

Netzwerk Türkei Working Paper No. 2:

**Examining the impact of
Turkey's Islamist party spectrum on processes of democratic consolidation through
strengthening the Turkish party system.**

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Abstract

Democratization in the Middle Eastern region is often regarded as an improvident undertaking and interpreted as giving rise to authoritarian and 'theocratic politics'. This paper is part of a wider doctoral research project which will examine the impact of Turkey's Islamist party spectrum on democratic consolidation processes. In doing so, it will attempt to shed new light on the debate regarding the compatibility of Islamic political cultures and liberal democracy in attempting to demonstrate that it is possible for Islamist parties or an Islamist party spectrum, specifically when adopting a moderate format, to have a constructive effect in advancing processes of democratic consolidation within a national polity. Specifically, it will investigate the hypothesis that Turkey's Islamist party spectrum has been positive by advancing the institutionalization of the Turkish party system and strengthening the linkages between the party system and civil society. The AKP, Turkey's incumbent party, is chosen as a case study as it represents Turkey's most significant Islamist party. The theoretical basis for this research proposal is informed by the party system institutionalization framework set by Mainwaring and Scully in which they posit 4 specific factors to examine the institutional strengths of party systems influenced the proposal's parameters. The paper will also look at other Muslim democracies such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Bangladesh and discuss the merits of including them as comparative case studies.