A GIFT FROM GOD?

An analysis of the role of religion in the restriction of free speech and the reversal of democracy in Turkey in the aftermath of the attempted coup in Istanbul 16th of July 2016.

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"I disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it."

- Voltaire

Abstract

This thesis presents a case study that aims to analyze the relationship between freedom of speech, democracy and religion. The case study is conducted as an analysis of the ongoing political shift in the aftermath of the attempted coup in Turkey in 2016. My research question is: *To what degree and in what ways does religion play a legitimating role in the restriction of free speech and democratic reversal after the attempted coup in Turkey?*

My motivation for this thesis is to develop a more profound understanding of what happens to the democracy when a given government take control of free speech, and which role religion can play in legitimizing the use of controversial means in this process. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan described the attempted coup as *a gift from God*, and this was the basis that initiated my search for religious components in the discourse on the legitimization of free speech restrictions. The timeframe of this study extends from the attempted coup in July 2016 until now (May 2018).

To answer the research question, I will analyze the collected data, including primary sources such as in-depth informant interviews, official documents and statements, and secondary sources such as literature and news articles. I have conducted interviews with five informants in Turkey, chosen based on their professions as academicians or journalists, in addition to their extensive knowledge on the field of freedom of speech and expression and personal experiences with the contemporary situation in Turkey. In their opinion, the conditions of freedom of expression in Turkey have worsened within this timeframe. This thesis aims to describe experiences and consequences of this process, emphasizing on religion as legitimizing force.

The findings from the interviews show a restricted policy of freedom of speech and knowledge control in Turkey, a reversal of the democratic conditions reinforced by the declared state of emergency, and a deeply cultural, intertwined relationship between religion and politics in Turkey. This facilitates the *use*, and *misuse*, of religious rhetoric for political purposes.

The findings of this and other studies conclude that the attempted coup has been anything but *a gift from God,* even though the religious-political rhetoric in Turkey have made many people believe that it was. Freedom of speech is restricted to a serious extent in Turkey today and the democratic conditions are being reversed. This thesis has shown that religion is playing a legitimizing role in the political discourse that is ultimately justifying this process.

Acknowledgements

One year has passed since I started this project, which turned out to develop, not only my understanding of the complex political situation in Turkey, but just as much my love for the country and its people. Today, I have written the last sentence of this assignment and I am happy to lay my years as a student behind me and finish my master thesis.

I have been privileged to be greeted into the lives of such great people. First of all, my informants have given me the permission to take part in some serious challenges of their lives that burden me with responsibility, but also the insight of their everyday commitment to make a change that fills me with hope! I am honored that you took the chance to meet with me and share your concerns and hopes. I am forever grateful to each and one of you.

Furthermore, I have had the pleasure of being supervised by Sturla Stålsett. I have put tremendous value not only to your expertise, insights and experiences, but also your observant and helpful being. Thank you for helping me from the start to the finish line, with new insights and approaches. Your constructive criticism and positive responses have kept me going day after day.

I have never written such a voluminous assignment before, and I am very thankful to you, Sara and Karl Yngve, for the help and support during this long process. Dear Anneli – thank you for letting me share my every day and life with you. You are an irreplaceable friend to me. And finally, to my beloved family – Mom and Dad, Sunniva and Åshild, thank you so much for being my "flock". You have always believed in me, helped me and stood by me, even when it didn't look so bright.

Despite all the help and support through this process, I must make it clear that the I alone am ultimately responsible for the content of this assignment.

And to you who are hopefully going to read this thesis now; I hope you learn something new about the role of religiosity, for better or worse, in our modern, globalized world and that you are left with hope that the good cause of the plural society, democracy, will win.

Oslo, May 2018

Table of contents

Abbreviations

AFSV	The Alliance for Shared Values in the United States
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkinma Pertesi/The Justice and Development Party
CHP	Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi/The republican peoples party
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
GIDSS	Global Institute for Democracy and Strategic Studies
HYSK	High Council of Judges and Prosecutors
MIT	The national intelligence organization of Turkey
Norwegian PEN	Association of Norwegian Editors and the Norwegian Union of Journalists
NRK	Norsk Rikskringkasting/Norwegian Broadcasting corporation
SRII	Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul

1.   Introduction

> Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes a source of terror to all its citizens and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.
> [*Special Message to the Congress on the Internal Security of the United States*, August 8, 1950] - Harry Truman (Peters & Woolley T., 2018)

Free speech is considered one of the core values of liberal democracies, but it is also one of the most contested issues of the modern, global society. A basic premise for people to be able to intervene in political life is open access to information and knowledge, and a public sphere where they can interact politically and free, regardless of political affiliations.

This thesis seeks to examine the conditions of democratic political life in Turkey, with special emphasis on the importance of free speech as fundamental for democracy, and the role of religion in the Turkish political discourse. It focuses on the time period after the attempted 2016 coup in Turkey, and up until present day, May 2018. Modern Turkey has a history of coups. In 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, and then again in 2016 an attempted coup occurred (Tan, 2016). Joakim Parslow, associate professor at the University of Oslo, said to the Norwegian newspaper *Vårt Land* three days after the attempted coup in 2016 that "Turkey's modern history has been characterized by conflicts between the secular and the religious, and the military has repeatedly chosen to intervene." (Haakonsen, 2016) A continuous power struggle between the secularists and Islamists has taken place, and the military have on multiple occasions taken actions with the expressed intention of protecting the democratic conditions in Turkey (Jung, 2008, p. 120).

The coup attempt here referred to occurred on the 15th of July 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan blamed Fetullah Gülen and the Hizmet foundation for the coup within few hours and immediately proceeded to detain more than 10 000 people, accusing them of having connections to the Gülenist foundation. More than 45 000 police officers, judges, prosecutors and people of other professions were subsequently suspended or removed from their jobs, based on the same allegation (Amnesty International, 2017). At least 208 people lost their life in the ensuing battles on the streets. On the very night the attempted coup President Erdogan stated publicly: "This uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army" (Dolan & Solaker, 2016).

One aspect that makes the coup attempt in 2016 different from other coups and coup

attempts in the Turkish history, is the fact that in this case there was no secular, military force intervening towards an increasingly religious regime. President Erdogan represented the Islamic government and the Muslim cleric Fetullah Gülen was blamed for the attempted coup. These two supposed counterparts were both religious, in contrast to the "traditional positions" in the coup history of Turkey, religious and secular. I purposely say *supposed,* because different sources question and points out lack of evidence to the conclusion that Fetullah Gülen and his foundation is responsible for the coup attempt. Particularly when seen in light of the positive ripple effect the coup had on the President's position of power. Today, according to Norsk Journalisforlag, Erdogan controls directly or indirectly of 90 % of the Turkish media (Stabell, 2016), and one of my theories is that this helped to build the foundation for the climate in Turkish society that Harry Truman warned about in 1950 (Peters & Woolley T., 2018).

1.1   Research question and hypothesis

In this thesis I will develop a more profound understanding of what happens to democracy when a given government takes control of free speech, and what role religion can play in legitimizing the use of controversial means in this process. I will look at this through a case study in Turkey, researching the political situation in the aftermath of the attempted coup in 2016.

The research question is: *To what degree and in what ways does religion play a legitimating role in the restriction of free speech and democratic reversal after the attempted coup in Turkey?* The research and findings in this thesis are a three-folded taxonomy of free speech, democracy and religion. Therefore, I have separated the research into three parts.

1. To what extent is *free speech* limited in Turkey after the coup attempt?
2. In what way do the free speech restrictions and the controversy in the aftermath of the attempted coup affect the *democracy* in Turkey?
3. To what degree and in which ways do *religious* dimensions influence the discourse on restricting free speech?

Questions one and two focus on the same; to establish the extent of the free speech restrictions in Turkey and the societal repercussions of these restrictions, with special emphasis on democracy. Research question number three aims at looking into whether the process of restricting freedom of expression and/or democracy are sought to be justified through religious means. By dividing the research question into three parts each focusing on free speech, democracy and religion, respectively, I hope to build a thorough and understandable thesis

structure. The three research questions will also help enlighten the case from various angles in a comprehensive and lucid way.

Basically, I want to analyze the importance of free speech in democracy and the role of religious legitimatization in the context of politics implementing restrictions. My aim is to see to what extent and in what ways religion can be used as justifying means in a process that ultimately jeopardizes democracy. Was the attempted coup really *a gift from God?*

My hypothesis is that the media picture in Turkey only facilitates "half the truth". As people only have access to limited information about the political situation, the conditions of democracy diminish. President Erdogan and the ruling party AKP seem to tactically legitimize this favorable situation. The strong position of Islam among a large part of the Turkish population reinforces the governments political legitimacy among Islamic believers.

This model illustrates, in accordance with the methodological choice of abductive approach (see below chapter 3.2), how the exact case I have conducted research on can be seen in a bigger context by zooming in and out. The collected data from my informants alone, are not of direct relevance to a bigger extent than saying something about the situation there and then, according to those whom I spoke with. My ambition is that the data I collected can be valuable as transferable knowledge, unconditional of time and place, and solid enough to generalize theoretically about the relationship between freedom of speech, democracy and religion.

Model 1

The relationship between free speech, democracy and religion (general).

This relationship in Turkey today (contextual).

This relationship according to the informants of this research (special).
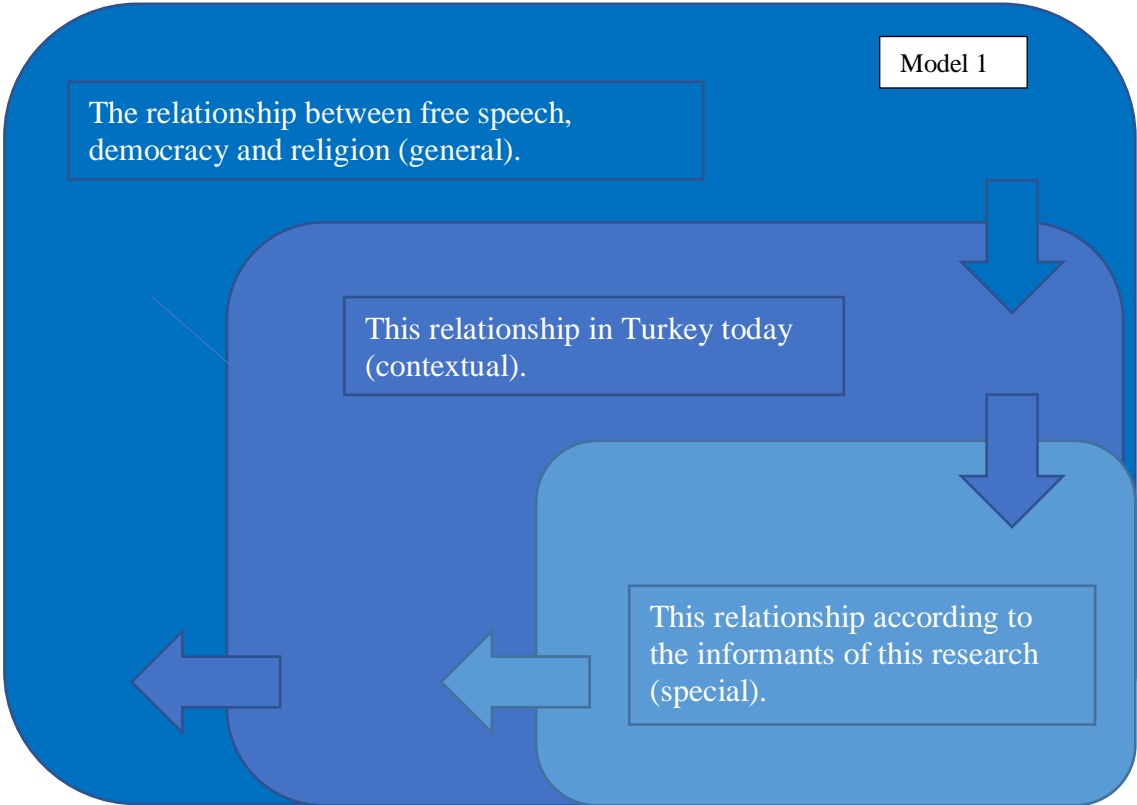
The case I am conducting research on is characterized by the fact that the situation is still in progress. The attempted coup is still a recent event and the current political current situation is fragile and can shift abruptly. This is exemplified by the snap election announced by the President on 18th of April 2018. I therefore clarify that this project was completed on 10th of May 2018, and any rapid change in Turkish society after this point in time is not taken into account in this thesis.

1.2 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The structure of the assignment is as follows: after this introduction I present a background chapter to give the readers a basic introduction to the relationship between democracy and free speech, religion as legitimizing power and finally the political situation in Turkey. This provide the reader with necessary knowledge about the case study. Then follows a chapter on analytical framework to introduce concepts, methods and theories within the field, followed by a methodical chapter to present the thesis' methodological framework. The fifth chapter explains the most important results of my examinations, and the sixth chapter contains analysis that aims to connect theory and results. Finally, there is a short conclusion chapter and some recommendations to a broader and further investigation of the field that did not fit into my thesis.

2.   Background

The following chapter will present an introduction to relevant knowledge necessary to establish a common background foundation: a description of the relationship between democracy and free speech according to political theory, the political situation in Turkey and religion as a potential legitimizing power in the Turkish climate. To facilitate an understanding of the post-coup attempt situation, I have also chosen to present some of the known circumstances around the time of the attempted coup in Istanbul in 2016. This includes a brief explanation of the disagreements regarding who is responsible for the coup, and some of the consequences that followed in Turkish society. With all the disagreements about the attempted coup itself, it has proven difficult to define the actual circumstances around the coup attempt, so the presentation will be left with some question marks. At the end of this chapter, some statistics about free speech in Turkey are presented with a line drawn to how the contemporary situation affects Turkey in international relations.

2.1   Free speech and democracy

To provide a common understanding to the content of this thesis it is important to define the terms *democracy* and *freedom of speech* and establish the relationship between these two concepts, here understood as reliant on each other.

This sub-chapter contains a brief introduction to the historical philosophical theories justifying freedom of speech and expression in context of democratic development, that build the foundation of today's understanding of the two. As I will try to illustrate, democracy turns out to be crucial to free speech, and vice versa, so these two seem to be mutually dependent on each other.

2.1.1   Defining free speech

In Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human rights it is stated that:

> "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers" (United Nations, 1948).

Professor at the University of Oxford, Timothy Garton Ash, published the book *Free speech – ten principles for a connected world* in 2016 (Garton Ash, 2016), arguing that more and better free speech is the right way to combine freedom and diversity in the global community we live in. The collective pursuit in current time, when we are all becoming global neighbors, should aim to *agree on how we disagree* between different cultural divides.

Garton Ash is arguing that facilitating speech is beneficial for the individual as well as the community in the 21st century. This is in accordance with the message from the classic script, "Areopagitica", written by John Milton in 1644. He stated "Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties" (Milton, 1918, p. 57).

Freedom of speech and expression is, and has through centuries been, a highly valued, individual freedom. Over the recent years an awareness of the benefits of this liberty has developed beyond the individual, as a more collective good, thus strengthening the position of community in society. This has been argued by both Garton Ash and as we will see, Harry Melkonian, law school honorary associate from the United States.

It seems necessary to mention the tension between freedom of expression and the right to protect human reputation and privacy in conjunction with juridical framework, as a worldwide, ongoing discourse. Different societies reach different balances in the scale of the expression-restriction dichotomy, based on cultural conditions (Melkonian, 2012, xxviii). The spectrum within politics choosing to prioritize the protection of speech versus privacy is relatively broad, and can still provide good democratic conditions (Melkonian, 2012). Nevertheless, the laws regulating privacy are not very relevant to this thesis. I have chosen to focus on freedom of speech as a collective right and a good for the democratic community, based on the sociological approach to free speech of Melkonian. It is an ongoing debate about where the boundaries of freedom of speech should be drawn, and hate speech has a dominating position in this discussion. Given the limits of this thesis, neither of these topics are prioritized, because the main attention is on the relationship between freedom of speech and democracy.

I consider it a given fact that there is a positive connection between democracy and free speech. In accordance with leading voices, no one would seriously argue against a constructive relationship between the two, but what is the character of the relationship between them?

2.1.2 Defining democracy

The origin of the term democracy stems from the Greek word *dēmokratia*. It consists of the two parts: *dēmos* meaning "the people" and *kratia* "power or rule". A literal translation is *government of the people or government by the majority* (Oxford Dictionary, 2018a). The political sociologist and leading contemporary scholar in the field of democracy studies from Stanford University, Larry Diamond, describe democracy as a system of government with four key elements:

1. A system for choosing and replacing the government through free and fair elections;
2. Active participation of the people, as citizens, in politics and civic life;
3. Protection of the human rights of all citizens; and
4. A rule of law in which the laws and procedures apply equally to all citizens (Diamond, 2004).

I choose to use Diamond's definition because of the attention he offers to both the election process and the participation of all citizens in politics. These two components are essential considering the current case of Turkey.

With these definitions in mind, we can have a closer look at the relationship between democracy and free speech. A political justification is necessary to understand the connection between the two. The value of free speech is often, especially in liberal democracies, assumed rather than explained. People tend to take the principal of freedom of speech and expression for granted, and become surprised when realizing the rather complex issue regarding the justification of this right.

Harry Melkonian presented a social argument for freedom of expression in 2012 that represents modern free speech theory and is quite groundbreaking on the field. As the historical review will show us, most previous theories on the field comes from philosophical scholars. Melkonian's goal is to explain the importance of freedom of expression beyond the individual perspective, as a social phenomenon. He presents arguments for freedom of expression derived from both the classical theory of Emile Durkheim and Jurgen Habermas' more contemporary theory. As his approach is one of the main theories of this thesis, we will come back to this in chapter 3 (Melkonian, 2012).

2.1.3 History of the relation between freedom of speech and democracy

Frederick Schauer, Professor of law from the University of Virginia born in 1946, is well known for his works on American constitutional law, especially on the field of free speech. For purposes of this presentation, I will make frequent use of the excellent and concise summary of the discernment of free speech and democracy through different eras, from his article "Free speech and the argument from democracy". He organizes the different sets of justification of free speech into three categories: "the argument from democracy", "the argument from truth" and "the argument from personal liberty". With these classifications as foundation we will have a closer look at the justification of free speech (Schauer, 1983).

"Areopagitica" is a book written in 1644 by John Milton. It is considered one of history's most influential philosophical defenses of freedom of speech and expression. Milton presented many arguments of freedom of speech and expression, aiming to justify speech as a path to collectively reach *the truth*. According to him, no individual is wise enough to determine the truth for everyone. Dissemination of diverse opinions was by him understood as crucial for commonsense to develop and be able to function as intended, namely to seek the truth. His contribution was radical in its era, and was written as a counter reaction to the censorship implemented by the British government at the time (Gauden-Kolbeinstveit, 2012, p. 10)

According to Schauer, John Milton (1608-1674) was the first of many to ground free speech theory on "the argument from truth" and the concept of "Marketplace of ideas": The truth is most likely to be discovered when all ideas are allowed to compete freely. This has been a widely criticized understanding because it rests on rather questionable psychological and epistemological assumptions, based on the idea called Gresham´s Law: "Bad ideas drive out good ideas". This makes Schauer conclude that the argument of truth is weak, at least standing alone, because the truth does not have some special power to prevail.

"The argument from personal liberty" emphasizes personal liberty as the condition to achieve self-expression and self-fulfillment. This theory has also been met by critique, mainly because personal liberty cannot justify free speech considering the fact that speech is not merely self-regarding: we speak to others with the very intension of influencing *them* or moving *them* to action. Speech can do both good and harm, and that is the base of the importance of protecting free speech. Speech is to be protected, not because it does no harm, but also *despite* the fact that it might cause harm. A useful principle of free speech cannot be based significantly on the other-regarding nature of the actions, and therefore are the arguments of liberty and individuality not considered sufficient (Schauer, 1983, p. 243).

In Schauer's presentation of the historical justification of free speech, the last and strongest, category is "the argument from democracy". Even though he points out the fact that the attractiveness of this justification partly stems from the weaknesses of others. There are difficulties in some of the well-known justifications of free speech. We need to find a conceptual foundation of the institutional understanding that free speech is foundational of properly designed political and legal institutions. The challenge with "the argument from democracy" is quite obviously that the whole theory presupposes the basic value of democracy (Schauer, 1983, p. 242).

Alexander Meiklejohn, philosopher and free speech advocate, was the first to fully present "the argument from democracy" in the early 1900s. He defended free speech entirely on democratic theory, what he called *popular sovereignty*. The basis of his argument is that public society is at the core of the free speech concept, and the idea that the final authority in the modern republic lies with the population at large. All political debate should receive especially strong protection, even beyond the general principle of free speech. He sees freedom of speech as essential because the way policy can be decided depends on whether all relevant information is made available to the sovereign electorate. To Meiklejohn, full information is fundamental to intelligent voting. To deny people access to information cause serious damage to self-government, and are indirectly a denial of the right to vote (Meiklejohn, 1948). Because of the special emphasis on the relationship between democracy and freedom of speech, Meiklejohn's theory will be more thoroughly introduced in the chapter of analytical framework.

Philosophers from earlier periods in history created the philosophical foundation Meiklejohn based his theory of democracy on. Among these were the Dutch philosophers Baruch Spinoza and Immanuel Kant, among others. Spinoza stated that public criticism serves the interest of the state, because it increases the likelihood that the laws reflect the view of the majority. The German philosopher Immanuel Kant presented the idea of "Freedom of the pen", similar to "the argument of democracy". He does not refer to "democracy" itself, but he clearly saw political authority as legitimate only if it reflected the general will. And "freedom of the pen" as the only way to ensure the sovereign powers would be aware of the general will among the people (Rauscher, 2016).

2.2   Politics and religion in Turkey

There are close ties between democracy and free speech. And with the third dimension of religion added in the analysis of the relationship between the two, I will now turn to recent

Turkish politics. As President of Turkey, Erdogan gains increased authority purely from his political position. But does he also gain authority through the use of religion in his appearance? I will now present Turkish politics and important political events over the latest years, following this common thread: the development in a democratic direction shifting towards a more authoritarian tendency, under the leadership of President Erdogan.

This thesis focuses on the timeframe between the attempted coup and the present (May 2018). It is therefore natural to present some facts about the coup attempt itself and introduce some of the persons of interest. President Erdogan and the Imam Fetullah Gülen are both important figures to this presentation. Some historical events are chosen to be mentioned during the text, but there will be no further introduction to early Turkish political history as such than the timeline presented below. This is because the case studied here happened quite recently and depends on the contemporary political situation.

Timeline of historical events in the republic of Turkey:

1923: Grand National Assembly declares Turkey a republic and Kemal Ataturk president.

1928: Turkey becomes secular: clause retaining Islam as state religion removed from constitution

1987: Turkey applies for full EEC membership.

2002 August: Parliament approves reforms aimed at securing EU membership. Death sentence to be abolished except in times of war and bans on Kurdish education, broadcasting to be lifted.

2003 June-July: Eyeing future EU membership, parliament passes laws easing restrictions on freedom of speech, Kurdish language rights, and on reducing political role of military.

2002 November: Islamist-based Justice and Development Party (AK) wins landslide election victory. Party promises to stick to secular principles of constitution. Deputy leader Abdullah Gul appointed premier.

2004 December: EU leaders agree to open talks in 2005 on Turkey's EU accession. The decision, made at a summit in Brussels, follows a deal over an EU demand that Turkey recognize Cyprus as an EU member.

2005 May: Parliament approves amendments to new penal code after complaints that the previous version restricted media freedom. The EU welcomes the move but says the code still fails to meet all its concerns on human rights.

2005 October: EU membership negotiations officially launched after intense bargaining.

2006 June: Parliament passes new anti-terror law which worries the EU and which rights groups criticize as an invitation to torture.

2016 July: The authorities detain thousands of soldiers and judges on suspicion of involvement in a coup attempt that President Erdogan says was inspired by his exiled opponent Fethullah Gülen.

The government also shuts down dozens of media outlets - including 16 TV channels - during a continuing crackdown in the wake of the failed coup attempt.

2006 December: EU partially freezes Turkey's membership talks because of Ankara's failure to open its ports and airports to Cypriot traffic.

2010 April: Parliament begins debating constitutional changes proposed by the government with the stated aim of making Turkey more democratic. The opposition Republican People's Party says the Islamist-leaning ruling AK Party is seeking more control over the secular judiciary.

2010 September: Referendum on constitutional reform backs amendments to increase parliamentary control over the army and judiciary.

2011 August: President Gul appoints top military leaders after their predecessors resign. This is the first time a civilian government has decided who commands the powerful armed forces.

2013 May-June: "Gezi Park protest" Mass anti-government protests spread to several cities, sparked by plans to develop one of Istanbul's few green spaces. The police respond with violence, and two protestors die. Prime Minister Erdogan responds with defiance.

2016 March: Authorities put Turkey's biggest newspaper, *Zaman* - closely linked to Erdogan rival Fethullah Gülen - under state control.

2016 July: The authorities detain thousands of soldiers and judges on suspicion of involvement in a coup attempt that President Erdogan says was inspired by his exiled opponent Fethullah Gülen.

The government also shuts down dozens of media outlets - including 16 TV channels - during a continuing crackdown in the wake of the failed coup attempt.

2017 April: President Erdogan narrowly wins referendum to extend his powers. Opposition launches appeal against result.

2018 April: President Erdogan calls snap elections for 24 June.

(Turkey profile - Timeline, 2018)

2.2.1 From democracy to authoritarianism

"Power is never so overwhelming that there´s no room for resistance" – Henry Giroux (Baser & Özturk 2017).

This quote is taken from the opening remarks in the book *Authoritarian regimes in Turkey: Elections, resistance and the AKP.* According to the editors of the book, Bahar Baser and Ahment Erdi Öztürk, the ruling party in Turkey, the democratically chosen AK Parti, has moved towards increasingly authoritarian measures over the last years (Baser & Özturk, 2017). The different contributors to the book scrutinize the very concepts of democracy, elections and autocracy from their different academic backgrounds, to expose flaws in Turkish politics which can be manipulated to the governments advantage. Baser and Özturk presented this work in 2017 concluding that a democratic reversal is going on in Turkey. I will attempt to continue this work and examine in what ways freedom of speech and the religious dimension affect this process.

After President Erdogan's last victory in Turkey in April 2017, the altered constitution provided extensive new powers to the presidential position. In their book published in 2017 they argue that the new constitutional reform transforms the country from a parliamentary democracy into a "Turkish style" presidential republic. The editors identify what they define as a "process of democratic reversal in Turkey" (Baser & Özturk, 2017 p. 9), and focus on the period of time after the attempted coup in 2016. The authors of the book examine the conditions of opposition groups like Kurds, Alevites, leftists and liberals, with special emphasis on pro-Gülenists. under the ongoing state of emergency (Baser & Özturk, 2017 p. 13).

They explore the various ways in which a democratically elected political party used elections to implement authoritarian measures. And they conclude that in an overall perspective, it seems the state of emergency in Turkey has created social instability and political turbulence. Because this thesis is researching an ongoing case, information about the contemporary political situation has to be gathered from newly published works. *Authoritarian regimes in Turkey: Elections, resistance and the AKP* was published in 2017, as a result of the attempted coup and all the consequences, and rely on worldwide academicians' view on this subject. This will be my main source for the short presentation of how the changes both inside the AKP, and as a cause of that, the Turkish political picture in general, have moved towards a more authoritarian direction over the last ten to fifteen years (Baser & Özturk, 2017).

Today the Justice and Development Party, AKP, is the biggest and most powerful party in Turkey. Their impressive electoral victory in 2002 represented a profound change in modern

Turkish politics, as AKP entered the scene of the republic. The party identified itself and was elected on democratic aims. These include reducing the Turkish military's involvement in politics, building a broad national security policy, empower the citizenry and sustain civil liberties, with 34,3 % of all registered votes (Election Resources, 2002).

According to Wilhelm Kavli, this election has been characterized as a political earthquake (Kavli, 2009, p. 104). AKP was founded only fifteen months before the election and the explanation for their massive victory, despite the rather low number of 34,3 % of the votes, is the election threshold in Turkey being set as high as ten percent. This gave AKP 363 seats in parliament, and the only other party passing the 10 % threshold, CHP, the rest, 178 seats. The history of this election threshold stems from the constitution of 1982, trying to prevent the political system in Turkey from political fragmentation and ensure strong governments. For example with the election in 2002, the result of this policy was that 55 % of the votes went to parties that did not reach the election threshold (Kavli, 2009, p. 104-105).

According to Istar Gözaydin, Turkish professor of law and politics, the first signs of authoritarianism in AKPs appearance became notable five years after AKP first came to power in 2007. Their emphasis on democracy seemed to decrease in this period, and the Islamist discourse intensified in the political picture: "The emphasis on democracy appeared to fall away, the AKP's conservative Islamist discourse intensified, and attempts at constructing a hegemonic authoritarian regime appeared" (Gözaydin, 2017, p. 257). An example of this un-democratic and non-secular development is the expansion of the authority and reach of the Diyanet, observed through the massive annual budgets and increasingly number of civil servants working for the Diyanet, since AKP came to power in 2002 (Fabbe, 2015). According to Gözaydin, this period marks a shift in the modern Turkish politics, from steadily moving in a more and more democratic direction, to shifting its course towards a more authoritarian regime. In 2007, there was also an episode where AKP was accused of "violating the principle of separation of religion and state in Turkey", in connection with the presidential election. The court rejected this demand with a small margin, issuing a fine instead of a ban of the party. Accoring to Gözaydin, this occurrence indicated a foreshadowing of what was to come (Gözaydin, 2017).

In 2009 another event occurred that strengthened President Erdogan's position within AKP, the Gezi Park protest. Initially it started as a demonstration against the urban development plan for Istanbul's Gezi Park. President Erdogan was harsh against the protestors in his speeches and the responses on the streets became violent as the days went by. According to Gözaydin;

> The violent response of the Turkish authorities to the Gezi Park protests exposed the beginning of a striking intolerance of opposing voices that seems to be an indication of Erdogan's belief that conspirational rhetoric is the best way to mobilize support… () … and thus he undertook a radical lurch in the direction of authoritarianism as a self-preservation mechanism" (Gözaydin, 2017, p. 259).

This example of the government's reaction to such protests does not facilitate democratic conditions, and the Gezi Park incident marks a big leap towards a more authoritarian regime.

On the 17th of December 2013, the so-called "17th-25th of December process" occurred. Governmental institutions initiated attacks on media and financial institutions, involving accusations of terrorism, arrests and imprisonments targeting businessmen, bankers and some family members of ministers in Erdogan's government. On the night of the 30th of March 2014 Erdogan held a speech in connection to the local elections that showed a clear victory for AKP. His message was clear: this was now a "one-man regime", one that would not be cowed by any attempt to be held accountable to the judicial organs (Gözaydin, 2017, p. 259).

The crucial events mentioned above, in combination with several singular events such as thousands of cases of "alleged defamation" against Erdogan, several violations of the judicial authority and curfews in some south-east provinces of Turkey, in sum shows us that there is ample reason to claim democratic conditions have been compromised in Turkey. In the book, *Authoritarian politics in Turkey* from 2017, Istar Gözaydin state that Turkey developed a *fundamentally corrupt regime* (Gözaydin, 2017, p. 260) with lack of freedom and diversity in media and misuse of terror through securitization policies. According to her, the use of law to repress any political opposition and a system where formal institutions only exist on paper, totally undermine normal democratic values.

President Erdogan once declared that democracy was "a vehicle, not a goal," implying that one could disembark at any point (Cook, 2016). The coup attempt of July 2016 seems to have given President Erdogan the perfect opportunity to tighten his grip (Gözaydin, 2017, p. 256). The declaration of "state of emergency" gave new opportunities to escalate the project already initiated, as showed through the events beginning in 2002 and lasting until present day (Gözaydin, 2017, pp. 256–265).

Recently (18.04.18), President Erdogan called for snap elections, and thus the parliamentary and presidential general election was expedited from November 2019 till August 2018 (Özturan, 2018). Fredrik Devon, a Norwegian journalist with long experience form Turkey, explains this with economic recession, due to the large amount of inflation in combination with a lot of international debt in Turkish currency (Urix, 2018). According to

Devon, Turkey is facing harder times, many people use the word "crisis" about the contemporary situation and the election must be hurried to increase the chances of Erdogan to be re-elected. Despite this rather unconventional move, Erdogan seems clearly favored to win this upcoming election. Davon's statement about Erdogan's dual purpose of both satisfying his own country and the democratic West is of special relevance to this thesis (Urix, 2018). We will come back to this *dual role of the President* in chapter 6.2.

2.2.2 The attempted coup in Istanbul on the 16th of July 2016

The attempted coup is considered a milestone in the contemporary political development in Turkey, and this thesis aim to explore how this event affected the democratic conditions. Therefore, it is useful to have some knowledge about the actual events at the time of the attempted coup and an understanding of the different contributors we know of. The circumstances around the situation are debated, and no one has taken responsibility for the attempted coup and the accused Gülinists refuse responsibility. I will now present highlighted information about the events of the attempted coup in Istanbul. The source used to identify the events is a timeline drawn by the English media company Reuters (Heavens & Williams, 2016), which is considered one of the more objective sources in this case. The timeline is based on the correct time Reuters continuously reported the events.

At 19.29 the 15th of July 2016, the Istanbul's Bosphorus Bridge and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Bridge are both being closed. Dogan News Agency footage shows cars and buses being diverted. Around 19.50, gunshots are heard in Ankara, military jets and helicopters are seen flying overhead. Helicopters are seen overhead in Istanbul. At 20.02 the Turkish Prime Minister, Binali Yildirim, says an attempted coup is under way, and calls people to be calm. He says a group within Turkey's military has attempted to overthrow the government and that security forces have been called in to "do what is necessary". At 20.25 the very same evening, a statement purportedly from Turkish military says, "it has taken power to protect democratic order". The message, sent by email and reported on Turkish TV channels, says all of Turkey's existing foreign relations will be maintained.

Around 20.30 it is reported that the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan is safe, by CNN Turk. At 20.47, the state-run Anadolu news agency says that the Turkish chief of military staff is among the hostages that are taken at the military headquarters in Ankara. At 20.49, a Turkish presidential source says that the statement made on behalf of armed forces was not authorized by military command. At 20.57 internet monitoring groups inform that Facebook, Twitter,

YouTube and other social media are being restricted in Turkey. Around nine o'clock it is reported that soldiers are inside buildings of Turkish state broadcaster TRT in Ankara, according to one TRT correspondent. At the same time the Head of Istanbul branch of Turkey's ruling AK Party says soldiers entered the party building but are told to leave. Five minutes later, the Turkish state broadcaster are reading a statement on the orders of the military saying that a new constitution will be prepared, that the country is being run by a "peace council", that martial law and curfew are imposed across the country, and accuses the government of eroding democratic and secular rule of law.

At 21.18 a Presidential source states that the president and government are still in power. At 21.22, the Turkish prime minister says on Twitter that everything will be done to put down the coup attempt, even if it means fatalities, and that sieges are under way at some important buildings and urges people to remain calm. At 21.26 the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan urges people to take to the streets to protest against what he describes as a coup attempt by a minority fraction within the military. Speaking to a CNN Turk reporter via a cellphone video link he says the coup plotters will meet a "necessary response".

At 21.51 a military helicopter opens fire over the Turkish capital Ankara, witnesses report an explosion in the capital. At 22.03 the Turkish justice minister says members of a movement loyal to U.S.-based cleric Fethullah Gülen in the army are behind the attempted coup. At 22.08 tanks surround the Turkish parliament building and open fire. Gunfire is also heard at Istanbul airport. At 22.26 two loud explosions are reported heard in center of the Turkish capital.

The Commander of Turkey's First Army, part of land forces responsible for Istanbul and other western areas, said those attempting a coup were a small fraction and "nothing to worry about". A few minutes later the Commander of special forces says a group has engaged in treason, but they will not succeed and the military does not condone coup. At 22.59, a Turkish fighter jet shoot down the military helicopter used by coup-plotters over Ankara, according to the broadcaster NTV. At 23.13, a group close to the U.S.-based cleric Gülen says the accusations that they were involved in coup attempt are "highly irresponsible", condemns military intervention in Turkish politics and expresses concern about the safety of citizens.

At 23.39, a bomb hits the parliament in Ankara, according to Anadolu. Reuter's witness hears a blast in Istanbul. Right before midnight the Turkish Prime Minister says the situation is under control and declares no-fly zone over Ankara. A few minutes after midnight the 16th of July, President Erdogan arrive in Istanbul. At 00.27 there are reported that two more explosions hit the parliament in Ankara; a member of parliament reached by telephone says that lawmakers

are hiding in shelters at the parliament.

At 00.45 the Turkish private broadcaster CNN Turk halts a live news broadcast. The presenter says soldiers entered their studio control room. At 00.45 - Around 30 soldiers, a part of the faction attempting to carry out the coup, surrender their weapons after being surrounded by armed police in Istanbul's central Taksim square. At one o'clock, Erdogan appears among supporters at Istanbul airport, saying that uprising has been attempted against the solidarity and unity of the country; but that no power is above national will. At 01.19 the Turkish president says that the attempted coup was "an act of treason" and is a reason to "clean up" the armed forces.

At 03.42 the soldiers involved in the attempted coup surrender on one of the bridges across the Bosphorus in Istanbul, abandoning their tanks with their hands raised in the air, as can be seen on live footage from CNN Turk. At 03.39 the Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan addresses thousands waving flags at Istanbul's main airport and urges supporters to stay on the streets until the situation normalizes. Early in the morning, at 05.10 - Turkey's military headquarters are held by pro-government forces, but small groups of rebel soldiers are still resisting and control some military helicopters, a senior Turkish official says. According to him, 29 colonels and five generals has been removed from their posts.

Around nine o'clock in the morning, Turkey's EU Minister, Omer Celik, says the coup situation is "90 percent under control", but some commanders are still being held hostage. At 09.20 the Turkish Prime Minister, Binali Yildirim, says 161 people are killed, 1440 wounded and 2839 army members detained including ordinary soldiers and high-ranking officers. He says those who formed the backbone of the coup are detained, and the parliament meeting is scheduled for 1200 GMT. He calls on citizens to fill town and city squares with flags.

At 11.45 the 16th of July, Turkish authorities remove 2745 judges from duty, according to the broadcaster NTV, citing a decision by the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK). Five members of HSYK, Turkey's high judiciary board, are also removed, state-run Anadolu Agency reports. At 11.51, the police detain about 100 military officers at an air base in Diyarbakir, southeastern Turkey, security sources say.

At 12.00, Fethullah Gülen denies the accusations that he played a role in the attempted coup and condemns the attempt to topple the government "in the strongest terms". U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry says he has not received any request to extradite Gülen. At 14.49 it is reported that the Head of Turkey's main opposition, the secular Republican People's Party (CHP), denounces a coup attempt. Kemal Kilicdaroglu tells the parliament it brings political parties closer to finding common ground on improving democracy.

2.2.3 Examples of President Erdogan's religious-political rhetoric

As the timeline illustrates, the Turkish government blamed Fetullah Gülen and the Hizmet foundation for orchestrating the coup attempt within hours after it all happened. This subsection aims at identifying some of the main features characterizing the political discourse by the Turkish President in the aftermath of the attempted coup, with special emphasis on religious components. This is not intended to be a discourse analysis but seeks to create a circumstantial insight of the political rhetoric in the aftermath of the attempted coup. The examples presented here are carefully selected and will be referred to through the chapters of analysis and discussion in this thesis.

"A gift from God"

…they will pay a heavy price for this. This uprising is a gift from God to us because this will be a reason to cleanse our army. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stated on the night of the attempted coup, addressing a large and desperate crowd of his supporters (Cockburn, 2016). This saying was one of the first official statements by the President after the attempted coup became known.

Extracts from the speech held by President Erdogan on 20th of July

Sky news broadcasted a speech held by President Erdogan 20th of July 2016 with English translation. In this speech, he clarifies his understanding of the circumstances around the coup attempt. Because this is a direct source to him, this speech is used as the base of the presentation of his immediate handling of the situation, as President of the country.

"Every member of our nation came together as one entity in the face of this attempt. Our citizens who said "no" to this, saw tens of neighbors being shot and being martyrized in front of their eyes. And of course, they saw numerous people getting wounded and injured. And they tried to save them. Until the early hours of the morning they continued their resistance. And thanks to God. Everyone who feel themselves to be a member of this homeland and of this nation stood in the face of this attempted coup (…)

For the first time in the history of our country, an armed coup attempt was crippled by the nation itself. And Turkey actually proved its allegiance to democracy and the rule of law by paying a very high price, which is the lives of the citizens (…)

The members of the national security council were gathered, and we decided to recommend to the government a state of emergency being declared, as of article 120 in our

constitution in order for us to be able to respond quick and efficient deal with all the elements of the terror organization. And the council of ministers also bided by the recommendation and decided to declare a state of emergency for a duration of three months. (…)

As it is known 120 of our constitution allows for a state of emergency to be declared in event of act of acts of violence that aims to abolish democracy, cripple fundamental rights and freedoms. The purpose of the declaration of the state of emergency is in fact to be able to take the most efficient steps in order to remove this threat as soon as possible, which is a threat to democracy, to the rule of law and to the rights and freedoms of our citizens in our country. This practice is absolutely not against democracy, the rule of law and freedoms, quite on the contrary. It has the purpose of strengthening and protecting these (…)

The attempted coup that we experienced, clearly showed who are on the side of democracy and rule of law in Turkey, by risking their life, and who are trying to impose their dictatorship. Our government, our political parties, our civil society and a chain of command within the Turkish armed forces and most important of all, our nation, has always, they have always shown that their preference is on the side of democracy. – Erdogan on 20th of July 2016 (Cockburn, 2016).

Erdogans' relation to Islamic rhetoric

In a speech held on the International Woman's day this year, the Turkish President came with the surprisingly religiously liberal statement «Islam must be updated», and continued: "Recently, some people claiming to be clerics issued statements contradicting religion, they have no place in our times. They don't realize how Islam needs to be updated and is updated accordingly. You can't apply the practices applied 15 centuries ago today. Islam changes and adapts to the conditions of different ages. This is the beauty of Islam" (Akyol, 2018). According to the journalist, Mustafa Akyol, of Al-Monitor's Turkey Pulse there is no wonder Erdogans' political narrative is based on "not a rigid Islamism that would have limited appeal, but an Islam-infused nationalism that appeals to the majority of Turkish society" (Akyol, 2018). This "flipping position" between Islamism and secularism will analyzed in chapter 5.4.1 and further discussed in the chapter of discussion.

Imam Hatip

Turkey's President states that he wants to create what he calls a "pious generation" and to achieve this, a large amount of assets have been transferred into schools that teaches Islamic

values. Reuters investigates statistics presented from the Turkish Ministry of Education in January this year illustrated a notable increase in the commitment to these schools in Turkey over the last years (Butler, 2018). As the statistical overview underneath illustrates, it has been a notable increase in the official commitment to facilitating Imam Hatips' since AKP came to power in 2007. In a speech from 2015, President Erdogan joyfully informed that the enrollment in *imam hatip* schools (state-run religious high schools) had increased from 65,000 students to nearly 1 million—a striking shift that the Presidents hopes will reshape how the young people of Turkey recognize their religious and cultural heritage (Hamid, 2017). This establishment and its potential impact on the Turkish school system will be analyzed in chapter 5.4.4.

IMAM HATIP SCHOOLS
Number by school year

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL STUDENTS
As a percentage of all Turkish students by school year

GOVERNMENT SPENDING PER UPPER SCHOOL STUDENT
Budget plans for 2018, by type of school. Amounts in Turkish lira.
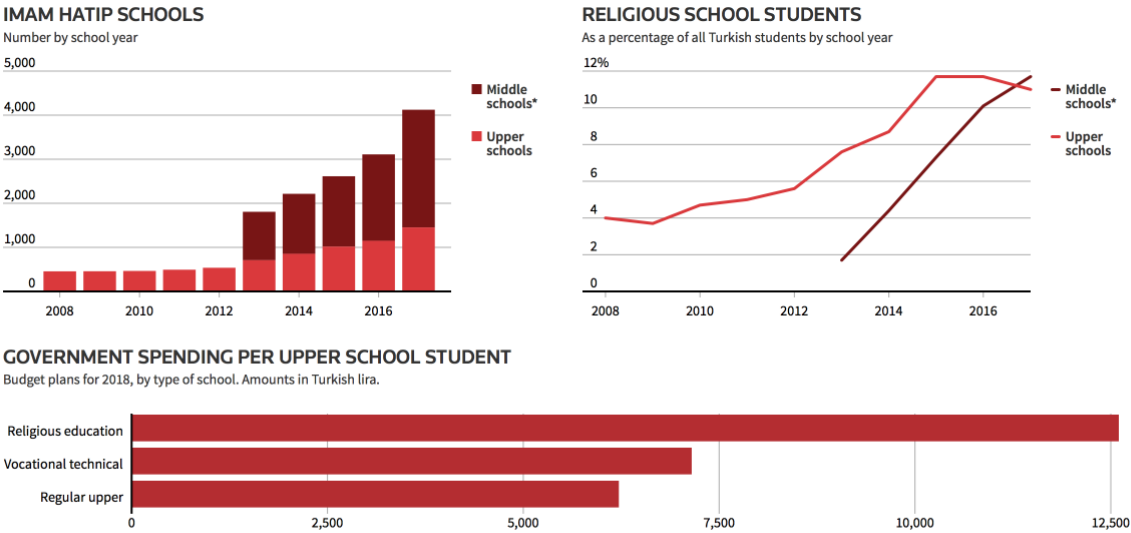
*Imam Hatip education extended in 2012 to middle schools, which are attended by pupils aged 10-14.
Note: School year from September to June with end of school year shown. Government spending per student based on 2018 budget spending by type of upper school and student numbers at formal state upper schools.
Source: Turkish Ministry of Education
By Daren Butler and Lea Desrayaud | REUTERS GRAPHICS

Model 2 (Hamid, 2017)

2.2.4   The Hizmet foundation

Here, the organization accused of the coup attempt by the Turkish government, the Hizmet foundation, will shortly be presented. Some fragments of this organization might have played a bigger or smaller role in the orchestrating of the coup attempt, but the big scope of the attempt proves that multiple minority groups must have been involved. International investigation of the circumstances has also failed to prove a connection between Hizmet and the attempted coup. Nevertheless, this organization was said by the Turkish government to be responsible for the coup and therefore a short introduction is necessary.

Fetullah Gülen is a Turkish imam and political figure in his seventies who has resided under self-imposed exile in the United States since 1999. He founded the Hizmet foundation (the name means "service" and is also called the Gülen movement) in the 1960s, and it has since then grown to become the world's biggest Muslim network with schools, think tanks and media outlets worldwide. The foundation promotes a tolerant Islam which emphasizes altruism, hard work and education (Grinell, 2015). Accused by the Turkish government for being the orchestrator of the coup, imam and founder of an Islamic foundation, one can wonder what importance his position as religious leader has in this setting? These are some of the questions left in this chapter. We will get back to this in the discussion.

The Gülinists and the AKP had an unofficial "give and take relationship" in the early 2000s and the Hizmet foundation gave important political support to President Erdogan's Islamist-rooted AKP. Gülinists were supportive of AKP through elections, and it is said that many influential positions in Turkey, in the police and the AK Party itself, have been held by Hizmet followers (BBC, 2013). But after claims of corruption within AKP, where several ministers had to go, the cooperation between the two ended. President Erdogan then accused Gülen and his foundation of trying to build a "parallel state" and take the sitting government down. Several followers of Gülen where cleaned out of their positions within public society, and Fetullah Gülen himself fled to the United States in 1999 (Hagvaag, 2016).

A platform of Hizmet Inspired Dialogue organizations in Europe wrote the report *The Failed Military Coup in Turkey & The Mass Purges* as response to the attempted coup and the purges of Gülinists in the aftermath (Intercultural Dialogue Platform, 2016). It argues that the Turkish government's official story about the circumstances around the coup attempt are not based on investigation, evidence or court verdicts. According to them, James Clapper, U.S. Director of National intelligence, has stated that they have not seen any evidence of Gülens involvement in the coup attempt in their intelligence. The report also presents proof of severe violations of human rights and claims that the Turkish government pursue a "misinformation campaign" to frame Gülinists and justify inhumane conditions in Turkey in their handling of the coup situation. They also deny all connection to the coup and argue that their aim as an organization is to cultivate democracy and human rights, and that such an act clearly would contradict their core values (Intercultural Dialogue Platform, 2016).

2.3   The position of religion in Turkey

To understand the point of focus in this thesis, not only on democratic conditions and free speech, but also on the religious role in Turkish politics, it is necessary to shortly introduce the role of religion in Turkish society. In chapter 4.3.3, "Secularism and religion in Turkey", we will come back to religion in Turkey, more specifically in the context of politics.

Historically, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, aimed to privatize religion. He wanted to eliminate the hierarchical and ideological position of Islam in Turkish politics and replace the position of religion in Turkish society based on the Western model. In this way he could re-position Islam as a religion with a personalized faith. Through several secular reforms that aimed to decrease the influence of religion in the social sphere, Atatürk took control over the position of religion in Turkey, rather than separating religion from the social sphere (Kasapoglu, 2016).

Diyanet isleri baskanligi (the directorate of religious affairs, hereafter Diyanet), was established in 1924 to take control of religion in Turkey, through administrating Imams and Mosques in the country. The purpose of this establishment was to secularize and modernize not only the state and politics, but also to transform the Turkish society into a modern body (Gözaydin & Özturk, 2014). According to Ingeborg Huse Amundsen, expert on the Middle-East and Turkey in the Norwegian newspaper *Verdens Gang*, the Diyanet was originally in the period of Ataürk constructed as a tool to limit Islam's position in society, while with Erdogan it functions as the opposite (Amundsen, 2016).

According to Wilhelm Kavli, former assistant professor of international politics at Hacettepe Üniversitesi in Ankara, the conservatism in the leading party, AKP, is characterized by the fact that Turkey is a traditional society with religion in a strong position (Bardakoglu, 2004). He argues that Erdogan has gained many voters from his reputation as a "good and sincere Muslim" (Kavli, 2009, p. 107). When it comes to religiosity in politics, Erdogan has played his cards tactically and tried to unite the Western modernity with traditional Turkish and Islamic values. It is a widespread understanding that Erdogan's personal authority acts as unifying within AKP (Kavli, 2009).

Professor Ali Bardakoglu, former president of the Diyanet stated that "Diyanet has a particular role in the production and transmission of religious knowledge" (Bardakoglu, 2004, p. 369). Religion is here primarily understood as Islam, and it is agreed by different authorities of the Diyanet that production and transmission of religious knowledge is a prominent task of the institution (Gözaydin, 2016, p. 12).

2.4 The attempted coup from an international perspective

> Turkey should urgently address the recommendations of the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe of October 2016. Turkey should ensure that any measure is taken only to the extent strictly required to the exigencies of the situation and in all cases stands the test of necessity and proportionality (European Commission, 2016 p. 9).

President Erdogan quickly implemented three months of state emergency and thus temporarily suspended his responsibility to the European convention of human rights, arguably in line with the conventions in article 15 that gives *possibility of exemption in cases of war or other public emergency that threatens the nations life* (European Court of Human Rights, 2017, p. 5). According to different sources it seems this suspension from the obligations of the European convention is expanded more or less officially several times, with an unknown timeframe (Johansen, 2016). Several human rights have been violated by President Erdogan and his governments reactions to the coup attempt and the following presentation illustrate the international communities' reaction to this.

Given the subsequent scale and collective nature of the measures taken in the period of state emergency in the aftermath of the coup, EU called on authorities to observe that the highest standards in rule of law and fundamental rights were upheld in the nation. The European commission published a report about the situation in Turkey and the international societies reaction to the attempted coup and Turkeys handling of this event in November 2016. The report states that the European commission are clear in its condemnation of the military coup and supports Turkey in the protection of their democracy in the aftermath of the attempted military coup. Serious accusations of human rights violations in the process of dealing with the coup-plotters in the aftermath of the coup forced EU to look into the situation and urge the authorities in Turkey to comply with international standards of human rights. The report clearly emphasizes Turkeys' right to fight terrorism but states the need to make sure that all anti-terror measures are proportionate. They must also respect human rights and fulfill all international obligations (European Commission, 2016 p. 4).

> There has been backsliding in the past year, in particular with regard to the independence of the judiciary. The extensive changes to the structures and composition of high courts are of serious concern and are not in line with European standards. Judges and prosecutors continued to be removed from their profession and in some cases were arrested, on allegations of conspiring with the Gülen movement. This situation worsened further after the July coup attempt, following which one fifth of the judges and prosecutors were dismissed and saw their assets frozen. The judiciary must work in an environment

allowing it to perform its duties in an independent and impartial manner, with the executive and legislature fully respecting the separation of powers (European Commission, 2016 p. 6).

Overall statistics presented on numbers from the end of September 2016 show that some 40 000 people was detained, more than 31 000 of these remain under arrest, and that 81 of them are journalists. 129 000 public employees remain either suspended (66 000) or dismissed (63 000). Over 4 000 institutions and private companies were shut down, and their assets were seized or transferred to public institutions. Additional 10 000 civil servants were dismissed by decrees under the state of emergency at the end of October, further media outlets were closed and more journalists detained (European Commission 2016, pp. 4-13).

Of special interest for this thesis is the serious backslide in the area of freedom of speech and expression, that is documented in the report. According to the report, Freedom of expression has been held under serious strain, especially in the aftermath of the attempted coup. A selective and arbitrary application of the law, especially when it comes to provisions on national security and the fight against terrorism, is having a negative impact on freedom of expression in the country.

> There has been serious backsliding in the past year in the area of freedom of expression. Selective and arbitrary application of the law, especially of the provisions on national security and the fight against terrorism, is having a negative impact on freedom of expression. Ongoing and new criminal cases against journalists, writers or social media users, withdrawal of accreditations, high numbers of arrests of journalists as well as closure of numerous media outlets in the aftermath of the July attempted coup are of serious concern. Freedom of assembly continues to be overly restricted, in law and practice (European Commission, 2016 p. 25-27, 49).

As of June 2016, 111 786 websites were banned in Turkey, of which only 2,6 % as following of a court decision. More than 2 500 journalists lost their jobs. The high number of journalist arrests on charges of terrorism (81), in combination with poor individual right to defense, fair trial, equality of arms and the right to appeal, constitute critical legal conditions, especially for this group. More than 30 TV and radio channels, known for being critical to the government, were dropped from the state-owned satellite distribution platform. After the coup, the government ordered the closing of 46 TV and radio channels, because of alleged links to the Gülen movement. Almost all Kurdish speaking channels are closed down. The government keeps media on a tight leash, which leads to a great deal of self-censorship and poor conditions for the free media (European Commission, 2016 p. 25-27, 49).

There are serious concerns with regard to the vagueness of the criteria applied and evidence used for determining alleged links to the Gülen movement and establishing individual liability, applied in a non-transparent and indiscriminate manner, leading to a perception of 'guilt by association'. (...) any individual criminal liability must be examined with due process, full respect for the separation of powers and the full independence of the judiciary. The right of every individual to a fair trial, including through effective access to a lawyer, is a central element of the rule of law (European Commission, 2016 p.9).

The European commission establishes that an empowered civil society is a crucial component in any democratic system, and that all institutions should be recognized and treated as such by the state. According to the report, politicians have continued to condemn and intimidate journalists, editors, academicians and human rights defenders for their critical views. The increased use of hate speech by officials and representatives of the state is a major concern (European Commission, 2016, p. 72). In Turkey, there is no government strategy in place for cooperation with civil society (European Commission, 2016, p. 13).

As attempted to illustrate in the section above, people representing some kind of opposition in Turkey were suspended or removed from their jobs, and a number of institutions were closed by force within few days after the coup. All these actions are based on the assumption that Fetullah Gülens foundation, Hizmet, were responsible for the attempt. Despite the fact that the Turkish government failed to produce any evidence to link Gülen to the coup attempt, and that the U.S. Director of National Intelligence has stated that they did not see evidence of Gülens involvement in their intelligence on the case, most Turkish people are convinced that the Gülinists orchestrated the attempted coup. In other words, there is a big gap between the hard evidence and the public opinion in Turkey. According to CNN, 64,6 % of the Turkish population believe Fetullah Gülen and the Hizmet foundation to be responsible for the coup attempt, compared to only 2,2 % believing that President Erdogan himself had anything to do with it (CNN - Fareed Zakaria Fetullah Gülen Interview on 'GPS', 2016). It is not the intention here to introduce the President himself as a potential orchestrator of the attempted coup. I just wish to illustrate the disproportion between evidence and public opinion in this case which illustrates the issue of media under public control, and it seems the goal of the government may be to create an atmosphere of fear to silence all democratic dissent. This is left as an open question here and will be further investigated through the collected data in the coming chapters.

2.5   Summary

Definitions and knowledge on freedom of speech, democracy and religion have been presented in this chapter. These three concepts are examined as independent qualities, but also as dependent upon each other and in the particular context of Turkey, with special emphasis on the period of time after the attempted coup in 2016. The aim for this chapter is to create a foundation of information relevant to the thesis.

3. Method

As social scientists, we are thrown off balance by our presence in the world we study, by absorption in the society we observe, by dwelling alongside those we make "other." Beyond individual involvement is the broader ethnographic predicament – producing theories, concepts, and facts that destabilize the world we seek to comprehend. So, we desperately need methodology to keep us erect, while we navigate a terrain that moves and shifts even as we attempt to traverse it (Burawoy, 2009, p. 19).

This thesis presents a qualitative research project conducted as a case study to shed light on the relevant research. Qualitative research seeks to uncover the world as it is understood from the informants' point of view. Focus on few informants facilitates a depth understanding of the informants' thoughts and experiences, which is considered relevant in this context. To secure good quality of the data material with a qualitative research approach, the validity and transferability have been especially important to take into account. Therefore, chapter 3.7 is quite extensive.

The purpose of the assignment is to understand the repercussions of free speech restriction to the function of modern societies and liberal democracies. I will also be looking into religiosity as a holy, justifying mean in a controversial political process.

I have met with experts on this field in Norway, both journalists and academicians, to expand my knowledge of the complex, contemporary situation in Turkey. These relations also proved to be significant in the process of building a network of contacts with the necessary characteristics to qualify as informants in Turkey.

The collected data presented in this thesis is the result of based on five depth interviews, one group interview and analysis of news articles. The interviews are semi-structured. With the informants' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed before the analysis. Because of bad quality-taping on the group interview, only quotes were transcribed and used as analytical material from this session.

3.1   Previous research and methodology

There have been conducted a lot of good research on freedom of speech and expression. As a very prominent issue of our time, free speech has been studied by several researchers all over the world from many different points of view. The intersection between free speech and hate speech, are both very relevant topics on the field, especially in the multicultural societies and

the global world online, where everyone can reach each other regardless of geographical location. The right of freedom of speech and expression has traditionally been considered an individual right and has only quite recently been investigated as a common good. This thesis does first and foremost take an interest in of freedom of expression as a necessity for good democratic conditions, and the exercising of this right as a common good, more than as an individual right, researched in light of sociological theory.

The following three points are important characteristics of this thesis: First of all, the case I am looking into in Turkey is ongoing at the moment and there is therefore a lack of research on the field. Secondly, I will be looking for religiosity in the discourse of the political controversy and the possible religious justification of human rights violations in the aftermath of the coup attempt in 2016. Lastly, my method is based on depth interviews with people affected by these restrictions.

I hope my thesis can shed light on the serious situation in Turkey, create and spread knowledge about the present issues. It is also a motivation of mine to be able to make a transferable generalization to similar societies suffering from the deprivation of free speech.

3.2   Abductive approach

Through the work of this thesis I have used the method called *abductive approach*. Abductive approach lies in between the methods deductive and inductive approach. *Inductive approach* is based on the idea that one can develop a theory based on empirical findings, whereas *deductive approach* depends on the empirical testing of theory, with a theoretical concept as basis of the empirical data collection (Thagaard, 2009, pp. 193–194). The golden mean, the concept of abductive approach was created by Glaser & Strauss and they described this approach to be a "…dialectical relationship between theory and data" (Lilledahl & Hegnes, 2000).

The basis of this approach is the idea that you are collecting data with a theoretical basis, and as the data collection provides more insight and other perspectives, the researcher expands the theoretical framework to achieve a broader and more suitable understanding of the findings. With this ongoing supplement of theory, new knowledge can develop. Through this approach, the sociological theory of Harry Melkonian was the basic premise of my research. Other theoretical frameworks were then added when the empirical work gave a better understanding of the reality, and what tools I needed to understand it more thoroughly.

3.3 Case study

Case study as a method is used for analytical and transferable purposes and is known as one of the most common methods in social science. It can be defined as a depth study of a particular case: the study is defined to research one unit of a bigger picture. There are several different methods of data collection in the field of case studies: interview, analysis of literature, surveys, observation and so on.

One challenge with case studies is to limit the case and define what is relevant to the case, and what to leave out. Once the case is defined, it is necessary to look into different circumstances around the case, to fully understand the case itself.

The case is never randomly chosen but selected on the grounds that this exact case can provide insight to a specific event, based on a theoretical question or a specific empirical research question. The chosen point of attention, the case, will always represent just a small part of a bigger picture. Therefore, it is important to be aware of the circumstances around the case, in addition to attention to the case itself (Halvorsen, 2008, pp. 105–108).

3.3.1 Extended case method

The *extended case method* applies reflexive science, a model of science that embraces not detachment, but engagement as the first step toward knowledge. The use of this method aims to "extract the general from the unique, to move from "micro" to "macro", and to connect the present to the past in anticipation to the future, all by building on preexisting theory" (Burawoy, 1998, p. 5). The concept of extended case method was first used by Garbett (1970), Gluckman (1958), Velsen (1960), Mitchell (1956) and Epstein (1958) in the Manchester school of social anthropology (Burawoy, 1998). Whereas traditional case methods often look for homogeneity and harmonies, the extended case method seek inequalities and the unexpected to appear. Van Velsen (1967, p. 135-137) notes that in the use of traditional case methods, singular information is often considered less important or relevant, only because it is not consistent with the majority or the expected. He also warns researchers not to "overestimate" informant information. It is important to see their opinions and experiences in light of a reality and remember that they themselves are a part of the case and the environment around the case. Because they are not social scientists, their understanding of patterns and causalities should not be blindly trusted, but understood as the researchers' source to their reality, and analyzed and compared to other sources of information.

In the process of collecting data to this master thesis, I aimed to make use of two specific aspects of this method: Firstly, the importance of noticing *difference* in the opinions and experiences of the single informant, over the majorities perception. Looking for homogeneity and patterns has traditionally been more common in case studies than trying to find opposites and exemptions. Secondly, taking the bigger picture into account when analyzing the empirical data material, not blindly trusting the information, but be conscious that the data needs to be seen in its theoretical context.

3.3.2   Case selection

The case selection can be chosen on basis of one out of two options: Either you choose a case to understand something more or bigger than the exact case itself, or you choose a case to understand something specific within that case. In this thesis the idea has been to understand the case itself through research, with a certain ambition to be able, to some extent, to generalize findings in other or similar situations. The case is not randomly chosen but preferred because of its possibilities to increase understanding of the situation in Turkey through interaction with theory. This is called relevance sampling, also named, purposive sampling (Krippendorff, 2012, p. 120-121), and in the case of this thesis targeted selection represent both the process of case selection and the choice of informants.

This exact case was chosen because of the notable shift in the Turkish society in the aftermath of the attempted coup. The research aimed to paint a clearer picture of the rather chaotic present in Turkey - from my point of view, with the democratic conditions at risk in the country, the case of the limitation of freedom of speech and expression was a good approach to understand this change. With the convoluted position of religion in Turkey and in light of the "secular appearance" of the nation, the religious perspective was hard to ignore. This perspective provided the opportunity to retrieve data from well-educated informants in the field, which turned out to be crucial for the selection of this approach.

3.3   Informant interview

Through the process of collecting data to this thesis, five informant interviews were conducted in Istanbul, in addition to one group interview. My aim was first and foremost to make the informants trust me as researcher and feel comfortable in the interview situation.

Confidentiality was important in this case, because of the actual risk they took talking to a researcher like me about the political situation.

My aim was to get a glimpse of their experiences and understand their thoughts and concerns around these. In dialogue with them, I tried to recreate some of the crucial moments in their carrier and reasons of the choices they have made. In my experience a relaxed and informal tone, prevents tension and stress in the interview situation, and with a confidentiality between us in this situation grounds for profound information is set. My general intention was to understand the informants' experiences, thoughts and opinions about the contemporary situation in Turkey.

3.3.1   Structure of an interview guide

Rubin and Rubin (Rubin & Rubin, 2012) categorized seven stages to produce a good interview guide, and two different structures, as a "tree" or "river", to follow through the interview, based on Van Velsens (Van Velsen, 1967) work. I was inspired by this in my preparation of the filed work, and aimed to conduct my interviews in accordance with their idea of a floating river. The other aspects of their theory will not be reviewed here.

The idea with the floating river in this context, is that you picture the main topic of the research as the big river. The side streams, where the water "choose" to float, are unknown. It is dependent upon the amount of water, wind and sun. Transferred to the interview situation, this structure places a great deal of responsibility to the way the conversation goes, on the informant. Their responses to the questions asked, orient in which direction the researcher should follow up. This makes follow-up questions essential. The subtopics of the interview cannot be determined in advance, but must be considered for continuous assessment (Van Velsen, 1967).

I found this approach attractive, because the informants of this research are so specialized on this field. My aim was for them to draw me in the most constructive direction possible, during the interview. Prior to the meeting I prepared an interview guide with main- and subtopics, designed as semi-structured interview (see attachment). During the interviews the situation felt more and more as a dialogue, where the informant and I were in a "give-and-take" relation. In my experience both of us developed new knowledge and viewpoints during the session.

3.4   Group interview

The Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (SRII) promotes academic research on Turkey and was my Scandinavian host. Together we organized a group interview in a session called "Today Talks". Specially invited guests, both Turkish and Scandinavian, with interest and/or education on the field participated in this dialogue. I experienced that sharing opinions on this topic in a group conversation provided different and fruitful information. To sit down in a circle and talk about the difficult circumstances many of them experience every day, was a powerful and good experience for me. Together we were able to bring new viewpoints to the table and I am very grateful for this opportunity and the 17 participants that evening.

3.5   Document analysis

In addition to five informant- and one group interview, I have also conducted some document analysis. Because of the very current timeframe of this case, news articles from reliable media outlets in both English and Norwegian, have been an essential source of attention, as illustrated by the bibliography. I have tried to create a depiction of the situation, with all its nuances, as clearly as possible – looking for confirmations and contradictions from different sources. The report from the European commission in 2016 provided solid, detailed information and statistics, that were indispensable to this thesis. Others, like the Norwegian PEN, Free expression under a shadow, statistics from Amnesty International and last, but not least a large amount of news material, Devon from Urix NRK, Johansen from VG and Hagvaag from *Dagbladet* to mention some, from 2016 till today have provided insightful information that proved essential to understand this case.

   According to Hammersley and Atkinson, a systematic review of relevant documents may bring new knowledge to the research. Sometimes this kind of analysis confirm information already established throughout the interviews. On other occasions the information from the two sources contradict each other. Either way it facilitates new knowledge, and contributes as stimulating in the process of establishing analytical positions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 122).

3.6   Choice of informants

In accordance with guidance of social science qualitative research, my informants are non-representative of a population. They have been strategically chosen because of their profession as journalists or academicians, actively intervening in Turkish society both as citizens and professionals.

The selection was affected by the difficult situation in Turkey. Some of my potential informants already fled the country and others were too scared to share information about such a sensitive topic. In the beginning it was a bit of a struggle to collect informants with the right characteristics, but through building trust via common "Norwegian contacts", my potential informants trusted me and had the courage to be my informants. As people heard of the project from trusted sources, some of them contacted me and wanted to contribute to my thesis because they saw the importance of this work.

The networking between contacts in Oslo and Istanbul took place in September 2017. I reached out to two prominent figures in Norway on the contemporary situation in Turkey:

- Jørgen Lorentzen, Norwegian PEN
- Joakim Parslow, University of Oslo (UiO)

Jørgen Lorentzen from the Norwegian PEN, a literary scholar with broad experience in the field of journalism, with never ending commitment to those journalists charged of terrorism claims in Turkey. He has followed several court cases closely in Turkey during the aftermath of the attempted coup. He met with me in Oslo in September. Joakim Parslow, associate at the University of Oslo, expert on the Middle-East and Turkey, conducting research on modern Turkey in political science, from a sociological and ideological perspective. Their benevolence was crucial both in providing me with insight, but also to put me in touch with informants in Turkey in a trustworthy way.

The five informant interviews and one group interview were conducted in Istanbul, in the time period of 23rd of October to 20th of November 2017. Due to the strained situation in Turkey, all my informants were promised full confidentiality before they accepted to participate as informants and the interviews were conducted. To participate in a research like this, was a potential risk for all of them. Therefore, the given description of the attending informants is very modest, to ensure their safety:

a) Male, academician. About 40 years old. Interviewed on 29th of October 2017.
b) Male, journalist. About 50 years old. Interviewed on 3rd of November 2017.

c) Female. Academician. 58 years old. Interviewed on 6th of November 2017.

d) Male, journalist. About 30 years old. Interviewed on 10th of November 2017.

e) Female, journalist. 25 years old. Interviewed on 14th of November 2017.

f) Group interview: 17 participants with interest and/or education on the field, hosted by SRII 9th of November 2017.

It is also necessary to mention that none of these journalists are working for government founded newspapers. During my stay in Turkey I tried to reach out to governmental-financed newspapers for an interview, and so did two of my informants on my behalf. Yet they couldn't find anyone who wanted to meet with me. This is the main reason I have chosen to prioritize direct sources to the President in the background chapter, because I consider his speech representative to the "official standard".

3.7   Recording

Both the informant interviews and the group interview were recorded using an iPhone. It was important to have these conversations on tape, mainly because I wanted to be as present as possible during the conversations, and don't occupy myself with pen and paper. With rather complex topics and emotional stories, it was important to keep my full attention to the conversation. To me, it was comforting to know that I had the opportunity to "go back" to the interview on tape afterwards. The interview situation was a stressful setting, to me as well, and I experienced that the chance to sit down and listen to the whole session afterwards gave me new confidence in the findings.

As the interviews were held in English, which is not my first language, nor my informants, the tape was essential in order to clarify potential linguistic misunderstandings afterwards.

3.8   Transcription and coding

Kvale and Brinkmann define transcription as "constructions from an oral conversation to a written text (S. Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Transcription is a process of transformation, in this case speech translated into written language. I gained a new kind of awareness to the collected data while I was doing the transcripts. It was time consuming, but after the transcripts was done I knew all the interviews in and out. This process is by Steinar Kvale (Kvale et al., 2009, p. 189) understood as the first part of the process of analysis because of the choices that have to be made when transcribing it.

I had to make some practical decisions about the transcribing. I consequently noted all the words said and marked the pauses with "(---)", to be able to notice hesitation in the written text. Sounds like "eeeeh" or other "thinking sounds" came up quite frequently, especially in-between the questions asked. These were taken out of the document, because it added no further meaning and was visually confusing in the text.

The coding was conducted based on the structure of the interview guide. I chose to calibrate these categories based on my findings in light of analytical framework and categorized all the material into these new classifications. I then used a pattern of different colors, when all the interview transcripts were completed, into the following categories:

- The democratic reversal
- Authoritarianism
- Freedom of speech and expression
- The religious discourse in Turkish politics

Further I tried to filter all this material in order to separate significant material from the less relevant information. During the reviewing of the transcripts, I constantly tried to select information of potential significance in correlation with theoretical framework. I separated the collected data into puzzles and aimed to puzzle it back together in a renewed position, affected both by confirming and/or contesting information, and in light of theoretical framework.

In order to preserve anonymity, the informants of this study will not be mentioned by names but discussed as "informants" in the chapter of analysis. They will be referred to as: "Informant A, B, C, D and E".

3.9   Research quality

Despite the fact that the requirements of validity, reliability and transferability are more prominent within quantitative research than qualitative, I think that these standards should be upheld as much as possible, also in the context of the latter. Essentially these terms concerns the *quality* of a product (Dalen, 2011) – an important aspect one should not attempt to circumvent in either qualitative nor quantitative research.

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability affects the collected data. *Why* choose these exact informants of data, *what* data have been collected and *how* was the data collected? The requirements of collecting data are as important in qualitative as in quantitative research. The "informal conversation" are considered beneficial in the context of qualitative interviews, because this setting facilitates in-depth information. Reliability in this context, therefore often underlines how the researcher treat the criteria of evaluation. And is often contested by whether another researcher would be able to reach the same conclusion (Thagaard, 2009, p. 198). By consistently and thoroughly specifying all progression of a research project, one increases the reliability and enables other to recreate the study (Thagaard, 2009, p. 199).

I concentrated on protecting the question of reliability through the whole process of doing research in this thesis. For example, through archiving all the preparations of the field work, taping and transcribing both the informant interviews and the group interview. The reliability does not necessarily decease in cases of qualitative research. From my standpoint, it is technically possible to recreate the findings of this research by following these steps. Practically these will always be a question of interpretation in social sciences, with a large potential impact on the conclusions being drawn. Another critical notion in this context, is the concern that the case I have conducted research on, is ongoing and the premises are rapidly changing in Turkey. And in my opinion, it is technically possible to recreate the findings of this research by following these steps.

3.9.2 Validity

Validity defines to which extent the approach and findings answer the purposes of the research consistently, and whether the findings can be considered a true representation of reality – to the extent a reality exists (Johannesen, Christoffersen, & Tufte, 2010, p. 230). To achieve *internal validity,* the results have to be understood as correct and true. The internal validity is strengthened if other studies confirm the findings of the research. There are two ways to control the validity of a qualitative research; either you compare the findings with other studies, or, you conduct a thorough and critical review of your own study (Jacobsen, 2005).

Through this research process I have aimed to see the data and findings in light of each other, looking for similarities and contrasts. I have tried to stay critical even towards the most convincing statements and compare the data along the way. By committing to this process, I have sought to capture the nuances of my informants' different viewpoints on the case. And

when these are presented here in sum, the findings are as representative of reality as possible, due to the premises of this research.

3.9.3 Transferability

In the field of qualitative research it is very common to emphasize the value of transferability of information over generalization, since generalization is more convenient in cases of statistics and quantitative approaches (Thagaard, 2009). Transferability concerns whether a research project can generate knowledge and information valuable to other cases than the particular case in point (Johannesen et al., 2010, p. 231).

As already mentioned in this chapter I have tried to follow some principles from the extended case method. One of these principles focuses on transferring the specific to the general. According to Burawoy (Burawoy, 1998), it is possible to use case studies as foundation of generalization. When actions by individuals are studied in a defined case, their actions will not be random, but rather locked to a social system where behavior is systematic because of social codes (Burawoy, 1998, p. 17-19).

In the case of this study the right to live and express oneself freely from political affiliations is under the scope. The chosen informants are selected on grounds of three specific characteristics, as citizens of the Turkish society, the willingness to participate in this study and their particular expertise as academician or journalist. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the participants of this particular study act in regular ways because they have to relate to specific institutions and authorities; Turkish judicial system, authoritarian leadership, media controlled by government, poor democratic conditions, religiosity in politics, minority negligence and state of emergency, among others. In other cases of increasingly authoritarian regimes, many of the examples above will be continuous situations. In other words, it would be reasonable to expect to find different individuals in other countries undergoing a similar transformation, and still see similar responses to certain conditions, because of the common features characterizing the situation. The regularity in patterns of behavior under specific circumstances makes it possible to transfer qualitative data collected from this study, to other similar situations, irrespective of time and place.

3.10 Challenges and ethical considerations

In research projects like this there are always ethical considerations to take into account. The most serious ethical concern conducting this research, was definitely the potential risk I exposed

the informants to. It became clear to me from the very beginning that the informants already were in vulnerable positions. Some of them were even under surveillance, and the fact that meeting with me as a critical researcher might increase their risk. I did two particular things to circumvent this challenge. Firstly, I reached out to Norwegian academics and journalists with contacts in Turkey and presented my project. They conveyed contact between me and potential informants, fulfilling my requirements (see chapter 3.6), in Turkey. This process made the informants trust me because I reached out to them through, by them, trusted sources. Secondly, and more formally, both I and the informants signed a document of confidentiality, "Request of research participation" (see attachments). This ensured that all personal information would be treated confidentially, that all information would be anonymized, and it would not be possible to connect the identity of the informants to the public thesis. It was also explained that it was voluntary to participate in the study and they could withdraw their consent from the project at any time, without any reason. Research ethics involves protecting the individuals participating from being exploited within the framework of research, and in my opinion, I have conducted this research in compliance with these guidelines.

The largest weakness of this research is, in my view, the homogeneity within the group of informants. They all represent the same "side" in a very polarized society. Through my Norwegian channels of networking in Turkey I was no able to reach any pro-government journalists. And during my stay in Istanbul a few of my informants reached out to government financed newspapers on my behalf, without finding anyone willing to participate in this research. Nevertheless, I regard my findings as reliable of what they represent for two reasons. Firstly, even though there are no big contrasts within the group of informants, they provided me with different understandings of the position they find themselves in. Secondly, the informants were chosen because of their profession and insight on the field, which enhanced their credibility as specially cultivated informants.

It is important to have a reflective relationship as to the role of being a researcher. Especially when conducting research with interviewing as method. Thus, I prepared well for the interviews and emphasized how my bare presence affected the information gathered. The constellation between researcher-informant is to be considered a power-relation. In many cases, the researcher is in a "power position" compared to the informant. Because the informants in this research were well-educated and chosen for this study because of their expertise on the field, I did not experience this as obstructing the goal. In our conversations I understood us as equals, both aiming to increase our knowledge on the contemporary situation in Turkey.

As the interviews were conducted in English, none of us spoke our mother tongue during the interview sessions. I am aware that this language barrier might have led to more categorical statements, causing less nuances than speaking our own language might have provided the findings with. I actually considered conducting the interviews with a translator present, but as both me and my informants spoke English quite fluently, it didn't seem necessary. Because of the awareness of the potential loss of linguistic nuances beforehand, I made sure to ask several follow-up questions, thereby giving the informants the chance to express themselves in different ways.

During the process of both transcription, coding and analysis it was important for me to protect the dignity of the informants. I have not under any circumstances intentionally presented any misinterpretation of the information given to me. I have strived to present and communicate the informants message as true as possible through the whole process of dealing with the data.

3.11   Summary

The methodological choices of abductive approach and the extended case method made a flexible relation between data material and analytical framework possible. I could go back and forth to seek new relevant perspectives from both sources throughout the whole process. This chapter aimed at presenting, as briefly as possible, the methodological steps taken both during the process of collecting data and analyzing the material.

4. Analytical framework

In the following chapter, the analytical framework will be presented. This chapter presents a review of relevant theory, terminology and previous research methodology. When it comes to the concept of both democracy and free speech, there are multiple theories and methodologies in the separate fields and the combination of the two to choose from when it comes to research foundation. Harry Melkonian's sociological approach to freedom of speech constitute the basis of the thesis analytical framework and was chosen prior to the data collecting. In accordance with the methodological choice of abductive approach, the remaining theories presented are chosen on the background of the findings/data collected in the field. All the theories will be used in the coming chapter of analysis. My intention is for these supplementing theories to shed light on my findings from slightly different points of view. Naturally, there are theories relevant to my thesis that are not mentioned here because of the limited time schedule and length of this assignment. That will be a project for further research.

4.1 Justification of free speech

As the historical introduction in the background chapter showed, the justification of free speech has been debated for years. I have chosen to focus on the theory of Alexander Meiklejohn, modified by Schauer, because of his emphasis on free speech's relationship with democracy - with a short comment based on Bhagwat – and Harry Melkonian's more contemporary theory for his social approach to free speech as a collective, more than an individual right.

4.1.1 Alexander Meiklejohn

Alexander Meiklejohn was a legal philosopher and free speech advocate (1872-1964), best known for his book *Free speech and its relation to self-government* (Meiklejohn, 1948). In it he presented his democracy-based theory on freedom of speech. Self-government meant to him that the final authority lies with the people at large and political truths were those made by the majority; popular sovereignty in its purest form. Meiklejohn stated that "To be afraid of ideas, any idea, is to be unfit for self-government… () … The freedom of ideas shall not be abridged" (Meiklejohn, 2004, p. 27). According to Frederick Schauer, Meiklejohn's work is better understood as a political philosophy than as a constitutional theory (Schauer, 1983, p.

243). He based his theory of free speech on the concept of self-government and argued that freedom of speech and expression is essential because;

1. It is the way in which all relevant information can be made available to the sovereign electorate, which can, based on that, decide policy.

2. Full information is requisite to intelligent voting. Denying voters access to information was to him doing serious damage to self-government and would be a denial of the right to vote.

3. Freedom of speech is necessary as a result of people's sovereignty. In this constellation the officials become servants and not rulers. This gives us an upside-down understanding of the power interaction between the people (as the power) and the officials (as the servants), and illustrates the importance not just protection of free speech, but also facilitation of it (Schauer, 1983, p. 247).

The two models figuring below are intended to illustrate how Meiklejohn understood freedom of speech as essential to self-government. According to him, it is only when all relevant information can be made available to the sovereign electorate that they can decide policy based on that information. He saw full information as necessary to intelligent voting to take place (Model 3). and argued that denying people access to information was the same as denying them the right to vote (Model 4). Hence, the prevention of full flow of information was doing serious damage to self-government (Schauer, 1983, p. 247).

Model 3.

Model 4.
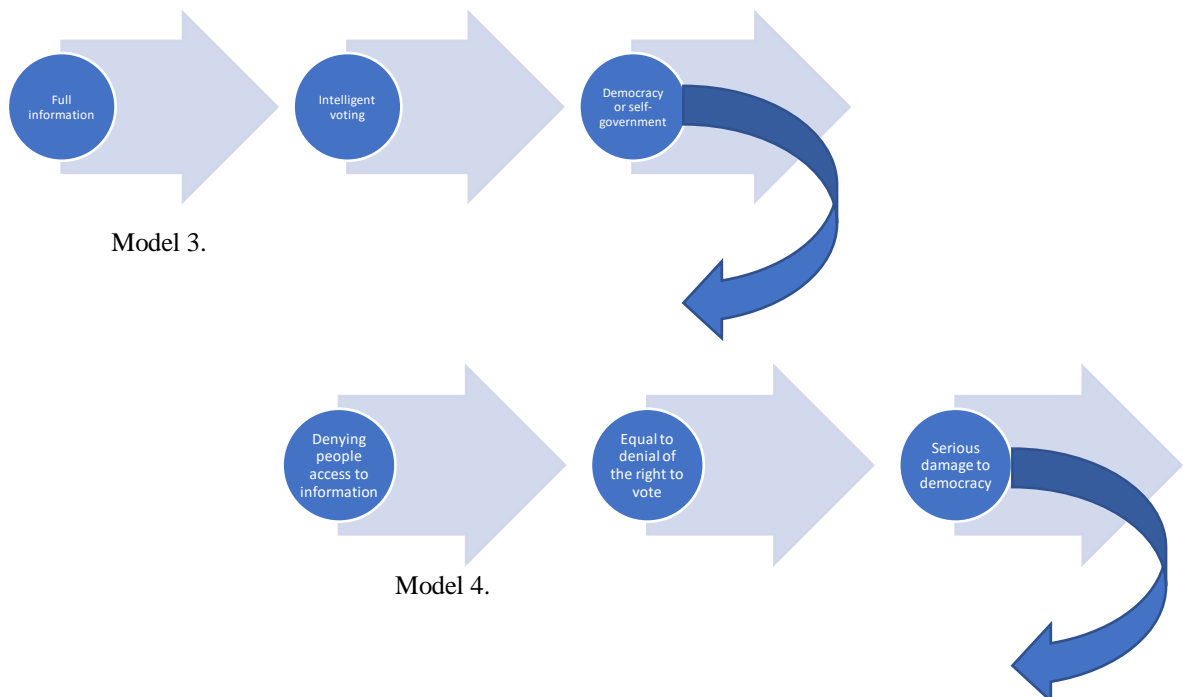
Illustrating, based on Meiklejohn's theory, how access to information, hence free speech, is mandatory to fair elections, and therefore also democracy.

According to Meiklejohn, one could argue that if the people are sovereign, then officials are servants and not rulers. Servants must know the wishes of the master, so the people need open channels for the officials to know what to do. According to him, all debate on politics should receive especially strong protection, even beyond the general principle of free speech. The premise of this is the fact that if political deliberation is central in our understanding of freedom of speech, a natural consequence is that political considerations deserve this special defense. Laws and practices that protect political talk should occupy a crucial position in the ideal state. If those in power are able to manipulate elections or tactically withhold information and criticism, democracy will not be able to reach its essential ideal.

According to Schauers reasoning on Meiklejohn's theory, from an epistemological understanding of "the argument from democracy", political truths are by definition "those made by the majority". This "theory of truth" have been used to justify free speaking of almost anything. In light of disagreements on different political issues, as well as even the criteria to be used for assessing political ideas, an implicit assumption of democracy is that here the majority rule *is* the best test of truth. Democratic theory assumes that truth is not really the issue, for implicit in any majority rule is the majority's right to be wrong. If the people are right to be wrong, the risk of wrongness cannot serve as the criterion for denying the population access to information that may affect their decisions.

Schauer conclude by criticizing Meiklejohn's understanding of democracy as the supremacy of the electorate. He argues that by accepting popular sovereignty as the premise of "argument of democracy", we are prohibited from impinging in majority power. If the premise would allow things to be said that the people do not want to hear, he claims, the argument is not so much based on popular will as it is an argument against it. Nothing is internally inconsistent about defining either democracy or popular sovereignty in a way that prevents democracy from committing suicide by alienating its sovereignty. Still, to rely completely on the majority rule is somewhat paradoxical. Schauer illustrates this with the instance that one for example never would let the majority withdraw the minorities' right to vote. The way he sees it, *equal participation* offers a much stronger form of "the argument of democracy", than *popular sovereignty* does. If all participate equally, they must have the information necessary to make participation meaningful. Hence, speaking openly supports liberty (Schauer, 1983). Even with the critique by Friederick Schauer, Meiklejohn's theory is

still a strong argument justifying the positive relationship between democracy and freedom of speech.

Free speech without democracy

With a well-established justification of freedom of speech and expression through democracy, we can be tempted to conclude that freedom of speech only depends on democracy. And in many cases, democracy and free speech are in fact either reinforcing or undermining each other: Poor democratic conditions generate less room for freedom of speech, a healthy democracy facilitates expression, and the other way around.

In this context Ashutosh Bhagwat, law professor from Chicago, published a thought-provoking work arguing that free speech is an important feature even in state systems without a democratic foundation (Bhagwat, 2015). This approach illustrates the value of freedom of speech and expression also detached from democracy, and will be operationalized in chapter 5.2 of this thesis, analyzing the democratic reversal. This contribution complements "the argument of democracy" by Meiklejohn in an interesting way. Bhagwat presented three distinct reasons why autocratic leaders might have an interest in permitting freedom of speech by citizens to some extent. This is noteworthy in the context of Turkey, as a state moving in a more authoritarian direction, and I therefore choose to mention his three reasons for admitting freedom of speech [even] without democracy.

1. The most important reason is that free speech is *enforcing central authority*. Citizens can play an important role in identifying, and publicizing, corruption and lawlessness as well as violations of central policy, at the local level. Freedom of speech among locals may in this way force the will of central authority in every local level.
2. Free speech can act as a *safety valve*. Through permitting some degree of free speech, the sitting government can lighten the pressure during political shifts.
3. Free speech as a form of *citizen participation* in government can lend legitimacy for a government, even without the legitimacy conferred by popular consent through elections, because they feel like they are contributing to the political life. In this context he also explores *the countervailing factors* — particularly the desire that the rulers to maintain their power — which result in clear limits on what sorts of speech will be tolerated in autocracies (Bhagwat, 2015).

4.1.2 Harry Melkonian

The distinction between the *constitutive* and *instrumental* justification, set by Ronald Dworkins, philosopher and legal scholar (1931-2013) represents an essential part of the analytical framework of Harry Melkonian's, Honorary Associate at the Macquarie University Law School, sociological theory of freedom of speech and expression. Now follows a clarification of these two terms.

The *instrumental* justification (collective good/result oriented) is based on the idea that free speech may not be an inherent or moral right. But in the other hand it is desirable because it attains desirable benefits, usually political, for the public at large. For example, John Stuart Mills seminal truth theory fits with the instrumental justification of free speech, where the right of free speech facilitate the achievement of specific goals.

The *constitutive* justification (individually/morally good), on the other hand, understands free speech as intrinsically a good and moral thing without regard to how much it helps to achieve specific goals such as democracy, also called self-government. It is an essential part of a just society and a crucial component of human dignity. Immanuel Kant's philosophy of individual autonomy and self-realization is one of the common theories providing theoretical support for this justification of free speech (Melkonian, 2012a).

This dichotomy is useful because it separates the result-oriented reasons for free speech, categorized as instrumental, from the moral arguments that falls within the constitutive definition. The book *Freedom of speech and society* written by Harry Melkonian aims to argue that the constitutive justification (individual/morally good) of free speech can be applied to the society as a whole, not just the individual. He draws the conclusion that all freedom of speech is intrinsically instrumental, because it is required in order for a society to function efficiently as a whole.

Melkonian is one of the first sociological scholar to present a full theory justifying free speech. Using the classical sociological theory from Emile Durkheim and the more contemporary social theorist Jurgen Habermas, he introduces a sociological argument for free speech. Traditionally philosophy or legal scholars have been the ones dealing with freedom of speech and expression. Melkonian presents six reasons for sociological considerations on the field:

1. Free speech is an ongoing discourse and the discussion deserve a sociological contribution.
2. A limitation in the philosophers' support to freedom of speech is the tendency to speak in absolutes, and no society have ever accepted absolutes in free speech.

3. Sociological arguments provide basis for a shift from the constitutive justification defined in philosophical terms, to the more results-oriented instrumental justification.

4. Freedom of speech has tended to be treated as an individual right. With sociological theory one can argue beyond the individual right of speech, with a more societal approach.

5. Focus on the target of speech, rather than the content of the speech.

6. Sociological theory may extend the pluralistic approach to freedom of speech and may enlighten the ongoing debate (Melkonian, 2012, p. xxv).

Melkonian's sociological theory of free speech bases its argument partly on Emile Durkheim's classical sociological theory with special focus on his concept of *mechanical* versus *organic solidarity*. This is the point of the theory I have chosen to bring attention to. The application of Habermas' more contemporary theory of Melkonian's argument, seen as an extension of Durkheim's work, will not be discussed here.

Emile Durkheim understood individuals in a society as part of a bigger, common structure. He exemplified this with the image of society being like one living organism, consisting of millions of cells. With this he tried to argue the existence of society separate and apart from the individuals, hence, that sociological research can study the existence of a group, merely as a group, separated from the individuals. Melkonian aims to prove, through Durkheim's theory, that freedom of speech and expression has a "direct and virtually independent benefit to the social organism as opposed to the real but distinct benefits to the individual members of society" (Melkonian, 2012, p. 16).

Melkonian is arguing that free speech developed as a societal need as a consequence of the resurgence of individualism. And analyzes this reasoning through the dichotomy of *mechanical* versus *organic solidarity* by Durkheim. This theory shows why traditional individually held rights in the field of freedom of expression are essentially collective rights benefitting beyond the individual, as a common good.

Durkheim understood people in primitive societies as living in a kind of *mechanical solidarity* to each other. In these societies people share a collective conscience, with common knowledge, values and beliefs. *Organic solidarity*, on the other hand, exists in more complex societies, with fewer shared values and bigger division of labor, as Durkheim defined it. Here citizens to a bigger extent play diverse roles in society and have different perspectives. In the case of a mechanical society freedom of expression would be unnecessary, because all the components of the societal structure share the same knowledge and worldview. Therefore, no one feels the need to question their existence or position, and free speech becomes excessive.

Durkheim's original theory also explained quite thoroughly how the characteristic of punishment in a given society could define whether it was categorized as primitive or complex, but that point is not considered relevant to this thesis (Melkonian, 2012, pp. 24-26).

> Most individual reasons for freedom of expression are essential for the wellbeing of modern complex societies, especially in modern industrialized democracies where shared and commonly held beliefs are in the minority as compared to individual perspectives (Melkonian, 2012, p. 183).

The law of every society needs to accommodate freedom of speech and expression, or the ruling law will be at odds with the needs of society. Laws should mirror or reflect its society, and in this context free speech is indispensable. Free speech plays an important role in the maintenance of organic solidarity, which again serve to sustain the societal foundation. Freedom of speech, including restrictions necessary for social harmony, is unavoidable in current social environments. And that without appropriately balanced rights to freedom of expression, society would be weakened. According to Melkonian, to allow political debate in the context of a state without democratic influence on the chosen leaders, would result in a condition where the laws are not harmonious with community values (Melkonian, 2012, p, 51). Melkonian concludes, without any intention of replacing, but rather complementing existing philosophical theories, that freedom of speech and expression needs to be considered a basic social right supporting society as a whole, in addition to the more philosophical view of this right as individual (Melkonian, 2012, p, 188). In my view, Melkonian's theory of free speech as a collective right is useful to analyze the Turkish case because of the "collective impact" of the contemporary situation, as I will discuss with a cultural argumentation in chapter 5.1.

4.2 Democracy theory

In the field of democracy, the quantity of potential theoretical framework is massive. Based on the contemporary case in Turkey, I have chosen to focus on the theory of use, or misuse, of the state of emergency by Agamben, the nuances between democracy and dictatorships, based on Nicolas Baverez' contemporary idea of *democratatorship*, and the relationship between democracy and Islam, based on Khaled Abou El Fadl's article "Islam and the Challenge of democratic commitment".

4.2.1 State of emergency

A state of emergency is a situation in which a government is empowered to perform actions that under normal circumstances would not be permitted. They occur because of war or other public emergencies threatening life stability of the nation. The state of emergency is protected by Article 15 in the European convention on Human Rights, which contains three parts. Part 1 defines the circumstances that qualifies the use of state of emergency, part 2 protects certain fundamental rights that the emergency state cannot repeal, and part 3 defines the requirements that must be followed by any state declaring state of emergency (European Court of Human Rights, 2017).

In the book *State of exception (2005)*, the Italian philosopher Georgio Agamben examines and responds to Carl Schmitts use of the concept *Ausnahmezustand*, by Schmitt defined as the sovereignties power to enforce exceptions. Agamben concentrate on the increased use of power by the government in situations of crises when state of emergency is implemented. He argues that this mechanism might deprive people of their civil and political rights. He finds the practice problematic because constitutional rights can be diminished, suspended or rejected in the process of claiming this power-extension by a government.

Agamben argue that the "Third Reich" in the Nazi state of Germany under Hitler's rule can be seen as a continued state of emergency that lasted for twelve years. Based on the experience from Nazi Germany, Agamben presents an idea that is interesting in the context of contemporary Turkey.

> In this sense, modern totalitarianism can be defined as the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated to the political system (Agamben, 2005, p. 2).

The political power, exceeding the laws and standards at play under normal circumstances, places a government, or one branch of the government, in the position of absolute power. In times of this kind of power extension, legalized by the state of emergency, there is a potential risk that certain forms of knowledge can be presented by the power holders as fortunate and true, whereas other opinions lose their arena of expression. The oppressive distinction of both promoting and withholding knowledge is by Agamben perceived as a violent act in times of crisis. State of emergency might ultimately facilitate tactical knowledge production that can lead a democracy to move in the direction of authoritarian leadership.

This can be considered a developmental setback, where the law suspension itself can cause a *state of emergency* to become a *prolonged state of being*, depriving people from civil rights, and especially citizenship, over time.

Agamben's interpretation of state of emergency makes him conclude that the distinction between dictatorship and democracy is indeed thin, as rule by decree become more and more commonly used. Again, he exemplifies with the "Third Reich", and the very fact that Hitler never abrogated the constitution, he only suspended it, justified with the incident of Reichtag Fire on 28th of February 1933 (Agamben, 2005, p. 3).

This indefinite suspension of law is understood as a threat to civil society by Agamben. He mentions several examples from the 20th century, among them camps like Guantanamo Bay, where the state of exception becomes a status under which certain categories of people live, a *capture* of life by right. The irony in this is the fact that sovereign law make it possible to create entire arenas in which the application of law itself is being suspended (Agamben, 2005). This theory of sovereign power by Agamben will be essential in both the analysis and discussion of the ongoing state of emergency in Turkey.

According to Baser and Öztürk, Erdogan has been waiting for an opportunity and position to increase his own power. They argue that the President been "making political and social issues out of nothing and blowing ordinary issues out of proportion to both consolidate his support base and instrumentalize the state apparatus" (Baser & Özturk, 2017, p. 9). The attempted coup provided the opportunity to, ignore the constitution, law and democratic principles, and make the ruling political figures in Turkey exceptional in its leadership.

When seeing how the state of emergency is legally imposed to a situation like the one in Turkey at the moment, it is tempting to question whether the system truly fails and ends up posing a serious threat to what it is intended to protect. Zones of exemption are established and create a sense of normality as time passes by. I will argue that when the protection of the state becomes more important than human protection, it must be characterized as abuse of power.

4.2.2 Democratatorship

Nicolas Baverez, a French historian, economist and editor published the book *Violence et passions. Défendre la liberté à l`âge de l´historie universelle* (Violence and passion. To defend freedom in the age of universal history) in January 2018. In this book he claims there is a new

type of governance, *democratatorship*, that threatens democracy in our time. In it he compares the contemporary trend with the political situation in the 1930s (Gravdal, 2018).[1]

The term *democratatorship* was used by the French-Rumanian political scientist and philosopher Pirre Hassner in the 1990s to describe the transition that was taking place in (Eastern) Europe. European states had up till then been governed by communists. When the states became less totalitarian, but not yet fully democratic, Hassner described the process of moving towards a democratic direction "democratatorship". Baverez changed the content of this term in his new book to be descriptive to the contemporary situation. According to him, the democratatorship we see today is not moving in the direction of democracy but is taking the opposite course. He defines democratatorship as *a regime governed by a strong man, with an economy controlled by oligarchs which stand close to the regime itself. The democratatorship appears to be a democracy, but the elections are manipulated, and the government acts aggressively towards the outside world* (Gravdal, 2018). Baverez uses examples from Russia, China, Turkey, Egypt and the Philippines when he is asked to mention examples of governments who fit this description today. And poses the characteristic that they define themselves as opponents of both the West and democracy itself, as the very core of their agenda.

He claims that the geopolitical battle we are now facing is between democracies and dictatorships. In his book, Baverez states that democracy is threatened by populism and religious fanaticism in our time. The crumbling of international structures is one of the contemporary changes comparable to the case in the 1930s with the flourishing of Fascism and Nazism in Europe, that alerts cause for concern. As the global order is based on common values like the founding of the United Nations, free trade agreements, international alliances and treaties, this negative development sets the benefits of the successful parts of globalization at risk (Gravdal, 2018).

More specifically Baverez presents a rather harsh characteristic of Turkey as an *Islamic democratatorship* after the new constitution ratified during the referendum 16th of April 2017 (Baverez, 2017). He argues that the new state model in Turkey makes all the states decisions rely completely on the head of the state. It puts President Erdogan in a position to reach verdicts, declare state of emergency and decide the national budget, basically, to fill in all the positions of the state, including the judicial system. This also puts him in a position to be supreme

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[1] I have not read the book *Violence et passions. Défendre la liberté à l`âge de l`historie universelle,* simply because it is only published in French so far. But I have been in contact with the journalist of Morgenbladet, Tove Gravdal and choose to use her article as secondary source because of the actuality of this theory, in combination with a news article from "Die Welt" by N. Baverez, translated to German by Bettina Schneider.

commander of the army and the intelligence service, while also remaining in the leadership position of AKP. According to Baverez, this new constitution does not only deny the democratic values in society, but also the principals Mustafa Kemal Atatürk based the building of the republic Turkey on: the division between religion and state. He further argues that this creates the foundation for an Islamic democratatorship in Turkey (Baverez, 2017).

In *Morgenbladet* Baverez states that to bring democracy back on the agenda, the political leadership needs to enter into an inclusive, social agreement with their people as exemplified by the political structures in Scandinavia (Gravdal, 2018). In the context of this case this theory is interesting because it illustrates of how the political positions are stretched between the two contradictions: democracy and dictatorship.

4.2.3 Islam and democracy

This thesis problematizes the relationship between religion and politics in Turkey and in this context Khaled Abou El Fadl, Professor of Law and Islamic Law, poses an interesting argument of Islam in relation to democracy. To be able to create an Islamic grounding for democracy one must be willing to compromise God's supremacy and transfer the decision making to humans. In this way we are not necessarily compromising with *the will* of God, we put ourselves in a trustful position of believing that God created the world and gave humans the opportunity for rational thinking in order for us to use it (El Fadl, 2005, p. 66-68).

Unfortunately, among modern Muslims it there has been a growing resistance against democracy. Not mainly because of the democracy itself, but on the grounds that it is a Western political system that many modern Muslims don't want to identify themselves with. But Khaled Abou El Fadl argues that it is truly possible to defend a democratic system within the frames of both Islamic law and tradition. In fact, if you study the early Islamic judicial work, the early Muslim legal experts approach to the ruling of states was far more similar to the democratic way of thinking than what we see today (El Fadl, 2005, p. 78). The Islamic political culture actually needs a revolution. A process is necessary in which they can start seeing democracy as more than a Western concept. It can be a true fulfillment of Islamic tradition and law (El Fadl, 2005, p. 80-86).

4.3   Religion as legitimizing power

Here follows a brief introduction to religion as legitimizing power, with the goal of defining religion and illustrate how religion influences human reasoning and actions. Religion is here

seen as practices, more than beliefs (Henriksen 2016, p. 37) and the fine line between culture and religion is presented, with emphasis on how both of them are affecting human behavior and with special especially on legitimization.

4.3.1   Defining religion

To define religion in social science is a difficult task. In the book "Bringing religion into international relations", the authors, Fox and Sandler, conclude that making a definitive definition of religion is impossible. Instead they choose to focus on the actual function religion has in the society and describe four important factors. Firstly, our worldview is often built on our religious belief. This gives religion power through our actions. Secondly, religion works as a platform for our identity. Our religious conviction affects how we see ourselves and also who we feel companionship with. This in its turn makes it possible to make a distinction between "us" and "them". Thirdly, religion can affect our actions by providing legitimacy when needed. And lastly, religion plays a role in many formal institutions with different kinds of power over the society (J. Fox & Sandler, 2004, pp. 175–178).

In science of religion there have been struggles to outline a definition. The Norwegian scientist of religion Arild Romarheim chose to define *religiosity* instead of *religion*. This move is comparable to what Fox and Sandler did, but gives us a firmer understanding. Here follows Romarheims definition of religiosity (translation by the author)[2], "Being religious means having something in one's life that is extrasensory, transcendent – and adds meaning to – everyday life" (Romarheim, 2011, p. 179).

4.3.2   Religious legitimation

Legitimacy is by Ian Hurd defined as "the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed" (Hurd, 1999, p. 381). Religious legitimacy is a complicated tool. It can be used as justification for war as well as being one of the most prominent advocates of peace.

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[2] *Å være religiøs vil si å ha som vesentlig i sitt liv noe over- sanselig som sprenger rammen for – og gir mening til – den dagligdagse virkelighet* (Romarheim, 2011, p. 179)*.

> Religion can act as a motivating force, either through the worldviews of policy makers or through the constraints placed on policy makers by the religious worldviews of their constituents (J. Fox & Sandler, 2004, p. 36).

Currently, governments and political ideologies draw their legitimacy from the will of the people and achieve political power from the democratic representation. In the period of pre-enlightenment, religion was the sole basis of legitimacy in Europe. Even though times have changed, religion is still a source of legitimacy, if only one of many. Fox and Sandler separate two types of religious legitimation in their book "Bringing religion into international relations" (J. Fox & Sandler, 2004). Their arguments are built on international relation politics, and some of their theories are transferable to the role of religion as legitimating power in general politics.

Firstly, they argue that religion is a tool that policymakers can, and do, use. The second argument is the independent influence of the impact religion has on the norms of the international system, to justify and support policies (J. Fox & Sandler, 2004, p. 34).

Religion is in some cases used as what we define as "soft power" in international relations. This refers to "the capability of an entity, usually but not necessarily a state, to influence what others do through attraction and persuasion" (Haynes, 2009, p. 296).

According to Fox and Sandler, religion can often legitimize what cannot be achieved by other means, and occasionally religions are in a position to justify what nothing else can justify. What they call "the dual role of religion" is the paradox where religion can be the crucial point that either creates war or establishes peace. Religion can encourage people both to "love thy neighbor", and choose to act in a "holy war" (Fox & Sandler, 2004, p. 40).

Geertz brings the cultural aspect to this discourse with his commentary, "Thrones might be out of fashion and pageantry too; but political authority still requires a cultural framework in which to define itself and advance its claims, and so does the opposition to it" (Geertz, 1977, p. 20). The link between religion and culture is interesting in this context. Sometimes the two are hard to tell apart. When the lines between the cultural and religious are blurry, it might be difficult to see at what point religion really enters the scene of politics. And as we have already clarified, the cultural and religious imprints are very intertwined in Turkish society. The secular state tries to take control of religion in a supposedly very religious society.

Jan Olav Henriksen, Norwegian professor of theology, concludes in his article *Everyday religion as orientation and transformation: A challenge to theology* (Henriksen, 2016), that currently, religion needs to be studied as practices, more than beliefs and doctrines. His argument is based on the contemporary discourse on everyday religion. He focuses on the

individual experience of religion and the purpose of religion in peoples' lives. There are two interesting points in this article that can be linked to this thesis. Firstly, he chooses to treat religion as a cultural resource, by taking a position where he tries to pragmatically understand religion. His focus being on the use of religion and its influence of human action. In his second point he argues that legitimation is one of the pragmatic dimensions of religion. There is a distinction between three pragmatic dimensions of religion - orientation, transformation and legitimation - He argues that based on the implication that what "matters" is the consequences of practice, "religion can be seen as a provider of resources that orient, transform and legitimize specific types of human practices that are symbolically mediated" (Henriksen, 2016, p. 38).

4.3.3 Secularism and religion in Turkey

Through the last decades Turkey has repeatedly been flagged as a secular and democratic example for other Muslim states to follow. Wilhelm Kavli, from Hacettepe Üniversitesi in Ankara, published the article "Islam, state and democracy in Turkey" in 2009. There he questions whether Turkey really deserves the recognition as democratic pioneer (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Nevertheless, this has up till now, especially in the West, been the ruling impression, but now is starting to crack down. Norwegian PEN observes in Turkey, among others, have repeatedly pointed out that the country's democracy is at risk. This is quite ironic as Turkey has traditionally been considered the democratic pioneer.

Secularism in Turkey is defined as "separating state and religion and maintaining their separation in particular state spheres within a set of institutional relationships that ensure their integration and supervision as well" (Davidson, 2010, p. 34-36).

Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, assistant professor of political science at Northwestern University, analyzes secularism as a form of political authority in her book *The politics of secularism in international relations (Hurd, 2008).* The book focuses on the relationship between the United States and Iran, as well as those between the European Union and Turkey. It is also based on research and examples from those respective countries. She presents a three-folded argument of secularism: Firstly, the division between religion and politics is not fixed, but rather socially and historically constructed. Secondly, the failure to recognize this explains why scholars of international relations have been unable to properly recognize the power of religion in world politics. And finally, the overcoming of this problem allows a better understanding of crucial empirical puzzles in international relations (Hurd, 2008, p. 1).

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, "the Turkish land father", looked to France when he built the Turkish republic from the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1923. He adapted the French model of laïcitè, which means the absence of religious involvement in government affairs. Atatürk emphasized state control of religious expression and institutions, into a unique mixture of Turkish nationalism, Sunni Islamic and European laicist traditions known as Kemalism. For Kemalists progress was defined as the management and control over local Islamic culture (Hurd, 2008, p. 66).

Hurd presents two different views on the Turkish secularism, or Kemalism, where she clearly sympathizes with the latter interpretation (Hurd, 2008, p. 66). Firstly, M. Hakan Yavuz describes the Kemalist reforms as an attempt "to guide an exodus from the Ottoman-Islamic past… [using] the French conception of rigid secularism as a compass to determine the direction of the exodus" (Yavuz, 1997, p. 65) . Andrew Davison, on the other hand, suggests that the Turkish state "never made religion or Islam an entirely separate (and thus, "private") matter (…) Islamism was not disestablished, it was differently established" (Davison, 2003, p. 341).

Hurd presents the idea that the laicist and Judeo-Christian and secular West have been partly consolidated through a common opposition to the conception of anti-modern, anti-Christian, and theocratic Middle East. But she also argues that the remake of public realm in Turkey does not constitute a threat to the foundation of modern politics. Instead she sees it as a modern contestation of authoritative practices of secularism authorized and regulated by the state authorities since the founding of the modern Turkish republic by Ataturk in 1923 (Hurd, 2008, p. 7).

Postdoctoral fellow researcher from UiO, Einar Wigen, claims that Atatürk established a strong signature-cult, personalizing the state-power in Turkey and that this tradition from the early 20th century still marks the Turkish political climate. Atatürk's person has been honored based on the idea that: "If there had not been Atatürk, there would be no Turkey". This mindset resulted in regulations forbidding to discredit him or the head of the state. And meant that all who contravened him also disobeyed the Turkish state. He was the one who aimed at separating religion from the state, and he followed this process of secularization in Turkey through. Many people didn't like him and what he did, but "he [Atatürk] was the appearance of the nation and impossible to remove[3]" (Wigen, 2017). Relevant in this case is the argumentation by Wigen that this tradition, the need of one strong man to build the nation, has also been a part of the image that President Erdogan has built his popularity on. Wigen also understands this tradition

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[3] Han [Atatürk] var et uttrykk for nasjonen og man kunne ikke fjerne han.

in light of religious convictions based on the "The Turkish-Islamic synthesis", with the central element of faith in a *reformer*. According to this belief, all eras get their own reformer, and people see him as sent from God or at least with a blessing from God, to restore a righteous order in society. From the 1950-80 when Adnan Menderes and Kenan Evren, among others, ruled the country through a period of coups, religion became considered a kind of "glue" to keep the Turkish people together. This facilitated the success for a party like AKP, with its religious foundation, and led Erdogan in a position to come to power. Wigen argues that Erdogan is an example of a leader who has *embodied the nation*, and who really *understands what is best for Turkey*, like Atatürk did before him. Currently, Turkey is ruled by a political party with an Islamic appearance under President Erdogan, but one thing seems to be more important to him than Islam, namely to use the Turkish expectation of a "reformer"[4] to build a personal autocracy (Wigen, 2017).

Kavli claims that in order to understand the political development in Turkey and the role of religion in Muslim societies, it is necessary to draw a distinction between secularism as state ideology on one side, and secularism as social process on the other. He places secularism in Turkey within the former category, as a governmental matter, and argues that the majority of the Turkish population are not even aware of the benefits that a political liberalization would potentially offer to society. He sees the Turkish state and institutions as fairly secular, but the society as very traditional with religion in a strong position. He classifies AKP within a political position between Islamism and secularism. He argues this vagueness is the reason for their broad political support over the last years, because it reflects the religious and political tendencies in Turkish society (Kavli, 2009 pp.102-106).

4.4 Summary

This chapter presented theories relevant to this thesis on the three topics of free speech, democracy and religion. The first two, free speech and democracy, are presented as analytical frameworks, suitable to the context. For my purposes here, it is especially important to connect the third topic, religion, directly to the context of Turkey. This factor is a vital component in the analysis and discussion in this thesis. For that reason, some of the theory on religion, contributed by Hurd, Wigen and Kavli, are chosen and presented as contextual to the case of Turkey.

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[4] «Fornyer» is the term used in Norwegian by Wigen, here translated to «reformer».

5. Analysis

The main characteristics of the data material are here presented analytically through comparison of findings and in light of the theoretical framework. I have chosen to focus on certain points of attention based on whether the finding was suitable of further research and compatible in context of theory. I have analyzed the data material to the best of my ability, and continuously protected the integrity of the informant information.

This chapter contains several quotes from the transcripts as a direct source to the informants. Even though I have tried to understand the findings of this research from different points of view, I have strived to protect the original message. Through continuously exemplifying findings with direct quotes and at the same time "renew" the information in light of the findings put up against each other and seen from different theoretical angles, I have made the distinction between the original finding and the further analysis clear. Due to anonymity, the informants are always referred to as "informant a, b" and so on, as already mentioned in the method chapter.

The following analysis is structured around the three initial elements of the thesis: free speech, democracy and religion. The second element: democracy is granted a complementary chapter of "authoritarianism". This priority will be explained in the analysis. All sub-chapters are ending with a short summary to clarify the relevance to the research question.

5.1 Freedom of speech and expression

In harmony with both my findings and the chosen theoretical framework, I have organized the analysis of freedom of speech in the following categories: The extent of the limitation, free speech and the election process, self-censorship, the cultural aspect of free speech, the relationship between free speech and success and social media as a news source. The sum of this analysis aims to cover not just the extent of free speech restriction in Turkey, but also some of the main characteristics, through explanations and experiences of this process made available to me during the process of interviewing. The group interview session became essential in the gathering of information to this section as the conversation had a good flow, and many of the following quotes are from this session. I have tried to give a brief introduction to the participants a few places where their personal identity had significance.

5.1.1 The extent of the limitation of free speech

The first research question, to what extent has freedom of speech been limited in the aftermath of the attempted coup, is probably the easiest one to answer. As the previous chapters have already illustrated, the issue of freedom of speech and expression are definitely present in Turkish society today. I want to present some of my informant's views and experiences on this topic in addition to the previous sources covering this field. Because the extent of this limitation is considered a premise of the following research, it is important to define this as exact as possible at an early point.

To be able to set a degree of free speech limitation, the situation in Turkey needs to be seen in relation to other practices of free speech around the world. One of the informants in the group interview session presented an interesting fact, in this context.

> I just saw the raking from the "Reporters without borders" Turkey is number 155 out of 180 countries, so of course, beyond doubt, it is a problem (Group interview quote).

This global barometer of press freedom categorize the conditions in Turkey as a "difficult situation", level 4 of 5, in a scale from "good situation" to "very serious situation" (RSF, 2018). In the description of the contemporary situation in Turkey, they define President Erdogan's government's actions against media critics a

> "massive purge" and a "witch hunt", in the aftermath of the attempted coup of 2016. The ongoing state of emergency is understood as the mean justifying authorities "to eliminate dozens of media outlets with the stroke of a pen, reducing pluralism to a handful of low-circulated and targeted publications. Turkey is again the world's biggest prison for professional journalists. (...) Detained journalists and closed media outlets are denied any effective legal recourse. The rule of law is a fading memory under the now all-powerful president (RSF, 2018).

To the extent it is possible to determine a definitive level of free speech restriction, this scale is a reliable source and with basis in the given information it is concluded that the limitation in Turkey is considerable, among the most serious cases in the world. When asked about the position of free speech in Turkey another informant replied:

> I think it is hard to answer a question about the role of free speech in Turkey, because it is not really free speech here. Either you are forced to be silent or you self-silence. So, maybe it is easier to answer a question about the conditions of free speech or public speaking in Turkey. There is a difference between

what is said here and what can be written in the news-papers. There are different levels of speech (Group interview quote).

The information in the ranking from *Reporters without borders* is illustrating the seriousness of the situation in Turkey, seen from a global perspective. When the informants expressed their experiences, the low ranking of Turkey in this scale seemed to be in harmony of the people, whom I interviewed, living under these free speech restrictions. An interesting argument presented here is "the different levels of speech" in Turkey. Different understandings of these levels came up in conversations with several of the informants. When the informants spoke about these "levels of speech" during the interviews, it was communicated that people in Turkey have to "feel" the context before expressing themselves, and this clearly limits the individual and collective right to both speech and information access. All opinions cannot be presented in any social occasion, and certainly not in writing. There are different kinds of "unwritten rules" or norms determining whether a statement can be presented in a specific setting or not. Both the cultural heritage and the political situation in Turkey continuously re-establish and maintain this state of ambiguity about the place of information distribution in different situations, as this first subchapter of the analysis aims to illustrate.

5.1.2 Elections and fair voting

The Turkish democracy will be further analyzed in chapter 5.2 and 5.3, but here, I will look into the significance of information access to fair, democratic election processes. Meiklejohn argue that full access to information is necessary for intelligent voting. As the situation of the restrictions in Turkey is considered serious, the concern of democratic conditions in Turkey seems to be a natural consequence. When asked about information flow during the Turkish election, Informant B was upfront about the challenges on this field.

> The Turkish population do not at all have the information they need for a fair vote! Having a look on the printing media, having a look on the news programs in TV, I can clearly say that we have a very poor information and news circulation in Turkey (Informant B).

Informant D was a bit more moderate when answering the same question but seemed to agree that there are serious challenges on this field.

> I don't think they [the Turkish people] do get the knowledge they need to vote fairly. One of the main reasons of this is that, they do not follow a free media. Where there is no free press, there can be no free

thought. If you are only given information from one body, you cannot possibly compare even two different ideas or ideologies (Informant D).

This finding illustrates the same concern promoted by Meiklejohn, namely that poor information deprives people from the opportunity to consider their options. When just one of the political options are visible and presented as s trustworthy political actor, the existing opposition is not even given a chance to appear in the political discourse on democratic premises.

Only the ones that seem to be supporting the current government policies are freely participating in the political Turkish debate today (Informant C).

Based on this knowledge, one can start to wonder how a whole spectrum of information can be withheld in a county with more than 80 million people. I asked one of my informants, a journalist, why he continuously chose to be careful with what he was publishing, and what kind of risk he would take by being a more critical, if not oppositional, journalist.

Of course, I don't enjoy being afraid of expressing myself. But when I talk to someone, Kurdish friends for example. They say, "Nothing can scare me, except for death", and for them that is the only thing that would be their limit. Beyond that, they have been tortured, they have been in prison, they have been beaten, but they have got up, and they continue their things all along (Informant D).

This statement gave me two important insights: first, a Turkish journalist working for a media outlet aiming to function as an objective news publisher tends to be afraid of expressing himself. He is aware of the risk he is taking by being objective, which in some cases equals to being critical of the regime. The harsh treatment of journalists in general, in combination with his own experiences of being arrested and raided by the police on accusations of "being a terrorist" has made him scared. Second, he refers to his Kurdish friend, a minority in Turkey, who expresses a feeling that he has got little or nothing to lose. Minorities who fight for their rights have unfortunately become victims of human rights violations, like imprisonment and torture, and in this example, he even expresses that his fear of death is the only thing that scares him. These two facts illustrate what fear does to the individual, as well as the structure of society. A fear among "the men on the street" keeps control of the information flow, hence political insight, and maintains the sitting power positions.

The very same informant explained the professional purposes for the news agency he is working for. The employees of this agency are well-educated journalists and seem very conscious about the role of reporting.

> Of course, there is a big presence of liberal progressive people as well, but in [anonymous newspaper], even though the people working for it might have political identities, this is never imposed in the rhetoric. We aim for being the neutral ground, that journalism can be practiced best. We do not want to impose our ideas or opinions on our readers. That we want to give them information, so that they can form their own opinion. Be it for our advantage or disadvantage. But we want everyone to have a source of information that will supply them with a necessary piece of news, that can be considered accurate and reliable (Informant D).

Despite this journalistic quality, they lost all official economic support in Turkey, the office has been raided and closed down several times, and the workers have to be prepared for the police knocking on their door for detention at night.

As the regime are now in control of about 90 % of the printed media in Turkey (Stabell, 2016), the information given through these official channels are perceived as the only reliable sources to a huge part of the population.

> The allegations against critical journalists are classic. "Propaganda of terrorist organization", "defame to the state" and so on. You know president Erdogan say: "They are not journalists; they are terrorists". Our allegations are like that (Informant E).

These kind of statements by the President, or other official authorities, were presented as a major concern in the report by the European commission of 2016 (European Commission, 2016), and here we are provided with an example by informant E. This can be seen as pro-government propaganda, here understood as unfair use of media, promoting one side of a case and relying on emotions (Oxford Dictionary, 2018c), that increases the reliability to one side of the political landscape and deprives the other sides credibility. The ripple effect of this information tampering become very crucial when it comes to the election processes.

5.1.3 Self-censorship

As the government keep control of the printed media, one way to keep being productive as a journalist or academician is to modify or self-censor standpoints in the officially published material. Based on my understanding of these findings, there was a fine line of balance when it

came to self-censorship, especially after the attempted coup in 2016, when the media control gained strength in Turkey. Informant A gave an example of how he strived to balance his integrity and the official guidelines of publishing:

> I am writing in English and I am now more self-censoring myself. I feel like I am still critical, I believe, but not as much as I want. But I had to turn some of my previous postings to draft from again because at the moment it is better not to publish them. (…) I just made them draft form, because they [government surveillance] were sort of tracking my stuff too, after the coup attempt. So, at the moment it is removed. (…) The moment you are more vocal you might lose your job or end up in prison, even if it is temporary it is not a good experience (Informant A).

This illustrates one academician's handling of the restricting politics. By censoring himself, he can keep publishing articles arguing from his point of view, maybe not as loud and clear as he would really want to, but he found it better to be in this position of "living on the edge" than being "taken out".

Informant D, on the other hand, did not see self-censoring as part of the solution, but rather as a complicating factor to the problem of free speech restriction:

> And then there is the most dangerous kind of limitation, the self-censorship. Which is actually killing a culture of questioning, because the restrictions, the regulations they may go away. The beating can be stopped. But if a culture has changed deeply, if a person starts saying: "I better not question that, I better not ask that, I better not fight that." This is very hard to change. So, I hope we will not see this happening much deeper. Because it has already happened (Informant D).

According to him, self-censorship can only be understood as a short-term solution to the problem. In a longer perspective this will potentially result in very negative patterns in society, a culture of "no questions asked". This subject came up during the session of group interview as well and a similar view were presented:

> When it comes to self-censorship, in terms of democratization or the principal of democracy, I personally consider self-censorship the most threatening action. Because any kind of regulation, rule or restriction limitation, can be lifted in a way. If there is an official retraction, it can be lifted with another official decree. But, self-censorship, end up altering the DNA of the society and changes the way people think. And this in turn creates a diseased kind of culture, in the coming generations. That once it is distorted; to not contrast opinions, to not question different entities, then, blind expectance of anything can lead to even worse conditions (Group interview quote).

The argument that a cultural shift of this kind grows deeper and might be impossible to change, whereas formalities like legislations can disappear with the stroke of a pen, is strong. According to informant D, this negative cultural development is already happening to some extent. He would rather risk being detained for telling the truth than self-censoring. At the same time, he admitted that he never published anything that intentionally provoked the government, but always aimed to write news representing an objective point of view and trusted the readers to form their own opinions. An interesting tactic in this case was to never publish articles that described anything or anyone with adjectives. He would for example never write: "The *authoritarian* President of Turkey came to Istanbul today" but only "The President of Turkey came to Istanbul today", even though he had good enough foundation to state the former of the two. Even though he did not see this as self-censorship, it can be understood as self-censoring to a certain extent. But in any case, the solution is more moderate than the former informants approach. This quote from the group interview session sums up quite well how the idea of self-censorship was understood by those whom I met:

> In a country where so many journalists have been killed over the last centuries, and so many else have been threatened, it is kind of understandable that a lot of people consider the risks before they write something provocative (Group interview quote).

5.1.4 Freedom to speak– different levels of speech

The different levels of speech in Turkish society, the unwritten rules defining what is allowed to say, where and when it is approval of saying it, became visible to me in different ways. For example, this young woman explained how these limits not even necessarily needs to be spelled out loud, it is a silent consensus of what is "right" and what is "wrong".

> When I was doing my internship in Hurriyet newspaper[5], I realized that self-censorship, even if there is no one saying to you: "You cannot write this", "You cannot speak like that", "You can't cover this subject in your news" or something like that, they think like that. There are stippled lines. And this is the problem I think. It is not about free speech, but also free thinking (Group interview quote).

The first step in solving a problem is to be aware of and acknowledge the actual issue. In a situation like this, when the set boundaries are unspoken and undefined, it is extremely difficult to make a change. If someone tells you "You cannot do this" it automatically opens up for a

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[5] *Hurriyet* is one of the biggest and most influential newspapers in Turkey. It is politically considered center-right and liberal conservative.

dialogue, or even a discussion. It gives you the opportunity to disagree. In the opposite case, with a silent consent to something vague and undefined, puts you in a position of doubt and maybe fear. It surely does not facilitate a culture of questioning or criticism. This seems to be the reality to many journalists in Turkey today. Informant E said, "We [Turkish journalists] suffer from a collective depression". They live and work under enormous pressure, and this propagates to the population as a whole and affects the culture.

> When you once kill free journalism, free media in a country – this is impacting future generations too. When you do not allow free press to operate in a country, when journalists start self-censuring, then the citizen see the journalist behavior. They stop questioning, and then at home, you see a five-year old kid, never ever questioning the parents. And then, this kid grows up and becomes a submissive child or submissive adult, who doesn't question anything about the state. This is a very dangerous pattern. And it can happen. There is a big potential risk there. Of course, I hope it doesn't happen, that the society in Turkey will not allow this to happen, but I am unfortunately observing some patterns in the society that resemble traces of self-censorship becoming the norm in the society (Informant D).

This statement by Informant D illustrate in a very good manner in what ways freedom of speech and expression is a collective, more than an individual, right. There is a strong connection between human speech and thought - language does in many ways create our reality. Melkonian's analysis of Durkheim's theory of organic solidarity focuses on freedom of speech as a collective necessity, supporting society as a whole. What informant D here talks about as development of a "very dangerous pattern" can also be seen as a cultural shift. He also refers to how these actions affect the children and coming generations. Seen in a perspective like that, one understands that the deeper structures of society are being affected. When development of a social pattern reach the cultural level, here understood as the ideas, customs, and social behavior of a particular people or society (Oxford Dictionary, 2018b), its manifestation will become harder to erase.

5.1.5 The cultural understanding of speech in Turkey

> In Turkey… I don't know where this denouncing of free speech comes from… Its, I think in the roots of the culture, discussion and debate is never really regarded highly in the society (Group interview quote).

It seemed to be broad agreement about this statement in the group interview session. It is interesting that there seems to be some kind of common understanding in the Turkish population that both debate and discussion are unwanted features, that generates trouble instead

of peaceful exchange of opinions. Exchange of opinions is normally applauded in contexts of democracy.

This disapproval of free speech may be seen in a perspective of what is already said about self-censorship: if you are used to think twice before expressing your opinions and beliefs, does that decrease your tolerance to others and their expressions? A culture's impact on individuals' behavior and a societies' united agreements, which are inherited over years and through generations, function as a provider of information from times to times. What is important to establish in this context is the finding that there seems to be a Turkish cultural understanding that being critical and argue from different points of view do not provide better knowledge, common understandings and respect, but rather the opposite way around.

As the ruling party in Turkey have become more autocratic over that last years, one may address the whole suppression of freedom of speech and expression to their politics. And probably, the contemporary regime does have a part of the responsibility of this tendency, but maybe the cultural trends also need to be seen as a part of the explanation.

> The problem is not the government, but the political culture in the country. The people need to own free expression and free speech. They must learn themselves to respect their neighbor, to respect their friends and family and relatives and even the people they just see around. If you want to practice your free expression yourself, but you do not want your neighbor to express themselves - there is a little problem. And regardless of what party you vote for and regardless of who is ruling the country, there is going to be a problem there. If basic principles of tolerance and respect are not met in the society, then the situations are going to deteriorate very rapidly again. Of course, a shift in government, it would lift a part of the pressure immediately, because a change of hands would relief a part of the media free. And, this would in some way take off some of the pressure, but currently I believe the people are owning their free expression much stronger than they have ever done (Informant D).

Informant D are here lifting some pressure off the political situation and place a large part of the responsibility of the issues around freedom of speech in Turkey on cultural explanations, regardless of political rulings. This will be further examined in the chapter of discussion.

5.1.6 The relationship between speech and success

During the group interview session an interesting discussion came up about the relationship between expression and success. One of the young Turkish participants explained how she experienced that the desire of being or becoming successful are affecting your chances of being free to talk:

> I think there is a really strong relation between self-censorship, or how you express yourself and the idea of being successful. There is a really strong relationship between expression and success, in Turkey. You are not willing of risking your income or success on expressing something controversial. You are scared to lose your position. So, it is kind of, yes there is an atmosphere of fear, but it is also you ambitions of being successful that stopes you from speaking (Group interview quote).

A Swedish researcher with SRII transferred this to a Scandinavian context and established a notable contrast when it comes to how degree of expression affects chances of success in Turkey and Europe:

> I think it is interesting on that point, I think journalists in Western countries maybe don't stop themselves enough. Because, they like to be provocative and controversial. So, *this* makes them successful, but here it is something else (Group interview quote).

5.1.7 Social media as news-source

During the group interview session, the replacement of conventional media with social media became a theme of discussion. The participants were arguing that since more and more educated people did not trust in conventional media any longer, social media became the most reliable news source.

> Especially the Gezi-park incidence gave a huge conciseness of social media to the Turkish people. But after Gezi-park, people started to write more on social media. And I call it social media journalism: I mean a conscious social media user, they kind of became social media journalists, basically (Group interview quote).

> My friends mostly use social media to actually find out what is happening in Turkey. That is the only way. They are the most trusted news-sources. I don't even watch Turkish news on TV anymore, it is just the same story on every channel. There is no real news (Group interview quote).

> In Turkey, we do not trust printed or established media, so that is the reason for the trust in social media news. I am just not sure whether the solution to this distrust against the conventional media is the citizen-media (Group interview quote).

According to those attending to this conversation, "the man on the street" in Turkey do definitely trust, and not even tend to question, the conventional media. An example of this were

presented in the group interview session about the taxi-drivers in Istanbul: "They drive around all day listen to the radio and are not at all being critical to the information they receive." This creates a large gap in the population, between those blindly trusting the conventional media, and those questioning everything as critical readers. The latter group seemed to have completely stopped accessing media financed by governmental assets. According to this group of informants and based on a map of election results in Turkey it seems people in the big cities with higher education are generally more media critical than those living in the countryside.

Some of the Scandinavian participants were critical to social media as main source of news, questioned the quality of sources and expressed concern of the journalistic ethics in this context. The Turkish participants argued quite well that as long as the conventional media couldn't be relied on, their only option was to go to the social media channels. Furthermore, the repressive measures that were taken by the government around the Gezi Park protest resulted in several "citizen journalists" gathering in systematic networks. Informant D said:

> All the restrictions force us to be more creative in how to reach people with valuable information (Informant D).

As the citizen journalists use social media, for example Facebook and Twitter, to reach people with their news, the information one can potentially receive through social media channels in Turkey have undergone a different kind of quality check than we are used to in Scandinavian countries.

5.1.8 Summary

Both the extent and impact of the limitation of freedom of speech and expression in Turkey is considered a fundamental framework of the following analysis of democracy and religious fragments in the political discourse. I have tried to illustrate both in what ways the restrictions are implemented in different areas of society and how the informants of this research experience this. I consider the most central finding here to be "the different levels of speech" that are being vaguely redefined in the everyday life of Turkish people, recreating the Turkish culture again and again with a negative impact, repressing free speech.

5.2 The democratic reversal

As chapter 5.1 illustrated, there is clearly a restriction of free speech in contemporary Turkey – how does this affect the democratic conditions? The term *the democratic reversal* used by Baser and Özturk (Baser & Özturk, 2017), as briefly presented in the background chapter, aim to identify the various ways a democratically elected party have moved towards more and more authoritarian tendencies and tactically used the elections in the implementation of authoritarian measures. After conducting the interviews in Istanbul this concept was striking to me and that is the reason I adopted the term to this thesis. This subchapter aims to present the nuances between democratic and authoritarian regimes, and how the former in some cases can facilitate the latter.

First, the Turkish democracy will be discussed with special emphasis on freedom of speech and expression and the challenges in the aftermath of the attempted coup. Then, components of the election process and the issue of juridical challenges will be analyzed.

5.2.1 Discussing the existence of democracy in Turkey

- *So, if you were to place Turkey in a line with democracy in one end and dictatorship in the other, where do we find Turkey today?*

  Ten being the democracy?

- *Yes.*

  I believe we are still at stage 4. No too bad. Then again, we have never been above 6 anyways, I would say (Informant D).

This statement defines the contemporary democratic conditions, and at the same time gives an historical assessment. Informant D compared the contemporary democratic situation in Turkey over the recent years. According to him, Turkey reached the top, of six in a scale from one to ten in the early 2000s, when, at the time (2003-2014), Prime Minister Erdogan implemented democratic reforms to qualify of EU membership. Now he graded the democratic conditions to four out of ten points, which is not too bad. Informant A argue that the democratic conditions are flawless on paper, but that there is quite another story when it comes to practice:

> But I think on paper most of what you see shows that it is a democratic country on paper. But, at the same time, I think institution-wise some of the institutions are embedded or legalized (Informant A).

During the group interview session, the Turkish democracy was referred to as "passive" and defined as a formality. According to them, the Turkish democracy is understood as people electing a President, and that the presidential position gives him the authority to rule at his own will:

> It is a passive, and definitely not a pluralistic democracy. We chose one leader and then he or she, mostly he, can do whatever he wants. Because we chose him. It is a different understanding of democracy (Group interview quote).

The understanding presented in the group interview contradict Meiklejohn's idea that if the people are sovereign, then officials are servants and not rulers and that the final authority lies with the people in any democratic society.

The reforms implemented in the second half of the 1990s to fulfil requirements to apply for EU membership produced political optimism in Turkey. After this "democratic blooming", the democratic reversal that carefully started after the dream of European Union membership faded in the early 2000s was a repeating topic of discussion during the interviewing. Informant A refers to a gradual alteration of the governing style which meant a decrease of democratic ideals, here exemplified with a serious accusation of the Turkish government in 2007:

> They [Erdogan and the AKP] were accused at that time for the assassination [a Turkish/Armenian journalist assassinated in 2007], but I feel like there was at some point all these democratic ideas began to stop, and gradually a more authoritarian regime began to be built (Informant A).

Informant E, on the other hand, argued that there is no democracy at all.

> We cannot talk about democracy in Turkey. Actually, after the coup attempt, Turkey is being governed with delegated legislation, the state of emergency. A lot of people fired from their jobs, detained, arrested, moved abroad to be safer so and so. There is no democracy in Turkey (Informant E).

According to informant C the conditions are already poor, but she points out the potential worsening of the situation with the suggested change of amendments in 2019.

> And once again, for the moment we are still in the parliamentarian system, if the amendments happen to come to power, which is to be in 2019, that will be a presidential system which is almost a "one-man-system". So, no. under these conditions we are not talking about a democracy or anything (Informant C).

None of the informants wanted to define the state system a "dictatorship", but there was a broad consensus that the democratic conditions had diminished over the last years, especially with the state of emergency after the attempted coup, and become increasingly authoritarian. It is easy to draw lines from the trend exemplified here to Baverez' theory of "democratatorship".

> At the moment Turkey is not a democracy, I don't try to be pessimistic at all. I really like to see the positive parts and aspects, but at the moment this is not a democratic but an authoritarian country, at least. I am not sure if I would call him a dictator or not, but at least he is definitely an authoritarian. In an authoritarian regime, there cannot be freedom of expression, much. You know, at the moment I cannot say everything I want to say in public (…) So, there is not freedom of expression at the moment. There are protests of resistance, but what happens to them too. I mean nearly all opposition lose their job and half of them are already in jail (Informant A).

One of the Scandinavian participants of the group interview session had a more balanced view of the contemporary relationship between free speech and democracy in Turkey:

> One could argue that there is enough room for free speech to assume, for yourself, that there is free speech, so room to create public revolt. But also, enough control to keep the atmosphere of fear. So, I believe that there is a different kind of equation than in Europe, it is a unique case. Not necessarily unique to Turkey, but different than what Europeans have in mind as free speech (Group interview quote).

This is an interesting statement in connection to Bhagwat's theory of Freedom of speech without democracy, arguing that authoritarian leaders may have interest in permitting freedom of expression to a certain extent in order to maintain or gain legitimacy.

5.2.2 The election process

Meiklejohn is very concerned with the importance of the election process in every democracy, with special emphasis on the necessity of well-informed voters as basis of a fair result (see model 3 and 4). Informant A here illustrate how democratic actions are deprived and that there is no room for oppositional politics in Turkey:

> I think most of the democratic actions cannot be performed anymore. From you know, creating associations to protesting and also even campaigning. You cannot do campaigning anymore. And this way they [the opposition] lose the referendum. You know, Turkey is a big country and so many people,

so many clicks so it is not really easy to suppress. But in terms of a democratic process I don't see for instance next election will be easy for opposition. Because, all the state establishments are working for Erdogan now. Totally. And in the end, the higher election council is also appointed by him. It is very hard to challenge that (Informant A).

According to Informant A, the whole state-system is structured around loyalty to the sitting government, which increases their chances of winning drastically and decreases the chances of the opposition inversely proportional. In the group interview session one of the participants spoke about the need of a figure of power, or father figure, in Turkish society. This is interesting in light of the analysis of the cultural understanding of speech. Comparable to the interpretation that discussion and debate has never been regarded highly in the society, people are seeking to concentrate power, to gather authority in one strong person. At the time being, President Erdogan is the one who embodies this power, who represent "the father of Turkey".

The lack of debate between politicians… The society is structured just the same way as a family. Turkish society needs a father-figure that can hit the ground, or we will fight until someone beats the other. And unfortunately, this is what we head for in the absence of debate (Group interview quote).

With the election in November 2015 AKP won with close to 49,5 % of the votes against 40,9 % in June the same year (Akarca, 2015). In June, AKP lost the parliamentary majority for the first time and had obligations to create a coalition, after months without result Erdogan announced a re-election and according to Informant D, the President stated a message without democratic emphasis on live TV:

As we have seen in 2015, the President said: "The people have given a wrong choice, so we will repeat the elections until they give the good decision" (Informant D).

This quote is descriptive for a political discourse representing the opposite of democratic values, which potentially transfers authoritarian expectations, in line with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis presented in chapter 4.3.3, to the population.

5.2.3 Summary

This sub-chapter wished to illustrate and exemplify different ways in which the free speech restrictions and the controversy in the aftermath of the attempted coup in 2016 infected the democratic conditions in Turkey and led to, what here are defined as, a reversal of the

democracy. Viewing the informants' different perspectives of the current presence of democracy, seen in light of the democratic culture or tradition in Turkey and through the examination of the election process as an important democratic action, a picture of the democratic situation in the country was being formed. This development in total led to a more authoritarian climate in Turkey, which will be further discussed in chapter 5.3.

5.3   Authoritarianism

During the field research, the evidence of poor democratic conditions and more authoritarian tendencies forced me to shift focus. This chapter will give an overview of how the informants in this study exemplified authoritarian actions by state officials, and the sum of these stories made me devote this subchapter to authoritarianism in addition to what is already said about authoritarian trends in Turkey under the chapter about democracy. The second section explains how the declaration and extension of the state of emergency enabled the situation to become more authoritarian. Last comes a short notice of the challenges related to the judicial power in Turkey, especially during the state of emergency.

5.3.1   Examples of authoritarian actions

The day after the attempted coup the President held a speech applauding democratic values and the protection of these. He explicitly defended the declaration of the state of emergency on democratic grounds:

> The purpose of the declaration of the state of emergency is in fact to be able to take the most efficient steps in order to remove this threat as soon as possible, which is a threat to democracy, to the rule of law and to the rights and freedoms of our citizens in our country. This practice is absolutely not against democracy, the rule of law and freedoms, quite on the contrary. It has the purpose of strengthening and protecting these (President Erdogan 20th of July 2016).

Of course, there is no doubt that any attempted coup by military force is an attack to the democracy. No one will dispute that. Nevertheless, the circumstances in the case of this attempted coup caused doubt in both the Turkish population and the international society about both the accused coup plotters and the intention of the coup. Erdogan's explanations to the declaring of state of emergency were criticized during the group interview sessions. My impression was that that the participants believed authoritarian goals to be the real underlying

motivation and that this declaration only was a mean to the bigger end of more authoritarian latitude. This was considered the starting point of the increase of authoritarianism.

> Erdogan called the coup attempt "a gift from God" because it clearly was the excuse he needed to wipe away everything in his way (Group interview quote).

This establishes the understanding that the state of emergency was democratically justified at the same time as it facilitated a potential authoritarian development in Turkish society. Before we go deeper into the consequences of the state of emergency, I would like to present some examples of authoritarian actions in the aftermath of the attempted coup, as explained to me by the informants.

As we saw in chapter 2.2.4 the government very quickly accused the Hizmet foundation or Gülen movement of being responsible for the attempted coup. Even though there is yet no proof of who was really behind it, the sanctions of the accused started already the next day. According to Informant A, the Gülinists was just the first group who felt these sanctions. In the months that followed this infected all the different minority groups or critical voices in Turkey as well.

> The thing is, they [the government] started with them [the gülinists], but now it is not like that. That's the problem, even the treatment to Gülenists might be objectionable, I think there is some real torture there too. But apart from that they… After the first month they moved to the Kurdish people, and they moved on to the leftist. You know, the usual story. And then all the other critical voices. It is not only Gülenists any longer (Informant A).

Informant C underline this point by expressing that the rights of the minorities are set under pressure in the country. An interesting opinion in this statement is the idea that the regime "sincerely" believe that they are able to represent the absolute truth for everyone, also those in political and/or religious opposition.

> It is the minority that matters, not the majority. But unfortunately, since Gezi, Erdogan and the party have been more and more intolerant of anything that doesn't come in their own terms. So, all the problems that's been going on, has to do with that.
> - *Why are they intolerant to anything that is against them?*
> It is an interesting question (…) Unfortunately, probably sincerely, they believe that they have that capacity to express, to represent the absolute truth for everybody. And try to, I mean, these are steps towards a more authoritarian regime (Informant C).

As Informant C concludes here, these characteristics do lead the system in a more authoritarian direction. One of the informants in the group interview session "named the elephant in the room" when she mentioned the hashtag *#reichstagfire* flourishing in social media after the attempted coup 16th of July 2016 and Erdogan's speech to the people.

> Regarding social media, after his speech, [The speech on 16th of July when the President called the coup attempt "a gift from God"] a lot of people shared the Wikipedia article after of the Reicshtag fire, the fire of the government building in Berlin, which was brought to fire, and Hitler used it as an excuse access more power. So, it is like a protest or something. People didn't want to say anything, but there were conspiracy theories [about who was responsible of the attempted coup] (Group interview quote).

The original German "Reichstag fire" was blamed upon a Dutch anarchist in Berlin in 1933 (The Reichstag fire of 1933, 2015). As it was proven difficult to be certain about who was behind the attempted coup in combination with understanding the potential winning the sitting government could gain from the situation, the speculations of the sitting governments influence in the attempted coup reached the surface in social media through a link to the 2nd world war. This never turned out to be more than speculations, though, and there is still no clarity in who was responsible. According to the informants of this research, the most likely explanation is that there were several fragments of opposition in cooperation and that the President probably was aware of the coup attempt coming up. To this thesis it is not of big importance who really orchestrated the coup itself, what is of interest, though, is the consequences that followed. It seems reasonable to conclude that the state of emergency was somehow convenient to the sitting government, and the fact that this emergency state is still under extension substantiates this assertion.

The two most common accusations of both the journalists and academicians in Turkey is defame of the president, or the state, or propaganda of terrorism organizations. Here is a statement from the group interview session that brought up the potential ripple effects of this trend.

> In a primal way, we do see what we want to [are told to] see. It is basic, it depends on your perception. It can honestly make you believe that a human rights activist is really a terrorist (Group interview quote).

Here, she refers to different occasions of human rights activists being arrested on charges of being associated with terror organizations. For example the leader of the Amnesty International in Turkey, Tater Kilic, is one of those who have been imprisoned for months and was released

in January this year (T. A. Andreassen, 2018a). The interesting point here is the impact the conventional media has on the Turkish population's perception of what is going on in their surroundings. In other words, this kind of rhetoric can generate control of people's opinions – if what you consider a reliable source keep feeding you information, this information will affect your perception regardless of the correctness in its content.

There seem to have been a tradition of authoritarianism in Turkey and informant D illustrated this "need" of an authoritarian leadership specifically with a *father-figure,* in a similar way as described under chapter 5.2.2 in the group session:

> It has always been one authoritarian figure after the other. And whenever there were weaker governments this was followed by a much bigger authoritarian figure. And in that sense, Turkish state has never really tolerated free speech, so that the authority remains solid (…) There need to be a strong father-figure in society, that is going to say "yes" or "no" to every demand of society, and that would be the final answer. So, a very patriarchal understanding of the state and society. So, this has been the new role of state after 1980. Prior to that there were different kinds of structures, but they did not really fall far from that idea (Informant D).

There seem to be a connection between the urge for strong leadership from fragments of the people and the government's struggle to suppress the oppositional parts of the population to establish this "position of power". The declaration of the state of emergency made new means available and reinforced the process of this establishment.

5.3.2   State of emergency

> There is no real state of emergency in Turkey. They just fake it. We are not safe. This emergency is "for them", for the AKP, not the community of Turkey. Because, we are arrested, fired and so and so (Informant E).

This statement by Informant E tells quite a different story than the justification speech the President held for the declaration of state of emergency. There is a clear dissonance between the government officials and the informants in this study when it comes to the understanding of the ongoing emergency state in Turkey. When necessary and implemented with strong ethical standards, the state of emergency can protect a democratic state from an ongoing threat. On the other hand, in cases of misuse, this mechanism deprives people from their civil and political rights. Agamben warn about the potential misuse of state of emergency because it sets the government in a position of the greatest power, and this leave the people in a vulnerable

position. More specifically and proper to this case, he expresses concern that one certain form of knowledge can be presented by the power holders as fortunate and the truth, whereas other opinions lose their arena of expression. According to Agamben, this tactical knowledge production can lead a democracy in an authoritarian direction, especially in cases when an emergency state is being extended over time. When talking to Informant C about this topic, she was clear that the motivation of the ongoing emergency state in Turkey is to increase the government's power:

- *Would you say that the state of emergency is in misused in Turkey?*
    Sure. Definitely.
- *What is the motivation of that misuse, you believe?*
    Try to get rid of other authorities, in order to gain legitimacy, in order to do whatever seems to be the thing to do. So, it is a very. I mean, state of emergency is a very easy tool. On the other hand, by the way. Legally speaking, even in times of state of emergency, you can't just put a side all the legal rules etc. I mean, some. But here we see the context having been built at so much, so it just affects the whole thing. Nowadays, it is almost a country that is been run by a very arbitrary decrease (Informant C).

Based on the given information there is an opportunity to suggest that the contemporary Turkish situation represents a good example of Agamben's theory. As the limitations of the state of emergency are not withheld by the Turkish government at the time being (European Commission, 2016), and as specified by Informant C, for example through the arbitrary application of law, it is reason to conclude that the declared state of emergency are misused, at least to some extent, in Turkey.

5.3.3   The juridical power

The judiciary system in Turkey was by the informants in this study presented as unfair and arbitrary. Informant B consider the judiciary one of several failed state institutions and the result of this is that people are being deprived from proper defense in court.

So, there is a bypass mechanism imposed to the juridical system, police services and all the state institutions. And it has led the system to very arbitrary and disproportional measures. Journalists are arrested by dozens, those who are arrested just after the state of emergency, remain behind bars. And proper remedies, as the juridical system is not there anymore. You cannot explain your right anymore. So, proper remedies disappear in Turkish juridical system, unfortunately (Informant B).

Informant D agree with informant B that the Turkish court of justice are dysfunctional in its practice.

> The laws are unjust. The application is unjust. But it is not targeting one group only. It is unjust for everyone, and everyone is a victim. Once this gets fixed. Once the judiciary is fixed, then the rest would follow. Well, I believe judiciary is only one step (Informant D).

There seems to be a lack of a proper judiciary system, especially in the handling of the cases where journalists and academicians are accused of charges of terrorism or defamation of the state.

5.3.4   Summary

This subchapter aimed to illustrate in what ways different authoritarian actions conducted by governmental officials have diminished the democratic conditions in Turkey in the aftermath of the attempted coup. The declaration of state of emergency polarized the Turkish society utterly and tightened the grip of the information flow on political matters. The state of emergency has substantiated the process restricting the human right of freedom of speech and expression and facilitated failing in the application of the rule of law.

5.4   The religious discourse in Turkish politics

The religious discourse is the fourth and last component of this analysis of the ongoing situation in Turkey. Despite the fact that AKP are elected on secular and democratic grounds, religion seems to become increasingly visible in the political picture. According to the informants in this study, the suppressing of free speech in combination with the increasing application of religious attributes in society are partly resulting in a backfiring effect.

> He [President Erdogan] is trying to Islamize the state. Heavily. But it is backfiring. Heavily. You should treat the society like you treat a teenager. If you push a teenager to do certain things, he or she does the exact opposite. The society is no different. Especially in a society with such a young population as Turkey. (Informant D).

To what degree and in which ways do *religious* dimensions influence the political discourse, including justifying the restriction of free speech?

5.4.1 Secularism vs. Islamism in Turkey

Both secularism and Islamism play important roles in the political picture in Turkey. This was clearly confirmed throughout my field study. As argued in the chapter about analytical framework, religion was never de-established, only differently established in Turkey. Hurd define the relationship between religion and politics as a result of social and historical constructions over time, and not as a fixed connection (Hurd, 2008, p. 66). Informant C here tends to agree that the two components are inseparable.

> (…) But religion is always in context, you can't – politics and religion, as far as I see cannot be segregated, in a sense. And whenever you say it should be, that's a wish. A wishful thinking, but it is not real (Informant C).

In other words, secularism has never been a complete separation between religion and state in Turkey, it has been an attempt to sort the two apart. Islamism was not separated from the Turkish state in the sense that religion became a private matter, which is supported by this group interview quote:

> Religion in Turkey, it is not something individual. It is something collective (Group interview quote).

Informant A pose a contextual argument of Islamism versus secularism in the case of AKP:

> AKP, Erdogan and all this leadership never rejected the Islamist orientation. But, you know, they were moderate Islamists, compared to the Muslim brotherhood or other previous parties. But they always believed Islam to be a part of their identity, and at some point, they were justifying "we are democratic Muslims", but gradually the Islamism became more explicit (…) I mean, there is not a homogenous Islamic discourse, since now the AKP leadership prevents other Islamic groups. So, we might see more extreme groups. More anti-secularist also flourishing and occupying some positions (…) It is never directly said that "we do this because it is according to Islam". They always find a secular reasoning (…) They always use some secular state reasoning. This is important. So, on paper you will see that most of the stuff is done according to secular norms, but in social practice you see "why this is done, and not this done?" I mean, you see that most of the policies are done according to Sunni-Islamic beliefs.
> - *Fascinating…religiosity in politics, with a frame of secularism.*
>   You know they [the government] are using the western, academic terminology to support their anti-western or poor Islamic discourse (Informant A).

Informant A is here expressing how AKP are in a flipping position between Islamism and secular democracy. This is a favorable situation for two reasons. Firstly, in the context of Turkey, when you see AKP relative to other extreme religious groups, they appear fairly secular. Secondly, in many cases they perform actions of religious motivation with secular legitimation. This is interesting understood in context with Kavli's analysis of AKP's reason of success, namely, their position between Islamism and secularism that reflects the political/religious ambiguity Turkish society.

Informant D established a link between religiosity in politics and authoritarianism.

> I think in some way the problems with AKP regarding religion is the tendency of authoritarianism. And the authoritarian side of AKP is much bigger a threat than the religious side. They use religion for authoritarian purposes, but this doesn't mean they wouldn't have used anything else either (…) So, a democratic, religious person would say: "I do not want to be forced to do anything, and I am not going to do anything to you". It is possible to be religious and democratic at the same time. Of course, being authoritarian prevents that (Informant D).

As presented in the analytical framework, Fox and Sandler and Henriksen argue that religion is a tool that can be, and is being, used by policymakers (J. Fox & Sandler, 2004/Henriksen, 2016). This is relevant of this case in Turkey, because Informant D argue that religion is a tool of authoritarian legitimation to AKP. On the other hand, he argues that this "tool" of legitimation could just as well have been something else, providing the same result for sake of their purposes. This is implying that it is not a religious conviction that constitute the basis for choosing Islam as the prominent means in this context. It is purely used for legitimating causes. According to his reasoning, bringing religious convictions into the political debate is not impossible, still functioning as a secular society, but that authoritarianism is the aspect of this case that destroys this potential combination and creates an issue of democratic legitimacy.

5.4.2 Religion as legitimizing force

Henriksen establishes that religion today needs to be understood more pragmatically than doctrinal. One of the three pragmatic dimensions he argues that religion provides is as source of legitimation (Henriksen, 2016, p. 38). When we study the visible signs of religion and its effect on human behavior, religious convictions that lead to actions become a topic of interest. Here, the distinction from Fox and Sandler, separating visible religiosity as result of actual convictions and the use of religion to gain legitimacy, become important (J. Fox & Sandler,

2004). This is interesting in the context of Informant B's answer to the question about religious legitimacy in Turkish politics:

> I believe that in this society [the Turkish society], the religious discourse is a very magic rhetoric, able to get people far away from their legitimate fundamental rights. When you have such a divine religious reference, covering the truth, saying the truth… Talking about your own human being is evaluated as a shame. What is prevailing is the sacrifice that you, a single citizen, and maybe you as a journalist, what you can do in the name of this divinity. That's why, and of course, if you misuse this religious rhetoric at this level you create this society, created from so various religious and cultural backgrounds. Very divided, a very politically divided society. Your religious rhetoric has hidden the truth and of course this religious rhetoric are all the time very difficult to target, to criticize, by people who are talking about the right of people. It is unreachable. It is unreachable (Informant B).

Informant B draws a distinction between "the profound" and "the holy" in Turkish society and media picture, whereas the former become insignificant in comparison to the latter. A large part of the Turkish population shares the same religious convictions. When politics are justified based on these common convictions, the receivers can blindly accept a political message as a religious truth. The receivers can, without further critical assessment, accept the message. Informant B never spells out "legitimation" literally in the context of religion, but he is talking about how the application of this "magic dimension" to the discourse make the arguments impossible to grasp and hence, dispute.

5.4.3 Islam as personal or official religion

During the group interview session, it was stated that religion is something collective, and not private in Turkey. This matches with Hurd's conclusion that religion was never made a private matter in Turkey. Informant C explained the role of the Diyanet in Turkey:

> In 1924, the political elite of the time established an institution called "The presidency of religious affairs" [Turkish: Diyanet]. Well, a you know in Islam there is no "clergy" in the sense of Christianity or in the sense of Roman Catholic Church. So, this institution is said to be, and is pronounced to be managing the services in term of Islam to sustain the mosques, to publish and translate Qurans ect. But, in my opinion, it has much more… There is a paradox there. Yes, that [the Diyanet] happens to manage religion, but also it sort of manages the weight of the religiosity in the society. How? Because it just... For example, the institutions answer the question of the public. So, when there is an answer there is a production of knowledge. So, that institution happens to issue the official Islamic view of the state at the time. But it is a very interesting institution (…) It has very much to do in parallel with the changes

of politics in the state, but it has always been used in one way or the other. I especially use the word *use*. It is a very state-power to use Diyanet (Informant C).

Informant C classifies Diyanet as a state-power that manages the weight of the religiosity in the society and doesn't make the Dyianet sound like a particularly secular institution. Informant E gave an example of how the religious identity of a person affects different possibilities in Turkish society:

- *On your identity card, does it say that you are a Muslim?*

  It says Muslim, yes. But I am not.

- *Why?*

  It is a formality; it is just like that. It is not my choice.

- *But can you call them and say, "I am atheist, can you change my card?"*

  I might be arrested, maybe.

- *Seriously?*

  Yes. Because, I am also a journalist. I have to be an "Islamic person", or I might get arrested (Informant E).

According to Informant E one will not be allowed to work as a journalist in Turkey unless you identify yourself as a Muslim. This is another example of how religion, in practice, control arenas of society that should function unaffected of religious institutions and beliefs. When being a Muslim is a requirement of qualification for acting as a journalist, the people that constitute the media consist of a homogenous group. A potential consequence of this screening is a discourse characterized by few contributions critical to religion. This kind of control with people's belief demands loyalty to the state and its religion, which may create a "false religious culture", not built on a true conviction, but a pressure on the religious identification.

According to a statement in the group interview session one of the Turkish government officials declared religion to be the medium that keeps the community together.

> Who said the other day, "The directorate of the religious affairs is the cement of this country holding it together. Otherwise, every street would declare their autonomy." It was the prime minister or the president. It was one of them, but I can't remember who. Anyway, one of those two officials said that the directorate of religious affair is the entity that holds the society together (Group interview quote).

This type of statements will be less critically assessed in the media picture, when religious identity is a premise of exercising journalism.

5.4.4 Imam hatip

As presented in chapter 2.2.3, there has been a massive increase in the official commitment to invest in Imam hatip, state-run religious schools, over the last few years. Informant E explicitly mentioned this when asked about religion in Turkish politics.

> *In what ways is religiosity visible in Turkish politics?*
> Firstly, I can say that the government officials are mostly men. The other very important issue is our system of education. Most of our schools are turned into 'imam hatip' (religious school, Islamic school) by the government (Informant E).

This illustrates that the Turkish education system is organized based on religion, to a much larger extent that former school structures have been. This again might affect the position of religion in the society as a whole, seen in a longer perspective. The clarity on this priority, as presented in sub-chapter 2.2.3, by the President illustrate that he is taking a stance in this case and communicates his intention to create a "pious generation" (Butler, 2018). According to Informant D, another interesting, recent change in the school system is the denial of the evolution theory. He understands this deprivation of the evolution in connection to strengthening the position of religion in school.

> It is never directly said that we do this because it is according to Islam, but they always find a secular reasoning. Have you heard that evolution is not and longer taught in school? And the reasoning is that it is a theory, not a proven fact. (…) So, on paper you will see that most of the stuff is done according to secular norms, but in social practice (…) you see that most of the policies are done according to Sunni-Islamic beliefs (Informant D).

These two statements provide reason to suggest that the government allows a religious preference to affect the school system. In the chapter of discussion, I will argue that this tendency might affect the deep cultural patterns in Turkey towards a more religious direction. But this potential change might also backfire, and move in the opposite direction, as pointed out by informant D.

5.4.5 Summary

Religion as a societal institution and phenomenon is complex in the case of Turkey. The government has been elected on democratic and secular grounds but has turned increasingly religious in its political appearance over the last few years. The Turkish people has a long

religious tradition, and even though the position of Islam, both as faith and in practice, are still strong among large fragments of the population, the Islamic measures taken by the government officials are not considered welcome by everyone. As stated by Kavli, secularism as ideology is distinct from secularism as a social process (Kavli, 2009 pp.102-106). One could argue that optimally these two are in harmony in society, but it seems these separate processes are developing neither in the same direction nor at the same speed in Turkey at the moment.

5.5   Summary

Based on the findings in the coded data material and understood in light of the chosen theoretical framework, this analysis was divided into four sub-chapters, which deviates from the original taxonomy of the three: free speech, democracy and religion. The extent, approach and impact of the limitation of freedom of speech and expression in Turkey was analyzed and exemplified. In addition, "the different levels of speech" and its potential cultural consequences were presented in the first part. The second and third sub-chapters presented material shedding light on the democratic conditions and the authoritarian measures recently taken in Turkey. The fourth, and final, sub-part of this chapter examined the perspective of religion in the political discourse and aimed at considering the position of religion as a legitimizing force through rhetorical designs and its practical consequences in the leading political discourse. The fourth part of this analysis is considered the most innovative and progressive in this thesis and will constitute the base in the following discussion.
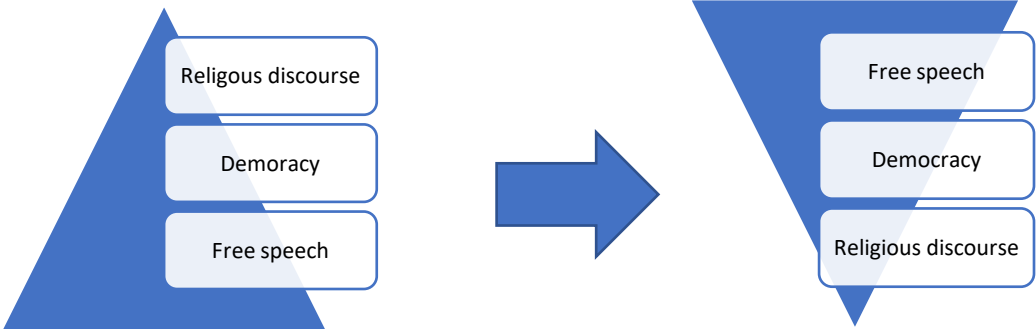
6. Discussion

The main characteristics of the data material are here presented argumentatively through comparison of the findings presented in the analysis and in light of the theoretical framework. In this chapter, I focus on certain points of attention based on whether the finding is suitable of further research and compatible in the context of theory. I have scrutinized the data material to the best of my ability, and continuously strived to protect the integrity of the informant information.

The structure used to discuss the findings in this thesis will be organized as a construction converse to my narrative and argumentative progression: from the dimension of religiosity, via the democracy and then back to freedom of speech. Further, I want to discuss: Do the religious components in this particular political discourse have an essential function in this case, and if it does, how? The answer to this question is characterized by numerous nuances that will be further examined in the chapter of discussion. As the two pyramids below aim to illustrate, religion is still the dimension of narrow focus while democracy and freedom of speech is considered the wider approach to interpret the data material of this research.

The following discussion is structured around four chapters:

- "The embodiment of power", which discusses authoritarianism in light of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis.
- "The dual role of the President and the emergency of the state", aiming to establish "the double intention" of the Turkish government both in the East and the West and the role of the state of emergency.
- "Freedom of speech as premise of organic solidarity", examining the potential reverse of the complex society when deprived from freedom of speech over time.
- "Religion as legitimizing force", investigating the component of religion through this whole process.

Model 5: For analytical purposes the ingress of the discussion is converse to my original positioning of the three components throughout the discussion.

6.1   The embodiment of power

In the chapter of analysis, I presented different authoritarian trends and *the need of a father figure* in Turkish society. I further want to discuss a potential *embodiment of power* in President Erdogan in light of a presentation of the Turkish political situation held by Einar Wigen at the Literature house in Oslo, and examine: How can the religious component be understood in the context of this *needed* authoritarian leadership? And if the authoritarianism we see in Turkey today partly is a result of a desire by the people of one strong power, are democracy and freedom of speech becoming unnecessary?

As mentioned in chapter 4.3.3, Wigen claims that Atatürk established a strong signature-cult, personalizing the state-power in Turkey, and that this tradition from the early 20th century still marks the Turkish political climate (Wigen, 2017). Relevant in this case is the idea that the Turkish society needs "one strong man" to build the nation and the fact that this seems be the foundation that President Erdogan has gained his popularity from. The central element of faith in a *reformer* of "The Turkish-Islamic synthesis" can be considered as both the political/cultural and religious reason that enabled the autocratic leadership to be democratically elected in the first place. If Erdogan is considered the "reformer" of our time, and people see him as sent from God, or at least with a blessing from God, to restore the righteous order in the Turkish society, it is reasonable to understand his political position with a partly religious mandate. Wigen argues that Erdogan exemplifies a leader who has *embodied the nation* and gives the impression of *really understanding what is best for Turkey*, like Atatürk did before him. Currently, Turkey is ruled by a political party with an Islamic appearance under President Erdogan. And one thing seems more important to him than Islam, namely, to use the Turkish expectation of a reformer to build a personal autocracy (Wigen, 2017).

This understanding of the power position of Erdogan is very similar with Baverez definition of *democratatorship* in chapter 4.4.2. There is a striking similarity between *a regime governed by a strong man,* in accordance with the theory of *democratatorship* (Gravdal, 2018)*, and the need of and belief in a *reformer,* in agreement with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis (Wigen, 2017). The difference between the two is the religious aspect. The dimension in the Turkish-Islamic synthesis that the state power is sent with a blessing from God, seems to be contextual to the case of Turkey. Furthermore, in the case of democratatorship, the fact that it *appears to be a democracy, but the elections are manipulated, and the government acts aggressively towards the outside world* (Gravdal, 2018), characterizes the situation in Turkey, based on the analysis of this thesis.

The description of the Turkish population in need of a reformer made by Wigen, illustrates both freedom of speech and religion in Turkey in an interesting manner to the context of this thesis. Firstly, the public opinion that you either give consent to the official view of the state or you stay silent, seems to have played an important role in Turkey through generations. And it supports the claim made by my informants that regardless of who has rule the country, there has never been a culture of questioning or criticism regarding politics in Turkey. This creates foundation for authoritarian leadership, simply because people are seeking to concentrate power and gather authority in one strong person, as illustrated in the analysis. Secondly, the idea that the Turkish-Islamic synthesis basically creates an expectation of authoritarianism and facilitates the autocracy Erdogan has been establishing, justifies different means in this process of authorization that would not necessarily be accepted under normal democratic conditions. A population with a religious and cultural heritage of this kind, will be more willing to ignore suspicious political moves and democratically elect the party representing what have traditionally been considered "the right one". Based on Informant C's statement, the idea that the regime "sincerely" believes that they are able to represent the absolute truth for everyone, even those in political and/or religious opposition, fits into this understanding (see chapter 5.3.1). This is interesting with regard to populism, here understood as the will of the people perceived as being directly represented in or through one leader (Müller, 2016). There seems to be a mutual public understanding that "the people" sincerely want what is best for the country, hence for the President. This means that the President sincerely takes actions that benefit everyone, including those of opposing political and religious viewpoints.

If the religious, and/or cultural factors play essential roles in the exercise of democracy, are there reason to believe that the Islamic component of this tradition makes Turkey less available to democratic governance? It has been presented hypotheses similar to this. And based on the assumption that prophet Muhammed as a divinely guided political leader established a standard of autocratic governance (Kavli, 2009, p. 110).

Wilhelm Kavli (Kavli, 2009), argues that there are at least two reasons that refute the hypothesis that the cause of the weak position of liberal democracies in Islamic states is a monolithic Islamic political culture. Firstly, he argues, that a variety of political consequences can be derived from any religion, depending on the preferences of the one who has the power to rule. According to Kavli, you can just as well turn the argument around and argue that the weakly developed liberal and political culture enables a political authoritarian interpretation of Islam. Secondly, Muslim communities are not the only ones where it has been proven difficult

to establish liberal democracies. According to him, only a limited share of the world's Christian communities has succeeded in this establishment. These two arguments make him conclude that there are other qualities than religion which makes democracy the favored form of government in Western societies (Kavli, 2009, p. 110).

These two arguments from Kavli, conclude that there are other qualities than religion that facilitates the democratic conditions of Western societies, and thereby, they also remove the responsibility of authoritarian trends from religion in Islamic political contexts. These arguments are strong, but I don't see them as absolute as he does. I agree that the hypothesis of absolute causality between Islam, or any religious conviction, and autocracy as form of government is a too categorical interpretation of the relationship between the two. My understanding is that there is a much more nuanced picture. The more weight religion has in society, the more likely is it that religious factors play a role in the political structures. I believe there to be several reasons why some states develop democratically while others don't, and religion is just one of them. For example, to argue that the Norwegian democracy is a result of what is generally considered to be "Christian values", would be to undermine other important contributions to the political development of the country. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that it is indeed possible to trace Christian values both in the Norwegian constitution and the political tradition. In a similar way it is difficult to conclude that Islam has nothing to do with the form of government in Turkey. In my opinion, religious traditions are always contributing to the political arena of a country to some extent, be it beneficial or not. My conclusion here is that Islam might be a contributing factor in the establishing and maintenance of autocratic political actions in Turkey. It must however be seen in combination with other factors, like culture, political traditions and persons with special political skills etc., as being crucial for the result.

If we consider religion as one of the determining relevant factors to type of government in general, it will be interesting look at Khaled Abou El Fadl's argument of Islam in relation to democracy as a specific perspective (El Fadl, 2005). He argues that it is possible to defend a democratic system, within the frames of both Islamic law and tradition, but that the Islamic political culture need a revolution; a process in which Muslims, both as individuals and as a group, can start understanding democracy as more than a Western concept, and rather begin to understand democracy as a true fulfillment of Islamic tradition and law (El Fadl, 2005, p. 80-86).

This "unwillingness toward democracy" and the perception of the democracy itself as a concept *by* and *for* the West, seems to be a common understanding among several Eastern

countries with Islamic-religious traditions. In comparison, Turkey has taken a positive position to the Western model of democracy, but is still not welcomed into the EU even after years of reforms. After a final refusal of the EU application in 2017, the President stated that Turkey doesn't need the West, and they will "teach Europe a lesson". This includes changing the constitution and transferring the executive power from the parliament to the presidency (Johansen, 2017). Erdogan is seemingly trying to create a political distance between Turkey and the West by discrediting Europe and their critical proclamations. At the same time, he moves Turkey in an authoritarian direction as a strong leader, "father of the country", and last but not least, with a blessing from God.

The material presented in this thesis clearly illustrates a gap between the peoples' understanding of the democratic conditions of the country: Erdogan's statements about the value of democracy in Turkey is in sharp contrast to the data material collected in this thesis and the public opinion of the West. It is a paradox to me how the intellectual resources in Turkey are those who are affected the most by this situation. Professors, lawyers, journalists and other well-educated and socially committed people, would under normal circumstances have been the ones who stood on the barricades fighting for their rights. Instead they find themselves paralyzed by the ongoing situation labeled as criminals or terrorists by the man who is sent to lead the country. Informant B argued that the *use* of religion, as magic, in the political rhetoric enables the authorities "to get people far away from their legitimate fundamental rights" (see chapter 5.4.2).

It seems there might be two different groups in Turkey that currently share the experience of being paralyzed. One group is forced to silence, whereas the other group chooses, more or less consciously, to keep supporting the power embodied in the President of Turkey. In sum, there is no free speech in any end of these two extremes. As model 1 and 2 illustrated, Meiklejohn sees full information as mandatory to intelligent voting and argues that denying people access to information is equal to a denial of the right to vote. Hence, any prevention of free flow of information means serious damage to the democratic foundation (Schauer, 1983, p. 247). Based on the authoritarian trends established in this thesis, partly through religious legitimation, and seen in light of the theory of Meiklejohn, there is foundation to conclude that the ongoing free speech restrictions generate severe negative consequences for the Turkish democracy.

6.2 The dual role of the President and the state of emergency

President Erdogan needs national support within Turkey, but also depends on international relations, in particular the relation to the West. I will now discuss the declared state of emergency, how it is implemented in Turkey, and justified both among the Turkish people and internationally.

According to Devon, the reason why the President called for snap elections in April 2018, was the tense situation both inside the Turkey and in the country's international relations. This resulted in a hurried election to increase the chances of Erdogan being re-elected. Despite this uncommon political move, Erdogan seems clearly favored to win this upcoming election because of his internal popularity in Turkey. Davon makes an interesting distinction in Erdogan's dual purpose of both rigging the election to his advantage in Turkey and at the same time satisfying the democratic West, who watches the political development in Turkey closely (Urix, 2018).

> He [President Erdogan] has to manipulate the game in his favor, like through his positioning in the media landscape and advertising, while at the same time having to make this election process appear like a fair, a democratic election campaign in Europe's eyes." – But is it a fair election? "Ehh, no. (…) It is rigged in his [Erdogan's] favor through control over the media and arrests of those representing the opposition. But at the same time it is possible to make reports in Turkey, like Sidel Wold does for NRK, so there is still hope (Urix, 2018) [6].

In the following discussion, there is a distinction between two groups: Firstly "the outside", which refers to the people assessing the situation from outside Turkey *and* people inside Turkey who have access to critical journalism, both forced to silence in Turkey. Secondly "the inner circle", which refers to those who has government founded news sources as the only option available in the partly information isolated Turkey, and who are mostly supportive of the regime. Erdogan, as President of the country, needs to be the ambassador of both sides in this distinction, and this places him in a *dual position.*

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[6] "Han [President Erdogan] må på sett og vis rigge spillet i sin favør, blant annet gjennom hvordan han plasserer seg i medielandskapet og reklame, samtidig så man han få dette til å se ut som en rettferdig, demokratisk valgkamp i Europas øyne". – Men er det det? "Ehh, nei. (...) det er rigget i hans [Erdogans] favør med kontroll over mediene og arrestasjoner av opposisjonelle. Men samtidig så er det mulig å lage reportasjer i Tyrkia, slik Sidsel Wold gjør for NRK, så det er fortsatt håp».

If we consider the embodiment of power in Erdogan from the previous sub-chapter a premise, this positioning is clearly favoring him to win the election. According to my informants, he is increasingly losing the grip of the group defined as the inner circle and has already lost all control over the people outside of his circle, even though he is still restricting their spaces of expression utterly.

The ongoing state of emergency has received severe criticism, especially from Europe (European Commission, 2016). It was a clear consensus among the informants in this research that the declaration of state of emergency in Turkey in the aftermath of the attempted coup is a clear case of misuse of this international legislation. When the protection of the state becomes superior to the human protection within the state, then it must be characterized as misuse. In the case of Turkey, it is my opinion that the declaration and constant expansion of the state of emergency ends up posing a serious threat to what it is intended to protect; the welfare of the Turkish people. When a zone of exemption is established and prolonged, as in the case with Turkey, it creates a sense of normality as time passes by. It sets the government in a position of the utmost power and leaves the people in a vulnerable position. The spreading of knowledge is essential in Agamben's theory of state of emergency. This is because when certain forms of knowledge are presented by the power holders as fortunate and true, whereas other opinions lose their arena of expression, the authoritarian leadership is facilitated in the population (Agamben, 2005, p. 40). Especially in cases where the state of emergency is extended over time, a reinforcing circle is established. Here the people themselves contribute to a regime of authoritarianism because of the disparity of the information available to the people.

Where there is a state of emergency and the interest of the state is superior to the wellbeing the people of the country, it is per definition a misuse of the emergency legislation. It sets the country in *another emergency*, judicially justified by international legislation and impossible to oppose. In accordance with the findings of this study, the motivation of the ongoing state of emergency in Turkey is to increase the government's power. The tactical, dual role of the President in both the East and West, in combination with the prolonged state of emergency in Turkey, results in another emergency of the Turkish state, justified by the attempted coup in 2016, but applied for different reasons.

6.3 Freedom of speech as premise of organic solidarity

The theory of Melkonian, based on Durkheim's classical work, bases its argument on the idea that free speech is a natural consequence in any society developing from mechanic to organic solidary. I want to discuss whether there are reasons to believe that this process is reversed when free speech is deprived in society over time. In chapter 4.2.2 I argued, based on Melkonian's theory, that free speech plays an important role in the *maintenance* of organic solidarity, which in it turn sustains this particular societal foundation (Melkonian 2012, p, 51).

This theoretical concept suggests that if the facilitation of free speech disappears in a society, the organic solidarity might reverse and result in a more mechanical solidarity if this status persist over time. Is it possible to say that this is the case in Turkey? I am aiming to establish whether this alleged dependence between free speech and organic solidarity goes both ways.

If it is the case that deprivation of freedom of speech over a longer period of time reverses the development of organic solidarity, it gives reason to believe that Turkey is moving towards a more mechanical, or primitive societal structure. According to Melkonian, freedom of speech and expression becomes excessive in mechanical solidarities, because all the individuals in society share the same knowledge and worldview; no one feels the need to question their existence or position. However, the distinction between organic and mechanic needs to be considered a gradual transition, and none of these extremes will be purely representative in any case. The two contrasts, organic versus mechanic, leave a spectrum of possibilities in between them, each characterized by more or less similarities with both of them.

I have looked for arguments supporting or contradicting this theory in the analyzed material from Turkey. As the democratic conditions are poor and the different arenas of freedom of expression are under increased control by the government, it seems that currently the Turkish society is developing in the direction of mechanical solidarity. According to Durkheim's theory, freedom of speech becomes unnecessary in these societies. The expression of opinions is simply unnecessary to the societal intervention because the people share a collective conscience, with common knowledge, values and beliefs (Melkonian, 2012, pp. 24-26). There is reason to believe that this is representative of the ongoing situation in Turkey, as the information flow is under increased restriction by the government. It seems that the government officials are motivated by increasingly taking control of the spreading of knowledge on both the political and the religious arenas of the country. The lack of facilitation of variety on all arenas within the Turkish population results in less diverse roles and a narrow

range of perspectives. As the population becomes more and more conformed in their worldviews because of the limited access to critical information, the experienced need of free speech decreases among the people. This, understood in light of the existing urge among parts of the Turkish people to establish a strong figure to be responsible for decision-making, emphasizes the process of which the demand of free speech diminishes in parts of the Turkish society. As a consequence of this, the need to question their existence or position, and free speech becomes excessive.

There might be a connection between Melkonian's theory of free speech in complex versus primitive societies and the theory of democratic reversal by Baser and Öztürk. Baser and Özturk claim to identify a democratic reversal in Turkey as a result of the ongoing state of emergency and all its consequences. Melkonian's theory applied to the case of Turkey suggests freedom of speech is essential to the sustainability of the advanced society. Hence, when freedom of speech is deprived to such a serious extent, as this and many other studies have shown, the democratic complexity that's been under development in the Turkish society since the establishment of the republic, are now being reversed to a more primitive state.
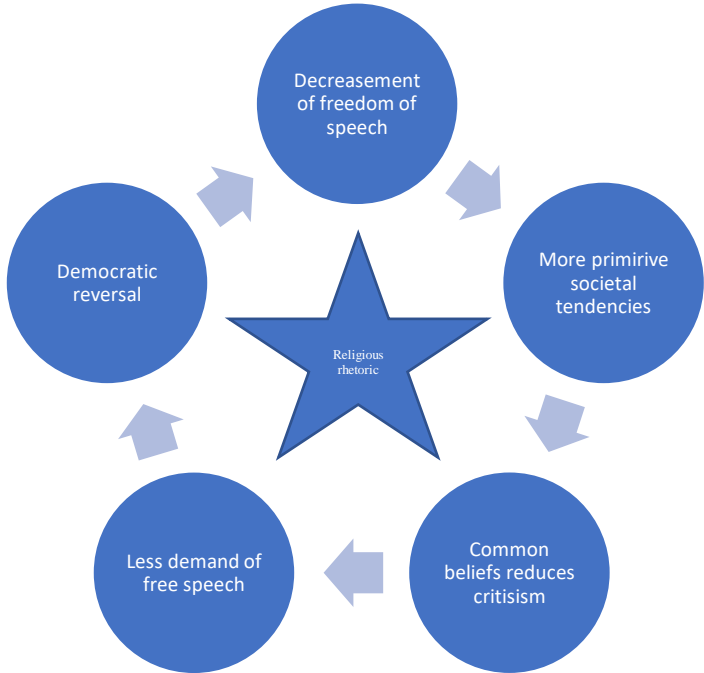
Model 6: The role of religious rhetoric in the negative political spiral

This is a circle of reinforcing features that are determining the political climate in a society, is inspired by the theories of Melkonian and Baser and Öztürk. Descriptive to the contemporary case of Turkey, these different features are justified by a political religious

rhetoric. The following sub-chapter will investigate the role of the religious rhetoric in this negative political spiral further.

6.4   Religion as a legitimizing force

As the material in the analysis illustrated, certain political messages are justified by its receivers on basis of common religious convictions. If politicians deliberately promote politics with a religious rhetoric, its religious receivers might accept the political meaning without further critical reflection of the potential political impact. People might blindly accept the political message as a religious, instead of a political truth. I will argue that the use of religious features in the political rhetoric, in combination with the facilitation of Islam as religious belief in the Turkish population, for example through the investment in Imam Hatip, lay the foundation for religious justification by political measures.

The statement below by Belma Erdogan, AKP's women's branch administration head, illustrates an example of how this sanctification that sometimes occurs in Turkish politics.

> Our president is a person so divine, he is a human being sent by Allah and a hope for this Ummah [Sunni-Islamic community]. Is there any way other than to pursue him, to serve him on his path? No, there isn't. (…) No power could ever displace Turkey from its position (Hürriyet, 2017).

There is reason to believe that this statement appeals to a large part of the Turkish population, identifying themselves as Islamic believers. She is speaking about the President in accordance with the understanding of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and the belief in a *reformer* of every age (Wigen, 2017). When the political attitude bases its appearance on a language characterized by a rhetoric of this kind, religion as legitimizing force becomes interpreted in the societal structures. Through referring to holy references in the validation of the elected President's position, his status is being justified on religious, instead of political, grounds. There are several examples of statements of this kind, and some will be exemplified here to illustrate the frequency of the use of religious references in Turkish politics. The extract below is taken from a speech by the municipal worker Fadime Cicek to the people of Konya [Turkish city politically dominated by AKP[7]] ahead of the April referendum in 2016.

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[7] Nearly 75% of electorate of Konya voted for the AKP in the November 2015 general election (K. Fox, 2016).

> Konya has developed only under the AKP regime. Before them it was in a very bad shape. They gave us jobs. If it weren't for them, we would be staying home as housewives. Now we can earn money. The state has given us everything, we are thankful for the state. (…) Tayyip [Erdogan] is the one and only. God save Tayyip (K. Fox, 2016).

It is natural to compare the rhetoric in this statement to the Turkish tradition of worshipping Atatürk as the land father presented in chapter 4.3.3: "If there had not been Atatürk, there would be no Turkey." – "If there had not been AKP, there would not be Konya." In the case of Konya, there is a reference of gratefulness to God and a statement personifying the power of the county in one man, Erdogan. Erdogan on his side, trusts God and the people:

> "We lean on God and the people (…) Do not heed what Europe says, care what Allah says" (Khalidi, 2016).

Here, he also establishes a distance to the West based on Europe's expressions of "grave concern" for the situation of minority groups in Turkey, especially during the state of emergency. This distinction presented by the President draws a stark contrast between Europe and Allah. Two interesting points here. Firstly, he communicates that the will of Allah equals the will of Turkey. Secondly, he connects attributes to Europe in conflict with the intentions of Islam, hence Turkey. This division between "us" and "them", "Turkey" and "Europe", reduces the credibility of Europe notably inside Turkey, and establishes an alliance between Turkey and Islam that generates religious legitimacy to the head of Turkey, Erdogan.

Another example of this "holy legitimation" is from of the election in 2017. AKP's posters displayed the message "EVET Inshallah" [Yes, if God wills"] (Hagvaag, 2017). This illustrates the position of religion in the political campaigning. It is also a concrete example of how religion is used to justify AKP's position as political party. It is interesting that AKP is elected on these grounds, seen in the context of the finding of this research. I have found that Turkey has a *passive democracy* in the sense that the people choose a leader, and based on that choice "he can do whatever he wants" (see chapter 5.2.1). This understanding of democracy in combination with the position of religion in the election process, demonstrates the conflicting idea of Turkey as a secular society. This substantiates the finding that religion is a common feature of the Turkish society, also intervening in the political picture.

This foundation of the partly religious political understanding, may indicate the aim of generally strengthening the position of religion in Turkish society. This can be seen in the context of the President's investment in Imam hatip with the outspoken intention to create "a

pious generation". There may be several reasons to facilitate Islam in the Turkish society. The main reason may be pure religious convictions, missioning the belief in life after death, and so on. But it may also be a way to position the Islamic belief in the lives of the individuals of the coming generations, which in its turn will make the *use* of Islamic belief, as documented in the analysis, possible for political causes.

A shift in the Turkish school system with severe increase of Islamic teaching, will have a great impact on the future generations' attitudes towards the Islamic belief. As the school system is considered the most central knowledge provider of any society, a change of this kind defines the population's future values and choices. When the school system teaches Islam purposefully and undermines otherwise recognized knowledge, like for example the theory of evolution, on grounds that it doesn't fit into the Islamic teaching, while at the same time implementing jihad [holy war] to the curriculum of elementary school (Andreassen, 2018b), quite serious transgressions are committed. It seems reasonable to predict that the massive facilitating of a "religious education system", like in current Turkey, might result in footprints in the societal structure, generating increased religious connections.

In addition to this recent commitment to Imam hatip, the number of mosques in Turkey has increased with 40 % over the last 30 years, from 60 000 to more than 85 000. This in turn produces many career opportunities in the mosques or Diyaniet (Andreassen, 2018b). It follows that Erdogan's commitment to religious education can be used to build up under his authoritarian position in the long term.

I further want to present two arguments against my last statement. Firstly, seen in the context of this ongoing facilitation of religion in Turkish society, it is quite a paradox that Fetullah Gülen and the Hizmet is the center of the persecutions and arrests in the aftermath of the attempted coup. There was never submitted any evidence of the Hizmet organizations actual involvement in the attempted coup (see chapter 2.2.4). The exiled Imam Fetullah Gülen is accused by the Turkish government for being the orchestrator of the coup and seems to be portrayed as a scapegoat. In addition the Hizmet organization is being removed from all it's positions in Turkish society. Combined with the government's outspoken intention of creating a "pious generation" in Turkey, it seems strange to remove one of the strongest Islamic foundations. One potential motivation for this might be that by "going after" Fetullah Gülen and The Hizmet, AKP seems fairly secular in comparison. They can then be understood as secular and be the ambassadors of "correct religiousness". This is supported by the argumentation in the analysis based on informant A's claim that AKP is perceived as moderately religious on the basis of this comparison (see chapter 5.4.1). By doing this they can

facilitate their *own basis of Islam*, convenient to the position of religion in their special management of secularity in politics. The risk in this case is that AKP might lose loyalty from a large proportion of the religious population when eliminating the basis of existence of the Hizmet. Nevertheless, the government seems committed to the decision to distance itself completely from the Hizmet foundation. Hence, they must be willing to lose those potential votes.

Secondly, another potential reaction to the goal of creating a "pious generation" in Turkey might be a backlash of criticism; increased religious knowledge may lead to an increase in self-esteem or critical thought, also transferable to the arena of politics. In fact, increased knowledge within the field of religion often generates a liberal development in itself. Because of the basic hermeneutic premise that forces fundamentalist viewpoints to include differing interpretations. This process facilitates liberation in itself. This of course depends on the "type" of religious education. Education of this kind could on the other hand result in a more fundamentalist understanding. In this alleged scenario there is a risk that the political leader, in this case President Erdogan, will no longer be accepted as the religious leader. These are theoretical possibilities of religious facilitation in school, but in my view these provisions are carefully considered. The government seems to be choosing to follow the "golden mean" in both religious and political considerations. In Turkey the government has built several mosques, facilitated the creation of religious schools, restricted alcohol sale and repealed the hijab ban. However, Turkey is still not comparable to other Islamic states, that enforce laws concerning specific clothing and the banning of alcohol (Andreassen, 2018b). AKP has seemed more interested in using Islam to achieve political interests, than vice versa. It is a challenge to understand the basic motivation and goal for the government's "heavy Islamizing of the state", and the intention of a "pious generation", as informant D refers to it (see chapter 5.4).

If the President finds himself in a position of power over the country, elected fully or partly on religious grounds, it is reasonable to assume that to strengthen religion in Turkey in many ways equals to reinforce his power position. To create a "pious generation" will provide the foundation for justifying politics on religious grounds for years to come. This kind of control with people's belief demands loyalty to the state and its religion. And it creates a "false religious culture" not built on true convictions, but a result of a pressure on the religious identification, fully or partly, based on political grounds. This line of argumentation confirms the finding that religion in Turkey is a collective, more than a private matter (see chapter 5.4.1).

As Jan Olav Henriksen encourages a pragmatic approach to religiosity in our time with focus on the *use* of religion and its influence on human action. According to him, "religion can be seen as a provider of resources that orient, transform and legitimize specific types of human practices that are symbolically mediated" (Henriksen, 2016, p. 38). I want to dwell on this process, starting with orientation and resulting in legitimation, in the case of Turkey. The foundation of our orientation in society, the map from which we choose our path, is determined by the knowledge made available to us. Based on our orientation, we become who we are. All the choices we make, and the reason freedom of speech and expression is of indisputable importance, is the fact that the information made available to us helps us orientate in sometimes difficult terrain, and furthermore potentially transform our being. Religion, as defined in chapter 4.3.1 of this thesis, is considered something extrasensory and transcendent that adds meaning to life. Hence, religion is in a position to form the orientation of life. Of relevance to this case, is the challenges arising when religion as provider of meaning to the life of a people are being mixed with political intentions through a rhetorical design confusing the position of the two. This places religion in position to orient and transform the political standpoint, which in its turn justifies political aims on religious grounds.

Based on this relationship between religion and politics, I further want to lean on Elizabeth Hurd's three-folded argument of secularism (Hurd, 2008, p. 1), presented in chapter 4.3.3, because I consider it relevant to the case in Turkey. The first part of her argument, the view that the division between religion and politics is socially and historically constructed more than a fixed relation, can almost be treated as obvious. It is based on the historical presentation above that illustrates the complex relation between religion and politics since the establishment of the Turkish republic with secular motives. Secondly, she points out that the failure to recognize the role of religion has precluded us from properly recognizing the power of religion in world politics. In my view, the very establishment of the secular Turkish republic has led to a failing recognition of the challenging position of religion in Turkish politics. As Turkey has been perceived as a "secular pioneer" and an example to follow by others in the East, there has not been enough problematizing of the existing challenges in Turkish politics. Finally, Hurd argues that an overcoming of the lack of awareness around religion would allow for a better understanding of crucial empirical puzzles in international relations. In my opinion, this is the case for Turkey as well. I believe that the basic understanding of Turkey as a well-functioning secular and democratic state system is part of the problem, rather than of the solution. Furthermore, the very acknowledgement that religion is an active contributing factor in this

picture, will facilitate a better understanding of some of the challenges Turkish politics are facing.

The potential "backfiring" effect of the government's Islamizing of the state became a topic of discussion during several of the interviews (see chapter 5.4.4). According to my informants, the facilitation of Islam seems to have a two-sided effect: some become even more religious, whereas others respond by distancing themselves from Islam in this form. When the propagation of atheism is a backfiring consequence of official attempts to form the religious landscape of a country, this reaction can also be considered a collective religious- or anti-religious response. An example of the backfiring effect of religious and authoritarian measures is that it, according to the informants of this study, seems to increase the secularistic ideas on an individual level, that the secularism in Turkey is being repressed, the societal structures become more religious, and the political hierarchy more authoritarian.

Erdogan's reference to God on the night of the failed coup in 2016, «A gift from God», might have been a coincidence without too much intended content. It might also have been a tactical use of a religious feature. Regardless, the speech resonated with its listeners and the message went worldwide within a few hours. When being aware of the frequent use of religious references in the Turkish political picture today, especially by AKP, it seems clear that this very statement had ripple effects within Turkey and the international society.

7. Conclusion

My aim for this thesis was to establish a better understanding of the research question: *To what degree and in what ways does religion play a legitimating role in the restriction of free speech and democratic reversal after the attempted coup in Turkey?* The research has been conducted as a qualitative case study in Turkey focusing on the period of time from the attempted coup 16th of July 2016 until today (10th of May 2018). I have structured my research into three parts:

1. To what extent is *free speech* limited in Turkey after the coup attempt?
2. In what way do the free speech restrictions and the controversy in the aftermath of the attempted coup affect the *democracy* in Turkey?
3. To what degree and in which ways do *religious* dimensions influence the discourse on restricting free speech?

The three components: free speech, democracy and religion in Turkey, and the interaction between these, constitute the foundation of my investigation. The whole thesis is structured around the taxonomy of the three.

The answer to the two former questions constitutes the basis that has made it possible for me to answer the last one. The existing restriction of free speech in Turkey was established at an early point. The democratic challenges that followed as a result of this have been exemplified and examined. I chose to shift my approach in the chapter of discussion, to the dimension of religiosity as my main focus via the democratic conditions and then back to freedom of speech. Thus, through the discussion, I wanted to illustrate the religious components in the particular political discourse in Turkey and consider to what degree they have an essential function as a justifying the use of force.

As this and many other studies have shown, freedom of speech is restricted to a large extent. The democratic complexity that has been under development in the Turkish society since the establishment of the republic is now being reversed to a more primitive level of democracy. There are disagreements about the democratic conditions of the country. The government officials proclaim Turkey as a democratic state, but acts authoritarian and is perceived as such by those able to offer the situation a critical view. I argue that the more weight religion has in society, the more likely it is that the religious factors will play a role in the political structures.

The Turkish-Islamic synthesis creates an expectation of authoritarianism and facilitates the autocracy established by the President. Erdogan is considered the "Turkish reformer" of our

time. Thus it is reasonable to understand his political position as one with a partly religious mandate.

The ongoing state of emergency in Turkey is a clear case of misuse where the protection of the state has become superior to the human protection within the state. The relatively long span of time allows the situation to normalize and sets the government in a position of the almost absolute power. The result of this is that certain forms of knowledge are presented as fortunate and true, whereas other opinions lose their arena of expression. It makes people "forget" to claim their rights, which again reinforces the strong political position of the sitting government in Turkey. Thus freedom of speech becomes "superfluous". When this circular development is affected rhetorically with religious argumentation at all stages (as illustrated in model 6) religion as a justifying force is present. This places Turkey in what I define as *another emergency* (see chapter 6.2). The ongoing state of emergency poses a serious threat to what it is intended to protect; namely the welfare of the Turkish people. In accordance with my understanding of this case, the following coinciding factors enable this: The cultural aspects of the *embodiment of power* and denouncing of free speech, and the strong position of religion and the secular "image" of Turkey. This, in combination with the state of emergency in sum, facilitates and maintains the authoritarian development.

As a result of the limited access to information that is critical to the government, the experienced need of free speech decreases among the people. This understood in the context of the *needed* authoritarian leadership, sheds light on the process of which the demand of free speech diminishes in parts of the Turkish society. The need to question the existence or position is being reduced. Free speech becomes less sought after until it, with time, is experienced as redundant.

The use of religious features in the political rhetoric, in combination with the facilitation of Islam as a religious belief in the Turkish population, lays the foundation for religious justification of political measures. The Turkish President presents himself as a *reformer*. Through the holy references in the validation of the elected President, his position is justified on religious instead of political grounds. This is confirmed by the finding that Turkey is a *passive democracy:* the people choose a leader, and based on that choice "he can do whatever he wants".

I also argue that the President's intention to create a "pious generation" will provide foundation for justifying politics on religious grounds for years to come. This kind of control with peoples' belief combined with the demand of loyalty to the state and its religion, may create a "false religious culture" where religiosity is not a result of true convictions. This line

of argumentation confirms the finding that religion in Turkey is a collective, more than a private matter.

When religion as provider of meaning to the life of people is being combined with political intentions through a rhetorical design that confuses the position between the two, different challenges become visible. This places religion in a position to orient and transform the political view, which in its turn justifies political aims on religious grounds.

In accordance with my findings the basic understanding of Turkey as a well-functioning, secular and democratic state system is a part of the problem, rather than of the solution. Furthermore, the very acknowledgement that religion is an active, contributing factor in this picture, will facilitate a better understanding and potentially enable actions to be taken with some of the challenges Turkish politics are facing.

The findings of this and other studies conclude that the attempted coup has been anything but *a gift from God,* even though the religious-political rhetoric in Turkey have made many people believe that it was. Freedom of speech is restricted to a serious extent in Turkey today and the democratic conditions are being reversed. This thesis has shown that religion is playing a legitimizing role in the political discourse that is ultimately justifying this process.

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Attachments

1. Interview guide
2. Request of research participation

Attachment 1
Interview guide

1. **Introduction**
   - **Project:** I want to analyze the importance of free speech in democracy and the role of religious legitimation of restriction of free speech. My aim is to see whether religion can be used as a justifying mean a process that ultimately jeopardize democracy.
   - **Keywords:** Free speech in Turkey. Democracy. Religion. *Looking for a religious perspective on the relationship between democracy and free speech in Turkey.*
   - **Informant interview:** This interview will be structured as an open conversation, because of my informants' competence and knowledge. I want to learn as much as possible from you, and will only make sure our dialogue holds a "red string" and touches the planned topics. "The structure of a river."
   - **Results:** The findings of this study will be presented in the thesis. The informants can read the finished result it they are interested.
   - **Final notes:** Delicate subject. Do you have any worries? Guarantied anonymity. You can at any time withdraw your consent. Record the conversation?

2. **Establish contact**
   - Tell me a little bit about yourself.
   - Family, studies, working situation, carrier and so on…
   - Where were you when the coup took place and what were you doing?
   - What is your perception of the circumstances around the coup attempt in Istanbul 16ᵗʰ of July 2016?

3. **Research questions**
   "What happens to the democracy when a given government take control of free speech and does religion have an essential role in legitimizing the use of controversial means in this process?"

4. **To what extent are free speech limited in Turkey after the coup attempt?**
   4.1. How do you define free speech in general?
   4.2. What is the role of free speech in Turkey today? Is it different from before?
   4.3. How have you yourself experienced free speech restrictions in your experience?

4.4. Can you give some examples of free speech restrictions you experienced and/or observed here in Turkey?

4.5. How are the restrictions followed through? What instruments maintain the current status? Keywords: Open/hidden. Conscious/unconscious

4.6. Do you experience any fear? If you do, how? Examples of what happen.

4.7. Do you experience any fear of the government in society, in the context of restricting speech?

4.8. What arenas are there for public criticism in Turkey at the moment?

4.9. In your opinion, to what extent does the interests of the state reflect the majorities view in Turkey?

4.10. In your opinion, does the restrictions of freedom of expression and speech in Turkey affect the nations international relations?

4.11. What does the Turkish constitution say about free speech?

5. In what way does the free speech restrictions and the controversy in the aftermath of the attempted coup affect the democracy in Turkey?

5.1. Tell me about the political and civil rights situation in turkey.

5.2. How do you see the democratic conditions in Turkey today? Did it change after the attempted coup?

5.3. What impact will free speech restrictions have on the next election?

5.4. Democracy are based on political participation by its citizens. Who are freely participating in the political debate in Turkey?

5.5. What arenas are there for freedom of political expressions in Turkey?

6. How does religious argumentation influence the discourse of restricting free speech?

6.1. In your opinion, what role does religion play politics, in Turkey and compared to other countries. Have you seen any change in this picture?

6.2. President Erdogan called the coup attempt "a gift from God", how do you interpret that statement?

6.3. Fethullah Gülen is blamed for orchestrating the coup attempt, what is your thought around the accusation?

6.4. In what way are religiosity visible in Turkish politics?

6.5. Can you think of any comment on free speech from President Erdogan and/or Fetullah Gülen?

7. Ending

- Any finishing comments or questions?

- Anything unclear?

This interview guide is based on Rubin & Rubin seven stages of an interview

Attachment 2

Request of research participation

Free speech in Turkey after the failed coup attempt in 2016

Research background and purpose

This is a research done in accordance with the master's program "Religion, Society and Global Issues" with the Theological faculty of Norway located in Oslo.

This thesis aim is to present a case study that aims to analyze the two-parted research question "what happens to the democracy when a given government take control of free speech and does religion have an essential role in legitimizing the use of controversial means in this process?" To concretize findings the research question is broken down into three parts:

- To what extent is free speech a premise of democracy?
- In the case of contemporary Turkey, how does religious argumentation legitimate human rights violation?
- How does religious argumentation influence the discourse of restricting free speech?

Basically, I want to analyze the importance of free speech in democracy and the role of religious legitimation of restriction of free speech. My aim is to see whether religion can be used as a justifying mean a process that ultimately jeopardize democracy.

The informants of this study are chosen based on their profession as journalists or academics in Turkey and their experience with free speech restrictions in the aftermath of the coup attempt in July 2016.

What does it mean to participate in this study?

My research is based on collecting information from informants with a high degree of knowledge in the field and my information will be based on dialogue interviews with my informants. I have chosen this form of interviewing because I am looking for a deep understanding of my informants' experiences, positions and motives, and want to give space for free speech within the frames of my topic.

I want to tape these interviews to make sure I don't miss any information and transcribe and anonymize it before I analyze the information.

What happens to the information about you?

All personal information will be treated confidentially. Myself and my supervisor will be the only ones with access to this information and I am the only one that analyzes it.

Personal information and the interviews/transcripts itself will be kept separately to contain confidentiality under any circumstance.

All information will be anonymized and it will not be possible to connect the informants to the public thesis.

The project is planned to be finished at 10th of May 2018, and personal information will not be kept after this point.

Voluntary participation

It is voluntarily to participate in the study and you can at any time withdraw your consent without any reason. If you withdraw all information about you will be anonymized.

If you agree to participate in this study or have any questions, please contact my supervisor Sturla Stålsett 0047[98600461/sturla.stalsett@mf.no](mailto:sturla.stalsett@mf.no).

This study is filed to NSD – The Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Agreement to research participation

I have received information about the study and are willing to participate

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