Summary: Widespread popular protests and the military coup in Egypt in the summer of 2013 and the sustained political turmoil in Tunisia have not only exemplified the tumultuous course of the Arab Spring but they have also reignited the debate on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. But the monopolization of power is more pertinent to democratization than incumbents’ political identity. The experience in recent years in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Turkey has indicated that superior capacity of Islamic parties to mobilize supporters has functioned as a mechanism of electoral hegemony, which combined with a majoritarian understanding of democracy has proven to be a pathway towards monopolization of power and an important obstacle to democratization in the region.

Introduction
Widespread popular protests and the military coup in Egypt in the summer of 2013 and the sustained political turmoil in Tunisia have not only exemplified the tumultuous course of the Arab Spring but they have also reignited the debate on the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Observers who formulated the transitions along these lines reduced politics in the region to a dichotomy of Islamism vs. secularism. But the monopolization of power is more pertinent to democratization than incumbents’ political identity. The experience in recent years in countries like Egypt, Tunisia, and Turkey has indicated that superior capacity of Islamic parties to mobilize supporters has functioned as a mechanism of electoral hegemony, which combined with a majoritarian understanding of democracy has proven to be a pathway towards monopolization of power and an important obstacle to democratization in the region. Recent developments have shown that monopolization of power under an executive who rules with a majoritarian impulse and relies extensively on an electoral understanding of democracy rather than a pluralist and participatory one has serious repercussions for minority and women’s rights, horizontal and vertical accountability of elected officials, and inclusion and participation of various social groups in democratic politics. Such an understanding of democracy indeed generates serious political crises pertaining to governability and stability, even inviting democratic breakdown, as has occurred lately in Egypt.

Islamism and Democracy
The question of compatibility of Islam and democracy has dominated the debates since the onset of the Arab uprisings. Accordingly, political developments in Egypt, Tunisia, and even Turkey, have been reduced to a false dichotomy of Islamism and secularism. Two points are in order with respect to this relationship. First, as Olivier Roy claims, democracy and Islamism are now inevitably intertwined. The popularity and ability of Islamic parties to mobilize the masses make them central actors in prospective democracies in the region. It is
The Turkish experience in the past decade has indicated that secularism alone is not sufficient for democratization. Issues pertaining to electoral hegemony and monopolization of power are equally pertinent.

**AKP Hegemony**

Since the AKP came to power in 2002, it has dominated the electoral process in general and local elections, attaining success unmatched by another political party in the history of Turkish democracy. This electoral hegemony in the existing institutional setting delivered the AKP strong majorities in the parliament, the presidency, and control over metropolitan municipalities, enabling the party to monopolize power. The AKP's desire to control power has been a result of its belief that effective governance is a function of a strong executive, increasingly embodied in the personality of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Prioritizing consequences over procedures, the AKP government has built its image on effective governance while frequently complaining of the "hurdles" they meet on their way (presented by the judiciary, the opposition, civil society etc.).

The monopoly on power, however, has had mixed results for democratic consolidation in Turkey. While the party successfully neutralized the unelected centers of power like the military and the judiciary, growing power consolidation led to erosion in accountability, sidelining of the parliament, and significant erosion in freedoms of expression, informa-


Nevertheless, Erdoğan's growing authoritarianism, majoritarianism, and exclusionary attitude, which left little room for dissent and pluralism even within his own party, coupled with his insistence on super-presidentialism to institutionalize a monopoly on power, culminated in widespread societal resistance in June 2013. A varied array of disaffected social groups, including anti-capitalist Islamists, LGBT, liberals, leftists, and secular-Kemalists joined the Gezi protests. The diverse background of the protesters supported by a number of Islamic intellectuals and human rights organizations seriously challenged the conception that the protests were a secularist backlash and a “counter-revolution” to the AKP rule. In the face of such diversity, Erdoğan took his majoritarian and exclusionary understanding of democracy to a new point by heavily investing in social and political polarization, increasing police brutality and censorship, and restricting civil society activism.

Egypt and Tunisia

Egypt and Tunisia have displayed similar behaviors to that of Turkey since the onset of the uprisings in 2011. Notably, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and Ennahda in Tunisia have enjoyed an unmatched popularity in their countries, while their opponents have proven to be highly fragmented and parochial. Thus, these parties emerged victorious in post-uprising elections. However, the MB and Ennahda have followed rather different trajectories in their approach to power once they were elected.

As in Turkey, electoral strength delivered the Brotherhood the Egyptian presidency, the majority in the Constituent Assembly, and the capacity to exert control over the state and society. In the course of this transition, the conservatives with hegemonic impulses — Mohammad Morsi among them — consolidated their power while purging moderate voices within the ranks. Hegemonic leadership in the MB generated an exclusionary and unilateral presidential rule under Morsi during the transition process, as evident in drafting of the constitution and crackdown on the opposition and the media through arrests of activists and journalists. This disaffected significant parts of the society that had initially supported Morsi's presidency. The fact that the uprising in June included several former Morsi supporters with conservative backgrounds affirmed this disappointment with Morsi’s image as the president of the Muslim Brothers rather than of the Egyptian people.

While Morsi resembled Erdoğan in his majoritarian and exclusionary governance, there are important differences between the AKP and the Brotherhood. Firstly, the AKP came to power in an institutionalized electoral democracy as a veteran in democratic politics, and it has gradually monopolized power as it consolidated its electoral hegemony in successive elections. Secondly, strong entrepreneurial spirit and economic dynamism within the AKP constituency took advantage of the global economic context and facilitated sustained economic growth, effective governance, and stability, which proved to be the major shortcomings of the Morsi administration. Finally, the costs of power monopolization in an institutionalized yet unconsolidated democracy differed remarkably from the costs incurred in transitioning countries. This difference is best captured by the fact that social discontent in Egypt led to a military intervention while a similar democratic breakdown remained a distant possibility in Turkey.

The costs of power monopolization in an institutionalized yet unconsolidated democracy differed remarkably from the costs incurred in transitioning countries.

Ennahda in Tunisia, in contrast, refrained from a monopolization of power and formed a coalition with social-democratic parties, sharing critical posts with their partners, rather than co-opting independents to establish a single-party government. The fact that pragmatists, who seek moderation and compromise with other parties, prevailed over the groups with somewhat hegemonic impulses in the party allowed Ennahda to make critical compromises in the constitutional process (i.e. to not to state Shari’a as the basis of law in the constitution), which has been more inclusive compared to the process in Egypt. Similarly, greater room for internal discussion in Ennahda permitted the party to skillfully manage political crises, such as the assassination of main opposition leaders or the recent protests that called for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. With these important points of divergence, Ennahda has proven that monopoly on power is not inherently an Islamist tendency. Most importantly, Ennahda has also shown that despite severe economic problems and occasional political crises, under conditions of power sharing, compromise, and inclusive politics, democratic transitions may have better prospects.

The experience in Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia shows that electoral hegemony and monopolization of power hurts prospects for democratization through political crises fuelled by social polarization, disaffection, and exclusion. These crises during democratic transitions incur substantial costs for societies, providing space for military coups and external interventions. As these countries write their constitutions anew, they should learn the lessons of the past and thoroughly analyze the recent crises. The remedy is not less democracy but more democracy through cultivation of trust among political actors, strengthening of internal deliberation within political parties, and careful designing.
of political institutions with well-functioning systems of checks and balances embedded in an understanding of participatory democracy.

About the Authors
Şebnem Gümüşçü is an instructor at Sabancı University and project coordinator at Istanbul Policy Center. Her research interests include political Islam, democratization, dominant parties, and Middle Eastern politics. She received her Ph.D. in politics from University of Virginia in 2010.

E. Fuat Keyman is a professor of international relations at Sabancı University/Istanbul and is the director of the Istanbul Policy Center. He writes for Milliyet newspaper and has a TV commentary program on Turkish and global politics. He works on democratization, globalization, international relations, civil society, and Turkey-EU relations.

About GMF
The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship. In addition, GMF supports a number of initiatives to strengthen democracies. Founded in 1972 as a non-partisan, non-profit organization through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has offices in Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Belgrade, Ankara, Bucharest, Warsaw, and Tunis. GMF also has smaller representations in Bratislava, Turin, and Stockholm.

About the On Turkey Series
GMF's On Turkey is an ongoing series of analysis briefs about Turkey's current political situation and its future. GMF provides regular analysis briefs by leading Turkish, European, and American writers and intellectuals, with a focus on dispatches from on-the-ground Turkish observers. To access the latest briefs, please visit our web site at www.gmfus.org/turkey or subscribe to our mailing list at http://database.gmfus.org/reaction.