it more difficult for elites and public to come together, agree on the basic rules of the game and provide attitudinal support for democracy. Second, essential facilitators of democracy, mutual trust among significant groups in society and belief that the other group is also loyal to the regime are damaged because of polarization. These mutual suspicions, in turn, lead to anti-democratic activities, such as using repression and looking for exit options.

The positive findings associated with Ergenekon disappear once the negative consequences of the case are analyzed. The conclusion we can reach five years after the start of the Ergenekon operation is that the case has been a double-edged sword for Turkish democracy. It cuts deep into the already existing ruptures of Turkish politics, while it heals other past injuries. It remains to be seen whether Turkish democracy will have been fatally wounded or will have continued its disabled survival after the courts make their final decisions and the Ergenekon trial comes to an end for good.

---

76 Gürsoy, "The Impact of EU-Driven Reforms," pp.297-8.

APPENDIX 1
Sample

Table 1. The cities in which the survey was conducted

	12 Regions	*Cities*
1	Istanbul	Istanbul
2	Western Marmara	Tekirdağ, Balıkesir
3	Aegean	İzmir, Manisa, Denizli
4	Eastern Marmara	Bursa, Eskişehir, Kocaeli, Sakarya
5	Western Anatolia	Ankara, Konya
6	Mediterranean	Antalya, Adana, Mersin
7	Central Anatolia	Kayseri, Nevşehir, Sivas
8	Western Black Sea	Samsun, Bartın
9	Eastern Black Sea	Trabzon, Ordu
10	North-eastern Anatolia	Kars
11	Central-eastern Anatolia	Malatya, Van
12	South-eastern Anatolia	Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa

APPENDIX 2
Survey Questions and Coding

Variables	*Survey question numbers, questions and coding*	*Codes used in the model*
Gender	Q1. The gender of the respondent	Female: 1 Male: 0
Age	Q2. How old are you?	Continuous from 17 to 86[77]
Education	Q3. What is your educational status, in other words what is the level of school you last finished?	Illiterate: 0 Literate with no diploma: 1 Primary school graduate: 5 Middle school graduate: 8 High school graduate: 11 University graduate: 15 Graduate school/doctorate: 17
Military service	Q5. Which year, which city and in which position did you do your military service?	Those who did military service: 1 Others: 0
Justice and Development Party (AKP)	Q12. Who, which party did you vote for in the 12 June general deputyship elections?	Dummy variables were created for the AKP, CHP, MHP and BDP voters
Leftist	Q14. In terms of politics, there has been a right-left-center tradition in Turkey for many years. Where would you identify yourself in terms of political outlook? Left; Center-left; Center; Center-right; Right; None	Left or center-left: 1 Others: 0
Turkish nationalism	Q15. What is the extent to which you would describe yourself as a Turkish nationalist? Very; A little; None	Very: 2 A little: 1 None: 0
Position on public official wearing headscarves	Q17. Women who work as judges, prosecutors, teachers, police etc. can cover their heads when they are on their jobs.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Position on primary and middle school children wearing headscarves	Q18. Female students attending primary and middle school can cover their heads during class.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Position on legal system and laws being based on religious rules	Q19. The legal system and laws would be based on religious rules.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0

77 Even though the respondents must have been 18 years old or older, in the final survey data, there were two respondents, who were aged 17.

Position on Kurdish language rights	Q20. The education rights of the Kurds in their own language should be accepted.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0[78]
Belief in the existence of Ergenekon	Q23. I believe that the Ergenekon terrorist organization exists.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Trust in parliament	Q25. I trust parliament.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Trust in the military	Q26. I trust the military.[79]	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Trust in the police	Q27. I trust police officers.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Support for democracy	Q28. Under every circumstance and condition, the country should be governed by democracy.	Agree: 2 Somewhat agree: 1 Disagree: 0
Kurdish ethnicity	Q48. All of us are Turkish citizens, but we can be from different ethnic roots. How would you feel or identify yourself in terms of ethnic roots?	Kurd: 1 Others: 0
Income	Q50. This is very important for our survey, what is the monthly total income of the people who live at your home? Including everybody's every type of earning, how many liras enter your home on average each month?	in 1000 TL[80]
Religiosity	Q52. In the month of Ramadan, do you fast regularly? I fast regularly; I fast partially; I do not fast; I cannot fast (because of health reasons, due to the respondent's religion)	I fast regularly: 2 I fast partially: 1 I do not fast: 0
Place of residence	Where the interview was conducted[81] Village; Town; Metropolis	Metropolitan region: 2 Town: 1 Village: 0

78 The respondents were given the following instruction for the questions 16 to 42: "Now I am going to read you a series of sentences. Can you indicate your opinions on these questions as "I agree," "I somewhat agree," and "I disagree?"

79 Note that throughout the survey the term "asker" was used in Turkish. Even though the term could be translated as "soldier" in English, it can also mean the "military" in colloquial language, which is why this term was preferred in the survey questions.

80 There were 13 respondents who declared that their household income was 0TL and one respondent who declared 4TL. The rest of the respondents stated various numbers ranging from 100TL to 15000TL.

81 There was no question on the survey, but poll takers noted the addresses of the respondents.

İstanbul Bilgi University, European Institute

Kurtuluş Deresi Cad. Yahya Köprüsü Sk. No: 1
34440 Dolapdere / İstanbul, Turkey
Phone: +90 212 311 50 00 • Fax: +90 212 250 87 48
e-mail: europe@bilgi.edu.tr • http://eu.bilgi.edu.tr

İstanbul Bilgi University
European Institute Working Paper Series

1.	EU/1/2009	Anbarcı, Nejat, Hasan Kirmanoğlu, Mehmet A. Ulubaşoğlu. Why is the support for extreme right higher in more open societies?
2.	EU/2/2010	Öniş, Ziya, Contesting for the "Center": Domestic Politics, Identity Conflicts and the Controversy Over EU Membership in Turkey
3.	EU/3/2010	Dramais, Andre, Is Globalisation Increasing the Depth of Growth Recession?
4.	EU/4/2011	Kaya, Ayhan, Ayşe Tecmen, The Role of Common Cultural Heritage in External Promotion of Modern Turkey: Yunus Emre Cultural Centres
5.	EU/5/2012	Gürsoy, Yaprak, Turkish Public Attitudes toward the Military and Ergenekon: Consequences for the Consolidation of Democracy

Orders can be placed:

İstanbul Bilgi University, European Institute, Dolapdere Campus
Kurtuluş Deresi Cad. Yahya Köprüsü Sk. No: 1
34440 Dolapdere / İstanbul, Turkey