

İPM | IPC
İSTANBUL POLİTİKALAR MERKEZİ
SABANCI ÜNİVERSİTESİ KAMPUSU
ISTANBUL POLICY CENTER
AT SABANCI UNIVERSITY

OPPORTUNITIES ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY AFTER JULY 15

PINAR AKPINAR
DERYA BERK

OPPORTUNITIES ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND DEMOCRACY AFTER JULY 15

PINAR AKPINAR

DERYA BERK

April 2017

Pınar Akpınar is a scholar and project manager at the Conflict Resolution and Mediation Stream of Istanbul Policy Center.

Derya Berk is a researcher at the Conflict Resolution and Mediation Stream of Istanbul Policy Center.

About Istanbul Policy Center

Istanbul Policy Center (IPC) is a global policy research institution that specializes in key social and political issues ranging from democratization to climate change, transatlantic relations to conflict resolution and mediation. IPC organizes and conducts its research under three main clusters: The Istanbul Policy Center-Sabancı University-Stiftung Mercator Initiative, Democratization and Institutional Reform, and Conflict Resolution and Mediation. For over a decade, IPC has provided decision makers, opinion leaders, and other major stakeholders with objective analyses and innovative policy recommendations. As an essential part of Sabancı University, IPC strives to foster academic research. The Center extends intellectual and substantive support to young academics and policy researchers through its various programs.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	4
Executive Summary	5
Introduction	7
Research Method	9
Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15	11
Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15	14
Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15	20
State and Military after July 15	23
Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15	24
Turkey's Foreign Policy after July 15	28
Conclusion and Policy Recommendations	31
Appendix 1: List of project workshops	35
Appendix 2: List of interview participants	35
Appendix 3: List of project policy reports	35

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project could not be realized without the kind and invaluable help of several people and institutions. Istanbul Policy Center's Director and Project Advisor E. Fuat Keyman, Conflict Resolution and Mediation Stream Coordinator and Project Advisor Bülent Aras, Financial and Administrative Affairs Coordinator Meryem Kösehasanoğulları, Managing Editor Megan Gisclon, Administrative Affairs Assistant Seray Pulluk, Project Officer Buğrahan Namdar, and Project Assistants Veli Aksoy and Çiğdem Ünal deserve a wholehearted thank you for their precious efforts and contributions. Special appreciation goes to the authors of the project's policy reports, E. Fuat Keyman, Bülent Aras, Metin Gürcan, Cuma Çiçek, Aysen Ataseven, Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Evren Balta, and Altay Atlı for their courage to pen their priceless thoughts amid such difficult times.

The project team also sincerely acknowledges the contributions of the project participants for their constructive efforts in deliberating their ideas to contribute to the project. We thank all the anonymous workshop participants and interviewees for sparing their valuable time for the project. We extend a special thanks to former Minister of Development and Justice and Development Party (AK Party) deputy Cevdet Yılmaz for giving the keynote speech in the workshop in Diyarbakır. We also thank the Turkish Prime Ministry and Foreign Ministry as well as the AK Party, Republican People's Party (CHP), and People's Democratic Party (HDP) deputies for taking the time to answer our questions amid the tight schedule of the constitutional amendment voting process. This report was realized with the exceptional inputs of these contributers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Turkey has been facing a number of challenges recently. The deepening polarization within the country and the growing insecurity in the neighbourhood has aggravated extant conflicts. The 15 July 2016 coup attempt has left Turkey in a state of further uncertainty, creating a conducive environment for conflicts to flourish. This report is the final product of the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project conducted between September 2016 and May 2017 by the Istanbul Policy Center. The project aimed to examine the changing context of the post-coup period, identify the main conflicts, and offer policy recommendations for a strong, cohesive Turkey. This study argues that the shattering of the perceived strong state image and rhetoric and the importance of secularism and meritocracy in maintaining strong institutions have been the most important lessons that could be derived from the experience of the coup attempt. In this regard, it maintains that weak social cohesion and weak institutions are sources of instability and conflict and create a sound base for coup attempts.

The study focused on polarization and the Kurdish question as the two main strands of possible areas of conflict in the country. These two issues have long been drivers of conflict and instability in Turkey. As such, the recent constitutional referendum held on April 16th also revealed how the resolution of these two issues would pave the way for a more stable Turkey. Solid steps towards dialogue, democratization, and coexistence are prerequisites for peace in Turkey. The referendum outcome has demonstrated that there are strong demands for democratization, and within this atmosphere steps should be taken to strengthen the culture of living together.

Based on extensive primary data gathered through five workshops[1] organized in Istanbul, Ankara, and Diyarbakır with about 100 participants and face-to-face interviews[2] with 22 participants from the bureaucracy, academia, civil society, business circles, and the media, the study found that lack of inclusiveness, empathy, representation, strong civil society, and the existence of a polarizing language in political debates come to the fore as the biggest hurdles for conflict resolution and democracy in Turkey. Moreover, all stakeholders indicated the importance of dialogue and deliberation to ensure peace, democracy, and stability in the country.

1 See Appendix 1: List of project workshops.

2 See Appendix 2: List of interview participants.

The project was built on five pillars, which constitute the main conflict zones in Turkey. These are polarization; the ethnic dimension of the Kurdish question; reform and institution building; state, military and foreign policy; and economic reform and inclusive growth. Although these may seem like different areas of study, they are all interconnected and should be given equal consideration in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable resolution of problems.

Polarization overshadows the prospects for inter-group partnerships as a means to overcome current hurdles for peace and democracy in Turkey. The following steps should be taken to overcome polarization:

- Political culture should be based upon mutual understanding and respect for differences. Policies based on the principles of egalitarianism and democracy should be embraced to stimulate confidence in the wider population.
- The media should act ethically, readopt its responsibility as the watchdog of the society, and be cautious with the use of language. Media outlets must be autonomous and impartial.
- Significant responsibility falls with politicians to act prudently and avoid discourse that would instigate conflict. Likewise, polarization should not be used as an instrument for political gains.
- The system of checks and balances should be ensured for equitable power-sharing within the state. Capacity building within state institutions should be prioritised based on equal and fair recruitment processes.

The Kurdish question can potentially initiate political and social unrest in Turkey unless the following points should be taken into consideration:

- Government should draw solid boundaries between Kurdish political and military wings and the Kurdish people to win the hearts of the latter.
- The lack of strong representation of Kurdish people suggests that measures should be taken to promote direct engagement of Kurdish citizens to address their demands, needs, and interests.
- Violence should cease to be used as a tool for political gains both by the state and the PKK. There needs to be mutual ceasefire and an end

to all forms of violence including in physical, psychological, and cultural.

- Peace and security are prerequisites for inclusive economic development of Southeastern Turkey. The region should be seen as an asset that offers great potential for economic development in terms of natural resources, location, and human capital.

The July 15th coup attempt also revealed that Turkey needs urgent reform within the state in terms of institutionalization and capacity building. In this vein:

- Trustbuilding in the judicial system and equal opportunity schemes are necessary to eradicate discrimination and inequality.
- Capacity building and institutionalization are urgent in terms of the reform of state institutions.
- The struggle against FETÖ should target only the people engaged in criminal activities and had verifiable links to the organization. It is crucial not to criminalize people without solid evidence to preserve individual dignity.
- State institutions should be defined and replenished according to the overarching principles of meritocracy, the rule of law, and pluralism. The reform endeavours should focus on extensive institutional arrangements rather than individual ad hoc initiatives.
- There is an urgent need for a new constitution in order to achieve broad-based institutional building. A new constitution should be a social contract aiming to extend universal human rights and freedoms delineated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Copenhagen Criteria.

The failed coup attempt also revealed that the prospects for military intervention have not yet been completely eliminated. In this respect, this study suggests that:

- The balance between civil and military actors should be well established to keep the Armed Forces solely in charge of eliminating the threats to national security.
- The recruitment and training processes of the military personnel should be grounded in the principles of the rule of law and meritocracy.
- Coordination between civil and military administrations should be based upon periodical reporting to the parliament regarding the strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and necessities of the Armed Forces.

The July 15th coup attempt has been a phenomenon with both domestic and international repurcussions. The following points should be taken into consideration with regards to Turkey's foreign policy:

- Polarization is as equally detrimental for foreign policy as it is for domestic policy. As such, policy makers should refrain from instigating polarization in the conduit of foreign policy. Furthermore, foreign policy should not be turned into an instrument of achieveing domestic political gains.
- Turkey should perceive its ties with the Kurds in the region as an asset rather than an obstacle for its foreign policy objectives. It should also regard Kurds in light of cooperation to strike a balance between security and democracy/peace.
- The resumption of the resolution process could be an opportunity for Turkey to heal its tarnished international image as well as its relations with international actors. It would also help Turkey's deadlocked policy in Syria.
- The burden on the Foreign Ministry should be shared, and the culture of consultation and debate should be enhanced among foreign policy actors including the ministry, the Turkish Armed Forces, General Staff, Turkish National Intelligence Organization, and the government.

INTRODUCTION

On 15 July 2016, a bloody attempt of coup d'état was staged in Turkey that targeted not only the government but also the people and the very foundations of the state itself. The coup attempt has revealed that problems can no longer be swept under the rug. One of the most important lessons the coup attempt brought about was that it shattered the perceived strong state image and its rhetoric.[3] The coup attempt has been a horrific and shocking experience for a country like Turkey that claims regional leadership, is involved in an ongoing EU accession process, and has one of the biggest economies in the world. It has become evident that state institutions are susceptible to corrupt practices or infiltration by particular groups. Furthermore, the coup attempt has shown that Turkey's long efforts towards democratization and ending military tutelage proved to be largely futile.[4]

This report, which is the final report of the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project, argues that the existing environment of terror and increased polarization in the country has created a perception of weak social cohesion, producing an environment conducive to the coup attempt. Despite the fact that polarization may be useful for the government in winning elections, it has failed to be instrumental in terms of efficient governance and sustaining existing institutions. Another lesson has been the importance of secularism and meritocracy in maintaining strong state institutions. As such, the coup attempt also revealed that Turkey needs urgent reform within the state in terms of institutionalization and capacity building. It has also become clear that the internalization of a culture of coexistence is the ultimate way out of the conflictual atmosphere.[5]

The outcomes of the 16 April 2017 referendum also revealed that there are now strong demands for the resolution of the Kurdish issue and steps towards achieving societal consensus. A comparison of the outcome of the 1 November 2015 general elections and April 16th referendum demonstrate a significant shift in the amount of Kurdish votes from the HDP to the AK Party, which is indicative of Kurdish demands for a return to normality and dialogue. In this regard, Turkish policy makers should take into account that they are now responsible for the Kurdish population, which is in favour of peace and resolution and is against urban wars and coups. However, they should also note that this is a good-faith deposit and could be taken back in the next elections if the government does not meet Kurdish demands. One positive consequence of the coup attempt has been the emergence of a broad, public consensus among different factions within society on civilian rule as an undisputed norm. The short-lived moment of rare unity confirmed the existence of enthusiasm on the ground for consensus and dialogue. As such, this project also aimed to explore the opportunities vis-à-vis the sustainability of this rare atmosphere of unity through the production of quality information for relevant stakeholders and the promotion of inclusive dialogue.

The Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project focused on the changing context of the post-coup period vis-à-vis polarization and the Kurdish question as the two main strands of possible areas of conflict in Turkey. These two issues, particularly along ethnic and secular-conservative lines, have long been drivers of conflict and instability in Turkey. The project aimed to identify the options in order to harness post-coup dynamics to help address problems and influence policy-makers to adopt those recommendations. The main idea was to analyse these conflicts, identify key denominators, and offer recommendations to help address problems. The project aimed to identify pathways enabling Turkey to steer away from conflict as well as prevent future coup attempts. It also aimed to investigate the possibilities of peaceful transition into the post-conflict period as well as to seek out ways to ensure the sustainability of strong institutions and peace.

This report is the outcome of a multidimensional research project, which aimed to put forth policy recommendations for a stronger and stable Turkey. Based on extensive primary data gathered through five workshops organized in Istanbul, Ankara, and Diyarbakır, involving around 100 participants in total,

3 Bülent Aras, "State, Institutions and Reform in Turkey after July 15th," IPC Policy Paper (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, March 2017); Metin Gürcan, "Never Again! But How? State and the Military in Turkey after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017); E. Fuat Keyman, "The Return to Normality: Possibility of Reconciliation after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017); Aysen Ataseven and Fuat Keyman, "15 Temmuz Sonrası Uzlaşma ve Birlikte Yaşama Olasılığı," IPC Policy Paper (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

4 Cuma Çiçek, "15 Temmuz Sonrası Kürt Meselesi ve Sivil Toplum: Diyalog ve Uzlaşı İmkanları," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, March 2017).

5 Aras, "State, Institutions and Reform in Turkey after July 15th," 3.

and face-to-face interviews with 22 participants from the bureaucracy, academia, civil society, business circles, and the media, the study found that lack of inclusiveness, empathy, representation, strong civil society, and the existence of a polarizing language in political debates have come to the fore as the biggest hurdles for conflict resolution and democracy in Turkey.

The Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project is built on five pillars, which surround the main arenas of conflict in Turkey. These are polarization; the ethnic dimension of the Kurdish question; reform and institution building; state, military, and foreign policy; and economic reform and inclusive growth. Although these may seem like different areas of study, they are all interconnected and should be given equal consideration in order to achieve comprehensive and sustainable resolution of problems. For instance, the findings of the policy report written by Aysen Ataseven and E. Fuat Keyman within the scope of the project demonstrate that reform in state institutions in order to ensure improvement in areas of education and economy is mandatory for progress in human development. According to the report, trustbuilding in the judicial system and equal opportunity schemes are necessary to eradicate discrimination and inequality in Turkey's South-eastern Anatolia region.[6] Altay Atlı also underlines in his policy report that policies based on inclusive growth could help in brining an end to conflict and promote peace in the region.[7] Bülent Aras argues in his policy report that capacity building and institutionalization are urgent matters of reform in state institutions in Turkey.[8] In a similar vein, the findings of the policy report written by Cuma Çiçek demonstrate that democratization, the establishment of strong rule of law, and demilitarization are pertinent matters that need to be tackled in an urgent manner to ensure strong civil society in Turkey.[9]

The July 15th coup attempt influenced and exacerbated the ongoing conflicts within the country. Therefore, the need to determine and discuss the existing and emerging problems has become even more urgent given the fragility of the political and social situation in the country. The project brought together prominent figures to examine these issues and offer sustainable solutions. Surprisingly, all stakeholders indicated the importance of dialogue and deliberation to ensure peace, democracy, and stability in the country. This report provides an outline of the findings of the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project in order to provide a humble, constructive contribution to the existing debates on post-July 15th Turkey.

6 Ataseven and Keyman, "Diyarbakır Sur'da Yaşanan Olayların Kent Ekonomisine Etkilerinin Analizi."

7 Altay Atlı, "Healing the Wounds: Turkey's Quest for Inclusive Economic Growth," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

8 Aras, "State, Institutions and Reform in Turkey after July 15th," 5.

9 Çiçek, "15 Temmuz Sornası Kürt Meselesi ve Sivil Toplum," 3.

RESEARCH METHOD

The Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project was designed as a qualitative research project aiming to increase awareness and enhance dialogue through conflict identification, analysis, and resolution by conducting field research, organizing workshops, promoting discussion, and disseminating information. The data was gathered from workshop proceedings, interviews, field observations, and secondary materials.

In total, five workshops were organized in Ankara, Istanbul, and Diyarbakır between December 2016 and March 2017. About 20 participants were brought together in each workshop to discuss specific issues related to research topics.[10] The research subjects participating in the workshops were selected according to their expertise or experience among high-level representatives of the bureaucracy, academia, civil society, political parties, and media circles through snowball sampling. All workshop participants are cited anonymously except for Cevdet Yılmaz, whose keynote speech in the first session of the workshop "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" was open to the press. The remaining parts of this workshop and all other workshops were closed, giving participants the opportunity to discuss their viewpoints in free, objective, and confidential spaces.

The workshops consisted of three sessions and began with general discussions in which participants exchanged their general views regarding workshop topics. In the second session, participants were split into small groups of four to five people to conduct group activities geared toward producing policy recommendations. Participants were asked to identify hurdles and solutions for specific problems. For instance, in the workshop "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" participants were asked to identify five main hurdles and offer solutions for overcoming polarization and bringing consensus in Turkey. In the workshop "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th," participants were asked to identify five key areas in need of institutional reform in Turkey. In the workshop "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th," participants were asked to draft a historical timeline of the ten most determinant events of their choice that had led to/affected the Peace Process. They were not restricted with any dates. They were then asked to identify hurdles and solutions.

In addition to their data-generating functions, the activities aimed to encourage cooperation and negotiation by bringing together subjects from different segments of elites. They also aimed to enable the participants to witness how different perceptions and priorities can surface even in such a limited period of time. As such, the activities were designed as conflict resolution activities by enabling the participants to experience in real time how they can reach consensus and produce knowledge in coexistence through cooperation. In the final sessions participants shared the findings of their group activities and developed policy recommendations. They also had the opportunity to share their final comments and ideas.

In addition to the workshops, the project personnel conducted semi-structured, in-depth, face-to-face interviews with 22 participants in Ankara and Diyarbakır, each lasting about 45 to 60 minutes.[11] From the bureaucracy, we were able to interview former ministers and current bureaucrats from key state institutions such as the Prime Ministry and Foreign Ministry. All of the interviewed state officials preferred to remain anonymous. We also interviewed various deputies such as Selina Doğan and Sezgin Tanrıkulu from the oppositional Republican People's Party (CHP), Ayhan Bilgen from the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), and a former deputy from the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) who preferred to remain anonymous. In addition, representatives from academia, civil society, and business circles were also interviewed in Diyarbakır.

Workshop and interview data were recorded, transcribed, coded, and analysed in order to generate certain themes on which the project publications were built. While five of the project topics were preconceived based on initial hypotheses and suggestions from project experts, others such as the "Kurdish issue and civil society" and "human development" were generated during the course of the research. The primary data gathered from the interviews and workshops were also shared with the project's experts, Bülent Aras, E. Fuat Keyman, Senem Aydın-Düzgit, Evren Balta, Metin Gürcan, Cuma Çiçek, Aysen Ataseven, and Altay Atlı, to be used during the writing of their policy reports,

10 See Appendix 1: List of project workshops.

11 Interviews in Ankara were conducted by Coordinator of the Conflict Resolution and Stream at IPC Bülent Aras and Project Manager of Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project Pınar Akpınar, and in Diyarbakır by Akpınar and Project Researcher Derya Berk.

which were published within the scope of this project.[12] The report also relied on field observation and data gathered from informal talks during the course of the project. The secondary materials used were reports, newspapers, commentaries, academic writings, and policy reports. The findings from the analysis of secondary materials were used to cross-examine the research findings from the workshops and interviews in order to minimize probable biases.

The research process was not without its challenges and limitations. Some interview candidates refused to participate in the project due to concerns over career prospects or ideological stances. For instance, MHP refused to participate in the project on the grounds that they had an institutional embargo on events or projects related to the Kurdish issue. Only one former MHP deputy accepted to be interviewed on the condition of anonymity. Two workshops organized in Istanbul on January 17th and 18th ("Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" and "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th") received limited participation from deputies due to the constitutional amendment voting process, which was underway in Ankara during that week. Another hardship faced was ensuring gender balance. Although we tried to invite as many female participants as possible it was difficult to find female representatives among senior bureaucrats. This was indeed a significant piece of data in itself since it exposed the urgency of gender mainstreaming in the state bureaucracy.

Against this background, the following sections will put forth a summary of the main project findings under the topics discussed above, followed by policy recommendations.

12 See Appendix 3: List of project policy reports.

POLARIZATION, CONSENSUS AND DEMOCRACY AFTER JULY 15

The concept of polarization has been highly debated in Turkey in recent years, particularly since the July 15th coup attempt. Tension around these discussions has been heightened as a result of the constitutional referendum that was held on 16 April 2017. Data gathered during the course of the project revealed two sides of the polarization debate in Turkey. While a small group of participants, many of whom are state officials or members of partliament (MPs), argued that there is no significant polarization in Turkey, and polarization is rather fuelled by provokers or in times by the media, a majority of participants underlined the existence of polarization in Turkey along political, ethnic, religious, and/or sectarian lines.

The group of participants refusing the claim of polarization in Turkey maintained that Turkey is a country with a multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural heritage. Thus, citizens from diverse backgrounds are accustomed to living together. For instance, one bureaucrat argued that Turkey is able to stand as a melting pot for all colours including the pious and the infidel, the secular and the non-secular, the Christian and the Jew. In a similar vein, another bureaucrat indicated that as a result of its imperial past, people in Turkey are used to co-existing. As such, differences are not perceived as a threat to the social atmosphere in the country, and the society is not as divided as portrayed.

A participant in the "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" workshop specified that the polarization debate can be observed among the elite, politicians, and media outlets, while it is not that evident among the people on the street. In a similar vein, another participant also indicated that the change of power from secular to conservative elite at the bureaucracy most probably created tension across other social domains. An academic from Diyarbakır argued that although there is a certain level of polarization in the country, people are more moderate today compared to the 1960s or 1970s when armed conflict between ideological groups was widespread. Furthermore, one bureaucrat who was interviewed underlined that polarization on the societal level is witnessed mainly in occasional events that are largely provoked and non-repetitive such as the Sivas Massacre[13]. By drawing attention to the relative hospitality of the Turkish people towards Syrians, the same bureaucrat, as well as a participant of the workshop from the United Kingdom, argued that no country other than Turkey would be able to absorb such huge number of Syrians without major societal disputes.

Nevin İl, chair of the Association for Business Women in the East and Southeast (DOGÜNKAD) and boardmember of the Diyarbakır Industry and Businesspeople Association (DİSİAD), indicated that early signs of polarization began to accelerate during the June 7th and November 1st elections in 2015. According to a former MHP deputy, polarization existed even before the coup attempt. He further argued that polarization decreased after the coup attempt as evident in the emergence of the 'Yenikapı spirit', which was regarded as a positive step towards the elimination of polarization. He maintained that polarization was highly exploited during the Gezi events, which was evident in Turkish President (then Prime Minister) Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's infamous words, "We can barely keep the 50 percent at home."[14]

The participants who argued that polarization exists in Turkey underlined that it is most evident along the Kurdish-Turkish, secular-conservative, Alawite-Sunni divides. As outlined by one of the participants during the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, although the July 15th coup attempt created a brief moment of unity based on a common stance against the coup, this had been a short-lived moment. For instance, former Advisor at Diyarbakır Municipality Şerif Derince maintained that the post-coup atmosphere offered opportunities for the government to reconcile with the opposition and establish well-grounded relations in order to resolve the existing economic, social, and political problems in the country. Several participants of the workshop also agreed that the July 15th coup attempt was a missed opportunity in terms of consolidating the rare spirit of societal unity and the transfer of societal problems into the political domain. Instead, it has turned into a symbol of polarization that surfaced under the dichotomy of "us" versus "them."

13 The Sivas Massacre refers to the demonstrations surrounding The Madimak Hotel where many Alevi intellectuals were staying for the Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Turkey's central province of Sivas. On July 2, 1993, these events caused the killing of 37 people including intellectualls, two hotel employees, and two people from the demonstrators.

14 "Turkish PM Gets Into Row with Reuters Reporter Over Taksim Protests," *Hurriyet Daily News,* June 3, 2013, accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-gets-into-row-with-reuters-reporter-over-taksim-protests.aspx?pageID=238&nID=48101&NewsCatID=338.

According to CHP Deputy Selina Doğan, polarization is currently the most pressing issue in Turkey. She further noted that despite its escalation since June 7th elections, polarization has taken an institutional form since the declaration of the state of emergency on 20 July 2016. Doğan postulated that instead of being expanded, freedom of speech has been further restrained after the coup attempt through the state of emergency measures by creating a more oppressive environment. She argued that since July 15, Turkey has been governed by executive decrees that render the parliament effectively non-operational. Doğan also drew attention to a survey conducted in December 2017 that revealed that the majority of people do not even want to be neighbours with people who believe in a different ideology.[15] She suggested that ceasing to use polarizing language and instead using a political discourse that will seek consensus within society is a mandatory practice in tackling polarization.

Interviewed deputies from oppositional parties and several participants from Diyarbakır argued that polarization is fuelled and exploited by the government as a political tool. For instance, Ayhan Bilgen contended that in the post-coup period, polarization has turned into a style of governance. In this view, the government uses polarization as a means of consolidating and manipulating its voter base through psychological operations, which is seen as highly risky for peace in the country. According to one bureaucrat, in order to overcome polarization, there is a need for actors to act constructively. In a similar vein, another bureaucrat underpinned that it is not right to raise one's voice as an investment for elections. As such, politicians should act prudently and refrain from destructive discourses.

Project data revealed that the lack of empathy and developing stereotypes about others based on their cultural, religious, or political backgrounds are some of the main reasons instigating polarization in Turkey both on the societal and political levels. During the workshop "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th," an anonymous academic maintained that moralization of opinions and preferences instigate the problems of otherization and exclusion within the ingroup-outgroup dynamics. For instance, people are in general inclined to think that their political, ideological, social, or religious position is ideal. In this respect, the proclivity of the groups to live in relatively isolated neighbourhoods and socialize with likeminded acquaintances fuels polarization. It was also underlined that people on each side of the political spectrum are inclined to ignore the mistakes of their ideological fellows. In doing so, political figures moralize certain political positions to prove their ideological superiority over their adversaries.

The media was also underpinned as a significant polarizing agent in Turkey during the project. It was maintained that media outlets manipulate the public around certain discourses. For instance, during the "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" workshop the media and some media figures were criticized for providing politically biased information and violating media ethics. It was also indicated that conventional media outlets and particular users of social media networks funnel their followers into respective self-confirming loops. One workshop participant and an interviewed bureaucrat argued that the anonymity on social media gives people an artificial courage within a fake, virtual reality that has no reflection in real life. Throughout the project, several participants also underlined the lack of media freedom as a serious problem for consensus and democracy.

Constant waves of elections were also underpinned as a polarizing agent during the project. The "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" workshop participants specified that constant waves of elections in Turkey have increased the use of populism as a political tool. Turkey has been through five elections in the last three years, which has created electoral fatigue and instigated polarization. The high number of elections in recent years also fed into the dichotomy of those who support or oppose the AK Party. Similarly, Vahap Coşkun argued that the supporters or opponents of the constitutional amendment reduce system change into a matter of survival, which further polarizes people.

The referendum process in Turkey, aiming to change the constitution and the system towards a presidential one, was also underlined as a polarizing factor during the project. For instance, a participant of the "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th" workshop and Bayram Bozyel, Vice Chair of Kurdistan Socialist Party (PSK), indicated that the spirit of consensus had been short-lived due to the introduction of the presidential campaign. CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu also maintained that the fact that the government has brought up the presidential discussions in the aftermath of the coup attempt and during the state of emergency have further fuelled polarization. Accordingly, Şerif Derince reiterated that the April 16th referendum process could increase the tension between the secular and the conservative segments of society. In a

15 İpek Yezdani, "Kutuplaşma Vahim Boyutta," *Hürriyet,* February 1, 2016, accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kutuplasma-vahim-boyutta-40048144.

similar vein, Aydın-Düzgit and Balta argue that societal polarization is fuelled by populist leaders *inter alia* via "majoritarian instruments such as referenda rather than a system which prioritises checks and balances."[16] In this view, referenda are used as opportunities to further polarize people for exerting political interests.

Şerif Derince asserted that polarization gradually increased to concerning levels over the last three years. He added that the political parties base their policy-making processes upon polarization of the people along Turkish-Kurdish and secular-conservative divides. It was also stated by some other project participants that the political culture in Turkey is excludes people outside mainstream social groups. For instance, during the group activity in the "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, one of the groups maintained that the representation of political parties in Turkey is highly questionable given the limited number of women, ethnic, and religious groups such as the Kurds, Alawites, or Armenians participating.

CHP Deputy Selina Doğan argued that religion is being exploited for political interests. In this view, the fact that many schools have been converted into *İmam Hatip* high schools (religious high schools) is an indication that imams and teachers operate in coordination with each other and that public institutions are in service of a certain ideology. During the discussions on polarization along secular-conservative lines, it was argued by some research participants that religion could be both the cause and remedy of polarization. As such, it was indicated that vast responsibility rests with the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey (*Diyanet*) in terms of tackling polarization and building consensus among people.

Several participants highlighted the debates over New Year's celebrations as a case in which polarization between the secular and conservative camps in Turkey became extremely visible. While some participants underlined that the criticism raised by the Presidency of Religious Affairs about New Year's celebrations before the 2017 New Year served to polarize people along religious lines, one bureaucrat argued that it is unlikely that the Presidency's sermons would polarize people. He notes that the Presidency's statements are in line with its responsibility to inform people about religious practices and traditions. He adds that it makes many statements during the *Ramadan* as well on issues such as extravagance or luxurious *iftars*.

It was underlined by some participants that the shooting attack in Reina nightclub on New Year's Eve perpetrated by the Islamic State (ISIS) also steered debates regarding different ways of life. Bayram Bozyel stated that ISIS intentionally touched upon the nerves of society in order to ideologically polarize people over lifestyle discussions. Similarly, CHP deputy Selina Doğan argued that the events around the Reina attack such as the arrest of two youngsters who called on the people to stand for secularism against the jihadists at a café or the Presidency's statements that criticized New Year's celebrations before the attack are indicated as moves that deepen polarization. She further noted that despite the fact that Article 216 of the Turkish Penal Code criminalizes the provocation of sections of the population towards enmity or hatred, two youngsters were arrested for calling on the people to stand for secularism against the jihadists in the aftermath of the Reina attack.[17] By referring to the same event, CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu argued that such strict measures were never seen in Turkey before and that this is an indication that the judiciary has turned into an instrument of polarization.

16 Senem Aydın-Düzgit and Evren Balta, "Turkey After the July 15th Coup Attempt: When Elites Polarize over Polarization," *IPC Policy Report* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017), 6. Please also see, Marc J. Hetherington and Jonathan D. Weiler, *Authoritarianism and Polarization in American Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

17 "Two Appearing in Viral 'Secularism' Video Arrested in İstanbul," *Hurriyet Daily News,* January 4, 2017, accessed April 14, 2017, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/two-appearing-in-viral-secularism-video-arrested-in-istanbul-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=108124&NewsCatID=341.

KURDISH QUESTION AND DEMOCRACY AFTER JULY 15

The Kurdish question is one of the most pressing issues needing urgent resolution in order to ensure consensus and democracy in Turkey. The resolution of the Kurdish issue would have a positive impact on the consolidation of democracy in Turkey since it touches upon the issues of basic rights and civil liberties. As such, the resolution of the Kurdish question would have a direct impact on the resolution of several other issues in Turkey. As also underlined by Nevin İl, the coup attempt was in a way a strike on the resolution process itself.

Several research participants underpinned that Kurdish people feel unrepresented by the state, the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the armed militant wing of the Kurdish movement in Turkey. Furthermore, it was underlined that the vision proposed by the PKK is based on a one-party, socialist, archaic system and fails to cope with the realities of the current international order in an increasingly globalized world. Interestingly, the idea of a one-party system proposed by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) fails to offer a very different alternative. As such, the needs, interests, and concerns of the Kurdish people are unmet. This has become even more apparent after the coup attempt due to the HDP's failure to demonstrate a firm stance against the coup. As indicated by one of the participants, the government also failed to expand this new political space to open more room for Kurds. Instead they preferred to exclude and isolate the HDP from the debates and decision-making processes. Although, this was claimed to be a stance against the HDP and the PKK, the Kurdish people arguably felt offended and isolated as well. On the other hand, Şerif Derince indicated that the government did not consult Kurdish people who themselves were victims of the coup. It was also underlined during the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop that both the government and the PKK are oversensitive towards criticism and expect absolute obedience from the Kurdish people.

The argument that the HDP was dismissed from the Yenikapı process was disapproved by interviewed bureaucrats and AKP deputies who argued that it was the HDP itself that preferred to remain outside. In a similar fashion, it was underpinned by a research participant that the fact that its co-chair Selahattin Demirtaş did not attend the meeting at the parliament in the aftermath of the coup attempt was a missed opportunity for the HDP in terms of reconciliation. Similarly, Vahap Coşkun, an academic from Dicle University, noted that HDP's uncooperative attitude gave the MHP an upper hand to fill in the oppositional vacuum during the constitutional process. Subsequently, Turkey is now faced with a constitutional proposal that was drafted by a right-wing coalition.

As argued by a participant of the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, the state has a responsibility and moral duty towards its Kurdish citizens to honour the social contract between the state and society regardless of other factors. Research participants underlined that Kurdish people feel like they are trapped in a situation in which they cannot trust either the Kurdish authorities or the Turkish state. One of the participants of the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop indicated that some of the steps taken by the AKP government were against the decisions taken in the parliament. For instance, the government appointed trustees to municipalities in Eastern Turkey shortly after all four parties agreed to withdraw the proposal in the parliament. This was considered a clash on democracy and created a perception that an all-out war was set out against the HDP as the political wing of the Kurdish movement. It was argued by one of the participants that this aggressive move undermined the concerns and goodwill of the Kurdish people who had stood against the coup and against the PKK's "urban wars" in the aftermath of the June 7th elections and who had demonstrated solid support for the peace process.

On the contrary, it was emphasized by a bureaucrat that the government's reaction was in no way against the Kurdish citizens themselves but rather against the Kurdish authorities who abused the resolution process. He blamed the HDP for not attending the court trials, turning a blind eye to terrorist actions, burying bombs in ditches, and letting terrorists use their official vehicles. In a similar vein, another bureaucrat argued that the trustees were appointed because the municipalities failed to serve the people and they were under the control of the PKK. He argued that instead of using the space of comfort opened for them by the state for mutual dialogue and peace, the PKK planted bombs in city centres and propagated against Turkey from international platforms.

During the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, participants underlined that class dynamics play an important role in the Kurdish issue as

well as in the overall problem of polarization in Turkey. As such, there is a new political imagination among the emergent Turkish and Kurdish middle class who have greater economic, social, and political expectations from the state and the Kurdish leadership. Furthermore, an academic from Diyarbakır underlined that Kurds are now more aware of possible opportunities that could be exploited through cross-border interaction with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq or other regional actors. Accordingly, there is now less interest in ideological aspirations and more demand towards stability. Both politically and sociologically, there is need for a new, innovative approach with a peaceful attitude towards a common future in Turkey.

Leaders' sincerity and commitment play a crucial role in conflict resolution, as was witnessed in the Irish or Colombian peace processes. The Kurdish peace process lack such strong leadership and commitment both on the Turkish and the Kurdish sides.[18] As underlined by an academic from Diyarbakır, the fact that the Kurdish leadership failed to give a central role to the political wing adversely affects the prospects for resolution. An academic from Diyarbakır indicated that the HDP constitutes the peripheral force of the Kurdish movement while Qandil/Imrali represents the centre, which unlike their Kurdish counterparts in other countries. Therefore, unless the HDP is placed in the centre and Qandil/Imrali on the periphery, the prospects for resolution and the elimination of the armed struggle would be unlikely. Therefore, it was underlined that the HDP lost the opportunity to strengthen the political wing of the Kurdish movement vis-à-vis the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK) administration because the former could not openly criticize and oppose the latter's faulty decision to continue the armed struggle within the residential areas of Kurdish cities.

According to one bureaucrat in Ankara, the post-coup opportunity for rapprochement between the political parties still exists because the leaders carefully used embracing language although the CHP administration abandoned their initial positive attitude. On the one hand, Selina Doğan criticized the government for avoiding parliamentarian resolutions and mobilizing its parliamentary majority to pursue their own political agenda, which is frequently dominated by the presidential palace. On the other hand, a former MHP deputy emphasized the unpredictability of the ruling AKP leadership for seeking conjectural partnerships though elections. An academic from Diyarbakır underlined that because of the government's Islamic and nationalist background it did not completely grasp the intellectual, ideological, political, and administrative requirements to resolve the Kurdish issue because identity-based claims did not resonate within their ideological framework.

During the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, it was underlined by one participant that despite the fact that terrorism is often regarded as a military issue, it actually consists of multiple dimensions and is an "eco-system" of which we are all part. The research participants underpinned that the Kurdish question emerged as a result of a state policy of denial, because the Kurdish identity, which has political, social, cultural, and educational undertones, has been subdued since the beginning of the Republican period.[19] As such, it is important to pull the issue out of the dichotomies of "us/them", "kill/get killed" or "victory/defeat". While these dichotomies may help create so-called military victories, they hamper the peace process by promoting win-lose perceptions. Sustainable peace, on the other hand, needs to be built upon win-win strategies where all sides are satisfied with the final outcome. Moreover, overemphasis on the military dimension overlooks the societal dimension as well as the needs, interests, concerns, and demands of the grassroots. On the other hand, participants underlined that there is a strong will among Kurdish people towards a peaceful resolution. According to the polls conducted in Turkey's Eastern region during the peace process, support had reached over 80%[20]. It was the closest experience to a resolution. As such, the decrease in deaths, increase in economic prospects, and the establishment of peace created a perception that the region can prosper, develop, flourish, and peace can be established.

It was also highlighted that since the coup attempt, there has a growing perception of an existential threat to the state. This perception of existential threat, *inter alia,* has increased the securitization of problems such as the Kurdish issue, which has hampered possible opportunities for dialogue. For instance, one bureaucrat underlined concerns that there may be some level of collaboration between FETÖ (Turkish acronym for

18 For more on this please see, Simon A. Waldman and Emre Çalışkan, *The New Turkey and Its Discontents* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2017), 187-188.

19 Metin Heper argues that it was not denial but non-recognition of Kurdish ethnicity by the Turkish state. Metin Heper, *The State and the Kurds: The Question of Assimilation* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 162-163.

20 "Çözüm Sürecine Destek Yüzde 84,7," *Bianet*, November 3, 2014, accessed April 12, 2017, http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/159660-cozum-surecine-destek-yuzde-84-7.

Fethullah Terrorist Organization) and the PKK.[21] In rebuttal, an attorney and human rights activist from Diyarbakır stated that it was the government itself that appointed the FETÖ-linked police officers, judges, and governors who played an active role in the collapse of the reconciliation process and the launch of the KCK operations. The subsequent armed struggle between the PKK militants and security forces created irreversible physical and psychological damages to the region. In this spirit, Nevin İl contended that the damage could have been controlled had the authorities been more alert about the transfer of weapons and other materials. It was also mentioned by several participants in Diyarbakır that the PKK should abandon armed struggle and acts of terrorism.

The Kurdish people initially expected restoration of the Peace Process in the post-coup period. However, as was maintained by Ahmet Özmen, President of Diyarbakır Bar Association, that the emergency rule and statutory decrees negatively affected the HDP and the Kurdish people despite their support for elimination of the parallel structures within the state apparatus. Adversely, a participant in the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop stated that it was the Kurdish people, who openly demanded extradition of the leader of the organization behind the coup to Turkey prior to July 15, who are now punished. The research participants in Diyarbakır indicated that these very structures victimized the Kurdish people in the 1990s. Yet, the HDP politicians were detained and some were imprisoned, and most of the municipalities of the HDP were delegated to the trustees appointed in the post-coup period. The research participants underlined that the associations, foundations, and labour unions associated with the Kurds or the Kurdish movement were criminalized through statutory decrees. Şerif Derince added that the cultural and social projects of the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality were closed and discontinued by the trustees. Therefore, it was emphasized that Kurds perceived the emergency rule and statutory decrees as political tools to suppress the opposition, especially the Kurds.

Some research participants, on the other hand, maintained that the rapprochement between the government and the Kurdish political wing adversely affected security in the country. In an attempt to justify the security policies, one bureaucrat admitted that there is a perception that the state prioritized security over resolution. However, as the bureaucrat explained, it is the state's responsibility to provide the people in the region with security and explain to them that the current situation is in their best interest. Another bureaucrat underlined that although the state took significant steps to resolve the Kurdish question, the PKK abused their good intentions for power. In this spirit, a former MHP deputy indicated that the "Peace Process" was in fact a "Dissolution Process" in which the government realised its mistake and that this is indeed a problem of terror that could only be resolved through security measures.

Participants underlined that the Kurdish issue is tied to the problem of democracy in Turkey, which has further deteriorated after July 15th. The move towards a one-party state, the malfunction of democracy, the deterioration of state institutions, and the decline of judicial independence have deepened the democratic rift. One participant indicated that since July 15th not only Kurds but anyone who is critical of the government has been silenced or seen with suspicion. CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu noted that the mass arrests and suspensions have created a massive number of victims across Turkey, which is likely to turn into a conflict bigger than the Kurdish issue in the long run. He also underpinned that while the Kurdish issue used to be contained in a certain region of Turkey, it is now scattered across the country. The Gülenists, in this view, are much stronger than Kurds due to their highly skilled human capacity. According to Tanrıkulu, working towards rapid normalization, taking concrete democratic steps and bringing an end to initiatives that would turn Turkey into an authoritarian regime, such as the presidential system, are necessary to overcome polarization. Bayram Bozyel and Şerif Derince also contended that the environment in the country is not adequate for openly expressing political views given that the main actors of the Kurdish politics were imprisoned.

It was indicated by an academic from Diyarbakır that all Kurdish movements including the HÜDAPAR, HAK-PAR, and the HDP, among others, demand cultural rights such as education in mother tongue, official recognition of Kurdish language, and decentralization. Similarly, the findings of Çiçek's research demonstrated that Kurdish people demand the constitutional guarantee of their existence and identity, improvement on economic and social welfare standards of the region, and definition of the legal status of all actors involved in the Kurdish issue including

21 "Tutuklanan terörist PKK/FETÖ ilişkisini anlattı," Anadolu Ajansı, September 8, 2016, accessed April 14, 2017, http://aa.com.tr/tr/turkiye/tutuklanan-terorist-pkk-FETÖ-iliskisini-anlatti/643162.

the combatants.[22] An academic also indicated that the most significant component of Kurdish identity was the sacrifices they made, which politicized their ethnic awareness because victimization of the Kurds consistently reinforces the PKK vis-à-vis the state. In this respect, it was maintained that the consolidation of pluralist democracy would fortify the legitimacy of the state vis-a-vis other actors. On the other hand, it was argued by a bureaucrat that despite all the problems, Turkey hosts the largest Kurdish population in the world that lives in relative peace. Similarly, a former MHP deputy argued that Kurdish citizens are able to enjoy equal opportunities in Turkey with their Turkish counterparts.

The deepened polarization has, *inter alia*, had a negative effect on the Kurdish peace process. An academic from Diyarbakır underlined that the division between the Kurds and the people from the secular and conservative Turkish right had deepened since the collapse of the Peace Process. It was cautioned that the Kurdish people in conflict zones chose to move to smaller Kurdish towns instead of Western Turkey. An attorney and human rights activist argued that the Kurds are disappointed with the people in other parts of country since they did not oppose the tight measures taken by the government during the Sur process.[23] Therefore, the fault lines between the Turks and the Kurds become increasingly more divided. Bayram Bozyel, on the other hand, indicated that the Turkish people are now more sympathetic to the ethno-cultural demands of the Kurds than in the 1990s.

Another problem stems from the definition and character of the conflict surrounding the Kurdish issue. While some consider it a problem of democracy, others see it as a problem of terror. As argued by one of the participants of the "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" workshop, even the word "peace" is often seen as synonymous with "terror". Supporters of peace are seen with suspicion and in times even accused of supporting terror. This has been the case with the Academics for Peace Petition in which several academics were expelled from their jobs and/or persecuted for signing a petition calling for peace between the government and Kurdish groups.[24]

22 Çiçek, "15 Temmuz Sornası Kürt Meselesi ve Sivil Toplum," 3.

23 "Turkey: State Blocks Probes of Southeast Killings," Human Rights Watch, July 11, 2016, accessed April 14, 2017, https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/11/turkey-state-blocks-probes-southeast-killings.

24 "Solidarity with Purged Academics for Peace in Turkey," Academics For Peace, March 22, 2017, accessed April 4, 2017, https://barisicinakademisyenler.net/English.

Civil society actors and opinion leaders could positively transform the conflict resolution processes. An academician from the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop also contended that civil society organizations could not intervene in the crises between the government and the Kurdish political movement because they were closely engaged with politics. Vahap Coşkun also underlined the lack of effective mechanisms to facilitate sustainable settlement of the Kurdish issue. It was stated that the judicial infrastructure did not allow civil society to fulfil its objectives although such actors play facilitating roles complementing the political processes. Selina Doğan, on the other hand, indicated that they did not know the reasons for the collapse of the Reconciliation Process because the negotiations were not transparent. A businesswoman during the workshop in Diyarbakır stated that people with no political affiliation were excluded because the highly politicized nature of politics in the region does not accommodate diversity.

An academician in Diyarbakır indicated that the people in South-eastern Turkey did not support the city wars because they preferred democratic processes and negotiated settlement over armed conflict. In this spirit, a bureaucrat indicated that the process could nevertheless be resumed if the required conditions are created. The fact that the process was "frozen" and not terminated is critical and signals goodwill on the part of the government. Furthermore, according to one bureaucrat the resolution process could be resumed and major, rapid steps could be taken after the removal of FETÖ-linked structures in the state apparatus. In this spirit, Ayhan Bilgen claimed that the state's motivation will be tested after the struggle with FETÖ, which is a major alleged obstacle for the resolution, has ended. Civil society could play a key role in this resolution; opinion leaders from the region could be brought in to resume the former peace process. However, another bureaucrat contended that the Turkish state cannot resume the process with an entity that has been unable to put distance between itself and terror/weapons.

Timeline Activity

During the activity, participants identified the Turkish state, the PKK, the HDP, and the Kurdish people as the primary actors of the peace process. On the other hand, during our research in Diyarbakır, it was underlined by some of the participants that the HDP was more of a facilitator and not a primary actor of the resolution process. For instance, Sezgin Tanrıkulu indicated that while Erdoğan and Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned leader of the PKK, were the primary

actors of the process, the HDP carried information between the parties and certain units such the government, Kandil, Brussels, and İmralı. In addition to these actors, two participants mentioned the Turkish people as an important actor that is often neglected. This was deemed unfortunate since it is difficult to achieve sustainable peace without including societal actors as has recently been the case with the Colombian peace process. It was also underlined that there is lack of civilian leadership among Turkish people due to the weakening of civil society. As such, it was suggested that in order to ensure the socialization of peace, people in the western part of the country should also own and lead the process. However, this seems rather unlikely for now due to the stringency of everyday politics. The closure of NGOs and civil society institutions were highlighted as elements that add insult to injury. In this regard, strong civilian leadership was deemed necessary to ensure the socialization of peace.

The earliest event that was underscored during the activity was Erdoğan's acknowledgement of the Kurdish question during his address in Diyarbakır on January 28, 2005. His address was highlighted by two different groups for its soothing impact on the tense atmosphere and for paving the way for the Oslo Negotiations that took place in 2009. Subsequently, the Oslo Negotiations were listed by two groups as another important step towards resolution. It was indicated that the negotiations were effective in ensuring ceasefire and dialogue among the military and intelligence wings of the two sides and for paving the way for the İmralı Talks. Three groups identified 2009 as an important year paving the way for the official peace process. As such, Beşir Atalay's press statement that gave the green light to the peace process, the induction of the government's Democratic Opening process/National Unity and Brotherhood Process, and the Alawite-non-Muslim Workshops promoted by the government were listed as the important events of 2009.

The initiation of the İmralı process was mentioned by three groups as a new hope for dialogue and ceasefire. It was also underlined that the talks were important in consolidating the leadership of Öcalan. His subsequent letter, which was read by HDP MPs Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Pervin Buldan during 2013 Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır, was underpinned by all five groups as a significant landmark with respect to its power to end the military struggle, consolidate ceasefire, and draw a perspective for peace, especially by preparing the AKP's voter base to such an end. Öcalan's Newroz letter was the only event that all five groups listed, hence demonstrating its significance.

Another important development that was underlined by three different groups was the establishment of "the Committee of Wise People" in 2013 as part of the psychological operation undertaken by the government to prepare society for a possible peace. The commission consisted of 63 opinion leaders including academics, celebrities, journalists, businessmen, and other important and popular figures from seven geographical regions in Turkey. Participants underlined that the initiative had a highly positive impact on public perceptions towards peaceful resolution of the conflict and underpinned its impact on the socialization of the peace processes.

The Islamic State's siege of the Kurdish city of Kobane in Syria and the Kurdish struggle thereafter were listed as other milestones by four groups. It was noted that the Kobane events resulted in a disengagement between the AKP and the Kurds and surfaced as a stumbling block for the Peace Process. It was also emphasized that the events united the Kurdish people against government measures. Participants emphasized that despite the AKP's goodwill, particularly in reference to permitting the Peshmerga to cross into the Turkish soil to reach Kobane, the process could have been better managed. Furthermore, the events of 6-7 October 2014, the HDP's call to take to the street in protest, and the subsequent death of 51 people resulted in a crisis of trust among Kurdish people.

The 7 June 2015 elections were highlighted as another landmark by four different groups during the activity. Participants indicated that the elections widened the rift between the AKP and the HDP/PKK, increased tension, and resulted in a loss of trust between the parties. It was underlined that the HDP's harsh stance against the AKP and particularly against Erdoğan coupled with Selahattin Demirtaş's campaign motto, "We will not let you become President", failed to serve the peace process since the presidential system could actually play out towards the resolution of the problem. As such, the HDP was criticized for building its election strategy solely upon AKP animosity. One businessman from the workshop in Diyarbakır and Bayram Bozyel indicated that the Suruç attack before the June 7th elections and the murder of two police officers in its aftermath debilitated the Peace Process. The expectations for the resolution gradually diminished as the ditch wars resulted in the loss of many lives and destruction of the main cities of South-eastern Turkey. To that end, it was noted that the elections marked the end of hope and the resumption of the conflict.

One of the common themes that came to the fore during the activity was the lack of consensus between the parties regarding a coherent roadmap. The 'Dolmabahçe Agreement' was given as an example by two groups, and also by several research participants, as a missed opportunity. It was underlined that both the government and the HDP were either unaware of or reluctant to recognize the priorities, needs, and suggestions of each other during the talks. As such, the Agreement meant different things for each group. For instance, CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu also indicated during his interview that Erdoğan is not motivated to resolve the Kurdish question because he considered the issue as a matter of political interest. Tanrıkulu contended that the AKP and the HDP did not seek to resolve the issue in the parliament where they could involve the CHP in the process. The AKP, in fact, excluded the CHP while the HDP could not utilize its leverage for a parliamentary-based settlement of the Kurdish question. Erdoğan dismissed the HDP and the process as the elections approached. Accordingly, the whole mission collapsed when Erdoğan realized that the peace process would not bring political return. On the other hand, Vahap Coşkun emphasized that the Dolmabahçe Consensus collapsed because it did not offer a prospective timeline and tangible roadmap to tackle significant issues such as the demilitarization of the PKK, the legal status of PKK fighters, and the diaspora Kurds.

The Yenikapı rally, which took place on 7 August 2016 to mark the end of the post-coup Democracy Vigils, was listed as the final event in the groups' timelines. Participants underlined that the creation of the "local and national Yenikapı spirit" left Kurds feeling isolated and marginalized. It thus had a negative impact on the resolution process. The HDP's failure to stand against the coup further complicated the situation leaving Kurds feeling unrepresented both by the state and the HDP. As indicated by one of the participants, the government also failed to expand this new political space to open more room for the Kurds. As such, the needs, interests, and concerns of the Kurdish people are unmet both by the state and the Kurdish authorities. Instead, the government and the main opposition parties preferred to exclude and isolate the HDP from the debates and decision-making processes. Although, this was claimed to be a stance against the HDP and the PKK, the Kurdish people arguably felt offended and isolated as well.

INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND POLITICAL RECONCILIATION AFTER JULY 15

The findings of the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project demonstrate that inequality between regions and social groups in terms of economic standards adversely affects the prospects for political reconciliation in Turkey. Former Minister of Development and current AK Party deputy Cevdet Yılmaz indicated at the project's "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop that Turkey proposed inclusive growth as one of the most significant developmental goals during the G20 Summit held in Antalya in 2015. He also underlined that it is the responsibility of the state to spread economic welfare to all societal groups through social policies such as regulating income distribution, ensuring equal opportunity to all segments of society, and supporting women to partake in economic production and decision-making processes. According to Yılmaz, environmental considerations, such as investing in green technologies to prevent degradation, and participatory governance practices allowing all people to get involved in decision-making processes are other elements that need to be taken into consideration to ensure inclusive growth.

Research participants of this project underpinned that issues associated with economic development, gender equality, and education could not be elaborated upon and resolved without effective resolution of the Kurdish issue. For instance, participants of the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop argued that restoration of peace was the most significant prerequisite for economic development in South-eastern Turkey. It was underpinned that although governmental initiatives appear to be inspiring on paper, it is urgent to create a peaceful environment to generate foreign and domestic investments. For instance, a businessperson from Diyarbakır indicated that entrepreneurs have chosen cities like Adıyaman, Şanlıurfa, and Kahramanmaraş rather than Diyarbakır, Batman, or Siirt to engage in economic activities because of their relatively peaceful economic and political atmosphere. CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu reiterated this view, indicating that private sector and government investments would not ensue under the climate of armed conflicts and violence.

With respect to securitization, Ayhan Bilgen maintained that the war economy is a major setback for Turkey, resulting in the channelling of significant resources into the military budget. Cevdet Yılmaz, on the other hand, underlined that it is difficult to ensure economic growth unless all groups and political parties denounce terrorism in principle. He indicated that government investments such as the Silvan irrigation project are blocked and delayed because of landmines and attacks against construction sites, although these projects could considerably transform the economic structure of the region. A civil society representative from Diyarbakır indicated that the Kurdish political wing repressed the potential opposition groups in the region and denounced the acts of gaining wealth as immoral. According to some participants, there are corruption allegations regarding the municipalities in South-eastern Turkey. It was stated that businesspeople were exploited by the PKK through the municipalities. Therefore, participants called for unconditional condemnation of the PKK's armed struggle and violence in order to ensure stability and economic growth in the region. A former MHP deputy rejected the arguments that poverty, economic backwardness, and unemployment are the reasons for terrorism since, in his view, there are many PKK members with middle-class origins. The former deputy indicated that despite the fact that the Black Sea region (*Karadeniz*) is much poorer, people over there do not resort to violence. He argues that it is the PKK that hijacks investment in the region by burning vehicles and work machines. Therefore, economic investments would not reverse the current situation in the region.

It was also underlined during the project that private investments could play a significant role in regional development, and the government should take steps to strengthen the economic capacity of private enterprises in the region. In this spirit, Cevdet Yılmaz stated that the Centres of Attraction Program (CAP) in Diyarbakır was launched to attract foreign investors in order to facilitate economic development. During the workshop, a businesswoman recommended that economic initiatives and government funds should be offered to existing and prospective investors. She maintained that supporting the companies that are already functioning in the region could further accelerate the effect of economic initiatives.

A civil society representative from Diyarbakır noted that the Investment Incentive Systems launched by the government did not produce effective results because the central administration's economic policies limit the prospects for regional or local growth. Furthermore, it was indicated during the workshop in Diyarbakır that regional development and economic growth plans are

poorly designed and inefficient as a result of centralised decision-making processes. Despite the fact that 21 laws were enacted to encourage the development of the region, they failed to produce economic and social welfare in comparison with the Western Turkish cities.

According to an academic from Diyarbakır, Ankara's economic growth and development perspective for South-eastern Turkey is considerably flawed since development plans did not prove to be effective. He argued that the accumulation of resources from the periphery of the country to industrial centres significantly undermined the region in terms of economic development for more than 60 years. Another academic also contended that South-eastern Turkey continuously remains in the scope of the 6th region, which is the least developed one.[25] Thus, a former municipality official in Diyarbakır stated that although the city housed one out of three factories in the early Republican era, 60 percent of Diyarbakır's population does not have steady jobs, sufficient income, and insurance as a result of such ineffective policies. Therefore, it is urgent to create public leadership prioritizing the common good in order to renegotiate the allocation of resources and institutional requirements for inclusive growth.

An attorney at the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop criticized Ankara for discriminating against South-eastern Turkey in terms of economic investments. It was also underlined that the regional administrative units of the central government were diffused among other cities in order to diminish Diyarbakır's significance. Şerif Derince argued that although South-eastern Turkey seemed to receive investment and economic aid from the central government on paper, in reality the actual invests were either incomplete or non-existent. Furthermore, it was noted that economic development packages like the Attraction Centres Program cannot be fulfilled due to lengthy bureaucratic procedures.

In a similar vein, Sezgin Tanrıkulu also drew attention to discrimination against the region with the example of the South-eastern Anatolia Project (Turkish acronym, GAP). He argued that while 80 percent of the project consists of energy-related projects, only about 20 percent is left for irrigation plans. He contended that while the energy produced from GAP is distributed to the other parts of the country, it is irrigation that would play an important role in regional development. On the other hand, three dam construction sites were closed because of security problems. Similarly, the closure of highlands due to security measures also has a negative impact on agriculture and husbandry.

Another important issue that was underlined during the project was the unequal distribution of the state budget. For instance, Derince criticized Dicle University for not contributing to the economic, social, and cultural development of the city despite the fact that its budget is larger than that of the municipality's. Furthermore, Bozyel and Derince maintained that the World Bank credit was not delivered to the Diyarbakır Municipality since the government did not approve the payment as the guarantor. As such, the existing public investments were criticized for failing to facilitate inclusive growth in the region. In this view, these investments are seen as pseudo remedies aimed to tackle the problem of terrorism rather than offering solutions for inclusive development.

It was also indicated during the project that regional agencies and associations could play a significant role in ensuring inclusive growth in the region. According to Nevin İl, development agencies in the region play an active role and assist private sector companies to achieve institutionalization, develop infrastructure, and increase their volume of trade. On the other hand, she noted that chambers and associations did not perform well enough because of several limitations such as financial resources. During the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop, a businessman stated that business chambers and associations were perceived as springboards to enter politics. These establishments possess very crucial data about the trade volume, capacities, and commercial activities of their members. Therefore, many of these institutions cannot produce meaningful policies to influence the decision-making processes at the local and national levels although they had the data needed to analyse the economic and developmental opportunities and risks.

A civil society member and businesswoman during the workshop in Diyarbakır indicated that the region offers great potential for labour-intensive sectors because of its large young population. The public-private partnership in the labour-intensive sectors could contribute to the economic growth of South-eastern Turkey. She also noted that the paternal social structure was the most significant barrier for women's participation in the workforce. On the other hand, the population of Diyarbakır was composed of people coming from agricultural backgrounds, and most of them were working

25 Regional categories refer to the state incentives offered based on regional categories. Diyarbakır is in the 6th region alongside Ağrı, Ardahan, Batman, Bingöl, Bitlis, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars, Mardin, Muş, Siirt, Şanlıurfa, Şırnak and Van, which is also the least developed region in Turkey.

for the service sector. As such, the industrial sector, which is the main component of the development index, is not at satisfactory levels. It was underlined that the region and Turkey in general should invest in technological research and development in order to produce high value-added products. In this spirit, regional businesses also need to create their brands and develop sound brand strategies. It was stated that government investments in terms of private sector subsidies could offer great economic returns if they could utilize the labour force in the region.

It was also indicated during the project that although the infrastructure in the region has improved in the last 15 years, especially in terms of transportation and communication, it needs to be further developed. It was also argued that public investments and government projects are not as ambitious as in other parts of Turkey. With respect to the issue of developing regional capabilities, Cevdet Yılmaz maintained that there have been considerable public investments in recent years such as the Diyarbakır Airport. He also argued that economic standards and healthcare services flourished significantly under the AK Party governments. On the other hand, an attorney indicated that the quality of education in Diyarbakır could not compete with other cities. A civil society member also noted that the educational standards did not correspond with the requirements in the region. For instance, it was noted that the universities are not equipped with large libraries, efficient information technology resources, and basic facilities.

In terms of tourism, it was maintained that the region has great potential in its historical artefacts and natural beauties attracting visitors from around the world. As such, the cities of Van, Mardin, Diyarbakır, and Şanlıurfa, among others, should highlight these assets in order to encourage domestic and international tourism. It was repeated that South-eastern Turkey was called the Fertile Crescent because of its vast natural resources such as water, oil, abundant land, and solar energy. Furthermore, the region has access to the Caucasus, Europe, and the Middle East. Regarding border trade, Bayram Bozyel indicated that trade with Iran and Iraq considerably diminished in the last years because of the armed conflict in Turkey. It was noted that the Halil Ibrahim Border Gate between Iraq and Turkey offered around 10 million USD worth of commercial activity. There is great economic exchange across the Esendere Border Gate to Iran. However, the trade volume have decreased considerably since the collapse of the Peace Process.

It was underpinned by Nevin İl that the region fails to utilize its geographical advantages in terms of economic development because Turkey has had significant political problems with neighbouring countries such as Syria and Armenia. It was noted that companies have to go through Georgia instead of Armenia because of the border closure between the two nations, which ends up to be too costly. On the other hand, business people cannot engage in border trade with Kobane although there is demand for goods and services from Turkey. Moreover, the conflict between the Iraqi government and the KRG has diminished the volume of border trade in the region amidst the ongoing problem of economic embargo with Iran. A bureaucrat also contended that so long as relations are sour with neighbouring countries, the opportunities for foreign trade would remain at a minimum.

It was also underscored during the project that economic relations with the KRG diminished because of the bureaucratic obstacles and security-oriented economic policies. An academic at the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th" workshop indicated that political and security concerns overshadow commercial activities with the KRG. It was stated that the Kurdish presence in Iraq offered economic opportunities because of its geographical proximity to the Kurdish areas of Turkey and the ethno-cultural bonds between the people. Accordingly, another academic indicated that the trade volume between Diyarbakır and Erbil has reached 10 billion USD, but bureaucratic procedures prevent direct economic relations between the two cities.

It was also recommended during the workshop that decentralization could be considered in order to ensure inclusive growth in the region. In response, Cevdet Yılmaz contended that although it was an extensive plan to reform the functions of governance processes, a previous law proposal to strengthen local governments had been vetoed by former President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on unsubstantial grounds. The subsequent initiatives were not quite as extensive as that plan, but the government launched partial reforms such as the abolition of the General Directorate of Village Services and their transfer to local administrations. The mandate of the local administrations was extended with municipal laws. As such, it was indicated by some research participants that the concentration of power in the centre is not economically and politically viable. Institutional design proposing diffusion of power and responsibilities between the central and local administrations could address the economic requirements for inclusive growth in South-eastern Turkey. However, Cevdet Yılmaz and the participants from the bureaucracy reiterated that the practices of local administrations in the region made it impossible to initiate further efforts toward decentralization.

STATE AND MILITARY AFTER JULY 15

The Turkish Armed Forces had traditionally been the strongest institution in Turkey with regards to institutional structure and operational capacity. It had also been the most reliable state institution in the eyes of the Turkish public as the most institutionalized, secular, and meritocracy-based institution. Throughout the years, the Turkish Armed Forces has been the locomotive of transformation among security forces composed of the army, intelligence, paramilitaries, private security, and police/gendarmerie.

Despite the fact that the government had taken several measures in recent years to bring an end to military tutelage, the conduit of the July 15th coup attempt revealed that even the military itself is open to infiltration by illegal structures, clientalism, and degeneration. Furthermore, it was a shocking experience for the Turkish public that although there had been various coups staged by the military in the past, July 15 was the first time that Turkish soldiers pointed a gun at its own citizens and eventually killed 246 of them. As underscored during the workshop "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th," another aspect that differentiates the July 15th coup attempt is its societal dimension and the fact that it caused severe suffering in its aftermath.

While past coups were mere attempts to move the misguided course of politics back on track, the failed coup on July 15 was an attempt to totally invade and confiscate Turkey. It was not only perpetrated against the parliament or the government but also against the Turkish Republic itself. As such, it was perceived as an existential threat for Turkey. It was also underpinned during the workshop that what differentiates the July 15th coup from previous ones was the lack of a "chain of command" during its execution. Furthermore, it took place amid mass regional threats and instability as a result of the Arab Spring, which differentiates it from previous coups as well.

The participants of the workshop "Reforming Turkey: Institutional Building after July 15th" also underlined that the Turkish Armed Forces is the institution most urgently in need of reform. It was suggested that the balance between the military and civil administration must be well-established in order to eliminate the possibility of future coup attempts. It was underlined that "secular state, pluralist politics, and equal citizenship" should be taken as bases for institutionalization. As such, the sustainability of state institutions is crucial for the sustainability of the state itself. It was also pinpointed that the erosion of democracy, the lack of a constructive platform vis-à-vis discussions on the presidential system, and the tendency to resolve problems through a highly securitized approach rather than a political one are urgent matters that need attention.

Three main points with respect to institutionalization were identified during the workshop "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th":

- The state should be able to carry out the process of institutionalization and institutional sustainability;
- State policies should be predictable by individuals to be able to ensure loyalty in state-society relations;
- The state should internalize objectivity during the process of centralization.

In addition to these suggestions, it was also underlined that there must be self-criticism within the state to be able to realize these steps. Another problem that came to the fore during the project was the lack of transparency vis-à-vis the July 15th coup attempt. For instance, it was underpinned by one participant during the "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th" workshop that even as a retired high-level bureaucrat he lacks sufficient information regarding the coup, which is an indication of the lack of transparency. It was put forth during the workshop that meritocracy should be outlined based on objective criteria and the principles of transparency. Institutionalization and institutional sustainability, predictability, objectivity, and inclusiveness were listed as the determinants of meritocracy during the workshop.

According to a participant of the "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th" workshop, the military is both the perpetrator and the victim of July 15. The coup was perpetrated by an informal click that had foreign connections and took orders from a different centre. It was also underpinned that this structure flourished as a result of the discharge of thousands of officers throughout the years during the courses of the *Ergenekon* and *Balyoz* operations. There is now significant evidence that these operations were led by FETÖ to get rid of the secular/republican military establishment and realize its own plans within the state. As such, the importance of thorough, objective, impartial investigations and the rule of law to ensure democracy was highlighted. It was also deemed important for the military to gain its reputation and dignity back given Turkey's problems with Syria and Iraq as well as with other actors such as the European Union and the United States.

REFORMING TURKEY: INSTITUTION BUILDING AFTER JULY 15

The July 15th coup attempt uncovered the existing institutional issues within the state apparatus in Turkey. As the coup attempt was averted, it became increasingly obvious that the state institutions were susceptible to corrupt practices of infiltration by particular groups like FETÖ. As a bureaucrat emphasized, although Turkey has come a long way in the last decades in terms of its level of prosperity, national income, services, business development, there are still many problems that need to be tackled. As Aras argued, the coup attempt together with the subsequent collective purges decapitated the state institutions.[26] Therefore, it was urged that the state needs to reform itself in terms of its influence, power, economy, and prosperity in order to institutionalize the democratic standards at all levels of the state.

The July 15th coup attempt, as one political party representative emphasized, was an act of terrorism, a coup attempt carried out with the intent to occupy Turkey. He cited a former member of the Armed Forces who warned about the likelihood of foreign manipulation behind the coup attempt, detailing the training, background, and *modus operandi* of FETÖ. In this spirit, the research subjects underlined that the FETÖ threat is essentially a very challenging task for the government and the bureaucracy to tackle because the members of the Gülenists conspired against the very bureaucratic cadres they replaced. In addition, they deleted vital information about the terrorist organizations and other threats that seriously compromised national security because accumulation of such information requires an extended period of time. As such, the research participants unanimously approved the post-coup commitment to eliminate the organization.

The research participants, on the other hand, warned that the massive purges considerably enfeebled the state institutions given FETÖ's control of the top echelons of the state bureaucracy. During the workshop "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th," a bureaucrat stated that around 50,000 bureaucrats were expelled, together with 150,000 more to be discharged from several governmental institutions. Accordingly, Vahap Coşkun expressed that there are allegations about people with no connection to FETÖ being discharged simply because their co-workers disliked them. Furthermore, Ayhan Bilgen cautioned that currently revanchism in state institutions could be a dangerous threat for institutionalization in Turkey. Ahmet Özmen and Vahap Coşkun also underlined that 4,500 teachers from Eğitim-Sen (Union of Teachers) were expelled from the public schools in South-eastern Turkey, but most of them have since returned to their jobs. It was also cautioned that there was widespread resentiment toward the government for eliminating the opposition using the state of emergency decisions and the statutory decrees. Such practices could produce serious legal repercussions as the defendants apply to the Supreme Court and the European Court of Human Rights. In this respect, it was stated that 120,000 discharged people petitioned to the Supreme Court, and the government created a commission to address the complaints about the dismissals with statutory decrees. In this spirit, Cevdet Yılmaz, indicated that a commission composed of three people from the Prime Ministry and one person each from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, Court of Cassation, and the Council of State and other significant units will provide a legal platform to submit complaints about the statutory decrees. There are structural and contextual problems within the judicial system. The feelings of impunity damaged the trust in the judiciary because many people were previously victimized during the KCK and *Ergenekon* trials. Therefore, the institutional capacity of the judicial system must be reinforced with the effective mechanisms of checks and balances. However, it is most urgent not to victimize the people who did not commit a crime and have no connection with terrorist organizations in the first place.

The research participants also pointed out the necessity of scrutinizing the mistakes that paved the way for FETÖ's infiltration in official posts. Furthermore, it was stated that the government should also take responsibility for its share in the course of events that have cumulatively prepared the ground for the coup attempt. Accordingly, Selina Doğan underlined that the government did not act responsibly and ignored the principle of meritocracy. During the workshop "Reforming Turkey: Institutional Building after July 15th," one academic also underlined that the people responsible for FETÖ's penetration in the critical positions within the state system should answer for their actions. Political party representatives from the opposition maintained that the only way to fix the damage is through high-level restoration, which is possible only through internal discharges within the governing party

26 Aras, "State, Institutions and Reform in Turkey after July 15th," 3.

itself. In this respect, Ayhan Bilgen and Selina Doğan noted that in order to decrease the damaging effects of the coup attempt on state institutions, the government should first end the state of emergency and government decrees allowing for the prosecution of citizens without trials. Additionally, research participants indicated that the Political Parties Law, Parliamentary Bylaws, and the structure of the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors should be altered in order to institutionalize a democratic system of government.

The lack of meritocracy had been one of the most challenging issues regarding institution building in Turkey long before the July 15th coup attempt. During the workshop "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th," one bureaucrat stated that public posts and state-owned enterprises were previously allocated for the election support. Such partisan interventions considerably disrupted the functionality of public institutions of all sorts. Although the KPSS (Turkish acronym for Public Personnel Selection Examination) was invoked to prevent favouritism and establish objective standards for civil service recruitment, the contributors from bureaucracy and government stipulated that FETÖ used these very regulations to infiltrate the bureaucracy. A government representative participating in "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th" workshop indicated that the government assumed responsibility to pursue the rehabilitation of institutions after the July 15th coup attempt. However, it became apparent that the legal standards and exams have not been sufficient to guarantee that employment of public officials would be based on meritocracy. Therefore, it was suggested that there is an urgent need to create an institutional board consisting of all parties in order to monitor public sector employment and promotions.

The fact that FETÖ was able to infiltrate many institutions and governmental bodies also proved the indispensability of merit-based employment in the public sector over the long run. An academician in Diyarbakır emphasized that the only standard for public sector recruitment should be the competence of a particular person rather than his or her ethnic, religious, sectarian, or political affiliations. Otherwise, the state apparatus will be vulnerable to corruption and unjust practices that would consequently collapse the whole system. During a group activity at the "Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th" workshop, it was emphasized that the institutional weaknesses and the lack of meritocracy were also underlined as catalysing factors of polarization because the public institutions are not representative of Turkey's society. In this spirit, the participants unanimously agreed that the current systemic crisis was the expected consequence of the unjust implementation of public recruitment procedures. For instance, some participants indicated that the groups outside the ruling party have limited access to high-level governmental jobs. As such, Sezgin Tanrıkulu emphasized the barriers against Alevi citizens in Turkey working in the high-level bureaucratic posts, especially under this sectarianist government.

During the project, capacity building came to the fore as another important issue with respect to institutionalization. According to one bureaucrat, quality and specialization of the personnel are significant in this regard. Referring to the infiltration of FETÖ members into state institutions, he noted that the July 15th coup attempt revealed a mistake made by the state regarding human capacity. According to Şerif Derince, Turkey needs an objective, impartial service planning to identify the areas in which capacity building is necessary and design educational institutions accordingly. In this spirit, a bureaucrat underlined that education is very significant in terms of building institutional capacity in order to establish long-standing policies. Although the number of FETÖ members constitutes only three percent of the overall bureaucracy, their expulsion from state positions has been destructive since many of them were well-equipped and skilled employees at the high echelons of the state apparatus. As such, Aras proposed a managerial approach to the bureaucratic transformation in Turkey in which the non-public official together with the existing bureaucrats could serve in official posts. He thus offered a sort of "public-private partnership" to help overcome the current paucity of skilled employees in the bureaucratic cadres.[27]

The research data revealed that dedication to work ethics is another significant issue largely lacking in Turkish institutions. The participants of the "Reforming Turkey" workshop emphasized that civil servants from different governmental bodies do not have the necessary skills to perform their duties. Accordingly, a bureaucrat suggested that a minister should also be a technocrat, not a politician, and therefore should have expertise in the field of the respective ministry. In addition, there is also prevailing inefficiency within the state as a result of the so-called civil servant psychology. Unlike the post-coup state of emergency period during which many civil servants have been fired based upon governmental decrees, ordinarily, it is very difficult to dismiss a civil servant in Turkey. The lack of fear of being dismissed significantly

27 Ibid., 12-13.

affected the efficiency of state institutions. As such, it was suggested that a performance-based system could be introduced to increase efficiency. On the other hand, another bureaucrat drew attention to the exaggeration of hierarchy within the institutions, while another government official emphasized the problem of widespread favouritism within institutions. Therefore, the reorganization of the Turkish bureaucracy into a merit-based democratic state apparatus was deemed as an urgent matter. It was indicated that it is not the system that is important but the people with whom it is filled.

One bureaucrat contended that the state should operate based on a pragmatic view, independent from ideological and identity-based concerns. State, in this regard, should be a structure with standards that delivers services. As such, political parties and the government should aim to improve standards and facilities. He also underlined that such a pragmatic attitude that focuses on prosperity and differentiates itself from ethnic or sectarian divisions would eradicate conflict and create better results. In this respect, Aras suggested that encouraging public involvement in the process of transformation could enhance the quality of services while the whole process will fortify the legitimacy of the reform efforts.[28]

As a civil society member at the "Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation" workshop emphasized, it is crucial to be vigilant about dismissing the prospects for new status quos when eliminating the existing one. Thus, the vacuum left by the FETÖ establishment should not be filled with other similar structures. State institutions should be democratically reorganized according to a pluralist perspective.

One of the major subjects widely discussed by the research participants was the constitutional amendment proposing the presidential system. Cevdet Yılmaz underpinned the limitations of the existing system, which was designed to institutionalize tutelage, in which the people did not have the ability to decide their interests. The current dual system consists of a government emerging from both the parliament and the presidency, which is very decretive in decision-making on vital issues. Therefore, the government, he contended, aims to strengthen the people by letting them directly elect the parliament, which is both the legislative body and the government, the executive body.

Some participants of the workshop on "Reforming Turkey: Institutional Building after July 15th," on the other hand, argued that the current constitutional amendments proposed a completely new executive structure with which Turkey was not familiar. Therefore, the process will require a detailed roadmap and meticulous efforts to transform the institutions, but there should first be a thorough description of the mandate and functions of presidential posts. Selina Doğan claimed that the time and circumstances are not suitable for a major constitutional transformation. As such, a former MHP deputy maintained that it is not constitutional to conduct a referendum under emergency conditions. Thus, the government should eliminate FETÖ and bring democracy to political parties without extending the emergency rule.

One academic from the United Kingdom stated that the presidential system could produce more efficient institutions and deliver robust security. However, he cautioned that civil society organizations and academic institutions should examine the cases of transformation from parliamentary to presidential systems to offer sound policy recommendations for the implementation of the process. As such, the constitutional change in favor of the presidential system must be well-designed to ensure institutional provisions that guard against strong centralization of power. In this spirit, the research participants argued that the current constitutional amendments do not institutionalize an effective system of checks and balances to prevent concentration of all powers and authority in a single person's capacity. Therefore, the executive branch could dominate the legislative body and the judiciary unless the separation of powers is not clearly delineated in a legal framework.

Responding to a question on to what extent the presidential system will be efficient, one bureaucrat indicated that the parliamentary system has many problems in itself, and therefore, it is worth giving the presidential system a shot. By referring to the concept of "constructive destruction", he added that the presidential system might yield positive results by reshuffling the existing system through a shock effect. Furthermore, he noted that if the presidential system does not work out, Turkey could always go back to the former system. Responding to a further question on whether the new system could be reversed or might fuel the exploitation of power, one bureaucrat argued that the exploitation of power could happen within the parliamentary system as well. Therefore, the public is to decide what the presidential system would bring about in terms of democracy, democratic rights, unity of the country, or a common future.

28 Ibid., 13.

According to the research contributors, since the constitution is a social contract, all segments of Turkish society should be brought to the table to discuss it. The proposed constitution has been prepared behind closed doors with the involvement of two parties only. Some of the workshop participants underlined that the deputies who drafted the amendment do not have the necessary experience or the expertise. According to Selina Doğan, it is therefore stated that the amendment is being imposed on the people without even being properly discussed in society. In this respect, Tanrıkulu and a former MHP deputy also noted that the ruling AKP hinders democratization of the country by excluding different segments of society in a pluralist framework.

TURKEY'S FOREIGN POLICY AFTER JULY 15

The failed coup attempt of July 15 has affected not only Turkey's domestic politics but also its foreign policy. The rigorous anti-Turkey campaign carried out by the Gülenists—followers of U.S.-based imam Fethullah Gülen, who allegedly planned and carried out the July 15th coup attempt—in Western countries in the aftermath of the coup attempt, the deterioration of Turkey's relations with its Western allies, and the escalation of the Syrian crisis in its backyard may be noted as some of the determinants of Turkish foreign policy in this period. As such, this period has also witnessed the further blurring of the lines between domestic and foreign policy. By referring to the "systemic", "political", "security", and "identity" crises that Turkey has been faced with since the July 15th coup attempt, Aras argues that these crises "create barriers in the foreign policy-making process, hold foreign policy hostage to domestic issues and priorities, decrease flexibility in regional and international policy, result in inconsistent policy attitudes, and spark debates on Turkey's international orientation."[29]

Among the aftershocks of July 15, the lack of solid Western criticism of the coup itself has left Turkey feeling largely abandoned by its Western allies. For instance, in the aftermath of the coup attempt, the Western media has been largely criticized in Turkey for being subjective and partial in its broadcast of coup-related news. This criticism was not without its merits since some mainstream Western media outlets demonstrated unjustified suspicion over the coup plot or gave biased information.[30] Furthermore, the strict measures taken by the government during coup investigations, such as mass suspensions and arrests of civil servants, journalists, academics, political party, and NGO members over their alleged connection with the failed coup, provided handy material for the foreign press to fuel hatred against Turkey within the following months. In a similar vein, the Turkish government also frequently accused unidentified Western elements of conspiring with coup plotters. As such, by feeding one another, these unproven allegations led to further deterioration of relations between Turkey and the West.

While part of Western criticism was due to Turkey's weakened international image as a result of the anti-Turkey lobby carried out by the Gülenists and worsening human rights conditions within the country, part of it was due to pre-existing anti-Turkish/anti-Muslim perceptions in Europe as a result of rising populism in the European Union. As such, the imprint of populist, conservative parties on the waves of elections in Europe and the active anti-immigrant, anti-Turkey campaign during several European election campaigns, such as the ones in the Netherlands, France, or Britain, played important roles in bilateral relations during this period. Furthermore, the Turkish government reciprocally exploited these xenophobic sentiments to legitimize its policies vis-à-vis the presidential debates during the referendum campaign. More often than not, foreign policy has been downgraded to a vague criticism of the West, which did not serve any particular foreign policy goals.

One participant in the workshop "Polarization, Consensus and Democracy" also pointed out that the anti-Western stance has been quite disconcerting since it has also increased tension in society by inciting the existing divisions vis-à-vis lifestyle. It was highlighted during the workshop "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th" that the post-July 15th period has been marked by the harsh foreign policy discourse of the government as well as the use of foreign policy as an instrument of domestic policy. In this view, politicians have exploited foreign policy in order to raise their profiles in domestic policy and "bring home" success stories. As also underpinned in Aras' report, "With Turkey's growing isolation due partly to ongoing changes in global and regional order, the Turkish government seems in need of foreign policy success stories to prop up domestic consolidation efforts."[31]

One of the most important determinants of Turkey's relations with the West and other major powers in recent years has been the Syrian crisis. The refugee crisis, the use of Turkey as a transit route into Syria by foreign fighters, the consequences of the crisis on Turkey's own Kurdish issues, and Turkey's aim for a regime change in Syria have been underlined as factors that affected Turkey's foreign affairs. Research participants stated that the prospects for the resolution of the Kurdish issue are closely associated with the situation in the north of Syria. The research participants underlined that the PKK tried to transfer the experience in Syria to the Kurdish cities of Turkey during the ditch

29 Bülent Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy after July 15," *IPC Policy Report* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, February 2017), 12.

30 Sabiha Senyücel Gündoğar and Ayşe Yırcalı, "Batı 'Darbe' Testini Geçemedi," Al Jazeera Turk, July 22, 2016, accessed April 6, 2017, http://www.aljazeera.com.tr/gorus/bati-darbe-testini-gecemedi.

31 Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy after July 15," 6.

wars because PKK reasoned it could gain international support as the Syrian Kurds did in Rojava. In addition to the lack of support, the Turkish government grew more sceptical of Democratic Union Party/People's Protection Units (PYD/YPG) settlement in the north of Syria. It was indicated that this tactical mistake brought the collapse of the Peace Process. Selahattin Çoban, an attorney and member of Mazlumder, also maintained that the ditch wars negatively affected the people including the Kurds and the Turks because the cities were destroyed and many people died during the armed struggle in South-eastern Turkey. An academic in Diyarbakır said that the negotiating parties, the HDP and the government, made grave mistakes that seriously damaged the reconciliation process. Ankara conceptualized the Syrian Kurdish presence as an existential threat after the Jazeera and Kobane cantons were unified in 2015 although. When ISIS sieged Kobane, Turkey wanted the PYD/YPG to learn a lesson while the PKK and the HDP became indifferent to the political resolution in Turkey, relying on their de facto status in Syria. Such flawed responses seriously reduced possibilities for building trust, which is a very significant element for a sustainable resolution.

It was often underscored during the project that Turkey's success or failure in the Syrian crisis is closely linked to its Kurdish issue. For instance, HDP deputy Ayhan Bilgen argued that the only way out from Turkey's deadlock in Syria is to build peaceful politics with the Syrian Kurds. This would also improve Turkey's international image, which has been significantly tarnished as a result of measures taken as part of the state of emergency currently underway. According to Bilgen, in order to emerge from the environment of conflict and uncertainty, Turkey should understand that its regional security is dependent upon its ability to build healthy relationships with regional actors. In this view, Turkey should see Kurds as potential partners for cooperation rather than as a threat—as a means to be able to strike a balance between security and democracy/peace. Furthermore, Ayhan Bilgen recommended that Turkey should move towards decentralization, which is largely overlooked in the constitution proposed by the government.

According to CHP deputy Sezgin Tanrıkulu, when the war is over and Syria is reconstructed, it will not be what it used to be, and neither will the Kurds. As such, Turkey should foresee this change and develop realistic policies in line with this inevitablity. Tanrıkulu argued that, twenty years ago, Turkey adopted a similar attitude towards Northern Iraq, an entity it now enjoys close relations with. A similar view was also noted by few other project participants who argued that Ankara could have developed more progressive relations with the Kurds in order to overcome entrapment in its regional affairs. Accordingly, such initiatives of rapprochement and possible coordination could have helped Turkey tackle security vulnerabilities. It was underlined that Turkey could enjoy advantages in cooperating with the Kurds, since they are likely to be one of the most influential groups in post-conflict Syria. Bilgen argues that the resolution process was a lost opportunity for Turkey vis-à-vis its regional policy. A peace accord with Kurds would ease Turkey's hand in its relations with the EU and the United States as well. Bilgen argued that, on the contrary, Turkey became a party to the conflict by allying with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

According to a former MHP deputy, one of the most harrowing aspects of the Syrian crisis has been the fact that Turkish citizens have killed one another from opposing camps in a foreign land and are then after buried in the same cemetery in Turkey. The former deputy regards this as Turkey's biggest pain, biggest mistake, and the source of its distress. In this view, Turkey should have prevented its citizens from joining the war in Syria both in the Kurdish camp or other camps such as ISIS or other militant groups. According to him, the Turkish citizens who were radicalized in Syria are now carrying out actions against Turkey on Turkish soil. He also indicates that the rise of the YPG and Western support for it have resulted in the strengthening of the PKK. While this triggers the emergence of a Kurdish entity in the region, it also creates a handicap for Turkey's counterterrorism efforts and motivates separatist ambitions.

A participant of the workshop "Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th" argued that the Syrian conflict has changed the dimensions of the Kurdish conflict from a national struggle to a regional and international one. The regionalization of the problem was underlined in the workshop as one of the biggest setbacks towards the resolution of the conflict since it is now tied to normalization in Syria. Regionalization has also brought in new actors into the conflict, such as the United States, Russia, Syria, and the PYD, which has made the resolution harder. A participant indicated that one of the biggest questions on the minds of the people is the status of Kurds in Syria in the post-war period. As such, it is difficult to resolve the Kurdish issue before the normalization of the situation in Syria. As also underlined by one bureaucrat, as a result of its unique geopolitical position, the developments in Syria and Iraq have a direct impact on Turkey.

Another pertinent issue that was underlined during the project vis-à-vis Turkish foreign policy was the urgent need for capacity building. Several participants agreed that there is a significant gap between Turkey's capacity and its goals. For instance, it was underlined in the workshop "State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th" that Turkey should invest in an integrated approach that brings together models of capacity building, institutionalization, reform, and coordination. It was also indicated that it should diversify its tools to be able to reach its foreign policy goals.

The lack of a culture of consultation and debate among foreign policy actors such as the bureaucracy and the government was cited as another problem that needs to be tackled during the project. For instance, it was indicated during the workshop that while there was a relative mechanism of checks and balances between the Turkish Armed Forces General Staff, Turkish National Intelligence Organization, and the Turkish Foreign Ministry before the coup attempt, this mechanism has been largely inactive since the coup. It was also underpinned that as a result of the decline in the number of foreign policy actors, the ministry has had to take on too many responsibilities.

CONCLUSION AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This report aimed to outline the Post-Coup Opportunities on Conflict Resolution and Democracy Project, which sought to address the problems that have emerged or intensified in Turkey in the aftermath of the July 15th coup attempt. As such, the study aims to identify and analyze the problems and offer possible solutions to help influence policymaking processes and promote consensus and democracy in Turkey. It argues that only effective mechanisms of and a constructive approach to conflict resolution can enable sustainable peace and stability in the country. The April 16th presidential referendum witnessed the conservative-nationalist bloc win with a narrow margin. There is now a two-year course for change to a new presidential system according to the timetable of the constitutional amendment. The high number of "yes" votes in Kurdish-populated regions in comparison to support for the AK Party in these regions in previous elections is significant and may be a reflection of the political will to solve the Kurdish question within the confines of a new political system. This outcome is also in line with the data generated from some Kurdish participants during the project who indicated that the presidential system might provide opportunities to resume the talks. In this view, the presence of strong leadership could contribute to the effective management of the resolution process.

However, it should also be taken into account that the high number of "no" votes in the referendum and urban-rural division could be a signal of further consolidation of the existing division and polarization within society. Senses of hope and fear exist simaltaneously, but one thing is for sure: the referendum result will re-energize domestic politics in Turkey. In this sense, two major issues under scrutiny in this project, polarization and the Kurdish question, would pose the most serious challenges for the normalization of politics and the emergence of a problem-solving agenda unless addressed urgently with an inclusive and participatory approach.

In this regard, the findings of this project demonstrate that weak social cohesion and institutions are sources of instability and conflict and create a sound base for coup attempts. As such, topics covered in this report such as inclusive growth, state-military relations, institutional building, or foreign policy are directly related to and affected by these two areas. To that end, research findings indicate several important points to be taken into consideration for relevant stakeholders.

In this vein, the study offers the following policy recommendations with the intention of contributing to peace and democracy in Turkey.

Polarization overshadows the prospects for intergroup partnerships as a means to overcome current hurdles for peace and democracy in Turkey. In this regard, a culture of coexistence should be promoted as an utmost priority. In order to achive this, the following steps should be taken:

- Political culture should be redefined based upon mutual understanding and respect for differences. Policies based on the principles of egalitarianism and democracy should be embraced to stimulate confidence in the wider population. Channels of free and open dialogue should be enhanced.
- Popular culture, popular figures, and opinion leaders could be mobilized to enhance channels of dialogue, promote coexistence, and consensus.
- The media should act ethically, readopt its responsibility as the watchdog of society, and be cautious with its use of language. Media outlets must be autonomous and impartial.
- Significant responsibility to act prudently and avoid discourse that would instigate conflict lies with politicians. Polarizing language should be avoided and political discourse that will serve consensus should be adopted. Likewise, polarization should not be used as an instrument for political gains.
- Religion should cease to be exploited for political interests and instead should be used as a tool for reconciliation. Responsibility rests with the Presidency of Religious Affairs of Turkey (*Diyanet*) to tackle polarization and build consensus among different segments of society in this regard.
- State institutions, such as the Presidency of Religious Affairs, should take responsibility for building societal consensus.
- The system of checks and balances should be ensured for equitable power sharing within the state. Capacity building within state institu-

tions should be prioritised based on equal and fair recruitment processes.

The Kurdish question can potentially initiate political and social unrest in Turkey unless the necessary arrangements are completed. There is also a broad-based expectation among Kurdish citizens for the reinstatement of the resolution process. The following points should be taken into consideration:

- The lack of strong representation of Kurdish people within the Turkish government suggests that measures should be taken to promote direct engagement with Kurdish citizens to address their demands, needs, and interests.
- Notwithstanding the difficulty of re-starting negotiations, dialogue channels should be kept open and grassroots engagement should be promoted. It should be noted from the Colombian example that the lack of dialogue brings lack of societal reconciliation.
- A coherent, clear, mutual roadmap regarding the resolution process should be drawn and followed in order to ensure efficiency and commitment. In a similar vein, it should be noted that the commitment of leaders is vital to achieve peace. It is also important to act with transparency, complemented with prospective timelines and clearly defined goals.
- Constitutional guarantees should be established based on pluralist, democratic principles. The inclusion of the cultural, social, political, and democratic rights of all groups in the new constitution should be ensured. The state could make legal arrangements to reinstate Kurdish claims such as education in mother tongue in order to bring reconciliation. Furthermore, the 10 percent election threshold could be revised to ensure broadbase participation in politics.
- Violence should cease to be used as a tool for political gains both by the state and the PKK. There needs to be a mutual ceasefire and an end to all forms of violence including physical, psychological, and cultural. Any kind of violence adversely affects the livelihoods of ordinary citizens and fails to provide any concrete steps towards resolution.
- Securitization of the Kurdish Question appears to be a major dilemma for the Turkish government. Relying solely on military response could hinder possibilities for political reconciliation in the long run. As such, not only the military but also the political, social, economic, and cultural roots of the conflict should be addressed. It is crucial to establish positive conditions for peace in order to proceed to the negotiation phase.
- The solution process should be dragged out of the security/economy trap, and dialogue should be a core part of a new peace process to ensure sustainability.
- The prevalent indifference among the Kurds with respect to the arrests of the HDP politicians and their refusal to support the “ditch wars” demonstrate that the Kurdish people rely on a political resolution. Accordingly, the government should reciprocate by keeping venues for dialogue open and continuing to negotiate with the concerned parties.
- The long post-referendum period should be seen as an opportunity to resume peace talks.
- Collective imprisonment of HDP politicians raises concern among the Kurds, although they have indicated that they have been disappointed with the practices and discourse of the HDP leaders since the June 2015 elections. The judicial process regarding the HDP prosecutions could be carried out through trials without arrest.
- Native language rights, vernacular education, restoring the names of cities/towns, and other gestures would generate positive reflection among the Kurds.
- Peace and security are prerequisites for the inclusive economic development of South-eastern Turkey. The region should be seen as an asset that offers great potential for economic development in terms of natural resources, location, and human capital.
- Investment in the region is important to initiate and facilitate economic activities. As such, coordination between the central and local governments to provide assistance and funding for entrepreneurs could positively influence prospects for peace through development.
- Decentralization would reinforce economic activities and inclusive growth since the local needs and demands would be addressed within the same administrative units. Decentralization

would enable regional natural resources and economic inputs to be directly utilized for the wellbeing of the local people. As a result, a functioning system of checks and balances between the local and the central governments could be established.

The July 15th coup attempt also revealed that Turkey needs urgent reform within the state in terms of institutionalization and capacity building. In this vein, the following suggestions should be considered:

- Trustbuilding in the judicial system and equal opportunity schemes are necessary to eradicate discrimination and inequality.
- Capacity building and institutionalization are urgent in terms of the reform of state institutions.
- Strong civil society is the base for strong democracy. As such, democratization, the establishment of strong rule of law, and demilitarization are pertinent matters that need to be urgently tackled to ensure strong civil society.
- The parallel structures within the state, such as FETÖ, should be entirely eliminated through comprehensive judicial process whereby allegations should be meticulously investigated and due process must be implemented with complete transparency.
- The struggle against FETÖ should target only the people engaged in criminal activities and with verifiable links to the organization. It is crucial not to criminalize people without solid evidence to preserve individual dignity.
- State institutions should be defined and replenished according to the overarching principles of meritocracy, the rule of law, and pluralism. Reform endeavours should focus on extensive institutional arrangements rather than individual ad hoc initiatives.
- Capacity building comes to the fore since the stock of skilled labour in all sectors, especially in bureaucracy, cannot correspond to the needs of Turkey. Accordingly, the education system should be reformed to teach students analytical thinking and practical skills.
- Universities should become autonomous institutions, independent from political pressure, in order to engage in scientific research. In so doing, the Council of Higher Education should be reformed or eliminated.
- Institution building efforts require public and private partnership and coordination to share information and generate valuable policy options from the relevant stakeholders. Therefore, the authority and responsibilities of the institutions must be clearly defined to provide them with the necessary autonomy as well as impartiality, representation, and transparency.
- Diffusion of power is important, and an effective system of multiple checks and balances at all levels of governance is necessary to ensure the participation of different societal groups in decision-making processes. Such an institutional design allowing Turkish citizens to have a stake in political, social, and economic reforms would also be instrumental in alleviating polarization.
- There is an urgent need for a new constitution in order to achieve broad-based institutional building. A new constitution should be a social contract aiming to extend universal human rights and freedoms delineated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Copenhagen Criteria.

The failed coup attempt also revealed that the prospects for military intervention have not yet been completely eliminated. In this respect, this study suggests that:

- The balance between civil and military actors should be established to keep the Armed Forces solely in charge of eliminating the threats to national security.
- The recruitment and training processes of military personnel should be grounded in the principles of rule of law and meritocracy.
- Coordination between civil and military administrations should be based upon periodical reporting to the parliament regarding the strengths, weaknesses, accomplishments, and necessities of the Armed Forces. As such ex-military personnel could advise political parties and assist leaders in military matters in order to facilitate civil-military coordination.

The July 15th coup attempt has further blurred the lines between domestic and foreign policy, having led to both domestic and international repurcussions. As such, the following points should be taken into consideration with regard to Turkey's foreign policy:

- Polarization is equally detrimental for foreign policy as it is for domestic policy. As such, policy makers should refrain from instigating polarization in the conduit of foreign policy. Furthermore, foreign policy should not be turned into an instrument of achieving domestic political gains. It should instead be based on long-term, sustainable goals in line with national interests.
- Turkey should refrain from getting carried away with the rising trend of populism and develop a prudent, constructive foreign policy discourse in line with its actual foreign policy goals.
- The international community should be well informed about the July 15th coup attempt to eradicate biases.
- Turkey should perceive its ties with the Kurds in the region as an asset rather than an obstacle for its foreign policy objectives. It should also take into account the opinions of these Kurdish groups in order to strike a balance between security and democracy/peace.
- The Kurdish question has become internationalized as a result of the Syrian crisis. Turkey is now faced with an increased number of interlocutors vis-à-vis the Kurdish question including the United States, Russia, and Iran. Turkey could differentiate between the PYD/YPG and the PKK in order to overcome the current deadlock. This policy transformation could mitigate the negative effects of the situation in Syria.
- Turkey needs to ensure peace and stability within its borders to be able to overcome the regional threats to national security.
- The resumption of the resolution process could be an opportunity for Turkey to heal its tarnished international image as well as its relations with international actors. It would also help unfreeze Turkey's deadlock in its policy in Syria.
- The burden on the Foreign Ministry should be shared, and the culture of consultation and debate should be enhanced among foreign policy actors including the ministry, the Turkish Armed Forces, General Staff, Turkish National Intelligence Organization, and the government.

Appendix 1: List of project workshops

1 - State, Foreign Policy and Military after July 15th – Istanbul (1 December 2016)

2- Kurdish Question and Democracy after July 15th – Ankara (2 December 2016)

3 - Polarization, Consensus and Democracy after July 15th – Istanbul (17 January 2017)

4 - Reforming Turkey: Institution Building after July 15th – Istanbul (18 January 2017)

5 - Inclusive Growth and Political Reconciliation after July 15th – Diyarbakır (3 March 2017)

Appendix 2: List of interview participants

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous AK Party deputy, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous former AK Party deputy, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Ankara, 21 December 2016.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 4 January 2017.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 5 January 2017.

Anonymous bureaucrat, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 5 January 2017.

Selina Doğan, CHP deputy, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 4 January 2017.

Sezgin Tanrıkulu, CHP deputy, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 4 January 2017.

Ayhan Bilgen, HDP deputy, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 4 January 2017.

Anonymous former deputy, MHP, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Ankara, 4 January 2017.

Anonymous retired military officer, interviewed by Bülent Aras, Istanbul, 1 December 2016.

Vahap Coşkun, Associate Professor at Dicle University, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Diyarbakır, 26 January 2017.

Ahmet Özmen, President of Diyarbakır Bar Association, interviewed by Derya Berk, Diyarbakır, 26 January 2017.

Anonymous academic, interviewed by Derya Berk, Diyarbakır, 26 January 2017.

Selahattin Çoban, Human Rights Advocate, interviewed by Derya Berk, Diyarbakır, 27 January 2017.

M. Şerif Derince, former Advisor at Diyarbakır Municipality, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Diyarbakır, 27 January 2017.

Nevin İl, Chair of the Association for Business Women in the East and Southeast (DOGÜNKAD) and board-member of the Diyarbakır Industry and Businesspeople Association (DİSİAD), interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Diyarbakır, 27 January 2017.

Bayram Bozyel, Vice Chair of Kurdistan Socialist Party, interviewed by Derya Berk, Diyarbakır, 27 January 2017.

Anonymous advocate and civil society member, interviewed by Pınar Akpınar, Diyarbakır, 27 January 2017.

Appendix 3: List of project policy reports

Bülent Aras, "Turkish Foreign Policy after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, February 2017).

Bülent Aras, "State, Institutions and Reform in Turkey after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, March 2017).

Cuma Çiçek, "Kurdish Question and Civil Society after July 15: Paths for Dialogue and Reconciliation," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, March 2017).

Metin Gürcan, "Never Again! But How? State and the Military in Turkey after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

Aysen Ataseven and E.Fuat Keyman, "Opportunities for Consensus and Coexistence after July 15: Peace and Human Development Connection," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

E. Fuat Keyman, "The Return to Normality: Possibility of Reconciliation after July 15," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

Altay Atlı, "Healing the Wounds: Turkey's Quest for Inclusive Economic Growth," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

Senem Aydın Düzgit and Evren Balta, "Turkey After July 15th: When Elites Polarize over Polarization," *IPC Policy Paper* (Istanbul: Istanbul Policy Center, April 2017).

İPM | IPC

İSTANBUL POLİTİKALAR MERKEZİ
SABANCI ÜNİVERSİTESİ KAMPUSU
ISTANBUL POLICY CENTER
AT SABANCI UNIVERSITY

ISBN: 978-605-9178-88-4

Istanbul Policy Center
Bankalar Caddesi No: 2 Minerva Han 34420
Karaköy, İstanbul TURKEY

+90 212 292 49 39
+90 212 292 49 57
@ ipc@sabanciuniv.edu
w ipc.sabanciuniv.edu