1980 Military Coup d'état and the Rise of Religious Politics in Türkiye: The Originators of 2000's Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Even though religion-based politics dated back to the inception of the Republic, particularly in recent three decades, Turkish politics witnessed a gradual rise of religious activism and politics. Interestingly, one may discern that the military coup d'état of 1980 and the policy espoused by the military regime between 1980-1983 was the very heart of these movements. The world context on the eve of the military coup and its timing gives important traces the reasons laying behind the coup. Among many, one of the important reasons was neoliberal turn which the regime wanted to keep up with and entrenched in the country. Then, religious politics gradually gained strength, by means of internal and external factors, thus a more religious politics became visible in the 1990s and culminated in 2000s in Türkiye. In this study, increasing religious activism and politics in the Turkish case was researched and was tried to set forth basic factors caused this visible phenomenon. Results clearly showed that, in line with democratization wave after the collapse of the Soviet Union, neoliberal economic system played a determiner role for increasing religious politics in Türkiye.

Keywords: Religious Activism and Politics, The Military Coup D'état of 1980, Military Regime, Neoliberal Turn, Democratization Wave

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INTRODUCTION

Particularly in the early 1990s, Turkish political arena witnessed an incremental religious discourse and religious politics. Then, religion-based political parties obtained much more popularity than ever, and became one of the major actors shaping the political arena. This was not an accidental or upstart phenomenon. Its root was deep-seated, and interestingly, prepared in time at the hands of the military coups. Although one may trace this phenomenon to the military coup of 1960 or the military intervention in 1971, basically the 1980 coup d'état and almost three years military regime played crucial role for increasing religious politics in Türkiye. Military regime between 1980 and 1983; despite its strict stress on the principle of laicism of the constitution, ironically, espoused and imposed the *Turkish-Islamic Synthesis*. The military regime tried to use the synthesis, put forward by the Association of Intellectuals' Heart (Aydınlar Ocağı) in the early 1970s, for the purpose of erasing the leftist and but also rightist (nationalist-idealist) movements' influence over the Turkish society (Yavuz, 1997). Thus, the mix of Ottoman, Islamic and Turkish popular culture were used to legitimize the new ruling elite; and disseminated by means of common-public education as well as by media (Yavuz, 1997). Briefly, it has two main themes; Sunni Islam and Turkishness (Eligür, 2014). The generals wanted to use Islam's unifying power by taking into consideration the violent struggle between leftist and rightist throughout in the 1970s. Moreover, in addition to making religious classes compulsory, they also opened Qur'anic courses and religious high schools (Imam Hatibs) in line with restricting the activities of labor unions and autonomous status of the universities (Yavuz, 1997). By doing so, they tried to create a "more homogenous and less political, Islamic society", and, according to Hakan Yavuz, *national identity was Islamized* and, at the same time, *Islam was nationalized* at the hands of military rulers (1997). Islam was considered as a pacifying ideology to eliminate the ideological struggle and the threat of communism (Yavuz, 1997). After crushing the radical left and the right, the generals, intentionally or unintentionally, created a real "political vacuum" in the Turkısh political realm. This gap was filled quickly and successfully by the religious movements particularly in the early 1990s.

Coincided almost with the coup, there were two growing phenomena in the world scene which brought a radical shift not only in the economic life of the societies but also in the cultural realms. These were the *globalization* and the *neoliberalism* with their negative and positive results. They were creating the losers as well as the winners. Particularly in developing countries, like Türkiye, the number of the losers were much more than the winners. Especially in the early 1990s, the world context was radically shifting after the collapse of USSR and communist ideology. Therefore, the democratization wave and widespread liberal values were the result.

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By the military regime, Türkiye was channeled into a neoliberal line in an ever-globalizing world, and, neoliberal substructure was constituted and supported by the military. Coupled with the globalization process and neoliberal turn, the democratization wave in the early 1990s; paved the way for increasing religiosity and religious politics in Türkiye. Additionally; Turkish disappointment with the European Union membership process also played important role for rising religious politics. All in all, the military coup d'état in 1980 gave the most powerful impetus to religious movements and became essential starting point for increasing religious politics in Türkiye.

FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

In this study, an observable phenomenon, the rise of religious politics and success of religion-based political parties particularly after 1990s, was dealt with in the light of not only internal processes but also external developments in order to reach reality out there. This study's basic argument is that the 1980 Military Coup and the rise of religious politics are interrelated firmly so much so that the coup should be taken as originator of 2000s Türkiye. To vindicate this claim first and foremost the real reasons behind the coup should be discovered, then correlation will be built between the two phenomena. Because taking the 1980 coup d'état as a result of sole internal processes, like anarchy or the bloody shootout between left and right throughout the 1970s, would be deceptive and poor. To grasp real reasons behind the coup, internal factors will be explored in line with external determinants, then, in the light of all factors the rise of religious politics in Türkiye will be analyzed. In this research, following four factors will constitute general framework for analyzing internal developments:

Firstly, one should take into consideration the world context and trends affected Türkiye in this period. In the course of military coup in September 1980, the most important factor to be born in mind was that the Cold-War has been under way. Just before the coup Afghanistan was invaded by the Soviets and the Iranian Revolution was brought about. Both events were a wake-up call for the United States to remember her forgotten ally in the region, Türkiye. Because of geopolitical importance for the US, from that time onwards, Türkiye could not be left alone and should be anchored to the western block tightly as soon as possible. The result was the military coup and three years' military regime for Türkiye.

Secondly; the rise of globalization in this period brought a profound effect on not only nation-state but also the structure of the society all over the world. Increasing communication systems and multi-national corporations' deployment all over the earth brought huge radical changes. In the Turkish case, the process brought not only erosion in nation-state's ability to correspond the people's demands but also erased the leftist or social democratic parties in political sphere by reducing the ability of trade unions and by increasing individualism vis-à-vis corporatism gradually. Hence, the people begun to looking for new alternatives for their well-being stemmed from the dissatisfactions with the leftist or social democratic parties as well as the center-right parties. Coupled with individualism, people were also becoming more assertive and demanding of their identity, either religious or ethnic.

Thirdly; in line with the globalization phenomenon, the neoliberal turn in the early 1980s which brought a new mode of production, also reinforced this trend. It was almost impossible to survive economically without espousing neoliberal policies of time. Either any country must have conducted neoliberal economic system or be isolated by the others. That is to say, a closed economic system would be the result. Moreover, free market economy was taken as a sine qua non condition for ranking among democratic countries. Briefly, neoliberal political system was imposing strong but minimal state and free market economy (Heywood, 2017, p. 37). This process also enforced creation of a "strong government" apparatus and "weak civil-society" in case of Turkey in particular, namely an obedient society. Because, neoliberal economic policies would bound to bring the losers as well as the winners. To create an obedient society by means of a strong governmental apparatus in the countries like Turkey was inevitable because of presumable mass dissatisfactions and resentments of the losers. Coupled with the globalization phenomenon, neoliberalism created *a huge political vacuum* in Turkish political arena which would be filled by the new religious and ethnic political discourse to meet with the people's new demands.

Fourthly; by the end of the Cold-War in the 1990s, together with the globalization process and neoliberalism, "the new democratization wave" also brought a fertile field for the rise of religious politics Türkiye. Indeed, democratic discourse and individualism gained an important impetus in Turkish politics as with the world in this period. Paradoxically, the European Union membership process of Türkiye also paved the way for religious politics again. In the early 1990s, the European condonation to the atrocities and even a genocide against the Muslims in the Balkans, particularly in Bosnia-Herzegovina, also gave a powerful stimulus for the religious politics and religious political parties in the Turkish political arena like the Welfare Party.

The four phenomena summarized above and internal political developments in Türkiye on the eve of and thereafter the 1980 military coup will be investigated for the purpose of setting forth interrelatedness of the rise of religious politics and the coup. In order to discover the correlation, it is necessary to take quick look the events before the military coup of 1980.

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS POLITICS IN TÜRKIYE UNTIL 1980

Religious/ conservative – Modernist/Westernist contestation dated back to the 19th century Ottoman modernization processes. Almost all efforts to reform the established political system and modernize society by the governments, faced religious resistance in this timeframe. Moreover, almost every dissatisfaction with the state or economic course of events were uttered by religious vocabulary during revolts or demonstrations. Nothing changed by the proclamation of republic in 1923, tug of the westernization and modernization have faced increasing dissent in due course. Religious discourse became an effective instrument for criticizing the republican revolution at the hands of opposition parties. Atatürk and founders of the republic saw religious discourse and the use of religion as a political instrument targeting to overthrow the newly established political regime. Owing to the fact that every kind of resentment, be it economic or cultural, were tempted by the opposition parties for the purpose of revitalizing the sultanate and caliphate, the regime took very serious and rigid measures against revolts at that point in time. Most particularly the abolition of caliphate in 1924 was a coup de grace for the people's perception over the state's approach towards the religion. Indeed, most of the people saw it a directly adverse action to the religion itself. That the espousal of westernism and western style way of life by the ruling elites brought an endless rivalry between the republicans and conservatives from that time on. From 1930 to 1950, the single party, the Republican People Party (RPP), and republican laics' dominance reigned in the Turkish political arena without any serious challenge. And yet, according to Feroz Ahmad, even in the single party period the RPP attempted to placate those religious based resentments by granting some concessions like foundation of religious schools and allowance of sermons' entering into the barracks (Ahmad, 2010). For Jenny White, although religious movement had begun almost a century earlier, religious politics could not gain a secure position in the Turkish politics until 1950s (White, 2008). By the Democratic Party's (DP) coming to office in 1950, religious politics and religious discourse became more visible not only among ordinary people but also state bureaucracy. The period after the mid-1950s may be taken as "the starting point of religion's becoming an important instrument of political struggle" (Ahmad, 2010, s. 13) though it could not threat the whole laic regime.

Immediately afterwards of the *1960 military coup,* the Turkish people expected extreme crackdown against religious politics by the regime. Surprisingly, the military junta, let alone such measures, paved the way for religious politics by espousing religious discourse, by encouraging Qur'anic courses and religious-tended commercial organizations, and overlooking the rise of religious communities in the eastern part of the country (Ahmad, 2010). In this way, the religious politics were seeded by the 1960 military coup unexpectedly. Meanwhile, the first overtly religion-based political party, the National Order Party (NOP), was established in 1970. This was a very important *milestone for religious politics* in Türkiye. Since the proclamation of the Republic in 1923, let alone laic system, the whole republican reformation process and even the regime's western-orientation were outspokenly censured by the religious politicians. Moreover, although the NOP was banned by the Constitutional Court after the military intervention in 1971, the military preferred to be tolerant towards the religious movements perplexingly again likewise the 1960 military regime (Eligür, 2014). This time tolerance derived from necessity of balancing unrestrainable boom of the radical left. So, the generals permitted have no chance but permit a follow-up religious party the National Salvation Party (NSP) in 1972. The generals' basic goal was to prevent the reigning leftist anarchy in the country by means of using new instrument. This was a conscious step for creating religious political apparatus for Banu Eligür (2014). Hence, the NSP pursued a way as a continuation of the NOP. Particularly after the 1973 national elections, by getting approximately % 12 voting rate, the National Salvation Party formed a coalition government with the Republican People Party (RPP). Until the 1980 military coup, religious discourse and religious politics pervaded and provided *legitimacy* for the political parties vis-à-vis communist threat of time. Furthermore, even the RPP leader Bülent Ecevit started to use religious discourse in his speeches (Ahmad, 2010). To grasp the importance of the point of time the coup was occurred, the next section of this paper will deal with the military regime's policy and the world context.

THE MILITARY COUP D'ÉTAT OF 1980 AND THE MILITARY REGIME'S APPROACH TOWARDS RELIGION

As soon as overthrowing the existing government in 12 September 1980, the military junta proclaimed Türkiye's loyalty to the western institutions and western block, put it clearly the United States and its policies, vis-à-vis the second world, namely the communists. Upon the US demands, the generals approved Greece's re-alliance with the NATO. This point also showed the US perseverance on not allowing Türkiye's any probable trajectory change from that time on. In so doing, the US' support was readily attained by the military junta. In 1979, not only the Soviets invaded Afghanistan but also the Iranian revolution occurred. Both events were coup de grace for American interests in the region. Since the Johnson Letter in 1964, Iran was key ally of the US in the Middle East until the revolution as substitution of Türkiye[2]. In brief, on the one hand forthcoming threat to the Middle East and rising religious

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[2] Between 1964 and 1980 Turkish-American relationship had experienced a problematic period following the letter President Johnson sent regarding Cyprus. Turkey had nonetheless executed the Cyprus operation, rejected Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreement (DECA), opium ban, and return of Greece to NATO. As a result, American response hasn't been delayed, a military embargo taken into effect.

fundamentalism on the other were the case. As Stephen Kinzer succinctly put it "Washington was stunned when Mohammad Reza shah fell in 1979" (2010, p. pp). In this catastrophic situation, the US must have remembered her "forgotten ally", Türkiye (Rustow, 1987). A Pentagon report also recommended that the US had to had restored alliance with Türkiye by any means (Ahmad, 1993). Since both sides needed each other seriously, relations developed and frozen alliance was repaired swiftly in the course of 1980s. military junta was looking forward to obtain legitimacy and the US reobtain effectiveness in the region. In other respects, the US also had a chance to penetrate into the Soviet borders and diminish her dominance in the central Asia in accordance with "Green-Belt Plan"[3] (Oran, 2008) by using Türkiye's Turkic and Muslim identity (Eligür, 2014). In the wake of the Iranian revolution and invasion of Afghanistan; in 12 September 1980 oft-repeated another military coup took place. When the military junta came into power, Türkiye was economically crashed and the whole economic system was need to be liberalized. Turgut Özal, the military junta's chief economic planner, was in the foreground to revive commercial and political affairs with the United States. As matter of fact, there was not any other chance for Türkiye to overcome economic depression for Özal (Erol, 2009). In brief; overlapping interests of the both sides brought a rapid development in relations.

On the other hand; harmony in relations, in fact, was not a coincidence. Taking into account above mentioned realities like the Soviet invasion and Iranian revolution, timing of the coup was indeed suspicious. The US effect over the military coup, military regime's policy preferences indicated a clear American effect over the whole military coup process. That is to say; the US had to remember her forgotten ally and had to anchor to the western bloc tightly again. As on will recall, as soon as coming into office, the generals declared that Türkiye would be loyal to the all of the western institutions including the NATO. Moreover, the 1982 constitution was in completely accordance with the US demands. In accordance with the Green Belt Plan, the military regime not only destroyed the left but also crushed the nationalist right. By doing so, the generals created a considerable "political vacuum" which would be filled easily by the religious political movements. For Eligür, there was an "implied agreement" between the generals and the religious movements (2014). The more liberal political regime created by the 1961 constitution targeted by not only the military regime but also the US at that time (Ahmad, 2014). The Turkish parliament was dissolved, existing parties and party leaders were banned, and % 10 election threshold were put into effect by the 1982 constitution at the hands of the generals. Moreover, autonomy of the universities was curbed, the free press was destroyed and trade unions were pacified by the new constitution (Eligür, 2014). Thus, the military regime openly and deliberately oriented to neoliberal political system which prescribes minimal but strong government. The period in the aftermath of the coup was succinctly described by Ahmad as "democracy without freedoms" (2014). Above mentioned policies were preferred by the generals in order to put into effect new economic system based on the 24th January Decisions in 1980. To police this policy depoliticization of the whole society, that is neither labor strikes nor protests (Ahmad, 2014), was a sine qua non condition at least for a while (Ahmad, 2010). The main reason behind the preference of the junta was that the new economic system could be implemented if and only if by a heavy-handed government. So, parallel with the new economic system, the new political system was imposed for the purpose of providing long term political stabilization (Ahmad, 1993). For Jenny White, the 1982 constitution curbed small parties' effectiveness in the political arena by %10 threshold ratio and restricted free press and civil society brought by the 1961 constitution (White, 2008).

With respect to religious politics; after having crushed the radical left and the right, the military tried to minimize their effect all over the country in case of posing a threat to the new political and economic order by overlooking and even supporting religious movements as a counterforce (Yılmaz, 2012). So, Türkiye's political faith was shaped by the junta's policy paving way to the religious movements and religious politics. In fact, this orientation had started by encouraging a nationalist religion, "Turkish–Islamic Synthesis", in the mid-1970s (Yavuz, 1997). The military generals also used religious discourse like "the Turkish soldier, defender of the Muslim faith" (Kaplan, 2002). According to Binnaz Toprak, the synthesis was espoused almost semi-official ideology of the military in the course of 1970s (2006). Their basic motivation was to prevent the leftist by indoctrinating Turkish youth with Islamic culture (Öniş, 1997). There were three main themes of the synthesis; "barracks, mosque, and family" (Toprak, 2006). Because the generals needed a conformable society for implementing new policies, they used even the fear of God in order to restore authority (2006). Espousal and encouragement of the synthesis also provided religious movements legitimacy and great opportunity to promulgate their ideas via their own press freely (White, 2008). Moreover, in the course of 1980s, the compulsory religious education and increase in number of religious schools like Imam Khatibs made easier to penetrate into political life in Türkiye for religious movements from that time onwards (Öniş, 1997). Since therefore; those developments generated "a new Islamic public culture (White, 2008). Result was a sharp rise of religious movements and religious political parties accordingly. Henceforward, religious discourse and explicitly religious movements became more visible in so much so that shape the whole Turkish political arena. For Jenny White; even though religion has always played crucial role in the Turkish politics an overt religious party could not be established until 1980s (2008).

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[3] A Carter-Brzezinski plan to influence the Muslim Soviet Republics in the central Asia against Soviet administration and to contain USSR.

Simultaneously, there were two spreading phenomena in the world affecting the Turkish politics: "the globalization" and "the neoliberalism". These factors indeed shaped the military's policy options and affected their choice of Islam as a basic tenet of Turkish society at the expense of the left. So, the new free market economic system in the 1980s enforced by the two phenomena, brought considerable wealth to conservative and provincial entrepreneurs (White, 2008). Beyond this, the losers, erstwhile reservoir of the leftist / social democrat parties, also gave rise to religious movements in the 1990s (2008).

THE GLOBALIZATION AND NEOLIBERAL TURN

Although internal factors may be useful for understanding the rise of religious politics in Türkiye, all of the analyses will fall short and be deceptive without examining external factors. Particularly, the role of the United States' foreign policy in the world and especially in the Western Alliance, of which Türkiye has been a member, *the globalization* phenomenon parallel with the *neoliberalism* played very important role so much so that constituted a determiner factor in policy formulations for Türkiye in 1980s.

In that period the world societies were indeed exposing some radical, deep and far-reaching transformations in the both economic and the cultural realms (Öniş, 1997). The globalization of the world economy and the neoliberal economic restructuring were profoundly affecting societies in almost every part of the world. In line with these profound economic changes, namely the new modes of production, Ziya Öniş claims that "the cultural globalization may help us to explain why parties with a strong religious or fundamentalist orientation have a chance of electoral success in the historical conjuncture" (1997). The most important product of these processes was the increasing "decline of nation-state" and change of the traditional settings of politics, that is the left versus the right. This process also made the welfare-state policies such as social security much more difficult than ever. In the process, national labor also gradually lost their bargaining capacity in line with the decrease of domestic corporations' competition ability. Hence, the nation-state was gradually losing control over economic activity within its own borders in an increasingly borderless world, and as Ziya Öniş briefly put it, "the pressures are to relocate authority *upwards* either to supranational or international institutions such as the European Union or the World Trade Organization or to delegate authority *downwards* to local or municipal organizations while the state continues to be the dominant political unit" (1997). Hence, a conundrum took place; on the one hand a sharp decline in the nation-state's ability, the increasing number of the losers who expected protection from their states on the other. Because the globalization process was not only bringing important opportunities to be rich, but also was creating many losers. As a result, because it was almost impossible to face their own people's demands, a sharp decline of the state's ability and its authority became inevitable (Öniş, 1997). This process was much more painful in developing countries like Türkiye stemmed from the fact that the number of losers were over many than the winners. Thenceforwards, neoliberalism in Türkiye brought a stunning chance in not only economic system but also political life: from the state-centric economy to a market-oriented economy or from import-substitution-industrialization model to an export-oriented one. In fact; it was unavoidable espousing neoliberal policies for Türkiye because of her membership and integration to the western bloc at that time (Moudouros, 2014). Basically, at the inception, neoliberal economic system caused decline in social protection instruments and deterioration in welfare distribution in the country. Weakening state ability engendered the dominance of international / multi-national corporations with an unlimited investment opportunity (Öniş, 1997). The result was "a wide political vacuum" in the Turkish political arena. This vacuum presented a manageable occasion for *extreme nationalism* or *religious fundamentalism* given failure of social democratic parties (Öniş, 1997). Briefly; the new economic system not only weakened the left but also fragmented the right. For Öniş;

"Ranged from the parties of the liberal right, representing primarily the interests of the rising bourgeoisie, whose interests increasingly coincide with those of transnational capital, to parties organized along fundamentalist lines catering primarily for the disadvantaged or the excluded segments of society" (1997).

At that point, it should be mentioned again that in the developing countries like Türkiye, the number of loser/disadvantaged or excluded were far more than the winners. Moreover, the cultural globalization brought not only emphasis on individualism, material values, liberal democracy, citizenship and human rights; but also, the acceptance of diversity, the recognition of local and traditional cultures including *religion* which facilitated the "identity politics" (Öniş, 1997). Together with disadvantaged and the poor, even though the rising Islamic bourgeoisie benefited from globalization and neoliberal economic model, they were still viewing themselves as excluded from the real elite of Turkish society. Thus, in this regard, religious politics may be defined as a protest movement encompassing the excluded groups which would constitute a challenge to both left and right-wing parties of the established secular political order (Öniş, 1997). Parallel with the rising income inequality, brought by the globalization and neoliberal economic system, engendered a mass migration from rural areas to the periphery of major cities and the religious movements also benefited from this process by expanding its vote in the urban parts of the country. Resulted from their deep-rooted organizations and ability to penetrate almost all strata of society, religious movements easily and quickly filled the political space by using religious discourse effectively vis-à-vis the

left and center-right. The religious movements became a stimulating power for periphery against the center as a voice of the losers or excluders (Gülalp, 2001).

All in all; it may readily be claimed that the military coup d'état in 1980, parallel with the globalization and neoliberal turn, paved the way for increasing religious politics in the years ahead in Türkiye. By the early1990s, there was another phenomenon which indeed facilitated the rise of religious movements in the Turkish case: the end of the cold-war and new wave of democratization process.

THE END OF COLD-WAR AND DEMOCRATIZATION WAVE IN THE 1990S

In addition to above - mentioned factors, religious movements in Türkiye also benefited from the postmodern *democratization wave* during the 1990s, that is to say; transmission of values conducive to liberal democracy, importance of a strong pluralistic society as well as cultural relativism that recognized the "rights of others" to co-exist (Öniş, 1997). So, this new democratization process opened up public space for religious movements to flourish, a space was not previously available for them. According to Ziya Öniş, the massive Saudi capital and sizeable remittances from migrant workers in Europe contributed to the process of religious resurgence in Turkey (1997). Moreover, the disappointments of the EU membership process and European indifference to atrocities and even genocide against Muslims in Bosnia have also influenced public sentiment and gave the religious movements and parties an opportunity to persuade people by using religious discourse in the early 1990s (Öniş, 1997). Why the Welfare Party has emerged as one of the major political parties in the 1990s may be answered in this context. Although 1961 constitution brought some free space for religiosity, there were other rivals which have the ability to fill the political vacuum of the newly established system. Particularly in the 1970s, there really existed a strong leftist movement together with a rightist-nationalist movement in the political arena of Türkiye. But, both of which had been destroyed by the military between 1980 and 1983. Hence, the junta had paved the way for the rise of religious politics from that point onwards.

The rise continued until "the post-modern coup" in 1997 and ostensibly faltered in a while. This event also known as the 28 February Process which gave very considerable contribution to religious politics in the years ahead by applying unreasonable pressure over religion in not only public field but also private one. For example, head scarved women were prevented from entering into the universities and working in state bureaucracy or establishments. This oppression and constraints in public life created a smoldering anger among almost all of the Turkish people be it secular or religious. Some liberals also reacted those policies by the military in the name of democracy and democratic values. Upon this pressure, even the secularist wing begun to defend their cause for the sake of democracy and democratic values in the late 1990s. Therefore, the 28 February Process, interestingly again, also gave rise to religious movements by means of conducting "excessive pressure" on them. And yet, the religious movements in this period kept taking roots among the people. Upon the 2001 economic crisis in Türkiye, the religious movements found a great opportunity for coming to the office stemmed from the widespread disappointment with the existing political parties. Hence, religious politics culminated in 2002 by the Justice and Development Party's (JDP) electoral victory and coming to the office. Even though there was some slight ups and downs, the JDP gradually increased its vote vis-a-vis the rest and have been winning all of the elections held since then.

CONCLUSION

Until 1980 military coup; even though religious politics in Türkiye had some acquirements before, it was not an explicit reality and not an in assertive character. By the policy preferences military regime seemingly and undoubtedly paved the way for the rise of religious politics. Indeed, the coup played a crucial role in preparation of 2000s Türkiye. The generals' first and foremost goal was to canalize Türkiye into neoliberal line just as her western allies espoused, in order to survive in an ever-globalizing world. To sustain this new orientation; they brought a strong governmental structure which would never be challenged by trade unions or the leftist movements again. By taking into consideration the new economic model's probable negative impacts over society, they tried to use religion as a unifying power in order to create an obedient society and to legitimate their authority. The real reason behind their imposition the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, condonation and even encouragement of the religious activism seems basically that the intention of establishing the neoliberal restructuring. Because neoliberal political system, as mentioned before in detail, postulated a strong government together with a weak and obedient civil society. Consequently, the generals did it by replacing the liberal 1961 constitution with the much more authoritarian 1982 constitution. Almost as soon as the Cold-War ended, a new democratization wave took place. This phenomenon also reinforced religious movements by providing more free space for activism and identity politics. Political vacuum, created by the military regime between 1980 and 1983 by destroying the leftist and nationalist parties, was successfully and even inevitably filled by the religious movements and subsequently religious political parties in the early 1990s by means of their well-institutionalized organizational structure and influence in the society. Disappointment with the European Union process of Türkiye was a coup de grace for the center-right and social democratic parties vis-à-vis religious parties in the 1990s.

There is a clear pattern beginning in the 1980s and regularly increasing in the 1990s and culminating in 2000s. This point shows us how powerful impetus and opportunity were given to the religious politics by the military regime of 1980-1983. As result; one may easily claim that what was reaped in Turkish politics from the early 1990s onwards, was seeded by the military junta in the early 1980s. Given the factors or events mentioned above, together with internal dynamics of the rise, external factors' effects can never be disregarded, perhaps, those are to be accepted as a real determinant behind the rise of the religious politics in Türkiye. Even though the violent years of 1970s undoubtedly affected policy choices of the military regime, it is not sufficient to explain the radical economic and political trajectory change in Türkiye. While the military regime of the 1960 overlooked and the 1970 coup provided a clandestine support to the religious politics, it is possible to claim that the military regime of the 1980, indeed, encouraged religious movements and religious politics either explicitly or tacitly. In brief, it is not a mistake to name the generals of the military regime of 1980 coup as the originators of 2000s Türkiye.

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