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Stalemate and Stagnation in Turkish Democratization: The Role of Civil Society and Political Parties

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ABSTRACT *Both civil society organizations (CSOs) and political parties are expected to be vital actors in democratic societies, yet the ideal relationship between the two types of groups has not been fully explored. This article analyses how the interaction between CSOs and political parties has affected democratic consolidation in contemporary Turkey. Through personal interviews with leaders of both types of groups, the study finds that traditional power relations have shifted to include a greater number of political actors. Islamists, who were previously peripheral in politics, have joined the traditionally dominant secular nationalists at the ‘centre’ of political power. However, instead of increased pluralism, the study finds Turkish society now polarized along secularist/Islamist lines, both in political parties and among CSOs. While restrictions against non-governmental organizations have been lifted in recent years and the number of groups has grown, most are still viewed as ‘arms’ of political parties, lacking an independent voice and political power. These findings suggest that the civil society sector in Turkey is underdeveloped and unable to contribute positively to the democratization process.*

KEY WORDS: Turkey, Islam, democratization, civil society, political parties, polarization

While there are many requisites of democratic consolidation, there is broad consensus that a strong civil society and institutionalized parties are two necessary components of healthy, functioning democracies (Diamond, 1994; Linz & Stepan, 1996; Mainwaring & Scully, 1995). Independent associations are expected to communicate the interests of society and help to influence government decision-making. Political parties are also expected to aggregate and convey citizens’ interests in democracies and reflect salient social cleavages in society (Bartolini & Mair, 2001; Sartori, 1976). Yet the literatures on political parties and civil society fail to clearly articulate what an ideal relationship

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between the two arenas would look like in a consolidated democracy and how the two types of social organizations might work together to help strengthen democracy.

In this study, we address this gap in the literature by outlining the key functions of civil society in relation to political parties in democratic societies. We study contemporary Turkey to analyse how a country that is currently engaged in democratic consolidation is negotiating the relationship between civil society and political parties. Examining Turkey in this context is instructive for several reasons. First, the country has held multiple rounds of free and fair elections and is now engaged in the consolidation process. Second, the country is majority Muslim, yet it is also a candidate for the European Union (EU), placing it on the threshold between Western democracies and the Muslim world. Finally, like many other democracies, it faces the problem of societal fragmentation, with major splits occurring along Islamist/secularist and ethnic and religious minority/majority lines. Yet, ethnic and religious divisions need not impede democratic consolidation. We hypothesize that these problems become an impediment to consolidation when severe societal fragmentation translates into institutional polarization among political parties, and a weak civil society is ineffective in countering polarization.

During Turkey's democratic transition, political parties were the dominant civilian actors challenging the strong state (Angrist, 2004). In the more recent process of democratic consolidation, Turkey has been able to liberalize by breaking down the centre-periphery lines that have been used to describe politics in the country for many decades (Mardin, 1973; Onar, 2007). Islamists—who used to be confined to the periphery—are competing through party politics with secular nationalists for control of the political centre. During this process, a weak civil society has been unable to break away from the country's polarized partisan structure. While dispersion of power is a desirable quality in a democracy, we find that the interests that are successfully incorporated into the power centre are the ones who ally with the strong leadership-driven parties that are highly polarized between Islamists and secularists. Moreover, competition and greater diversity in political society in Turkey are not leading to a full democratic consolidation. Civil society remains the weaker political actor and significant segments of the population—such as liberals and minorities¹—continue to be left out of the political process. The polarization of parties at the power centre along a narrow secularist-Islamist axis fails to meet the complex and diverse economic and social needs of Turkish citizens. At the same time, because civil society is weak, it is unable to fully represent the vast diversity of Turkish society. As a result, the incomplete development of civil society under a strong party-dominant democratization process leads to incomplete consolidation.

We argue that the Turkish case can help scholars understand the larger question of how countries that are fragmented along ethnic, nationalist, linguistic, and religious lines manage the process of democratic consolidation. Countries as diverse as Bolivia, Ukraine, and the Palestinian territories face similar troubles with democratization (Jamal, 2007; Kuzio, 2007; Mainwaring, 2006). In these and other societies, the inability of polarized parties and civil society to mitigate societal divisions is an important factor that inhibits achieving democratic compromise. Thus, Turkey is not a unique case, but rather one that embodies the institutional problems that many other new democracies face.

After discussing the role that civil society organizations (CSOs) and political parties play in democratic consolidation more generally, we detail the process in the Turkish context, tracing historical precedents for the current situation. We then present evidence from our research on party and CSO documentation, policy papers, media archives,

legal documents, and interviews we conducted with civic and political leaders in Turkey in 2008–2009. We conclude with an assessment of the status of the civil society sector in Turkey and its effect on prospects for further democratic consolidation.

Civil Society, Parties, and Democratic Consolidation

Debates remain in the literature regarding the role of civil society and parties in democratic transitions. For example, in several Third Wave democracies, civil society groups were instrumental in helping to overthrow authoritarian regimes and install democratic institutions (Diamond, 1994, p. 5). On the other hand, civil society may be inconsequential in situations of elite-pacted transitions, as in the Turkish case (Rustow, 1970, p. 362; Schneider & Schmitter, 2004). In other countries, political parties have been important in bringing about democratization (Oxhorn, 1995). While the actors involved in *transitions* to democracy may vary, much of the literature agrees that *consolidation* of democracy is not possible without a strong and independent civil society and representative institutionalized parties. Yet, the existing literature lacks attention to civil society's *relations with* political parties in the consolidation of democracies. In this section, we review the way in which civil society and political parties are expected to contribute to the consolidation of democracy and discuss how developments in Turkey relate to these issues.

In countries transitioning away from authoritarian regimes, we expect civilian party politics to take the place of the state in policy-making. As parties gain power, several characteristics of the party system need to be analysed to understand their contribution to democratization. Representative political parties can help overcome societal divisions, while strong partisan powers may be associated with low-quality representation (Coppedge, 2001; Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Stability and levels of polarization among the political parties also impact democratic performance (Sartori, 1976, pp. 575–590). More problematic is the phenomenon of strong personalist leaders as the driving force in party politics, as opposed to programmatic party platforms (Huntington, 1968, pp. 397–461).

Civil society remains a debated concept. In this paper, we follow the definition of civil society as 'that arena of the polity where self-organizing groups, movements, and individuals, relatively autonomous from the state, attempt to articulate values, create associations and solidarities, and advance their interests' (Linz & Stepan, 1996, p. 7). Civil society is composed of actors who are autonomous from the government, but serve a public and political function by building social capital, trust, and raising citizen awareness. Putnam explains how social capital—which is characterized by norms of reciprocity and networks of civic engagement—helps 'make democracy work' by solving collective action problems in the short term as well as building the societal conditions necessary for sustained cooperation over time (Putnam, 1993). Cooperative norms and networks can also help to build societies that are stable and perform well by making citizens more capable of demanding better governance. As a result, CSOs should help overcome historical divisions and 'draw together new constituencies that cut across longstanding regional, religious, ethnic, or partisan cleavages' (Diamond, 1994, p. 9).

The issue focus of CSOs influences how effective they are in promoting democratic consolidation. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with a universalistic approach to rights contribute to building more democratic public participation (Ekiert & Grzymala-Busse, 2007, pp. 29–30). In contrast, if the CSOs are organized to represent the interests

of particular ethnic, religious, or linguistic groups, then this leads to a deepening of divisions in societies that are already fragmented (Schmitter, 1997, p. 248).

While a large portion of the literature focusing on the Western world has presented evidence of the positive impacts of civic participation on democracy, case study research from other regions suggests that civil society should not always be considered an undisputed good, especially in highly polarized and fragmented societies. In much of the Middle East, for example, when autocratic states allow space for liberalization, the increase in participation by civil society can lead to increased participation by illiberal forces (Brumberg, 2002). For example, Islamist organizations in Egypt were responsible for incubating illiberal radicalism, which pushed the regime to revert to Islamist social policies rather than greater democratization (Berman, 2003). The Islamist versus secular polarization we describe in Turkey can also be found in Morocco, Algeria, Malaysia, and the Palestinian Territories. Jamal (2007) demonstrates how civic associations reproduce elements of the polarized political context in the West Bank and Gaza. She finds that in authoritarian states, CSOs have the potential to replicate state-centralized and patron–clientelistic tendencies. In the Palestinian territories, civil society has aligned along the lines of the political polarization between pro- and anti-Palestinian National Authority groups (Jamal, 2007, pp. 50–76). The upheavals in the Arab world in 2011 have brought renewed focus to the role of CSOs in the democratization process. While religious, universalist, liberal, and secular organizations have been involved in the protests, it is still too early to judge the future success of these various groups in participating and cooperating in democratic institutionalization.

In Eastern European countries, civil society played an important role in initiating democratic transition, yet as leaders of civil society, movements became part of the political elite, civic organizations lost their effectiveness (Kaldor & Vejvoda, 1997; Nelson, 1996; Rupnik, 1999). The current position of civil society in Eastern Europe has varied, with communist parties playing an important role in determining levels of consolidation and the status of CSOs (Petrova, 2007). Across the democratizing world, civil society groups continue to struggle to define their role in social and political life, and their position in politics in relation to parties has a profound impact on this role. Turkey is no exception.

While scholars have explored how the relationship between CSOs and a strong state inhibits democratization (Carbone, 2005; Obadare, 2005), few study how the relationship between civic organizations and *political parties* affects the process of democratic consolidation (for an exception, see Hochstetler & Friedman, 2008). It is often effective for associations to be affiliated with political parties; yet, the relationship can also diminish their public legitimacy, particularly when such affiliations are not publicly acknowledged (Brysk, 2000). As Diamond (1994) argues, '[o]rganizations and networks in civil society may form alliances with parties, but if they become captured by parties, or hegemonic within them, they thereby move their primary locus of activity to political society and lose much of their ability to perform certain unique mediating and democracy building functions' (p. 7). Associations can cooperate with parties while maintaining their independence, and often do so as a result of ideological overlaps and similarities in policy goals.

The relationship between CSOs and political parties often depends on the political context. CSOs can function as interest groups lobbying political parties to push policy demands. They can provide resources to parties such as information, exposure, and voter mobilization, and monitor parties, holding them accountable to their policy platforms by disseminating information about politicians, legislative actions, or voting

records. CSOs can also help train party members by holding conferences or seminars on policy areas within their expertise or by organizing meetings or debates to help disseminate information about issues to the public. All these functions should help contribute to democratic consolidation in contexts containing large numbers of independent CSOs targeting a functioning institutionalized party system. Based on these expectations set by the literature, we next explore how the Turkish case helps to illuminate the way that the political party–civil society relationship affects the progress of democratic consolidation.

Turkish Civil Society

State intervention in the early years of democratic transition led to the uneven development of civil society in Turkey. More recently, reforms have allowed for the growth of the civil society sector. Yet, because Turkish politics remains dominated by strong and polarized parties, CSOs have had little success in affecting public policy. Those organizations that have been influential are the ones that adopt narrow issue agendas that replicate those of the dominant parties. This leaves those groups with universalist goals and that represent marginalized social groups with little power to influence politics.

Historically, the development of organizations that serve as intermediaries between private individuals and the state in Turkey was stifled by the nation-building goals of the strong state apparatus (Erdoğan Tosun, 2001; Toprak, 1996). While all transitions to democracy involve institutionalization, Valenzuela (1992) has noted that sometimes this can take a ‘perverse’ form, destabilizing democratic processes and delaying consolidation. Unelected officials can undermine the authority of government by taking away its power on certain issues or by setting up electoral institutions that limit representation. In Turkey, several military interventions interrupted the move towards democratization, with each affecting civil society development negatively (Turan, 1998). The secular nationalist military, bureaucracy, and judiciary represented the core of the strong state apparatus—traditionally characterized by Mardin as the ‘centre’ of Turkish politics (Mardin, 1973). Civil society groups that tried to challenge the central state authority faced marginalization into the periphery of power and suppression by state authorities.

As a result of this traditional centre-periphery arrangement, civic activity organized around pro- and anti-statist lines. This type of development was especially obvious during the 1970s when groups from different ideological backgrounds challenged the state authority. As a result, the 1980 military coup was especially harsh in its treatment of civil society, closing labour unions, CSOs, and all political parties and imposing restrictions on political affiliation among civil servants. The 1982 constitution was written based on the military’s perception that ‘individual liberties lead to anarchy’ (Erdoğan Tosun, 2001, p. 305). Laws placed state interests above individual rights and made it difficult to found and operate associations. Only those organizations that were deemed to be regime-friendly chambers, professional, and businessman’s organizations were allowed to continue operations (Erdoğan Tosun, 2001, p. 302).

The military did not only use repression to eliminate the opposition it viewed as coming from the left. The ‘Turkish-Islamic Synthesis’ was an unwritten state policy intended to unify the periphery and help the coup government consolidate its power (Toprak, 1990; Yavuz, 1997). In response to the leftist resistance movement in poor communities, the policy was intended to introduce Islam as a part of the Turkish nationalist identity. It also allowed for the increased activity of certain Islamist CSOs throughout the 1980s.

The freedom given to Islamists by the military later had the unintended consequence of challenging the traditional centre of power, which included the secularist elites, Kemalist nationalists, and the military establishment itself.

Turkey transitioned to electoral democracy in 1983, and has since been working on strengthening institutions and increasing representation. In the last three decades, there has been a marked decline in state power. This is partially due to the EU harmonization and accession process and Turkey's integration into the global economy, and cannot be directly attributed to the activities of civil society. Since the mid-1990s, especially during the EU harmonization and accession process, there has been a decline in state power, with changes to the laws governing civil society leading to an opening for civic participation. Several legal reforms extended freedom of association and organization to CSOs.

In this study, we focus on *voluntary CSOs*.² *Foundations* are privately funded philanthropic organizations, while *associations* are voluntary membership-based organizations formed in the pursuit of a common interest. We identify as *Islamist* those organizations (parties and CSOs) that find the separation of Islam from the political system to be artificial and unnecessary, and seek to incorporate Islamic values, ideals, and modes of organization into contemporary state structures. We identify as *secularist* those organizations that work under the general principles of laicism as understood by Kemalist principles (Tepe, 2008). Here we should clarify that while there are other organizations that are secular and universalist in their approach, we identify as secularist those organizations that are polarized from the Islamist groups and their ideology.³ From our archival research, we selected those organizations whose campaigns, leadership and/or members question the legitimacy of the Islamist view in the political sphere in Turkey.

Despite changes in legal codes governing associations and foundations, CSOs in Turkey remain weak participants in the political process while parties remain the dominant actors. The number of associations and foundations has increased over the years reaching a record 85,000 by 2006. Yet, per capita membership to and hourly voluntarism in associations by Turkish citizens are among the lowest in new democracies (Bikmen & Meydancıoğlu, 2006, p. 45). A great majority of organizations do not focus on the broader questions of democratization, human rights, or economic issues, but exist for the purposes of charity, meeting local needs of worship, and personal networking. These CSOs tend to be dominated by male elites and are mainly located in large urban areas (Bikmen & Meydancıoğlu, 2006, p. 45). Many organizations lack funding and capacity-building and coalition-building skills. Keyman and İcduygu (2003, pp. 232–33) argue that in Turkey, a pluralist vision of civil society has been 'abused' by ethnic and religious fundamentalists in order to achieve 'their own communitarian strategies'. Organizations committed to pursuing universalist goals have remained weak, while narrow issue-based groups and those with partisan appeal are the ones that have been more visible and effective.

Party Politics and Civil Society in Turkey

Symptomatic of problems pointed out in the literature, party politics in Turkey remains clientelistic and polarized; moreover, party organizations are dominated by strong leaders and lack internal democracy.⁴ Thus, parties have been serving to reinforce societal divisions rather than overcome them. During the 1990s when civil society was starting to flourish, parties did not change their traditional approach to society. 'For their part, the

political elite remained as unresponsive to civil society as the state elite concerning the general “policies” they pursued. Instead, in order to garner votes they formed links with leading economic interest group associations and some key persons such as local notables and others who could mobilize votes for them’ (Heper & Keyman, 1998, p. 261). This corresponds to what Carbone (2005) labels the ‘hard state-weak civil society’ model, where the state promotes social and economic development, but is not as concerned with promoting democracy or freedom of association. Thus, while there was a transition in the power structure, this transition was not dominated by social transformation through a strong civil society, but rather a power struggle between parties and the state.

The parties began to suffer from fragmentation, volatility, and ideological polarization in the 1970s. These problems peaked in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Turkish parties have always been elite-based and electorally focused organizations that depend on patronage ties, rather than mass-based parties that recruit, mobilize, and organize different social groups (Özbudun, 2001, p. 260). As a result, parties were unable to reform with the changing needs of their constituents, creating a system in which there are only a few political parties that pass the 10% vote threshold required to enter into parliament. After the 1980 coup, parties no longer cut across societal cleavages. The parties that are able to pass the parliamentary threshold make up the current ‘centre’ of Turkish politics, which is comprised of competing and polarized Islamist and secularist parties on each side of the spectrum with no traditional social democratic alternative (Öniş, 2007). The Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, AKP) and the Nationalist Action Party (*Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi*, MHP) represent the Islamists and the opposition Republican People’s Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP), the secularists. These three political parties have dominated the Turkish political sphere in the last three elections.

In relation to these dominant and polarized political parties, civil society occupies a weak position, thus creating incentives for civil society to develop narrow issue-based platforms that appeal to specific party interests. Those organizations that have broader and more universalistic goals have difficulties finding allies among political parties—and, consequently, a voice in the political arena. Although in line with Dahl’s (1971) criteria for democracy, a new community of organizations developed independently of Turkish *state* influence, the inability of these organizations to develop independently of *party* influence reduces their effect on democratic consolidation. This would not pose a problem for consolidation in a society where there are crosscutting cleavages represented by broad-based parties. Yet, in societies where there is a fragmentation of groups based on religious and ethnic identity and parties polarize along religious and ethnic as opposed to ideological issues, the consolidation of democracy becomes more difficult (Valenzuela, 1992, pp. 82–83).

Because parties in Turkey have developed along divisive secularist versus Islamist lines, the CSOs that are able to be dominant and visible are those that replicate these divisions. Thus, civic organizations that are strong and effective are those that uphold the polarization of Turkish society and politics rather than aid in compromise and democratic consolidation. The relationship between the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) and Islamist-oriented civic organizations is a telling example of this phenomenon. The opposition parties also develop similarly exclusionary relations with certain CSOs. In the following sections, we build on this argument and detail Turkey’s experience in delayed consolidation due to the inability of parties and civil society to overcome societal fragmentation.

An Independent Civil Society? Politics and Partisanship among CSOs

To assess the role of CSOs in democratic consolidation and their relationship with political parties, we relied on extensive research in three major Turkish news sources: *Zaman*, *Hürriyet*, and *Bianet*. *Zaman* is a conservative and Islamist daily newspaper, while *Hürriyet* has a nationalist and secularist perspective. *Bianet* is an Internet news site funded primarily by the EU. It emphasizes independent reporting, human rights, and multiculturalism. We searched the online archives of these three sources for references to civil society during presidential elections and following civilian constitutional change initiatives in 2007–2008.

We also conducted a series of interviews of CSO and party representatives in December 2008 and January 2009 in İstanbul and Ankara, Turkey. We conducted a total of 18 interviews with representatives of associations and foundations, 16 of which were face-to-face interviews lasting between 30 min to 1 h (see Appendix 1 for a list of organizations interviewed). We also interviewed eight key party officials who are in charge of public and civil society relations from the top three parties in Parliament. We chose the civil society interviewees from among the most active and well-known CSOs in Turkey. We selected the Islamist organizations from the Common Mind Movement—New Constitution and Democracy Platform (*Ortak Akıl Hareketi—Yeni Anayasa Platformu*), which brought together about 400 organizations during the attempts of the AKP to amend the constitution to legalize the headscarf in the universities in 2008.⁵ The secular organizations were chosen based on their visibility in the media. While the organizations interviewed are not based on a random sample, they make up a broad range of the most visible CSOs. We conducted semi-structured elite interviews with CSO leaders using open-ended broad questions in order to allow the interviewees to choose the direction of the responses (see Dexter, 1970). The questions explored the goals of the organizations and how they approach the government and political parties in trying to accomplish them (see Appendix 2). The stories they recounted about the lack of power and effectiveness of their own organizations highlight the more serious issues faced by groups that are smaller and less visible than the ones we interviewed.

We analysed the content of the interviews to identify common themes raised by the civil society groups and political party officials. First, we found that civil society parallels the Islamist-secularist polarization found among political parties, and argue that this polarization is driven by the strength of parties in Turkish politics. Second, the weakness of civil society in relation to parties is illustrated in the confusion that CSOs display between the concepts of partisanship and political participation. The interviews with political party officials reinforced these findings by pointing to the narrow definition of civil society held by these officials and the low level of reported interaction between the actors. The AKP appears to be the only party that has significant connections to civil society, yet the nature of its relationship with this sector helps to reinforce the polarization we find in Turkish society.

Islamist-Secularist Polarization in Civil Society

Based on analysis of the content of the interviews, we identified the most important issue in the civil society sector to be polarization along Islamist-secularist lines rather than along issue platforms. Because of this polarization, separate Islamist and secular organizations

exist to address similar issue areas, and groups are unable to work together to solve common societal problems. The strongest indication of this divide in civil society is the existence of a parallel set of associations and foundations, representing the same issue areas. For instance, the secularist Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (*Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, TÜSİAD) is paralleled by the Islamist-oriented Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (*Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, MÜSİAD) and some smaller organizations that promote the interests of Muslim businessmen. TÜSİAD's membership comprises executives of the major industrial and service companies in Turkey. Its mission statement includes commitment to freedom of enterprise, a market economy, and the integration of Turkey into the international economic system.⁶ MÜSİAD claims to integrate small and medium-sized enterprises into its organization and, while not explicitly referring to Islam in its goals, does state its desire to 'contribute to the emergence of a society of people who have inner depth, are professionally well-trained and have a notion of solidarity,' and a 'common business ethics model fed by cultural and spiritual values brought along from past to present'.⁷ MÜSİAD represents those businesses referred to as the 'Anatolian Tigers'—firms from the Turkish provinces in central and southern Anatolia, where inhabitants are religiously devout, but entrepreneurial and favourable to rapid economic growth (Turgut, 2006). Other groups on the Islamist side include the Association of Anatolian Businessmen (*Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği*, ASKON). Interestingly, while all three associations exist to protect free enterprise and the interests of businesses in Turkey, all emphasize their commitment to human rights in their mission statements.

The same divide exists among human rights associations, which claim to represent the rights of all Turks, but ally with different political camps. Women's rights organizations that advocate for improving female education are an example of this divide. Several Islamist-oriented groups were founded to promote the right of women to wear the headscarf in public institutions. One of the most important is the Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People (*İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği*, MAZLUMDER). Others include the Women's Rights Association Against Discrimination (*Ayrımcılığa Karşı Kadın Hakları Derneği*, Akder) and the Freedom of Thought and Educational Rights Association (*Özgür Düşünce ve Eğitim Hakları Derneği*, Özgürder). Secular organizations also focus on issues such as education for girls, including the Association for the Support of Contemporary Life (*Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, ÇYDD) and the Association to Support and Educate Women Candidates (*Kadın Adayları Destekleme Ve Eğitim Derneği*, KA-DER). The members of the secular organizations interviewed were opposed to allowing headscarves in public institutions. Despite having common goals, the headscarf issue and the differences in approaches to women's rights prevent these groups from working together. We find this to be emblematic of the Islamist-secularist divide in politics, as most of these groups also ally with parties on corresponding sides of that divide.

Foundations also play an important role in civil society.⁸ The parallel development of civil society along the Islamist-secularist divide is best captured by the two umbrella organizations representing foundations. The Third Sector Foundation of Turkey (*Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı*, TÜSEV) represents 110 of the largest secular foundations in the country, while the Foundation of Volunteer Organizations of Turkey (*Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*, TGTV) was formed in 1994 and represents 109 Islamist foundations. The divisions are so deep that the groups negotiated the election process for the newly founded General

Directorate of Foundations Assembly in order to get equal representational outcomes for Islamist and secularist organizations. During interviews, representatives of TÜSEV and TGTV used the example of the negotiations to demonstrate their good relations with organization on the ‘other side’. Yet, these organizations referred to these ‘others’ with suspicion and tended to be ill informed about their activities. The reaction from a secularist organization is a telling example of how polar organizations view each other:

... If you examine the work [the Islamist organizations] are doing, they are not doing anything. What is interesting is that you cannot separate the Islamist NGOs from Islamist politics in Turkey... whenever a political movement gains power, a lot of followers will appear. So it is the same thing for NGOs in Turkey. Now that the Islamists are in power, their NGOs are multiplying in numbers. They have a lot of powerful NGOs because of government support but we do not know what they are doing. As far as an activity base, they are not doing a lot, but they are very powerful.⁹

Islamist organizations voiced similar sentiments about the secularist groups.

The polarization between the Islamist and secularist CSOs is best illustrated through the issue platforms the groups pursue. In general, we find that Islamist-oriented human rights organizations equate human rights with religious freedom, focusing on achieving equality for graduates of *İmam Hatip* (religious secondary) schools and abolishing the headscarf ban. Secularist human rights organizations tend to be focused on gaining rights for certain minority groups, such as Kurds or Alevis, or, on the opposite pole, reinforcing the country’s secular nationalist ideology.¹⁰ While all economic CSOs converge on a pro-capitalist economic agenda, these organizations also tend to reflect the Islamist-secularist divide in their approach toward democracy and human rights. The Islamist economic CSOs also express concern for freedom of religion, the headscarf issue, as well as *İmam Hatip* schools. The Islamist groups all identify the ‘hegemonic’ state represented by the military to be a common opponent of human rights. On the other hand, the secularist economic CSOs portray excessive government intrusion under the AKP government as an attack on democracy and democratization.

Issue divisions were evident in the organizations’ reactions to the civilian constitution change initiative in 2007–2008. The associations and foundations that were visible during this process can be placed on the secularist or Islamist poles of the political spectrum. The visibility of these organizations during the campaigns should not be confused with their effectiveness, however. The ‘civilian’ constitution was actually initiated by the AKP government in consultation with academic experts. Ultimately, the proposed changes were passed by the government through compromise with the opposition MHP and without much consultation with civil society. In 2007–2008, the AKP limited the constitutional changes to very specific issues, especially the right of women to wear the headscarf, leaving out most of the suggestions from the independent commission formed to advise the government. While Islamic CSOs supported the changes, liberal and women’s groups criticized the outcome.¹¹

CSO Awareness of the Role of Civil Society in Political Life

In a democratic society, CSOs are expected to play an active role in politics by articulating and representing citizens’ interests, advising political parties on matters related to their

areas of expertise, and serving as an independent check on governmental power. Among the CSOs we interviewed, some articulated a sophisticated understanding of the role of civil society in democratic systems and how CSOs are able to relate to political parties, yet many seemed unaware of their legal rights and status. When asked about their political activities, almost all CSO interviewees confused *politics* with *partisanship*, and immediately disassociated themselves from parties. Upon further clarification, however, some interviewees did acknowledge a difference between being politically involved and being partisan. A representative of one organization claimed not to see anything wrong with cooperating with political parties that have similar issue sensitivities, ‘while making sure that we do not paint ourselves with their political colours’.¹² One group even emphasized the need to be critical of parties, including the AKP, the party in government.¹³ However, most CSOs were quick to point out that they were not affiliated with any political party, regardless of their orientation. Secularist organizations noted that they were ‘above the parties’¹⁴ or admitted to treating all parties equally, while reasserting that they were not the ‘arm or extension of any political party’.¹⁵ Most of the Islamist organizations, however, emphasized that they were independent of parties, including with regard to monetary support.

Both secularist and Islamist organizations fear direct political involvement, or the perception that they are influencing parties—in particular, the AKP. For instance, one organization emphasized that they were not a ‘side organization’ of the AKP, and that they had no political goals or purpose, despite the fact that they later recounted how they contributed to the drafting of an anti-terror law in Parliament.¹⁶ This same organization was extremely active in organizing ‘democracy protests’ to support constitutional changes proposed by the AKP.¹⁷ Similarly on the secular side, organizations claiming no involvement in politics were active in organizing ‘republic protests’ against the AKP government, in close participation with nationalist and leftist political parties.¹⁸ We find the lack of distinction between partisan and political in the minds of CSO representatives and their fear of being perceived as politically involved to be a telling example of the incomplete development of civil society and democracy in Turkey. It points to the historical association of CSOs as ‘arms’ of the state and the current dominance of political parties in setting a polarized political agenda.

Civil Society–Party Relations

We expect democracy in Turkey to grow stronger as the political ‘centre’ becomes increasingly contested and more viewpoints are represented among the political parties that hold seats in parliament. Since both Islamists and secularists have politically viable parties, we expect to find a greater variety of CSOs having access to politicians and more opportunities to work with them on issues related to their fields of expertise and concern. In particular, parties may even be able to reach across the Islamist-secularist divide to try to build more diverse constituencies. Yet, in interviews with political party representatives, we found that party–CSO relationships reinforce the divide between the Islamists and secularists and hinder the growth of a strong independent sector. In this section, we examine the three major parties that are currently represented in parliament and constitute the political centre: the CHP, the MHP and the AKP. We discuss how the parties communicate with, take cues from, influence, and relate to civil society in Turkey. We conclude that each party almost exclusively communicates with the

organizations closest to its own ideological perspective without incorporating ideas from the other side of the Islamist-secularist divide. Thus, the centre is highly polarized, with the party in government determining how civil society will develop. This situation illustrates how a lack of attention to the relationship between political parties and civil society can cause scholars to overlook an important reason for the underdevelopment of pluralistic relations in countries undergoing democratization.¹⁹

Republican People's Party (CHP)

The Republican People's Party (CHP) was founded at the same time as the Republic of Turkey, and has been associated with the centre of Turkish politics (along with the military, bureaucracy, and judiciary). By the 1970s, the party had moved towards populism, while the military had decided that the economic policies of import substitution industrialization could no longer be sustained. Knowing that the CHP would oppose a shift towards market-oriented policies, the military shut down the CHP and other parties in the 1980 coup. The CHP was re-established after the coup and has since become more focused on a secular nationalist agenda than a populist one.

Today, the party limits its understanding of civil society to what it calls 'democratic mass organizations' (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, 2008, p. 76). The populist principles of the party were built into its politics through close ties with nationalist and secularist labour unions and cooperatives. Thus, the party primarily associates civil society with these types of groups. The party's programme specifically lists school boards, labour unions, professional chambers, consumer protection movements, cooperative unions, and common interest groups as 'democratic mass organizations' and the type of civil society that should be encouraged. The party programme also mentions the important role of women's associations in improving women's rights.

The limited relations of the CHP with CSOs became clear in our interview with the CHP Vice President in charge of civil society relations. When asked about the party's relationship with CSOs, he spoke exclusively about working class citizens.²⁰ The representative emphasized the rights of workers, mentioning that the unions have been in decline because of the strong CSOs among the capitalists. He also blamed the AKP government for the decline in unionization. He accused the AKP government of founding a labour confederation and unions that are ideologically identical to the party and of trying to 'de-unionize' other groups. According to his assessment, the government's creation of Islamist labour federations to counter secularist ones is leading to the decline of labour rights. While our focus was on voluntary CSOs and not unions, the CHP representative's first reaction to our question about civil society illustrates the Islamist-secularist divide we see among CSOs and parties. The labour union divide along Islamist-secularist lines is consistent with our observations of all civil society in Turkey. For example, the only civil service unions that have gained membership since the AKP took office have been the Islamist unions, while the secularist unions have declining membership (Toprak *et al.*, 2008, p. 113). In response, the CHP's approach has been to deal with labour unions on the secularist side, leaving the Islamist unions under the AKP's patronage. While the CHP is a political party that represents working class citizens and the AKP is considered a centre-right party economically, the Islamist-secularist divide trumps the cross-cutting economic identity of these workers, forcing civil society to split around these issues.

The CHP has a narrow conception of human rights and considers organizations that do not share its ideas as not worth associating with. In analysing the CHP's party platform and newspaper reports on the party, we find the CHP's platform on human rights makes no mention of human rights CSOs, and CSOs are seen as those that help fight against anti-secularism. The CHP representative we interviewed characterized human rights CSOs in Turkey as partisan and narrow in scope, limiting their work to protecting the rights of minorities, such as the Kurds. He argued that by failing to represent workers' rights, CSOs are doing a disservice to the human rights struggle in Turkey. Such an attitude reveals not only a narrow conception of human rights by the CHP representative, but also suggests that CSOs from both the centre and the periphery have a hard time finding an ally in the CHP. He did mention some CSOs that cooperated with the party, including the Kemalist Thought Association (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*) and the Women of the Republic Association (*Cumhuriyet Kadınları Derneği*), both secular nationalist organizations, which were at the forefront in organizing the anti-AKP government protests. Thus, the CHP maintains the traditional notion of the Turkish political centre as those groups that uphold the secular nationalist vision of the Republic.

Nationalist Action Party (MHP)

The MHP was originally founded as a Turkish nationalist party in 1969. It has been open to Islamism as a core part of Turkish identity, but is not as receptive to the global Islamic community as other Islamists (Tepe, 2008, pp. 167–168). The party is in the minority among the opposition in parliament, yet it retains a large conservative nationalist following across the country.

The Vice President of Social and Professional Institutions and Public Relations of the MHP explained that the party had good working relations with many CSOs, mentioning only the party's independent youth arm *Ülkü Ocakları* (Idealist Hearths) by name.²¹ He made clear that the MHP is *not* open to working with organizations that are funded by foreign sources or that are 'divisionary'. He specifically mentioned the Soros Foundation as being problematic. Many organizations that have been influential in the secularist front of civil society have received resources from the Soros Foundation (Geray, 2006). Like the CHP, the party is also wary of human rights organizations. The representative, who also serves on the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament, had similar reactions to the human rights associations as the CHP representative:

Many associations that dress up as human rights associations in Turkey are like mouthpieces of an ideology—this could be nationalist or separatist, or an idea that comes from Europe. A large segment of them are not in search of real human rights, because they do not pay attention to the rights of those who are beyond their own interests. Of course, a human rights activist needs to put humans at the centre of his cause. This person is a human whether he is an American, a Turk, or a Somali. A person working on the southeast issue²² should also pay attention to Gaza, Chechnya, or the Caucasus as part of his job. Human rights organizers are only interested in certain areas of human rights. Personally, I assess these types of organizations as militant and agent organizations.²³

We thus found that both the CHP and the MHP were not open to cooperation with human rights organizations, accusing them of emphasizing the rights of particular groups of citizens as opposed to being all-encompassing in their approach. Yet, the parties seemed to overlook the fact that some of these organizations have overcome their narrow interests and cooperated with each other to expand their reach. The Human Rights Joint Platform (IHOP) is a good example of such cooperation, combining groups that represent universal human rights with issue-based groups calling for Kurdish rights and Islamists for greater religious freedom. A report on civil society in Turkey also acknowledges that human rights CSOs are among the groups that have had the most success raising awareness about their issue platforms, despite the fact that they—like other types of CSOs—have had limited impact on the overall policy (Bikmen & Meydançioğlu, 2006, p. 94). Yet, we also find that when the human rights organizations cooperate with each other they tend to focus on their own narrow agendas.

Justice and Development Party (AKP)

The AKP won the national elections in 2002 (with 34.4% of the vote) and became the sole party in government, holding 363 out of 550 seats in the Grand National Assembly (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*, TBMM). The party was able to increase its vote share in the 2007 and 2011 national elections. This was only the second time in Turkish parliamentary history that a party increased its vote share from one election to the next while in government. Thus, the AKP has been able to build a strong political presence in a short amount of time. This was partly due to the growth of a strong Islamist civil society, much of which is organized into foundations and associations (Tepe, 2008). These organizations comprise the base of the party, helping it to retain power while it expands its reach into mainstream society by claiming a ‘conservative democratic’ identity. The AKP’s rise to power with the increase in representation of Islamist interests in government constitutes a reorientation of the traditional political centre.

The AKP is the only major political party that has strong roots in civil society—even though it is limited to Islamist civil society. While it is illegal for political parties to have an Islamist identity in Turkey, it is public knowledge that many of the leaders of the AKP serve on boards and/or are founding members of Islamist foundations and associations. For example, many of the founders of the AKP are also the founders of the conservative Islamist *Birlik* Foundation.²⁴ Through our interviews, we found that of all the parties, the AKP has the most sophisticated mechanism for incorporating the demands of CSOs into its platform and policies. However, we do not find this to be a concerted effort to engage civil society in policy-making, but rather a by-product of the fact that the AKP has been the only party in government since 2002. Any organization with close ties to the party is likely to have its concerns addressed by the AKP—which in practice means that the issues raised by Islamist organizations are given priority both by the party and the Turkish government. Therefore, we find the relationship of the AKP to CSOs to be more akin to a patron serving the needs of his clients in exchange for electoral support rather than a cooperative relationship between independent political actors with similar policy goals. Because many of the organizations closest to the AKP have only been in existence since the party came to power, the patrimonial quality of the relationship is emphasized.

In an interview with the authors, the AKP Deputy Chairwoman of Publicity and the Media characterized the party as having developed a closer relationship to ‘non-systemic actors’ and stated that, ‘the success of the AKP can be associated with the support it has received from civil society associations and foundations’.²⁵ She specifically mentioned the close relationship that the party has developed with the Islamist business association MÜSİAD, as opposed to the secular TÜSİAD. Since the representative of the AKP admits to having close relations with MÜSİAD, its position of power allows for those voices to have greater representation in the policies the government pursues.

It would be difficult for any government to ignore the demands of an organization such as TÜSİAD—which, according to its own literature, represents about 40% of capital in Turkey. However, TÜSİAD has also been one of Turkey’s most vocal advocates of human rights and democratization through strengthening institutions and fighting corruption (Öniş & Türem, 2002). It is not clear that the AKP government is open to discussions with TÜSİAD regarding these issues. In an interview, the Secretary General of TÜSİAD noted that due to the lack of productive communication between the organization and the AKP government, they are often forced to express their interests through the media. On the other side, the Deputy Chairman of the AKP on Economic Affairs claimed that his party and the AKP government listen to all CSOs before making decisions, but that they were frustrated with CSOs giving them ‘random criticism’ when the government makes decisions that are not in line with their demands or issuing ‘ultimatums’ to the government on specific policy issues.²⁶

Like the secular businessmen, the leader of an economically less powerful organization representing the Alevi religious minority was equally frustrated with the AKP government:

The AKP government’s attitude toward civil society parallels its outlook towards the world. We do not know, of course, what kind of dialogue they have with CSOs that are close to them, but it does not have a very healthy dialogue with Alevi organizations. Has it been six years since Erdoğan became the Prime Minister? He has not had a meeting with any Alevi organizations . . . They understand Alevism through their own religious ideology. Therefore they only speak to the organizations that they see fit to speak to, and not to any others.²⁷

The AKP representatives claimed to have very good relations with Alevi organizations, though their interpretation of the Alevi’s interests differs from those of the Alevi majority. While most Alevi CSOs in Turkey emphasize an ethnic but secular identity, the AKP has allied with a small community of Alevi organizations that emphasize the group’s religious heritage. Thus, rather than working with secular Alevi organizations, the AKP targets specifically Islamist ones.

To summarize, our interviews with party representatives lend support to our argument that while the political centre has expanded to include previously excluded Islamist voices, parties remain closed to CSOs that do not represent their own narrow ideological interests. In addition, the parties discussed do not view each other as legitimate oppositional parties—as is evidenced by the CHP’s continuing attempts to have the AKP shut down. As a result, any CSO that associates with the AKP is considered suspect and illegitimate by the CHP. Similarly, any organization with ties to ethnic minorities is considered suspect by the MHP. Finally, parties fail to acknowledge CSOs as potential partners or advisors in

the policy-making process. Even though the AKP is the party in government and therefore is capable of addressing a variety of perspectives on important policy issues, we found the party to adhere to the Islamist-secularist divide. Therefore, the expansion of the political centre has not helped increase representation in government. Instead, it has replaced the previously dominant secularist viewpoint with an Islamic one.

Conclusion: Implications of Civil Society/Party Relations on Democratic Consolidation in Turkey

CSOs can be important contributors to the political development of a country. Affirming Jamal's research on the Arab Middle East, we show that context matters in the ability of civil society groups to play a positive role in democratization in polarized and fragmented societies. Our close examination of the Turkish case shows that CSOs have developed along a polarized Islamist-secularist divide. This development closely reflects the struggle for control of power at the 'centre' of Turkish politics and illustrates the fact that civil society is not yet truly an independent sector.

Turkish CSOs that are afraid of being labelled partisan are confused about the difference between partisanship and political activism. Thus, we find that civil society actors in Turkey have yet to incorporate EU-harmonization sparked reforms of their sector into their worldview and activities. Until CSOs are viewed as legitimate and independent political actors, they will be ineffective. Because having a voice in politics still means being tied to a particular partisan agenda, universalist CSOs remain unable to accumulate enough power and influence to help strengthen Turkish democracy. Our findings suggest that in thinking about how to help encourage civil society development, scholars and policy-makers should consider looking to political parties as a vital component in civil society's capacity to help strengthen democracy.

There have been some recent positive developments in relations between civil society and the public sector. The Parliamentary Joint Working Group Initiative (*Ortak Çalışma Grupları Girişimi*, TBMM-OÇG) was established to bring Members of Parliament from various parties together with CSOs. They organize forums in cities around Turkey to allow representatives from civil society to communicate with MPs, and have also created a set of 12 issue-based working groups in Parliament (including groups on children's rights, rights of the disabled, transparent governance, women's rights, and corruption) that match parliamentarians with CSOs working on similar issues. While the representative of the TBMM-OÇG was optimistic about the increased role civil society could play in the public sector as a result of this cooperation, an MP we interviewed who had been involved in the working groups did not consider them to have been particularly successful, though he did express hope that they would continue.²⁸ Media reports have also suggested that the MPs tend to ignore these meetings and that this has disheartened CSOs. Because CSOs are not yet viewed as strong political actors, there is little incentive for MPs to participate in these efforts.

Scholars of comparative democratization have long grappled with questions about how to resolve social divisions in fragmented societies (Dahl, 1982; Mainwaring, O'Donnell & Valenzuela, 1992). While many Western European countries have been able to overcome religious, ethnic, and ideological divisions through careful institutional design, current immigration trends threaten social unrest in these stable democracies. More recently, political scientists have been questioning the role that societal divisions play in the problems

that majority of the Muslim countries face with democratization (Diamond, Plattner, & Brumberg, 2003; Esposito & Voll, 1996; Hefner, 2001). Thus, understanding the factors that can impede pluralistic cooperation in fragmented and polarized societies is still an important question for scholars of both consolidated democracies and transitioning regimes.

Many countries that transitioned from authoritarian systems in the Third Wave have fulfilled the minimum institutional expectations that qualify them as procedural democracies, yet these countries in Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa still struggle with consolidation of democracy. CSOs and political parties articulate citizen demands and needs and are important for democratic consolidation. When political parties are unable to fulfil their core functions of interest aggregation and representation, it becomes more important for political scientists to understand the role of civil society in relation to parties (Schmitter, 2001, pp. 72–74). The Turkish example demonstrates a situation in which the decline of state power was followed by the dominance of polarized political parties. A weak civil society reinforces political polarization by organizing along Islamist-secularist and ethnic-nationalist lines. We have argued that the inclusion of more groups and ideas in the political system helps democratization only if CSOs and political parties cooperate to try to overcome social polarization. If parties and CSOs mirror polarization, consolidation becomes more difficult to achieve.

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Notes

1. We acknowledge that there are other fault lines within Turkish politics. For example, there is a strong Kurdish political movement and Kurds have been successful in electing candidates to the parliament. Yet, the division between the Kurds and nationalists manifests itself as an issue between the centre (i.e. the nationalists) and the periphery (i.e. the Kurds). In this study, we limit our analysis to the divisions *within* the centre of Turkish politics.
2. Labour unions, chambers of commerce, and most professional organizations in Turkey fall under a quasi-corporatist legal category that requires separate investigation.
3. There do exist universalist liberal value-advocating groups that are willing to have a debate about these polarizing issues, yet they comprise a relatively small portion of the CSO community. We acknowledge their importance in contributing to progress of democratization in Turkey, yet their role in comparison to the organizations on which we focus here is negligible.
4. For more on party politics, see the Special Issue on Political Parties in Turkey, *Turkish Studies* 3 (2002).
5. See the New Constitution and Democracy Platform, <http://www.demokrasiplatformu.org> (accessed 22 January 2010). The ban on women wearing the traditional Islamic headscarf in public institutions—originally imposed as part of the secular nationalist campaign—has served as a focal point of Islamist-secularist conflict in recent years. While the right to wear a headscarf may be interpreted as a religious freedom or gender rights issue in some settings, in Turkey it has been used as a symbol of the division between Islamists and secularists, and organizations created to oppose the ban have been Islamist.
6. TÜSİAD website, <http://www.tusiad.org/> (accessed 13 January 2010).

7. MÜSİAD website, <http://www.musiad.org.tr/> (accessed 13 January 2010).
8. The difference between the associations and foundations analysed for this article is technical. Associations and foundations are governed by two different sets of laws that regulate their financial activities, but their political activities are similarly regulated.
9. Interview with Secularist foundation, Istanbul, 26 December 2008.
10. These include groups that pursue the rights of particular minorities, including Kurds (*İnsan Hakları Derneği*: Human Rights Association, İHD) and the Alevi religious minority (*Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği*: Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association). Other secularist groups in the country are committed to maintaining Atatürk's nationalist legacy in Turkish society, such as the Kemalist Thought Association (*Atatürkçü Düşünce Derneği*, ADD).
11. See Bianet news, 'Anayasa Kadın Platformu'nun Talepleri' (The Demands of the Women's Constitutional Platform), 4 December 2007; *Radikal*, 'AKP Zirvesine Özbudun Uyarısı' (Warning from Özbudun to AKP Summit), 27 January 2008.
12. Interview with Islamist human rights association, Ankara, 3 January 2009.
13. Interviews with Islamist economic and human rights associations, Istanbul, 26 December 2008 and Ankara, 3 January 2009.
14. Interview with Secularist human rights association, Istanbul, 23 December 2008.
15. Interview with Secularist human rights association, Ankara, 2 January 2009.
16. Interview with Islamist foundation, Istanbul, 25 December 2008.
17. See New Constitution and Democracy Platform, <http://demokrasiplatformu.org/site/> (accessed 22 January 2010) for the participants in the pro-civilian constitution protests.
18. Secular organizations such as ÇYDD (see media coverage on their web page announcing their role in protests, <http://www.cydd.org.tr/default.asp?sayfa=basindacydd>), the ADD, and the Women of the Republic Association (*Cumhuriyet Kadınları Derneği*) were among the leaders in organizing against the AKP leading into the 2007 elections and 2008 following constitutional changes over the headscarf. Among hundreds of articles published about the role of secularist civil society groups in organizing protests, see the following articles from <http://www.bianet.org>: '14 Nisan Mitingi İçin Ne Diyorlar (What are They Saying About the April 14 Protests)?' 13 April 2007; '29 Nisanda Çağlayanda Cumhuriyet Mitingi (Republic Protest in Çağlayan on April 29)' 27 April 2007; 'İzmir'in Cumhuriyet Mitinginde Neler Olacak (What Will Happen During the Republic Protest in Izmir)?' 11 May 2007; and 'Üniversitede Başörtüsü İçin Anayasa Değişikliği Meclis'ten Geçti (The Constitutional Change for Headscarves in the Universities Approved in the Parliament)' 10 February 2008.
19. While we focus on the Islamist-secularist divide in the centre of Turkish politics in this paper, it is possible to see similar dynamics in the centre-periphery divide between the nationalist centre and ethnic Kurds.
20. Interview with CHP representative, Ankara, 8 January 2009.
21. Interview with MHP representative, Ankara, 5 January 2009.
22. Referring to the human rights of citizens of Kurdish descent.
23. Interview with MHP representative, Ankara, 5 January 2009.
24. *Birlik* Foundation brochure.
25. Interview with AKP representative, Ankara, 8 January 2009.
26. Interview with AKP representative, Ankara, 6 January 2009.
27. Interview with Alevi organization, Ankara, 2 January 2009.
28. Interviews: Parliamentary Joint Working Group Initiative (TBMMOÇG), Ankara, 31 December 2008; Member of Parliament from CHP, Ankara, 9 January 2009.

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Appendix 1. List of Organizations Interviewed

1. ASKON, *Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği*, Association of Anatolian Businessmen
2. *Birlik Vakfı*, Unity Foundation
3. ÇYDD, *Çağdaş Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği*, Association for Support of Contemporary Life
4. *Dünya Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı*, World Ahlul Bayt Foundation
5. GYV, *Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı*, Journalists and Writers Foundation

6. İDSB, *İslam Dünyası Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Birliği*, The Union of NGOs of the Islamic World
7. İHD, *İnsan Hakları Derneği*: Human Rights Association
8. İHH, *İnsan Hak ve Hürriyetleri ve İnsani Yardım Vakfı*, The Foundation for Human Rights and Freedoms and Humanitarian Relief
9. MAZLUMDER, *İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği*, Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
10. MÜSİAD, *Müstakil Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği*, Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association
11. Özgür-der, *Özgür Düşünce ve Eğitim Hakları Derneği*, Freedom of Thought and Educational Rights Association
12. *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği*, Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association
13. STGM, *Sivil Toplum Geliştirme Merkezi*, Civil Society Development Centre
14. TBMM-OÇG, *Ortak Çalışma Gurubu*, Working Group Between Parliament and Civil Society
15. TGTV, *Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*, Turkey Voluntary Agencies Foundation
16. TÜSİAD, *Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği*, Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association
17. TUSEV, *Türkiye Üçüncü Sektör Vakfı*, Third Sector Foundation of Turkey
18. TUSKON, *Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayicileri Konfederasyonu*, Confederation of Industrialists and Businessmen of Turkey

Appendix 2. Interview Protocol

Questions asked to CSO/political party officials:

1. What is your occupation?
2. What are your primary professional duties and responsibilities?
3. Please describe the aims and activities of your CSO/the fundamental mission of your political party.
4. How do Islamic beliefs and practices inspire your organization's mission (if applicable)?
5. What do you think it means for a political system to be democratic? Can you give me an assessment of the status of democracy in the Republic of Turkey?
6. Does your CSO/political party contribute to democracy or democratization in any way? If so, how?
7. Does your organization have any formal or informal relationships with any political parties/does your party have any formal or informal relationships with CSOs in the country? Please explain.
8. Have any political parties approached your organization/have any CSOs approached your party in the interests of cooperation? Please explain.
9. What do you perceive the role of CSOs to be in democracy and democratization?
10. Are any active members of your party also active members of CSOs?
11. What is your assessment of the current state of the Turkish economy/human rights situation?
12. What role do you see your organization/party playing in that status?
13. What are the economic policy/human rights prescriptions of your party?

14. Do you find that the current government has been receptive to input from CSOs regarding the country's economy/human rights situation?
15. What kind of input do you see from CSOs on the development of your policy platforms?
16. In the past 10 years, how has the business environment/human rights environment in Turkey changed? Please provide specific examples, if possible.
17. Do you think that the political climate in Turkey has an influence on economic development/human rights in the country?