The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey

_The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey_ explains why political Islam, which has been part of Turkish politics since the 1970s but on the rise only since the 1990s, has now achieved governing power. Drawing on social movement theory, the book focuses on the dominant form of Islamist activism in Turkey by analyzing the increasing electoral strength of four successive Islamist political parties: the Welfare Party; its successor, the Virtue Party; and the successors of the Virtue Party, the Felicity Party and the Justice and Development Party. This book, which is based on extensive primary and secondary sources as well as in-depth interviews, provides the most comprehensive analysis available regarding the Islamist political mobilization in Turkey.

Banu Eligür has written extensively on Turkish domestic and foreign policy and taught courses on Political Islam and Civil Society in the Middle East at Brandeis University as a visiting assistant professor. The recipient of numerous awards and fellowships, she now lives in Turkey and conducts field research on Turkish nationalism.
To

my best friend,

my father Özcan Eligür
The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey

BANU ELIGÜR
Contents

List of Tables vii
List of Diagrams, Charts, and Boxes ix
List of Acronyms xi
Acknowledgments xiii
Preface xvii

1 Introduction 1
   Theoretical Approaches to Islamist Mobilization 4
   The Social Movement Literature 9
   The Political Process Model 12

2 Emergence of the Islamist Social Movement in Turkey 37
   Islam in the Ottoman Empire 37
   Ottomanism, Islamism, and Turkism 39
   The Turkish Revolution 41
   An Overview of Turkish Politics (1946–1960) 48
   From the Liberal 1961 Constitution to the 1971 Military Intervention 59
   The 1980 Military Intervention and Its Aftermath 76
   Conclusion 84

3 The Turkish-Islamic Synthesis and the Islamist Social Movement 85
   Turkey on the Brink of Civil War 85
   Adoption of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis 93
   Turkey under Motherland Party Rule (1983–1991) 118
   Conclusion 135
## Contents

4 The Malfunctioning State and Consolidation of the Islamist Social Movement  
*Origins of the Malfunctioning State* 136  
*Framing the Political Opportunity Structure: The Welfare Party and the Just Order (Adil Düzen)* 137  
*The Welfare Party Becomes a Party of the Masses* 144  
*Municipal Governance as Political Opportunity Structure* 154  
*Conclusion* 164

5 Organizational Dynamics of the Islamist Social Movement 182  
*Islamist Party Organizational Networks: The Welfare Party and Virtue Party* 183  
*Party Mobilizational Efforts* 189  
*The Emergence of “Reformists”* 198  
*The Parallel Islamic Sector* 200  
*Conclusion* 213

6 The Soft Intervention of 1997 and the Islamist Social Movement 214  
*The Welfare Party Comes to Power* 215  
*The “Soft” Intervention of 1997 and the End of the Welfare Party* 220  
*The Virtue Party* 234  
*After “Virtue”: Justice and Development* 243  
*The Justice and Development Party Tests the Limits* 248  
*The July 2007 General Elections* 254  
*The Justice and Development Party Mobilizes against the Secular-Democratic State* 261  
*Conclusion* 275

7 The Islamist Social Movement Today and Prospects for the Future 276  
*Bibliography* 285  
*Index* 303
List of Tables

2.1 Reasons for NSP Support among Potential NSP Voters, 1973 Election Poll .......................... page 71
2.2 Percentage of Votes Won by Parties in General Elections, 1950–2002 ......................... 72
2.3 Seats Won in Parliament, 1950–2002 ............................................................................. 74
2.4 Party Choice of the Fully Employed, 1988 (percent) ..................................................... 79
2.5 Vote Share (percent) of Islamist Political Parties in General Elections in Major Cities, 1987–2002 .............................................................. 80
2.6 Vote Share (percent) of Islamist Political Parties in Municipal Elections, 1984–2004 .... 81
2.7 Approval of the Sharia Rule in Turkey (percent) ............................................................. 82
2.8 Religiosity, Nationalism, and Voter Preference (percent) .............................................. 83
3.1 Methods of Teaching Quranic Verses and Prayers ......................................................... 110
3.2 Methods of Teaching the Hadiths .................................................................................. 111
3.3 Imam-Hatip High School Students as a Proportion of Total Number of High School Students in Secondary (Ortaöğretim) Education, by Academic Year ................................................................. 127
3.4 Investment and Development Banks and Special Finance Houses in Turkey (as of November 2000) .................................................................................. 133
4.1 Shantytown Housing in Turkey, 1950–1990 .................................................................. 141
4.2 Party Support by Type of Urban Community (percent of total vote in community), 1973 General Elections ................................................................. 143
4.3 Party Support in Major Cities in General Elections, 1969–1977 (percent) ................... 143
4.4 Party Support in Major Cities in General Elections, 1983–1999 (percent) ................. 144
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Rates of Increase in Cost-of-Living Index for Wage-Earners in Istanbul (percent)</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Party Vote in Municipal Elections, 1984–1999 (percent)</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Percentage of Votes and Seats Won by Parties in 1995 General Elections</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Comparison of Attitudes of İmam-Hatip High School Students and WP Voters</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Perceptions of the Function of İmam-Hatip High Schools</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Sectors that İmam-Hatip High Schools Students Want to Work in the Future (percent)</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Number of Companies Owned by Islamic Brotherhoods</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Public Poll, 1997</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>Public Poll, 1997</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>Results of the July 2007 Turkish General Elections</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Diagrams, Charts, and Boxes

DIAGRAMS
1.1 The Dynamics of Preconsolidation (1980–1991) \hspace{1cm} page 24
1.2 The Dynamics of Consolidation (1991–1997) \hspace{1cm} 28
1.3 The Dynamics of Divergence and Reconsolidation (1997–2007) \hspace{1cm} 34
5.1 The Welfare Party’s Organizational Network \hspace{1cm} 186

CHART
1.1 The Mobilization of Political Islam in Turkey (1980–2007) \hspace{1cm} 22

BOXES
2.1 Political Parties in Turkey \hspace{1cm} 53
2.2 Genealogy of Islamic and Islamist Political Parties in Turkey (1946–2007) \hspace{1cm} 55
# List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AMGT</td>
<td>European National View Organization (Avrupa Milli Görüş Teşkilati)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASKON</td>
<td>Anatolian Tigers (Anadolu Kapılanları)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMCEC</td>
<td>Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D-8</td>
<td>Developing 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DİSK</td>
<td>Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti, DSP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democrat Party (Demokrat Parti, DP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DPP</td>
<td>Democratic People’s Party (Demokratik Halk Partisi, DEHAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSP</td>
<td>Democratic Society Party (Demokratik Toplum Partisi, DTP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FP</td>
<td>Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMEI</td>
<td>Greater Middle East Initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GUP</td>
<td>Great Unity Party (Büyük Birlık Partisi, BBP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İH</td>
<td>Intellectuals’ Hearth (Aydınlar Ocağı)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İsDB</td>
<td>Islamic Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>İTMGT</td>
<td>National View Organization of Muslim Community (İslam Toplum Milli Görüş Teşkilati)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDP</td>
<td>Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JP</td>
<td>Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LPT</td>
<td>Labor Party of Turkey (Türkiye İşçi Partisi, TİP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MİSK</td>
<td>Confederation of Nationalist Trade Unions (Milliyetçi İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, ANAP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MÜSİAD</td>
<td>Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAP</td>
<td>Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCR</td>
<td>National Culture Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
List of Acronyms

NDP Nationalist Democracy Party (Milliyetçi Demokrasi Partisi, MDP)
NOP National Order Party (Milli Nizam Partisi, MNP)
NP Nation Party (Millet Partisi, MP)
NSC National Security Council
NSP National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP)
NWP Nationalist Work Party (Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi, MCP)
PDP People’s Democracy Party (Halkın Demokrasi Partisi, HADEP)
PEP People’s Endeavor Party (Halkın Emek Partisi, HEP)
PKK Kurdistan Workers’ Party
POS Political Opportunity Structure
PP Populist Party (Halkçı Parti, HP)
PPM Political Process Model
RDP Reformist Democracy Party (İslahatçı Demokrasi Partisi, IDP)
RNP Republican Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Millet Partisi, CMP)
RPNP Republican Peasants Nation Party (Cumhuriyetçi Köylü Millet Partisi, CKMP)
RPP Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP)
SDPP Social Democratic Populist Party (Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti, CHP)
TIS Turkish-Islamic Synthesis (Türk İslam Sentezi)
TPP True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, DYP)
TÜSİAD Turkish Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association
VP Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP)
WP Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP)
WWG West Working Group (Bati Çalışma Grubu)
Acknowledgments

This book, which is based on my PhD dissertation, has been a work in progress since 2003. First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my dissertation adviser, Professor Steven Burg, in the Politics Department at Brandeis University, for his invaluable guidance, comments, and support. I am indebted to him for believing in this project since its inception. It was a privilege and real education for me to work under his guidance. Without his invaluable comments and support, I could not have finished this book.

I am grateful to Professor Steven Teles, who is now at the Johns Hopkins University, for his invaluable support and guidance for this book. He has been a mentor and friend since my arrival at Brandeis University in 2000. I wish to thank him for broadening my academic approach through our interdisciplinary discussions and for always being there for me when I needed guidance.

I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Jack A. Goldstone and Professor Barry Rubin for their enthusiasm and support for this book.

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to a number of institutions for supporting me as I wrote my dissertation and revised it into a book. Brandeis University Politics Department doctoral fellowship, Benjamin fellowship, and the Morris Abrams Award in International Relations enabled me to conduct my dissertation field research in Turkey between 2003 and 2004. Koret dissertation fellowship and Grand fellowship enabled me to write my dissertation between 2004 and 2005. Crown Center for Middle East Studies postdoctoral fellowship at Brandeis University between 2003 and 2004, Crown Center research fellowship, and Madeleine Haas Russell Visiting Assistant Professorship in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies in the Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department at Brandeis University between 2007 and 2008 enabled me to revise my dissertation into a book. Without the generous financial support of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies and the Near Eastern Judaic Studies Department, I could not have completed this book. Special thanks to Professor Shai Feldman,
Acknowledgments

director of the Crown Center, and Kristina Cherniahivsky, the center’s associate director, for their financial support for this book. I am particularly grateful to Professor David Wright, Near Eastern and Judaic Studies Department chair, Professor Avigdor Levy, Professor Jonathan Sarna, and Dean Adam B. Jaffe for providing me this invaluable opportunity for teaching and writing at an early stage of my career. I also thank Professor Asher Susser for our intellectual discussions on Turkish politics at the Crown Center during the 2007 and 2008 academic years. I wish to thank my dissertation committee members Professor David Cunningham in the Sociology Department at Brandeis University and Professor Shai Feldman. I also thank Professor Robert Art, Professor Daniel Kryder, Professor George Ross, and Professor Ralph Thaxton, in the Politics Department at Brandeis University, for their enthusiasm for this book.

This book is based on extensive primary and secondary sources (party programs, speeches, newspapers – Islamist, liberal, and leftist), as well as in-depth interviews conducted in Turkey in 2003 and 2004. I interviewed Islamist politicians (former and current parliamentarians) and party workers, Islamist foundation members, military officers and retired generals, center-right and center-left parliamentarians, sociology professors, divinity professors, members of the directorate of religious affairs, and Turkish nationalists. These interviews provide important insights into the thinking of key members of the Islamist movement regarding Turkish society and its future, and of key secular actors, as well. I would like to thank a number of Turkish scholars that I interviewed for this book: Professor Oya Akgönenç, Professor Sencer Ayata, Professor Nahide Bozkurt, Professor Hasan Onat, and Professor Binnaz Toprak. Although I cannot mention all people that I interviewed for this book, I would like to thank the following people who kindly agreed to be interviewed and provided research assistance: Şevket Kazan, the vice-chair of the Felicity Party; Aygınur Tekdal, the chair of the Felicity Party Women Commission; Felicity Party Women Commission workers; Hüseyin Kansu, then the Justice and Development Party parliamentarian; Hüseyin Besli, the Justice and Development Party parliamentarian; Selma Kavaf, then chair of the Justice and Development Party Women Commission and current State Minister for Women and Family Affairs; Zelkif Kazdal, then chair and current founding chair of the Justice and Development Party Youth Commission; Nevzat Kösoğlu, the former Nationalist Action Party parliamentarian; Ayvaz Gökdemir, the former Minister of State and parliamentarian from the True Path Party (TPP); Mehmet Ağar, then the TPP chair; Uluç Gürkan, the former Democratic Left Party parliamentarian; Yakup Kepenek, the Republican People’s Party parliamentarian; Nuri Gürgür, the Turkish Hearths chair; Galip Tamur, the prominent Turkish Hearths member; and Retired General Çevik Bir and Retired General Aytekin Ziylan. I would like to acknowledge my debt to all, who generously shared their time and views with me and patiently answered my questions during my interviews. Without their invaluable input, this book could not have been as profound.

I wish to thank Brandeis Library Interlibrary Loan Borrowing Coordinator Dzintra Lacis and her staff as well as the Turkish Grand National Library staff for processing my endless research material requests.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank Cambridge University Press for bringing this book to print. Many thanks to Lewis Bateman, the Press’s senior editor, for his enthusiasm and support for this book and to Emily Spangler, senior editorial assistant, for kindly answering my questions and making the publication process smooth. I would like to thank two anonymous readers that Cambridge University Press solicited for this book for the valuable comments.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents Aylâ and Özcan Eligür; without their encouragement and support I could not have completed this book. They have been part of my journey from beginning to end. I am particularly grateful to my father for his friendship and invaluable contributions to my field research. I also thank Kurgu, my good friend and “assistant,” for accompanying me while I wrote this book.
This book explains why political Islam, which has been part of Turkish politics since the 1970s but on the rise only since the 1990s, has now achieved governing power. The book focuses on the dominant form of Islamist activism in Turkey by analyzing the increasing electoral strength of four successive Islamist political parties: the Welfare Party; its successor, the Virtue Party; and the successors of the Virtue Party, the Felicity Party and the Justice and Development Party. The Justice and Development Party is now the party of government in Turkey. Drawing upon social movement theory, and the political process model variant of this theory, this book argues that the rise of political Islam in Turkey can be attributed to three factors: first, the emergence of a political opportunity structure, created primarily by the adoption of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis by the military regime in the aftermath of the 1980 intervention; second, the presence of movement entrepreneurs with significant organizational, financial, and human resources; and, third, the successful framing of issues by entrepreneurs to expand the appeal of the Islamist social movement beyond the population of Islamists to secular but socioeconomically aggrieved voters.

While the successful mobilization of political Islam can be attributed in part to the malfunctioning state and the structural conditions that it created, particularly since the 1990s, these factors alone do not explain how the Islamist movement could establish the well-organized and resource-rich networks that enabled it to address the ills of the state since the 1990s. For grievances to lead to successful social movement mobilization, two additional conditions must exist: a political opportunity and successful framing of that opportunity by movement entrepreneurs. Movement entrepreneurs must establish a dynamic relationship between movement networks, framing processes, grievances, and the political opportunity structure. These four factors, while necessary for social movement mobilization, are insufficient by themselves. Movement entrepreneurs are also necessary for success.