

A New Era for Turkey The Attempted Coup of the 15th of July

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In order to really understand what transpired in Turkey during and after the attempted coup on the 15th of July in the summer of 2016, we have to look at the rise and the evolution of a number of components of Turkish society and the socio- historical background of Turkey. This study will primarily examine the incident that occurred on the 15th of July 2016 and try to understand its impact on the Turkish republic and its people. Hence, this study will try to present a brief political overview of Turkey and its socio-religious strata. The prime actors that will be focused upon and explained are the political and the socio-religious background of the Turkish Republic and the Gülen Movement. Furthermore, this article will try to explain the psycho-sociological aspects of this group which was behind this attempted coup. This article will try to explain how the situation has developed in such a way that not only led to an attempted coup in Turkey in July 2016 but also led to Turkey directly defending itself against three different terrorist organisations. Thus, this article will attempt to evaluate the role and the on-going results of the post-coup attempt in Turkey. As a final point, the article will demonstrate how a religious movement such as the Gülenist movement evolved into becoming a terrorist organisation labelled as FETÖ by Turkey and its allies.

Keywords: Republic of Turkey; Attempted Coup; Gülenist; Terrorism; Socio- Religion.

INTRODUCTION

On the 15th of July 2016, Turkey was the victim of an attempted coup with İstanbul, and Ankara being attacked directly, the former is its biggest city and the latter its capital. Between 9pm and 10pm of that Friday evening reports began to emerge that a group of soldiers had laid siege to a number of places in Ankara and İstanbul, including the International Ataturk Airport and the Bosphorus Bridge in İstanbul. They were followed by other reports claiming that the Turkish airspace was closed to traffic, yet, around two dozen F-16 fighter jets were flying low over cities such as, İstanbul and Ankara. Across Turkey, officers involved in the coup began to detain senior military leaders, block major roads with tanks and helicopters and seize crucial institutions like the İstanbul Atatürk Airport. At nine forty eight in the evening a website called '*Haberdar*' belonging to the Gülen movement announced, "Troops in front of Beylerbey Palace [An Ottoman Palace situated on the Asian side of Bosphorus]: Martial Law declared. Everybody go home!" (Duran & Altun, 2016, p. 13) A later announcement on the same website declared that a successful coup in the chain of command of the country had been carried out. By half past ten in the evening the *MİT* (Turkish Secret Service), the

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Police Special Forces Compound, the Ankara Police Headquarters and other security forces were attacked with helicopters, tanks and F-16's. During these attacks numerous police officers were wounded and killed. At five minutes past eleven in the evening of that day, the Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım went live on A-Haber news channel to inform the public that a group of soldiers within the Turkish Armed Forces had undertaken an unlawful attempt to seize power. The public was prompted to protect democracy and he promised that the government was vigilant and on duty. (Duran & Altun, 2016, p. 14) This announcement was followed by a declaration by all the main opposition parties, including the nationalist and the secular parties, condemning the coup. By five minutes past midnight a broadcast appeared on the state-owned TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) TV channel. Where the coupists, who had taken a female news anchor as a hostage, forced her to announce them as the, 'Peace at Home Council', a reference to one of the country's founding secular ideals. They claimed that they were with the Turkish Armed Forces and that they had completely taken over the administration of the country. They claimed that the current government had destroyed the country's institutions, engaged in corruption, supported terrorism and ignored human rights. They insisted on a martial law and called people to stay at home. (Miş, Güleler, Coşkun, Duran & Ayvaz, 2016) By this time a lot of misinformation began to roam around the international and social media. From some Western media outlets such as, the NBC, a tweet was sent quoting a "senior US official" as saying that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan had fled the country and had sought asylum in Germany. He was further quoted as saying that the Turkish army was now in control. (TRT World, 2016) A chain of text messages revealed after the coup highlighted that during this period, Major Murat Çelebioğlu told his fellow coupists, "The deputies of the İstanbul police chief have been called, informed and the vast majority have complied." (Filkins, 2016). At the same time a helicopter special force team was sent by the coupists to assassinate President Erdoğan in Marmaris, where, he was currently on a holiday with his family, including his grandchildren, but the plot failed.

In contrast to the reports by the international news agencies, at twenty five minutes past midnight, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was present in the country at the time, appeared on CNN Turk over Facetime and called on the citizens of Turkey to defy the Putschists. By this time it was clear to the majority of the public that this was an attempted coup by a parallel deep state. President Erdoğan addressed the Turkish citizens and called on them to resist the attempted coup which was carried out by a group named Gülenists, who had infiltrated the Turkish armed forces and were masquerading as liberators (Miş, Güleler, Coşkun, Duran and Ayyaz: 2016). People of both religious and secular orientations took to the streets. Unfortunately, the coupists opened fire on the civilians and used fighter jets, military helicopters and tanks against the masses, as well as bombing the Parliament building, the Presidential Complex, The National Intelligence Organisation and several Police Special Forces Departments. It was after his TV appearance that the coupists tried to assassinate the President at his holiday resort. Ultimately, the people who took to the streets won by resisting the coup attempt. "Faced with overwhelming popular resistance, the troops had to decide between [continuing to] shoot large groups of demonstrators or giving up. By the morning the uprising had been broken" (Filkins, 2016). The media, the NGO's, the government and the opposition parties all joined together to make sure that the Putschists failed. The price for this victory was the death of 241 people, designated as martyrs and 2195 wounded.

AIMS AND SCOPE

The aim of this article is to examine the incident that occurred on the 15th of July 2016 and to understand its impact on the Turkish republic and its people. Hence, this study will try to present a brief overview of Turkish political history and Turkey's socio-religious strata over the last ninety years. Furthermore, this article will try to explain the psycho-sociological aspects of the group that was behind this attempted coup. Moreover, in this article we will discuss the context and background of the Gulen movement in order to explain how a religious movement became designated as a terrorist organisation by Turkey and its allies. Finally, we will attempt to evaluate the role of Turkey in West Asia, also known as the Middle East, in the failed post - coup era. Although this is a comprehensive article concerning the current events and social history of Turkey, there is a certain limitation to this study. The scope of this article is limited to the socio-religious sphere, before and after the attempted coup. Looking specifically at the causes and effects of the attempted coup, this article will touch upon the political aspects. However, since the authors are not political science theorists, this aspect of the study will have obvious limitations.

SOCIO-RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

According to the last survey carried out on the religiosity of Turkey in 2014, 99.2 percent of the people described themselves as Muslims. Furthermore, 42.5 percent of the population stated that they were fulfilling their daily prayers regularly and 83 percent of the population said that they were fulfilling their fasting obligation during the month of Ramadan (DİYANET, 2014). These findings indicate that Turkey has a majority Muslim population with a large religious society that practices their faith and gives importance to religion in their everyday life. This is why it is vital to understand the role of religion in a society such as Turkey.

In order to understand the current Turkish society it is impertinent to understand the socio-religious historical background of the Turkish Muslims, in other words there is a need to trace it all the way back to the late Ottoman society. Before the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, the Ottoman state consisted of majority Muslim population with pockets of Jews and Christians. In this late Ottoman society of the early 20th century the Sufi orders were very dominant in the forming of people's religiosity. Most people were educated about their faith and religious ways through the Madrasas of the Ottoman state and the *Tekke* of the Sufi groups (Hussain, 2013). The new Turkish Republic was created within this kind of socio-religious atmosphere, but, due to the secular framework of the new Republic all religious institutions were banned. Therefore from 1923 to 1950 during the early history of the Republic, Sufi orders and their institutions were banned from the public sphere, however, they continued to operate in secret across the society. Only after the 1950's with the introduction of liberation policies across the Turkish political sphere, did the Sufi orders begin to emerge publicly in society again. Due to the urbanisation process across Turkey between the 1950's and 1980's, which accelerated during the later years, a large part of the religious conservative society developed strong ties with these religious movements (Mardin, 1993). During this period, two types of religious movements emerged in Turkey. The first type of religious movement developed from their Sufi roots, such as, the *İskender Paşa Cemati* and *Menzil Cemati*, whereas, the second type of religious movement arose out of modernity such as, Nursis and Süleymançilik

Cemati, the latter two being a response to attempting to live a modern religious life style. Both types of religious movements provided the public with access to religion in a new urban secular setting (Efe, 2008). Sociologically, all of these religious movements provided people who joined them, access to many social facilities, such as, general education for various age groups, charity organisations, and specific religious education. With the passing of time some of these religious movements developed a very strong and healthy social infrastructure that contributed to the wider cultural and religious developments of society. Some of these religious movements went onto develop political interests and began to engage with the political establishment. Initially, they were more interested in supporting one of the many political parties that already existed, such as, the Refah party. However, later on especially after 2000, some of the religious movements began to initiate their own political parties, such as, *Bağımsız Türkiye Partisi* and *Sağduyu Partisi*. On the other hand, some religious movements refused to take part in the political establishment, such as, the Nursi movement. In contrast, the Fethullah Gülen movement seems to have attempted to manoeuvre political power so as to control the outcome of any future governance. During the last fifteen years this movement has had a very dominant role in numerous social infrastructures in the Turkish society. The reason behind their success to power during this period is complex. To truly understand this movement we have to first look at the political history of the Republic.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

During the final years of the First World War when the allies had successfully defeated Germany and its Kaiser, the Ottomans who were allied with Germany, came under increasing pressure to submit to the allies. While Germany was subdued by the victors and recreated into the Weimar Republic, the Ottoman powers in Istanbul willingly laid down their weapons hoping to receive the best possible solution from the allies. The allies had occupied Istanbul and the Greeks had marched into Turkey from the city of Izmir. In 1920 the internal Turkish opposition to Istanbul, based in Ankara, decided to fight the Greeks and the allies. This internal Turkish opposition feared that Europe would leave nothing for the Turks once all of Turkey was occupied. This group of opposition became known as unionists, due to their call for the land of Anatolia to be united against the plan of the allies. The allies' plan was to partition most of Anatolia; western Anatolia was to be given to Greece and eastern Anatolia was to be created into possible Kurdish and Armenian states (Zurcher, 1998). The Istanbul government and the Sultan chose Mustafa Kemal, later known as, Ataturk (the father of the Turks), as Inspector-General of the armies of Anatolia in order to de-mobilise them. However, Mustafa Kemal decided to lead the resistance against the imperial government in Istanbul instead, which was at that time occupied by the Allies. The resistance began the war of independence against the allies from Ankara. Mustafa Kemal and his followers were very successful in their war of independence due to the division between the allied forces after the Great War. Italy and France had left the battlefield due to the need to rebuild their individual war torn homelands, leaving only Britain and Greece to fight the Turks. In 1922 Mustafa Kemal won his victory against the Greeks and the British. The Sultan's willingness to play along with the British gave Mustafa Kemal the pretext to abolish the Sultanate but not the Caliphate. As the liberator of Turkey from Allied occupation at the end of the World War, Mustafa Kemal enjoyed immense clout and the backing of the whole Turkish military and state structure. This also explains why the Sultanate was abolished, but not the religious seat of the Caliphate in 1922. A year later the Caliphate was

abolished but for a different reason than the abolishment of the Sultanate (Toni Alaranta, 2014).

THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

Mustafa Kemal established the Republic of Turkey out of the ashes of defeat of the Ottoman state at the end of the First World War. In 1923 the state was set up by Atatürk based upon state secularism, which later became known as Kemalism. This state philosophy which was highly militaristic and un-liberalised remained in charge of Turkey until very recently. According to Umut Azak (2010), during the initial years of the republic a single party period commenced with a very strong Kemalist discourse on reactionary Islam which was exaggerated and exploited to create an emotional bond within the secular republic. Due to these events the Kemalist government even tried to develop their own form of vernacular Islam which promoted recitation of Turkish translation of the call to prayer and so on. However, this project failed amongst the masses and a multi-party period commenced from 1946, creating a need for a new method to uphold the official ideology of Kemalism in a relative democracy. The problem that arose for this ideology of secular programme was the need to control Islamist tendencies and the Kurdish identity inside the Republic, amongst the masses.

According to Micheal M. Gunther (2014) in his chapter entitled, 'Turkey, Kemalism and the Deep State', he argues that this kind of aggressive secularism led to a Deep State (Derin Devlet) apparatus developing parallel to the official state apparatus which enforced until very recently the principles of the Kemalist Republic. A definition that was offered of this deep state was that it was "made up of elements from the military, security and judicial establishments wedded to a fierce nationalist statist ideology who, if need be, are ready to block or even oust a government that does not share their vision". The role of the military and the Deep state having a preeminent role in Turkey more likely stems from the Kurdish uprising in 1925, which led to the squashing of democratic rights of both the Kurdish and the general Turkish masses in Turkey. The role of the military grew in such a way over the years that in 1980 the new constitution enshrined a constitutional role for it. Consequently, for the entire twentieth century Turkey's religious majority, representing various kinds of religiosity, was governed by a small secular elite, who used the Turkish institutions, especially the military, as the guardian of the militant secular state. Hence, when during the nineteen-seventies and eighties, Islamist parties rose to prominence, they were either shut down or banned with the support of the 'deep state' apparatuses.

Thus, in 1997 the Kemalist Deep State utilized for the fourth time the army to carry out a coup against the government, which was this time run mostly by Erbakan's Refah party, which was favoured by the majority of conservative Muslim population due to its Islamic leaning. Across the Turkish society this coup was later known as a post-modern coup. However, what was less known was that a religious movement known by its leader's name Fethullah Gülen had begun to manoeuvre his followers into all of the important structures of state, such as, the Police, the Army and the Judicial system decades earlier. In fact, it can be argued that the Kemalist notion of 'deep state' gave birth to the idea of a 'Gülenist deep state' (Gunther, 2014). In fact, Claire Berlinski (2012) in her article, 'Who is Gulen' describes how Gülen was indicted for trying to change, through hidden means, the role of secularism in Turkey. He was tried in absentia by a state security court. The government in 2000 claimed that his movement had attempted to infiltrate Turkey's

military schools, but in 2008 due to lack of evidence, Gülen was acquitted (Berlinski, 2012).

In the troubled 1990s, Turkey's secular establishment was associated with economic instability, whereby, inflation averaged 70 percent. Moreover, a forceful and prejudiced policy was enforced that banned girls and women in hijabs from most public institutions, such as, schools, universities, the government, the judiciary, and the police force. It is interesting to note that Turkey's allies in Nato and the EU were very much aware of this situation, since during this period, Turkey's elite solicited the continued support, both politically and economically, of the west. Inside Turkey the major change, since Atatürk, came when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan— a ferry captain's son with roots in the conservative Black Sea region, entered the government with the official role of the mayor of İstanbul in 1994. In 2001, the Justice and Development Party—known by its Turkish initials, A.K.P.— was founded by a group of men led by Tayyip Erdoğan. A dynamic former mayor of İstanbul, Erdoğan had recently emerged from prison; he had been jailed by the country's military leaders while he was the mayor, accused of reading lines of a poem written by a prominent Turkish poet, which included words such as “The mosques are our barracks . . . and the believers our soldiers.” The A.K.P. swept into power in the national elections, and Erdoğan began remaking Turkey. He overhauled the judicial system, liberalized the economy, and eased relations with long-suppressed masses of religious people, the Alevis and the Kurds. The economy was regained over the following years with the economic growth expanding by an average of 5 percent per annum. From 2005 onwards it seemed that Turkey had become a prosperous, democratic, and stable country with a majority Muslim population. During his thirteen years in power, Erdoğan and his Justice and Development party (AKP), have presided over a transformation in Turkey's fortunes: on the back of strong and stable leadership and a raft of liberalising political and economic reforms (Filkins, 2016). In this socio-economic development the country's middle class grew by 40 percent that saw stability in their country as a way to continue their aspirations. This is one of the reasons why many people were willing to go out to the streets to fight the attempted coup, – they felt empowered and unwilling to give up their hard earned development. Another development that truly made Turkey successful over the last decade was the government's achievement in shrinking the gap between the Republic's values and popular sentiments. The elite imposition of secularism, elitism and Westernism as part of an authoritarian modernization project to alienate the masses was finally removed. Due to this transformation where people could adopt religious or secular lifestyle based upon their own choices, the ordinary everyday citizens took it upon themselves during the attempted coup to protect their new earned democracy (Albayrak, 2016).

THIRTY YEARS IN PREPARATION FOR A COUP

During the nineteen-seventies and eighties when the secular elite had full control of the government and had successfully banned or closed down any Islamist party that arose to prominence, Gülen seems to have made his own accommodation with Turkey's secular establishment after the 1971 military coup, when the new regime arrested Gülen on charges of conspiring to overthrow the secular order. According to Dexter Filkins (2016), after this event Gülen's talks and sermons were trying very hard to be pro-business, pro-science, and conciliatory towards Israel. He is reported to have said on Turkish television, “I have said time and again that the republican order, and secularism, when executed perfectly, is a blessing from

God". To understand how a simple preacher such as Fethullah Gülen can make a movement that later became a 'cabal' which created its own deep state, we have to delve deeper into the psycho-social structure of the group. Fethullah Gülen was born into a religious conservative family in the east of Turkey in 1938. His father was an imam who gave him his first religious edification. His education consisted of madrasa instruction rather than the governmental official religious high schools. By the time he was seventeen in 1959 he began to officially preach in the mosques of Edirne. In his youth he followed *Bediuzzaman* Said Nursî (1878–1960), a Sunni charismatic religious personality that became popular during the early Turkish Republic. Gülen followed in his youth the ideas and thoughts of *Risale-i Nur*, a number of books written by Said Nursî, which were disdained and sometimes banned by the Republic due to the Republic's secular outlook. These books became the basis for the formation of "reading circles" that were geographically dispersed in small towns where followers gathered to read, discuss, and internalize the text and to duplicate it. These books became the ground work for *Nurcu* (Berlinski, 2012). In 1966 Gülen was promoted as the official Head of Preachers in İzmir and he was engaged in public religious education. However, it seems that in the seventies he gradually moved away from the *Nurcu* movement which he criticized for being apolitical. Instead he promoted himself as a leader of a new movement that promoted his ideas concerning religion and society. In 1971 he was in prison for six months and by 1975 he began to preach his thoughts and ideas at a number of conferences concerning religion and science. He established a journal called *Sızıntı*, where he promoted his ideas. In 1989 he became a preacher at one of the major mosques in İstanbul. During the 1990s he garnered a lot of followers and at the same time he gathered around him a community that together, owned many schools, radio stations, TV channels, newspapers and trade associations. During the same period, he began a campaign to launch his ideas abroad with an interfaith dialogue platform (Efe, 2008). For the West, his ideas were welcomed as liberal and suitable for modernity. Hence, Gülen was so successful in the West that he even had a meeting with Pope John Paul II, the leaders of major Jewish denominations and President Bill Clinton. For all of these personalities and for the liberal West, Gülen represented the new 'reformation' of Islam (Filkins, 2016).

In so many ways, Gülen had transcended all other religious movements by becoming a social, educational and media conglomerate. In the 1997 coup, Fethullah Gülen surprised many people when he supported the removal of Erbakan, however, many Kemalists believed that he was a hidden '*trojan horse*'. Thus, the Kemalist deep state began legal inquiries concerning his affairs. In 1999 he suddenly moved to the United States claiming it was for health reasons, but others claimed he was trying to avoid court proceedings. Gülen retreated to the Pennsylvania countryside where he became a recluse and began to control his affairs and followers in Turkey from afar. His movement became known by his followers as '*Hizmet*' meaning 'service', but for everyone else it was known as the Fethullah Gülen movement.

This movement's history can be classified into four periods; beginnings (1970-1983), proselytization (1983-1997), Internationalisation and Liberalisation (1997-[2002]) [and 'Deep State' (2002-2013)] (Efe, 2008). Initially, while spreading his ideology, Gülen and his followers were known to be highly conservative, and their aim was, just like the *Nurcu* movements, to mould religious and pious generations. However, after the period of Internationalisation and Liberalisation it seems that the movement began a liberal discourse so as to be accommodated within the West. Thus, their main focus was perceived as being about interfaith

dialogue, tolerance and Love. Although they had no Sufi background, in the West they portrayed themselves as spiritualist. However, by the 17th of December 2013 this movement began to be recognised for its hidden agenda and it was declared a criminal organisation by the Turkish government and two years later it was designated as a terrorist organisation, one year before the coup attempt (Ayten and Düzgüner, 2016). The structure of the Gülen movement is like a pyramid. Fethullah Gülen is the only leader, both spiritually and socially. According to Dexter Filkins (2016), an ex-member high up in the hierarchy of the movement, Professor Ahmet Keleş (2016), described the organization as hierarchical, divided into seven levels starting from Gülen at the top level (level one). Keleş was able to join 'level three' a senior leadership assembly, which is only superseded by Level two, which conducts covert operations and is in close contact with level one. According to Keleş (2016) the members that are part of level 2 are only known to Gülen and they operate within cells. At the third level, which Keleş was a part of, operates a leadership assembly that communicates all the messages and teachings from level one downwards. These three top levels are indispensable to the movement. The other levels consist of members of the general public, members who are working in all the movement institutions as employees, members that are fulfilling the role of elder brother or sister (*Abi/Abla*) in each of these institutions, members who are responsible for all members keeping to the parameters set by the movement and finally the mediators that accommodate mediation between members of the movement that are in official government jobs with the leadership levels, respectively.

The main aim of this movement according to the '*Hizmet*' itself is, charity, education and a tolerant Muslim society, however, behind the scenes the main aim seems to be trying to control, manoeuvre and mould the nation of Turkey; this was evident through a speech in 1999 when Gülen on record stated:

"You must move in the arteries of the system without anyone noticing your existence until you reach all the power centres. . . . Until the conditions are ripe, they [the followers] must continue like this... I know that when you leave here, [just] as you discard your empty juice boxes, you must discard the thoughts and the feelings that I expressed here" (Berlinski, 2012).

Ahmet Keleş, who had been a member of this movement since 1973 was asked by Gülen after his graduation to run one of the 'lighthouses-*ışık evleri*', which included student dormitories that were religious discussion centres at the same time. According to Keleş, beyond the ecumenical and charitable deeds that perhaps most of them earnestly practiced, was a secret goal. He is reported to have said that they were taught that, "The only way to protect Islam was to infiltrate the state with our followers and seize all the institutions of government", and he expounded on this by stating, "The legal way to do it was by election, by parliament—but you couldn't do it that way, because the military would step in. The only way to do it was the illegal way—to infiltrate the state and change the institutions from within." According to Keleş, this was done primarily through the infiltration of the police and the judiciary. By the early nineties, Keleş estimated that the region where he was stationed in Turkey, forty percent of the police and approximately twenty percent of the judges and prosecutors were followers of the movement (Filkins, 2016).

Although this movement has numerous education institutions across the world, many studies demonstrate that the main motive behind these schools is

basically to legitimize Gülen's Empire and create wealth. There has even been an investigation by the FBI into Gülen schools in the United States; during this investigation a number of issues came to light. One issue was that these schools were getting funds from multiple sources, they were only hiring Turkish individuals so as to achieve work visas, some visas were created for people that did not even exist and they illegally utilised US tax money to pay for immigration. In general, researchers such as Aydın Özipek, who attended a Gülen school, stated "the primary objective of the Gülen Movement is to increase its share of power" (Berlinski, 2012). In order to achieve this goal the Gülen Movement uses esoteric language and disguise. Furthermore, the followers of Gülen are under a certain kind of information control, since they rigidly only read and listen to his books and sermons, disregarding any other scholar from the present or the past. Filkins (2016) argues that many of the followers of Gülen describe him as a 'saviour' figure and see themselves as an exclusive group with a leader that continuously gives the impression that he is having divine encounters through dreams of the prophet Muhammad.

This organisation that had been infiltrating the state apparatus for more than 30 years was ordered by their leader to launch the coup on the 15th of July 2016, earlier than their original plan, because the government and the intelligence service had uncovered their plans. It is also evident from most sources that the FETÖ (*Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü*) saw no difference between removing the Kemalists from government during the early period and removing the AKP from government during the later period. The reason for the coup to have been so rushed was because the government since 2013 had begun to cleanse important elements of the state, such as the police and the judiciary, of Gülenist conspirators. This operation of the government was very successful and by 2016 the government began to successfully investigate the armed forces. Due to possibility of the government removing key players of Gülenists from the armed forces, the FETÖ pre-empted their brutal attack on the state, which led to the 15th of July 2016 attempted coup.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this article was to examine the incident that occurred on the 15th of July 2016 and to understand its impact on the Turkish Republic and its people. Thus, we tried to present a brief political overview of Turkey and a general view of its socio-religious strata. We demonstrated in this article the structure, the motivation and the psycho-sociological aspects of the Gülen organisation and at the same time we showed how it evolved into becoming a terrorist organisation that attempted a coup in Turkey on the 15th of July 2016.

It is evident that after this attempted coup people started to debate the function and the legality of all religious groups in Turkish society. It is clear from the evidence based on the public opinion polls in Turkey that the majority of the Turkish people whether they secular or religious, are convinced that this attempted coup was instigated by FETÖ (*Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü*). Hence, their attitude towards the Fethullah Gülen terrorist organisation is that of dislike and rejection. Conversely, this has also brought the subject up of how modern society should understand all other religious groups. According to the survey done in 2014, seventy percent of the Turkish Muslim population believes that religious *cemaat* (groups) are beneficial for society. However, at the same time the same survey results show that seventy eight percent of the population believes that the religious

groups services and events should be regularly inspected by the state (DİYANET, 2014). These findings and our discussion demonstrates that the only way to keep society and religion safe is to have some kind of transparency across the board.

If we look at the Psycho-social result that arose out of the attempted coup, it is evident that after this attempted coup, people feel the need for all religious groups to be transparent, because it is argued that all groups may have the capacity to transform individuals negatively. Thus, a group of individuals that are negatively influenced may be a very harmful element in a modern democratic Muslim country. The perception of much of the public in Turkey after the attempted coup is that a group that is excessively powerful in society may in the long run create a large group of society that have in-group mentality which promotes rigidity, dogmatism, and exclusivism. For any society that needs cohesion and tolerance such an in-group mentality can be severely harmful to the larger society and for any social development. It might be argued that due to this perception, in the near future the Turkish society may see more individualistic religiosity rather than the collectivist form of religiosity which is traditional in Turkey. Unfortunately, it is also might affect people's pro-social behaviours to other religious groups within society, since an individualist religiosity may create individuals who are reluctant to give charity or support any social activity carried out by religious group based organizations. On the other hand, the trauma experienced by the people that resulted from the attempted coup might provide them with a high-level of self-confidence, because as citizens they were able to prevent a coup attempt. Therefore this might contribute to the development of their understanding of a modern social democratic society.

Although the attempted coup of the 15th of July 2016 caused much social unrest, anxiety, fear and trauma, the nation as a whole came out of this event stronger and united. The main implication of this experience is the discovery by the Turkish people, be they religious or secular, is of their 'ownership' of this nation, free from any political ideological background and foreign influence. In so many ways, Turkey went through an experience of maturity by learning about the power of the people and democracy. In fact, this can be seen through two aspects that were carried out during and after the attempted coup. First, their maturity came from the ability of civilians to protect their nation against any un-democratic threat. They did not wait for the army, police or any such governmental institutions. They saw themselves as the natural protectors of their nation and their democratic rights; thus in their history, for the first time civilians broke down a possible coup. In so many ways, this will go down in history as the moment when Turkey began a new era. The second aspect is their willingness to continue to protect their nation and democratic right by going on vigil that lasted about 40 days across all of Turkey. In this vigil people came out every night in the city and town squares and held vigil and joyful festivities to demonstrate their freedom and new beginnings.

At the same time Turkey as a political entity made two major decisions. First of all, the removal of any trace of a 'deep state' within the state apparatus; secondly, the willingness and the confidence of the Republic to insist on a foreign policy that would block any extremist attempt in not only Turkey, but its neighbouring countries. It is not a coincidence that Turkey, which was already politically becoming a major player in West Asia, moved after the attempted coup to show its strength and capacity to deal with all threats. Thus, in order to deal with a group that for more than thirty years had been infiltrating the state's institutions and who attempted through terrorism, a coup, Turkey implemented state of

emergency and began the inevitable cleansing of this 'deep state'. Consequently, in the new era Turkey has stopped being the tool of the other major powers, rather, it sees itself and its people as writing their own destiny. This has led to Turkey to have taken upon itself to defend its nation and borders against all kinds of terrorist organisations such as Daesh, PKK/PYD and the FETÖ.

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