ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOKS

The Routledge Handbook on Contemporary Turkey

Edited by Joost Jongerden

THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK ON CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

This *Handbook* discusses the new political and social realities in Turkey from a range of perspectives, emphasizing both changes as well as continuities. Contextualizing recent developments, the chapters, written by experts in their fields, combine analytical depth with a broad overview.

In the last few years alone, Turkey has experienced a failed coup attempt; a prolonged state of emergency; the development of a presidential system based on the supreme power of the head of state; a crackdown on traditional and new media, universities and civil society organizations; the detention of journalists, mayors and members of parliament; the establishment of political tutelage over the judiciary; and a staggering economic crisis. It has also terminated talks with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK); intervened in and occupied mountainous border areas in northern Iraq to fight that organization; occupied Afrin and strips of territory in northern Syria; intervened in Libya; articulated an assertive transnational politics toward "kin" across the world; strained its relations with the European Union and the US, while developing relations with Russia; flirted with China's intercontinental Belt and Road Initiative; and carved out a presence in Africa, to name just a few of the most recent developments.

This volume provides a comprehensive and wide-ranging overview of the making of modern Turkey. It is a key reference for students and scholars interested in political economy, security studies, international relations and Turkish studies.

Joost Jongerden is an associate professor at Wageningen University, The Netherlands, and project professor at Kyoto University, Japan. A common denominator of his research has been the question of how people create and maintain a livable life while under or addressing insecure conditions. He refers to this as 'Do-It-Yourself-Development' and distinguishes this as a different mode of ordering from 'state' and 'market'.

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1
INTRODUCTION

Joost Jongerden

Few people interested in current affairs could have failed to notice some of the most striking events in Turkey during recent times. In the last few years alone, Turkey has experienced a failed coup attempt; a prolonged state of emergency, only to be lifted after the implementation of a presidential system based on the supreme power of the head of state and the absence of proper checks and balances; a crackdown on traditional and new media, universities and civil society organisations; the detention of journalists, mayors and members of parliament; the establishment of political tutelage over the judiciary; and a staggering economic crisis. It has also terminated talks with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK); intervened in and occupied mountainous border areas in northern Iraq to fight that organisation; occupied Afrin and strips of territory in northern Syria to combat its US partners, the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF); and intervened in Libya to reverse the advance of the forces of Khalifa Haftar. It has staked new claims to drilling rights in the Mediterranean Sea, pushing relations with Greece to a new low; articulated an assertive transnational politics towards 'kin' across the world; and strained its relations with the European Union (EU) and the US, while developing relations with Russia; flirted with China's intercontinental Belt and Road Initiative; and carved out a presence in Africa, to name just a few of the most recent developments.

It is an understatement to say that the challenges Turkey faces, both domestically and abroad, are many. So much has happened that Turkey's future today looks very different from that of two decades ago. With the lifting of the state of emergency in the south-eastern part of the country in 2002, for the first time in the history of the Republic, the Kurdish population in this region was not ruled under martial law or emergency regulation. For many, this had signalled the start of a new and more hopeful era. In a similar vein, Turkey's first gay pride event was held in 2003, which grew in size to ten thousands of participants in the years that followed. In 2005, the EU officially initiated accession negotiations with Ankara, which signalled a significant rapprochement between the Turkey and EU, including, in the background, Greece, with whom relations had been long strained. The economy was booming. Along with China, India, Brazil and others, Turkey was on its way to classification as a Newly Industrialised Country.

The landslide electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkinma Partisi, AKP) in Turkey in 2002, just one year after its establishment as a political party, was met with guarded optimism by many inside and outside Turkey. Turkey would throw off the shackles of the hardened Kemalist elite and the main political programme for which it had become known: the monomaniacal obsession with regulating the identity of its inhabitants. Yet the founders of the AKP, among them Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül and Bülent

Arinç, were veterans who had been active in the Islamist Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi) and its predecessor, the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), while others had a background in nationalist and conservative political parties. Yet to many, they seemed to be a relief compared to the old cast of inveterate politicians. However, it was only a few years after the AKP assumed power that it became clear that the initial reform agenda had not stemmed from a political will towards a fundamental reorientation of the state towards its citizenry but was rather to be used as a tool with which to marginalise the Kemalist elite (Bahcheli and Noel 2011, Cinar 2011, Müftüler-Baç 2016, Jongerden 2019). In fact, the state that the party started to build had many of the features of the old, built around maintaining the authority of the centre, the primacy of state power and articulated around a narrative of nationalism, but harnessed now to an Islamist populism.

Earlier assessments that 'Turkey has made significant progress toward the consolidation of its democracy' and turned out to be 'resilient to the global economic downturn' (Sayarı 2012: 1) have been shattered. References to a new Turkey (Yavuz 2006) started to look like an anachronism. The establishment of a one-party rule, the exaltation of its leader, the self-confident and forceful positioning as a regional power referred to as neo-Ottomanism (Taspinar 2008), the depiction of Turkey's rowdy president as the new sultan (Cagaptay 2020) give the impression of Turkey as the 'Angel of History' caught in full flight (Benjamin 1940, Bauman 2017). Yet different from the famous painting by Paul Klee, in which the angel pushes forward, away from the atrocities of the past, the AKP angel is flying backward. Virulent nationalism and political paranoia fuel its flight.

The optimism about progress in Turkey has been a performative effect of the widespread belief that Turkey's state elites, both old and new, have been the carriers of modernity and democracy. In both Turkish and Western academia, Turkey was long viewed as the exceptional case in the so-called Muslim world, where a secular elite had led the country into the modern age (Lerner 1958, Lewis 1994, Shah 2011). Military tutelage and an occasional coup were either considered compatible with an 'authoritarian modernisation' paradigm (Örnek 2012: 953) or evaluated as short-term interruptions to save democracy from itself (Heper 2005) and keep development on track (Varol 2013). Albeit not always with democratic means, the bureaucratic elite and the military, in short, were thought to facilitate the overall development of democracy (Lewis 1994, Heper 2005, Varol 2013). The military as the shepherds of the masses prevented 'instability and anti-systemic turbulence' (Örnek 2012: 953). This representational practice, making authoritarianism the fellow traveller of modernisation theory, served the cementing of Turkey into the Western bloc during the Cold War, but also a persistent anti-democratic rule.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, the political upheaval it represented was again framed in terms the idea of a Turkish exceptionalism, now adjusted to a 'Turkish Islamic exceptionalism' defined as 'a complex, many-tiered encounter between "traditional" forces and modernity that have interpenetrated and been transformed over time' (Mardin 2005: 160). Thus, it was determined that 'Turkish Islam has come to have an increasingly secular face' (Heper and Toktas 2003: 157), which contributed to the democratisation process (Heper and Toktas 2003, Mardin 2005, Karaosmanoglu 2012), even though 'the reformist zeal exhibited by AKP leaders during the party's first two years in office slowed perceptibly in 2005 and noticeably in 2006'. (Patton 2007: 340). Though there had been concerns over the AKP adherence to 'universal notions of modernity' from its first days in power, many thought that the AKP, because of its popular ties, could form the platform which could bring the periphery closer to the centre (Kasaba 2008: 7–8). Its approach had been hailed as a model for the Middle East (Taspinar 2014).

The idea of a fundamental tension between an institutional and popular component in Turkey's progress to modernity has been persistent in Turkish studies (Mardin 1973, Kasaba 2008). This 'representational practice' – the way in which a dualism was created around a progressive institutional centre and a conservative popular component – has been seductive and deceiving at the same time. Seductive, since it provided a robust framing of political, cultural and economic contradictions, while it was deceiving since it imposed a generalising theoretical straitjacket on social and political sciences. The latter helped create an ideological barrier against doing meticulous research into the layered, conflicting and contradicting ways in which social realities and practices are constituted in Turkey.

Over the last decades, we have not only seen a growth of Turkish studies (Sayarı 2012) but also witnessed the field becoming more diverse and comparative (Zurcher 2014: 589), critically interrogating hegemonic epistemologies (Eissenstat 2014, Zurcher 2014: 597) and questioning taboos, such as the Armenian genocide and the Kurdish issue. In Turkey, too, the space for critical encounters increased, until the beginning of 2016, when a petition of academics against the state's renewal of a military approach to its Kurdish issue was squashed and the failed coup attempt became the pretext for an unprecedented purge of academics in which more than 6,000 lost their jobs (Kaya 2018), which set the scene for university closures and a restructuring of the academic landscape in Turkey (Bohannon 2016).

Notwithstanding this oppression of intellectual freedoms, however, Turkish studies has now moved beyond a promotion of 'modernisation' – or 'Ottomanisation' or whatever-isation. Turkish studies has moved beyond the close-distance promotion of nation and state, and area studies, of which Turkish studies has been a part, has changed from 'long-distance knowing' (Schendel 2002: 660), and a site of 'exoticism' and 'eurocentrist representations' into a field of situated academic discourses (Gibson-Graham 2004: 408, 409, 412). The contributions in this book are an expression of this qualitative change in Turkish studies.

The first chapters of this handbook cover the period marked by the conversion of an empire into a nation state, the period in which rulers came to consider themselves not as separate from the people but as a part of and representing the people. This was also a time in which political parties, populism, borders and demographic engineering came to prominence. In 'Politics and ideology: party and opposition in the late Ottoman and early Republican period', James Ryan (Chapter 2) examines the conflicts and contradictions that drove politics in the late Ottoman period and the formative decades of the Republic. This chapter focuses on the contest between authoritarian regimes and their opponents against the background of, on the one hand, internal political ambitions and challenges and, on the other hand, international interactions with ideological trends as varied as liberalism, fascism, communism and conservatism. Uğur Ümit Üngör and Ayhan Işık (Chapter 3) examine the role of violence in the transformation from empire to republic and how violence continued to play a role in the sustenance of the nation-state form. While some populations in the Ottoman Empire suffered from genocide, the authors argue, the Kurds became subject to a protracted process of exclusion. Three distinct episodes are examined, showing that much of the logic of the violence was systemic.

Zeynep Kezer (Chapter 4) looks into the reshaping of Turkey's demographic and cultural landscapes in the course of the violent transition from a pluralistic empire to a unitary nation state. The phenomenon of population movements culminating in purges and mass violence against non-Muslims at the end of the Ottoman Empire continued in the Republican period. Kezer argues that the zeal for the constitution of a homogeneous citizenry, a 'homogenization by faith', became an endless and all-consuming pursuit within the Republic. Ottoman inhabitants of Orthodox faith were one of the population groups purged, supported by a League of Nations-mediated formal agreement. Eleni Kyramargiou (Chapter 5) follows the

fate of the more than one million Christians from the Ottoman Empire who were forcibly moved to Greece after the formal agreement on a 'population exchange' between the states in 1923. Kyramargiou shows how the departure of Muslims from Greece created ample space for a process of 'Hellenization'.

With the violent transition from empire to nation state and the cultural and demographic change that came with it having been considered in generic terms, the sixth chapter looks at how this worked out at the local level. Ali Sipahi (Chapter 6) discusses the transformation of a rural hamlet into an imperial town and then a national city. The transformation of Ağavat Mezrası to Mamuretülaziz and subsequently Elazığ, he argues, can only be understood in the context of a long-term interplay and collaboration between local and extra-local forces, whose relations were at certain times marked by disinterest, while at other, critical moments, they converged. These local and extra-local interactions are examined around the creation of a landlord settlement, establishment of an imperial garrison, Armenian genocide and contemporary developmentalism.

The next chapters of this book broach the rearrangements of political and social relations in modern Turkey, the centrality of appeals to 'the people', the emergence of clientelism and the false contradiction between secularism and religion. They address the rise of populism, an approach that makes an appeal to 'the people' the primary form of political legitimisation for an elite politics and a means for mobilisation, and they discuss the false dichotomy between secularism and religion in Turkey and the development of political parties as platforms for weaving popular support into state power. This part opens with a chapter by Asim Karaömerlioğlu (Chapter 7) investigating populism from the late Ottoman Empire until today, from the 'To the People' (Halka Doğru) movement of the Unionist era (1908–1922) through the populist discourse of the single-party period (1923–1950) to populist politics under Menderes in the 1950s, Demirel in the '60s and Ecevit in the '70s, arriving at the Islamicist regime of the 2010s. This chapter compares the various forms of populism involved in this history, indicating similarities and differences.

Ferhat Kentel (Chapter 8) examines the interpenetration of the secular and the religious during the Republican period. Contrary to the dominant conceptualisation of conflict and polarisation between secularism and religion, this chapter focuses on continuity and even complementarity between the two. Kentel argues that the 'old' and 'new' regimes of the Kemalists and the AKP are, above all, both 'religious' and 'secular' at the same time. In each case, he suggests, nationalism and Islam have been harmonised and instrumentalised for political ends. From an examination of populism as a discourse making a people and its nation, in the contribution by Elise Massicard (Chapter 9) we move to the way in which political parties organise state–society relations. This chapter looks at how political parties function as platforms maintaining social support by connecting their constituencies to state resources. Parties function as mechanisms for political patronage and clientelism, and the uniqueness of the AKP today is not so much its character as its command of a majority government in combination with neoliberal policies that have enabled the continued development of its clientelistic networks. This has enabled the party to exert an extensive control over national resources, whereas previous coalition governments had to 'share the pie'.

The handbook continues with examining the ways in which the political sphere has been shaped by interventions, military coups and majoritarianism, enabling the development of authoritarian regression in a parliamentary democracy under tutelage. This consideration of interventions and breakdown opens with a chapter on the role of the military, by Burak Bilgehan Özpek (Chapter 10). As the self-appointed guardian of national security, the military has a long track record of interference in politics and control over policy-making processes.

However, its position and role have been subject to change. The chapter evaluates this changing position and role of the military throughout the history of the Republic, with a focus on the AKP era. Chapter 11, by Nikos Christoffis, reviews Turkey's history of military coups, with a focus on the most recent, the failed coup of July 15, 2016. Christoffis discusses the aftermath of this coup attempt as the culmination of a process of increasing authoritarianism. In the next chapter, 12, Ergun Özbudun examines constitutional changes in Turkey and their impact on the functioning of the political system. Özbudun concentrates on the 2017 constitutional amendment, which created a presidential system and is portrayed here as 'competitive authoritarian' and 'abusive constitutionalism'. The breaking of military tutelage in combination with judicial and constitutional change provide the background to Chapter 13, by Berk Esen, who discusses Turkey's regression to a competitive authoritarian regime. Esen argues that despite a long history of multiparty rule, politics oscillated to a large extent between majoritarian rule under right-wing parties, sustained by the patronage politics and clientelism, and military governments. Early optimism about the reform agenda of the AKP has disappointed mainly because Turkey has regressed to a regime of competitive authoritarianism. The chapter examines this regression in the wider context of Turkey's multiparty history. The final chapter in this part examines truth and post-truth (Chapter 14). Beginning with a theoretical elaboration of post-truth, Hakkı Taş, outlines the trajectory of the politics of truth in Turkey; then, while noting the continuities with the past, he explains how post-truth politics has operated in the 2000s under the rule of the AKP. The chapter concludes that, although the AKP produces a post-truth conditionality in the political game with its rivals, it also follows in the footsteps of the Kemalists and their centralised, programmatic agenda of truth-making.

From here, the focus shifts to the pillars of identity on which modern Turkey has been established, with discussions about Turkey's Kurdish issue, gender, same-sex and youth politics. It is also against this background that novels, film and music as cultural productions are discussed. The part opens with chapter 15, by Cengiz Gunes, discussing the Kurdish issue in Turkey. This contribution covers the emergence of the Kurdish movement in the late 1960s and early '70s before focusing on the PKK as the dominant political force in the struggle for Kurdish rights. Chapter 16, by Simten Coşar, discusses gender regimes in Turkey as a lens through which to view the relationship between nationalism and patriarchal order. The chapter first distinguishes among various gender regimes and the gender relations they aim to produce, and then moves to an examination of current gender-regime changes from a feminist perspective. In Chapter 17, Ayça Alemdaroglu examines youth politics in Turkey. Different from the dominant view that Turkey's young generation is apathetic, and distinguishing three episodes, this contribution delves into the narratives that young people use to make sense of power, politics and themselves. In Chapter 18, Ceylan Engin and Zeynep Özbarlas provide a historical analysis of same-sex sexuality from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic. This chapter shows that homosexual relationships were common and accepted practices during the Ottoman Empire, but this acceptance decreased in the early nineteenth century, particularly in the attempt to modernise the Empire and ameliorate relations with Western states. While homosexuality is not explicitly banned in contemporary Turkey, tolerance is low, and discrimination and violence against sexual minorities pervasive. Next, in Chapter 19, Çimen Günay-Erkol uses literary works to examine nation-building as a militaristic and paternalistic process in which women are subjugated to dominant men. Analysing a selection of Turkish novels, Günay-Erkol investigates the production of hegemonic masculinity within a militarised nationalism. Chapter 20, by Gönül Dönmez Colin, provides an overview of the contemporary cinema of Turkey. Recurring themes and trends, and the representations of ethnic and religious minorities, women and LGBTI individuals are highlighted within the context of collective

and individual identities. Film criticism and scholarship, the masculine hegemony in the film industry, the critical gaze of the state and its repercussions on the creativity of the artists, cinema beyond the nation-state boundaries and the implications of transnational film-making are all explored along with a focus on the cinema produced by film-makers of Kurdish origin. In the final contribution of this part (Chapter 21), Martin Greve investigates the nexus between musical diversity and identity in Turkey. Greve looks at how Kemalist elites loaded music with ideological burdens and then neoliberalism and commercialisation created a music market, but also how rural–urban migration brought Anatolian folk music to the city and a musical plurality was produced in the context of Kurdish and (urban) political struggles.

The next part groups six contributions on political economy and political ecology, with discussions on Turkey's development model, regional disparities, environment and agriculture/food. It opens with a narrative presented by Bora Selçuk and Murat Öztürk (Chapter 22) that moves from the development of capitalist relations of production in the late Ottoman Empire through the state-led economic model developed in the early years of Kemalism to the emergence and growth of neoliberalism from the 1980s. This is followed by a contribution by Veli Yadırgı (Chapter 23), who discusses the political economy of the Kurdish question. Yadırgı critically examines Turkey's much-lauded development politics and highlights the symbiotic relationship between the Kurdish question and a peculiar form of underdevelopment that is captured by the notion of 'de-development'. Next, in Chapter 24, Arda Bilgen investigates how the South-East Anatolia Project (GAP) has become an iconic signifier of Turkey's state- and nation-building processes. Bilgen looks at how the state has presented GAP as a nationally cohesive project and used it to reconfigure the relationship between state and society through its control over nature.

In Chapter 25, Murat Arsel, Fikret Adaman and Bengi Akbulut discuss the political economy of environmental conflicts and struggles in Turkey. The post-1980s process of neoliberalisation is viewed as an important background to environmental conflicts and struggles in the countryside, followed by conflicts and struggles centring around major infrastructure projects, especially in the urban sphere. The chapter ends with an examination of the limits of environmental struggles and the challenge of environmentalising politics. Next, Murat Öztürk, Andy Hilton and Joost Jongerden (Chapter 26) consider the political economy of agriculture and rural life. Two main developmental periods are distinguished, the first from 1923 to 1980, which was characterised by a state-led agricultural promotion, and the second the post-1980 period of neoliberalisation, which is viewed in the context of contemporary peasant strategies and varied intergenerational 'multi-place-living structures'. The final chapter in this part, by John William Day (Chapter 27), explores political meanings and practices surrounding food in Turkey. This chapter shows how food is deeply entangled with nation-building. Questions related to the politics of localism and topophilia inform an exploration of the limits of belonging and nationhood, and a thinking of food is suggested as a rich practical site where the sensual and semiotic overlap with tensions of inequality, injustice, biopolitics and power.

From discussing the political economy and political ecology, we move to the interlinked subjects of migration and urban and rural space. It opens with a chapter (28) by Tahire Erman, who explores migration from villages to cities in Turkey starting in the late 1940s. The chapter discusses various issues, including migrants' social and spatial clustering and their extended relations with people in the village as mechanisms of solidarity and support, the effects of neoliberalisation policies on the ability to maintain a livelihood in the city and the mass-migration from the Kurdish southeast as a result of the village evacuations and burnings during the state's counter-insurgency programme against the PKK. Many of the migrants established themselves in inner-city areas or more distant areas around the city that were then considered

unattractive, yet were to become hotspots for urban development. It is against a background of urban rent and speculation and neighbourhoods where the state encountered strong opposition that Eray Çaylı discusses the use of the Disaster Act as a means for urban dispossession (Chapter 29). Çaylı discusses this against a background of a wider politics of dispossession in Turkey: the dispossession of non-Muslims in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and rural populations throughout the second half of the twentieth century. In the last contribution here, Joost Jongerden (Chapter 30) examines Turkey's concern with 'negative' places and subject identities within the nation. Incompatible with the order in the making, these are places and identities that the authorities have tried to erase or render invisible. Focussing on Diyarbakir, Jongerden examines the representational practice in which the rural becomes 'matter out of place' in an urbanising society. This is followed by a contribution (Chapter 31) by Chris Houston on urban activism, defined as the alteration of urban space through social struggles over ownership, use, design and meaning. Houston focusses on Istanbul for his examination of historical and contemporary forms of activism, including the transgenerational Kemalist movement, leftist activism in the 1970s, the more recent events of Gezi Park and the urban activism of the AKP in Istanbul responding to the 2016 coup attempt.

Ceren Lord (Chapter 32) provides a sociopolitical overview of religions in Turkey, with an emphasis on Sunni–Islam and Alevi movements. While the emergence of religious movements has been widely conceptualised as a popular response to an authoritarian secularist and Kemalist state, this chapter outlines how the importance of religious politics was facilitated by the form that nation-state building in Turkey took and how the Islamist movement was enabled from within the state. In the following contribution (Chapter 33), Özgür Yaren, Cenk Saraçoğlu and Irmak Karademir-Hazır discuss the quest for cultural power in Turkey. Although the struggle over the cultural sector has been conceptualised in terms of a historical Islamic discontent with the Kemalist hegemony, the authors here argue that this framework risks producing a misleading depiction of political struggles. Rather, the contemporary Kulturkampf should be examined in the context of the AKP's political and ideological strategies to entrench its political hegemony.

In Chapter 34, Aslı Telli considers the domain of new media and digital activism. Set against a background of global waves of digital politicking and protest movements, Telli discusses citizen journalism, video activism and anti-surveillance protest actions as well as several urban-mapping projects, digital literacy mobilisations, crypto-parties and their relations to offline and mainstream politics in Turkey. Next follow contributions on Turkey from the perspective of its place in the world and international relations. It opens with a chapter (Chapter 35) by Ahmet İçduygu and Damla Aksel discussing Turkey's refugee politics, which historically had mainly served to consolidate a nation-building process, opening borders primarily to the arrivals of people of 'Turkish origin and descent'. This instrumental approach is continued today in respect of refuges from Syria, who are used as a bargaining chip in domestic and foreign politics.

Transnationalism and diaspora politics is the subject area examined by Banu Şenay (Chapter 36). Turkey has a long history of reaching out to its émigré communities to develop stronger ties and extend its influence. Directed at emigrants, pan-Turkish 'co-ethnics' and second- and third-world foreign Muslim nationals, these efforts are articulated with the state's dual strategies of kin-building and diaspora mobilisation in line with domestic political interests. Then, Şenay shows how the diaspora politics of the AKP pursue an enlarged trans-Kemalism, amalgamating ethnic-Turkism, the Turk-Islam synthesis and Islamic Third Worldism.

The contribution (Chapter 37) by Sinan Ciddi investigates Turkey's relation with the West. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey's relationship with NATO and the US was fraught

with complications, but both sides implicitly valued the relationship from the perspective of collective security. Since the beginning of the Arab uprisings in 2010, however, Turkey has increasingly been at odds with its Western allies and relations have become increasingly strained over a range of issues, from the purchase of a Russian missile-defence system, to Libya and the US partnering with the Kurdish People's Protection Units (Yekîneyên Parastina Gel; YPG). While Turkey is drifting away from its alliance with the West, Ciddi shows that Turkey has not yet developed an alternative narrative of its position in the world. In Chapter 38, Michael Gunter takes a closer look at Turkey's foreign policy towards the Middle East, analysing Turkish strategic-depth and zero-problems strategy as it developed in the early 2000s. Gunter concludes that Erdoğan's increasingly populist authoritarianism has made this policy a failure as Turkey has found itself mired in a deep quagmire of several complex problems. Next, Pınar Akpınar (Chapter 39) examines Turkey's Africa policy. Having developed into an important component of Turkey's foreign policy, this has proved to be resilient in the face of a number of crises, including the Arab Spring and its aftermath, Turkey's failed coup and constitutional shift from a parliamentary to presidential system and, recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Turkey's imposition as a regional military power in Africa has also created suspicion and further strained relations with other countries in the region, such as Egypt.

This handbook and its contributions do not follow a strict chronological logic, or better, episodical logic. This means that the handbook does not have its contributions organised as before or after Turkey's establishment in 1923, the end of the one-party era in 1950 and the commencement of the current AKP period in 2002. Such divisions organise history around the manifest turning points of change and transition, a popular theme in the modernisation paradigm – and thus tend also to blur or hide continuities. In fact, several of the contributions in this volume extend through time, which allows for an examination of duration and cohesion as well as rupture.

In like fashion, the contributions in this handbook break with dichotomies like centre-periphery, modern-conservative and secular-religious, another characteristic of modernisation theory and which has been dominant in Turkish studies, as in many of the other area studies, for several decades. Instead, the contributions in this handbook take a relational perspective, considering interactions and interrelations and taking their power geometries as fundamental for an explanation of the social and political world. This emphasis on a more integrated historical perspective (rather than episodical breaks) as well the relational perspective (instead of dichotomies) may afford a deeper consideration of events and processes in the regional territory known as Anatolia and Turkey.

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2

POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY

Party and opposition in the late Ottoman and early republican period

James Ryan

Introduction

A simple dichotomy that could accurately describe political developments in the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic in the period from the formation of its first parliamentary body in 1876 to 1950 is that of a vibrant, dynamic, ideologically diverse polity struggling and only intermittently succeeding against a harsh, censorious, often-brutalizing authoritarian state. From a teleological viewpoint, each step forward, such as the birth of a constitution in 1876, is met with a nearly immediate step backwards, as evidenced when Sultan Abdülhamid II swiftly prorogued the parliament as the ink on the 1876 constitution was still drying. These apparent backward moves ultimately gave rise to a characterization of Turkish politics in this period that places incredible weight on one man or a small group of men at the centre of political decision-making. Often depicted as conspiratorial and bloodthirsty – sometimes with good reason – and orientalised in patronising language in their own time and since, figures such as Abdülhamid II; the Unionist troika of pashas Enver, Cemal, and Talaat; and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk have often served as stand-ins for a uniform, monolithic political class, and culture. Such narratives offer a monochromatic, ahistorical, and static vision of politics that serves an orientalist narrative depicting the entirety of these polities in the same manner as one of Delacroix's odalisques – supine, inert, and without agency. This chapter is meant to dispel these notions and to show, as Nader Sohrabi has in the case of the 1908–1909 constitutional revolution, that, "given the heterogeneity of actors and the disparity of grievances, it is only logical to expect conflict and difference to be roiling under the uniform veneer" (Sohrabi 2011, 4). To understand politics and political cultures marked as these are by revolution and authoritarianism, it is of paramount importance not to allow the hegemon to shroud the struggle over which they preside.

This chapter emphasises the conflict and inherent contradictions that have driven, and in many ways continue to drive, Turkish politics in a crucially formative era wherein strong authoritarianism slowly gave way to a constitutional–republican form of government. By focusing on the contest between authoritarian regimes and their opponents, the chapter also addresses the global nature of Ottoman and Turkish politics in this period. Between the Hamidian and Kemalist periods, the politics of westernization and political, diplomatic, and

cultural engagement with global ideological trends as varied as liberalism, fascism, communism, and conservatism were central to the political debates about how to chart a course through the increasingly restrictive geopolitical confines in which the Ottoman Empire and Republic of Turkey found themselves. In similar ways, Abdülhamid II and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk were inheritors of state-sponsored traditions of emulation of Western statecraft, science, and popular culture, and, at the same time, generated a political discourse that set their states in opposition to Western states – mainly France, Britain, and Russia – which were seen equally as colonialist usurpers scheming to undermine Turkish sovereignty and as sources of knowledge and models of modernization. Many of the political movements of this period, those in power and those in opposition, engaged global political trends to either manage or escape the double bind of "westernization against the west" (Mardin 1973, Koçak 2010, Hirst 2012).

The Hamidian era and the Young Ottomans

The ascension to the throne of Abdülhamid II in 1876 is seen simultaneously as the climax and immediate denouement of the 40-year-long project of legal and bureaucratic modernisation that preceded his reign known as the Tanzimat. Beginning with the 1839 Gülhane Decree of Abdülmecid I, the Ottoman Empire embarked on an aggressive project of modernising and expanding the state bureaucracy and reconfiguring classes of citizenship, subjecthood, and rights regimes. This project would empower middle- and upper-level bureaucrats far beyond their previous scopes, and, with the 1856 Reform Edict, extended basic rights and access to government services, like education, and government appointments to the Empire's non-Muslim subjects regardless of their *millet*, or religious community. The various architects of these policies and reforms appeared to set the Ottoman Empire on a straightforward path of importing Western frameworks for constitutional government and did so in an environment in which the Ottomans were increasingly reliant on France and Britain for protection from Russian adventurism – especially after the Crimean War (1853–1856) and the Treaty of Paris (1856). The 1860s and 1870s saw the fiscal situation worsened thanks to debts taken on after the Crimean War, Strike public, Crimean War, opinion amongst the great powers turned against the Ottomans, and separatist movements gained steam in the Balkan provinces. Seeking to bring a pliant sultan to the throne who would promulgate a constitution following a coup d'état against Abdülhamid's uncle Abdülaziz, Midhat Pasha, a high-ranking bureaucrat and architect of the constitution, would first bring Murad V, Abdülhamid's brother, to the throne, where he would last merely three months before he was deposed on account of mental illness.

Having convinced Midhat Pasha that he would promulgate a constitution, Abdülhamid II came to the throne at the end of August 1876. Strenuous negotiations over drafts of the constitution ensued over the next three months, ending on 13 December when Abdülhamid II signed the documents which had been hoped for by Young Ottoman leaders in the Empire and in Europe for nearly two decades. The Young Ottoman movement began in the early 1860s amongst a diverse movement of intellectuals and bureaucrats who believed the Tanzimat was insufficient in its goals of extending sovereignty to all of the empire's subjects and adequately staving off European designs on Ottoman territory. Its adherents ranged in their ideological approaches, often combining elements of Enlightenment-rooted liberalism inspired by the likes of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke and contemporary anti-materialist Islamic philosophy inspired by figures such as Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani (Mardin 1973, Elfenbein 2017, Yalçınkaya 2015). Though many of them were exiled to Europe following the bombastic debut of Namık Kemal's play *Vatan yahut Silistre* (The Fatherland, or Silistre) in 1873, Midhat Pasha

and his cohort were deeply imbued with their influence. The announcement of the constitution itself – amidst a conference held in Istanbul with European diplomats – was designed to appease European concerns about the treatment of the Empire's non-Muslim subjects.

At the same time, the mounting geopolitical exigencies of the moment placed increasing pressure on the Ottoman state to deal with unrest in the Balkan provinces, a continued Russian threat, and a treasury that was forced to renege on foreign debts in the face of several bad harvests and resulting famines. Abdülhamid II, given the circumstances of the deposition of two of his predecessors, was also deeply suspicious of Midhat Pasha and those around him.[1] The Istanbul Conference, meant in part to find a solution to a worsening cycle of intercommunal violence in the Balkans, broke up without a solution in January 1877. The leaders of the constitutional government refused to appease Russian agitation in the following months and in April, Russia declared war on the Ottomans. This war, fought in the Balkans and in northeastern Anatolia, was an unmitigated disaster that plunged the Ottoman state into a deep crisis. In the midst of the war, Abdülhamid II began to take advantage of the considerable powers that remained with him in the constitution by banishing Midhat Pasha to a position in Syria, dismissing parliament, and suspending the constitution altogether in the weeks following the conclusion of armed hostilities on 31 January 1878.

Following the Treaty of Berlin, which slightly mitigated the disastrous terms of the Treaty of San Stefano, Abdülhamid II lay in charge of an empire under enormous financial strain and having lost nearly all of its European territory. Facing this crisis, and scarcely 36 years of age, Abdülhamid II would embark on an ambitious restructuring of the Ottoman state, infrastructure, and governing ethos that Selim Deringil has characterized as "fine tuning" that "involved the meticulous inculcation, indoctrination, enticing, frightening, flattering, forbidding, permitting, punishing or rewarding – all in precise doses – which had been the stuff of empire since [sic] Caeser crossed the *limes*" (Deringil 1998, 10; italics in original). This process involved heavy state centralization of industry and construction, repressive restrictions on the press and free speech, massive expansion of the education system, and a reformulation of the Islamic (and implicitly Turkish) character of the Ottoman state. The thoroughgoing and deeply institutionalized authoritarianism of Abdülhamid's reign, "paved the way to a form of modern personal rule that would eventually play a crucial role in late Ottoman and Turkish politics," according to Edhem Eldem (2018, 44).

Union and progress, order and collapse: the Young Turks

The Young Turk ideology was as much a rejection of the Young Ottomans as the Hamidian world view. While the development of their ideology in the late nineteenth century sits in a similar frame as both the Young Ottomans and Abdülhamid – considering questions of engaging with European politics, ideas, and culture in the face of increasing pressure from those nations – their political and ideological programme was by far more strident and radical. Where the Young Ottomans and Abdülhamid sought out solutions to the conflict between Ottoman/Islamic and European scientific and philosophical traditions, the Young Turks saw no contest – science, materialism, and Europe were supreme, and "saving the state" meant adopting all of it whole cloth. Şükrü Hanioğlu has identified four "icons" of the Young Turk movement – the French chemist-politician François-Vincent Raspail, whom they admired for his aim of replacing religion with science; the biologist Claude Bernard, whose experimental methodologies contributed greatly to the Young Turks' adherence to positivism; the German materialist philosopher Ludwig Büchner, whose opus *Kraft und Stoff* would become, according to Hanioğlu, "a cornerstone for Young Turk thought"; and Gustave Le Bon, whose

phrenological elitism perhaps most influenced the Young Turks' self-perception as an avant-garde movement (Hanioğlu 1995, 18–23).[2]

The positivist core of the Young Turk movement's ideology would face political challenges as their political manifestation – the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) – came to the head of a movement to depose Abdülhamid II and reinstate the Ottoman constitution. The conflicts with Freemason, liberal, and conservative opponents in parliament and within their own ranks stemmed partly from their reluctant engagement with the parliamentary and constitutional system to begin with. As Hanioğlu argues, the core Young Turk thinkers supported reviving the constitution for purposes that were instrumentalist and symbolic – having one was necessary to ward off threats to national sovereignty coming from Europe and paying some lip service to egalitarian philosophy was necessary to quell anxieties that could justify European intervention (Hanioğlu 2001, 28–32).

The core group that would lead the revolutionary events in 1908 began their activities in Istanbul at the Royal Medical Academy in 1889, largely under the direction of Ahmed Rıza, who coined the name of the revolutionary umbrella organization. In 1902, members of this coalition would meet in Paris at the Congress of Ottoman Liberals to debate divergent paths towards reform and revolution. A major rift would occur between those who advocated an avante-garde approach to stirring up revolution amongst Ottoman subjects, and those who favoured courting external allies with the aim of staging a coup d'état (Hanioğlu 2008, 145–146). The former group would emerge after a few years as the leading edge of the movement, spurred by the intellectual firepower of Yusuf Akçura's seminal 1904 manifesto *Three Forms of Politics* (*Üç tarz-ı siyaset*) and the 1906 incorporation of the Ottoman Freedom Society, consisting of disaffected army officers in Salonica. Akçura's recommendation of a Pan-Turkist approach to politics, as opposed to Pan-Islamist and Pan-Ottomanist, provided the movement with its ideological firmament, and the incorporation of military officers in eastern Thrace gave the movement a base of power in Macedonia during a period when that region was a pressure point for Abdülhamid II as he was attempting to preserve the Empire's European territory (Akçura, 1976[1904]).[3]

Mass defections and protests began in earnest on 3 July 1908 in the Macedonian and Albanian provinces. Soon afterwards, it appeared that significant forces in the European provinces were prepared to march on Istanbul, and in the face of this threat Abdülhamid II ordered that a new chamber of deputies be decreed on 23/24 July, reinstating the constitution. These moves by Young Turk-affiliated groups were so precise and quick that news of the revolutionary activities did not reach the general public in Istanbul and points east until after the constitution was reinstated (Hanioğlu 2008, 149).

The success of the Young Turks in 1908 cannot solely be attributed to the power of their ideas nor their surgical insurrection. The 1908 revolution, like any revolution, was multifactorial, emerging as a response to the paranoiac repression of Abdülhamid II's censorship, increasing pressure from Great Powers on the Ottoman economy, and the growth of armed separatist movements such as the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and an array of Armenian revolutionary groups in the east. As Ryan Gingeras has put it, in reference to a speech given in Salonica after the revolution by the CUP figure Mehmed Cavid, "Absolutely no one who gathered to hear Cavid speak that summer would have remembered a time devoid of crisis" (2019, 21). That the CUP was able to ride this wave of discontent as an insurgent movement to oust Abdülhamid II after more than 30 years of rule was cause for a widespread celebration throughout the empire that evoked concepts of an "Ottoman brotherhood" which encompassed the newly (re)enfranchised across ethnic and religious lines (Der Matossian 2014, Campos 2010, Jacobsen 2011, Cohen 2014, Fishman 2020). While the umbrella ideology of

the Young Turks, and their particular pressure on the regime from Macedonia were the proximate cause of the revolution, the sustaining energy from across the empire proved crucial over the following year through new elections and a counterrevolutionary coup in April 1909.

This coup, known also as the 31 March Incident, unspooled following the murder of a prominent critic of the CUP, Hasan Fehmi, and mass demonstrations attending his funeral. The demonstrations were largely on behalf of religious conservatives who felt threatened by the apparent egalitarianism of the revolution, as well as those wary of the reduced power of Abdülhamid II in the face of parliamentary changes. A group of infantrymen then executed the coup d'état on 31 March, arresting deputies and organizing a demonstration alongside members of the lower ranks of the Muslim clerical class. The following events would result in the flight of CUP officials from Istanbul and the dismissal of the cabinet. The CUP's flight would be short-lived, however, as officials quickly organized "Action Armies" to again march on Istanbul and reverse the counterrevolution less than two weeks later, resulting in the abdication and exile of Abdülhamid II in favour of his younger brother Reşat (regnal name Mehmed V) (Sohrabi 2011, 224–283). The upshot of this incident, which stemmed primarily from popular dissent rather than machinations between elites in the parliament or palace, was that the CUP emerged as the unquestioned prime mover in Ottoman politics. Despite the persistence of the Ottoman parliament's quasi-democratic role in the years following, the CUP's position was such that they would eventually consolidate into a single-party state in the midst of armed conflict which broke out first with the Italians in Libya in 1911 and later in the Balkans against separatist movements in 1912.

The first four years of CUP rule saw the group increase their sway over opposition factions and groups representing predominantly provincial populations who consistently drew the attentions of parliament to demands for autonomy. These demands were met with hostility by the CUP administration, particularly in areas deemed ripe for separatist conflagration such as Eastern Anatolia and the Balkans (Gingeras 2019, 31–37).[4] A younger cadre of CUP officers came to the fore in this period either by rising to important cabinet positions, or through valorous participation in the losing causes in Libya and the Balkans, many of whom would go on to play crucial military and political roles in the founding of the Turkish Republic a decade later. These losses coupled with the ascendance of young revolutionaries in the ranks of the bureaucracy resulted in the consolidation of Turkish nationalist thinking within the core of the Ottoman state. This group fully consolidated its hold on power in a coup d'état on 23 January 1913 against the government of Kâmil Pasha, head of the Freedom and Accord Party (Hürriyet ve İtilaf Fırkası), who was threatening to cede Edirne to Bulgaria in post-war negotiations. The ascension of Turkist ideology coupled with the tragedy of the refugee crisis that followed the Balkan wars underscored a fundamental distrust towards Greek and Armenian Christian minorities amongst this group that would only be amplified to the most horrific extent in the maelstrom of the Great War. From 1913 until the end of the war, opposition was quieted and the triumvirate of Minister of War Enver Pasha, Interior Minister Mehmet Talaat, and Navy Secretary Ahmed Cemal took command of much of the major decision-making.

After the Ottomans entered the war in 1914, the massive mobilization effort, the ensuing catastrophe of the Armenian genocide, general dissension from rebel minority groups, and the fact that the CUP, while hegemonic, had not truly consolidated its power much further than the main ministries contributed to a slow but nearly total breakdown of state and society relations by the end of the war. A great number of historians have by now demonstrated the clear break with pretensions to a pluralistic Ottomanism in this period as demonstrated by the massacre of the Ottoman Armenian population, but it also bears noting that resistance to the CUP's conduct in the war was evident from the grassroots on up, and that dissension and

factionalism existed amongst and between different agencies throughout the war as a consequence of the sheer scarcity of basic resources brought about by the mobilization effort (Akçam 2012, Akın 2018, Suny 2015, Üngör 2011). By the time the war ended, and Istanbul was occupied, and large portions of Anatolia carved out for new mandatory regimes, what was left of the Ottoman polity was, to say the least, embittered against the palace, the CUP, and the occupying powers, and despite a great diversity in political persuasions almost universally opposed to the final devastation wrought by the post-war settlements at Mudros and Sèvres. It is critical to understand that at the very start of what would become the Turkish independence effort, there was both a unity in opposition to occupation and huge shifts across Anatolia – as well as the Arab provinces – in sociopolitical roles taken up by ordinary subjects of the Ottoman Empire. The post-Ottoman order in what would become the Republic of Turkey emerged from this sense of desperation and crisis that permeated Anatolia and Ottoman Thrace.

Political contestation at the dawn of the Turkish Republic

The Nationalist cause in 1919 and 1920 articulated a vision that was broad in its ideological content at the outset – manifestos from "Defence of Rights Societies" across Anatolia, and later the Grand National Assembly in Ankara, rejected the partitioning of Anatolia and Eastern Thrace, clearly articulated their cause as one on behalf of Muslims against imperialist actions of Christian powers, and parted with pretensions to continue with life under the rule of the Ottoman royal family. Key figures in command of the national forces drew from a cross section of CUP figures, albeit those with more military than political experience. Yet, as the fighting died down and power coalesced around the figure of Mustafa Kemal, fissures began to appear that would shape the political destiny of the nascent republic in significant ways. Having assumed the position of the political leader of the Nationalist forces in 1919, Mustafa Kemal had "seized upon each opportunity to gather greater authority," and personally crafted the emerging political leadership of the movement that only aggregated his power (Gingeras 2019, 59–60). Amidst a crowd of new military heroes with their own political ambitions, and a returning cadre of former CUP officials with deeper experience, the resulting struggles would come to be defined as personal vendettas and power grabs rather than ideological disputes per se (Zürcher 1986, Özoglu 2011). The work of consolidating power under the Ankara government led by Mustafa Kemal would begin in the negotiations at Lausanne, wherein the Turkish delegation was able to successfully argue for an unusual exception to the standard general amnesty provisions for 150 Muslim subjects – ultimately opponents of the national movement and supporters of the sultan in the former Ottoman government and Istanbul press – who would be subject to expulsion by the Ankara government (Özoglu 2011, 15–78).

By this point, discussions and negotiations on the formation of a new republic were well on their way. Less than two months after Lausanne, Kemal announced the organization of the "Halk Fırkası" (People's Party) on 9 September 1923 and the Republic was formally convened on 23 October. Kemal's party would rule virtually uncontested for the next 23 years and would not cede power in the Grand National Assembly until 1950. This picture of overwhelming hegemony often obscures intense political, ideological, and social contestation in the Turkish political sphere. Shortly before the Turkish parliament opened, Mustafa Kemal immediately set about co-opting potential rivals, particularly among elite classes in Istanbul who had largely been disconnected from the war effort, and whose political attachments to Western powers were stronger. In once such instance, a group of proto-feminist figures led by the columnist and novelist Nezihe Mühiddin established a political party, the Women's People's Party (Kadınların Halk Fırkası) before Kemal had a chance to announce the formation of his

own People's Party. Kemal managed to convince its leaders to disband the party and convert their organization into a parastate apparatus, the Turkish Women's Union (Türk Kadınlar Birliği), that would provide material assistance on women's issues, promote Kemalist gender policies, and run a number of women- and family-centred publications. After parliament opened in October of 1923, the work of consolidating interests under the nationalist banner remained unfinished, despite the People's Party's sole position as a representative party. While representatives of most classes joined the People's Party, a sole figure representing the interests of a conservative Anatolian merchant class, Kadirbeyoğlu Zeki Bey, stood as the only independent representative in the parliament voicing dissent on several fronts, particularly the abolition of the caliphate (Balistreri 2015, Hassan 2017). Similarly, local administrators played an outsized role in the enactment and negotiation of the new Kemalist reform programme, in some cases pre-empting secularization and in others mitigating its impact (Ryan 2018, Yılmaz 2013, Meeker 2002).

The government immediately sought ways to arrest this kind of disorganization and take the lead in forwarding a series of sociopolitical reforms that would seek to reshape life across the new Republic. Across the initial period of these social reforms from 1924 to 1928 – including the total disestablishment of the Muslim clerical class, the banning of Sufi lodges (*tekkeler*), sartorial reforms including the banning of the fez and a campaign against veiling, a new civil code based on a Swiss model, and the introduction of a change in script from the "Ottoman" Perso-Arabic script to a modified Latin script in 1928 – open dissent and opposition were crushed at nearly every opportunity. Laws against treason were liberally enforced and the Independence Tribunals (İstiklal Mahkemeleri) tried and executed dozens of religious figures and former CUP officials, on often-flimsy charges of sedition. In November 1924, many of the other leaders who had banded with Mustafa Kemal in the years of the Independence War, including Refet Bele, Ali Fuat Cebesoy, and Rauf Orbay, formed the first opposition party in the Grand National Assembly, the Progressive Republican Party (Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası). The party, whose programme differed very little from that of the ruling People's Party, would last less than six months as a revolt broke out among the Kurdish population in south-eastern Anatolia, the response to which offered Kemal a pretext to shut the party down and bring forth a new set of restrictive laws including the infamous Law for the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sükûn Kanunu*), which passed in March 1925 (Zürcher 1991). The bill was among the first introduced by the new prime minister, İsmet İnönü, after the resignation of Fethi Okyar, who had been sympathetic to multiparty politics. The law would grant the government wide authority to close down political parties, including the Progressive Republican Party, along with social organizations, and submit their leaders and any others who disturbed the peace to an Independence Tribunal. Ostensibly, the law was meant to grant emergency powers to curb the ongoing revolt in the south-east, but, as Hakan Özoğlu has written, "it is not a [sic] misjudgment to suggest that the law's primary aim was not the handling of the Sheikh Said Revolt but rather the opposition" (Özoglu 2011, 102).

While political opposition in this period was suppressed even in its infancy, the onset of aggressive cultural reforms in the first few years of the Republic meant that away from the arena of high politics, there was much negotiation taking place between regional political leaders, resulting in wide variations in enforcement of Kemalist reforms. Scholars such as Hale Yılmaz, Michael Meeker, and Murat Metinsoy have demonstrated how local powerbrokers in the Anatolian provinces played an outsized role in the uneven implementation of Kemalist norms in the 1920s, and beyond (Yılmaz 2013, Meeker 2002, Metinsoy 2011 and 2013). At a certain level, this meant that disagreement with the direction of the Kemalist government was widespread but latently expressed, as much of the populace credited Mustafa Kemal with

bringing an end to a decade of war and desperation, thus granting him a wide berth in politics. This discontent rose to the surface on a popular level during the failed experiment in multi-party politics in 1930. Following the onset of the global depression and mounting anxiety over the Kemalists' handling of the economy, Mustafa Kemal sanctioned the creation of an opposition party in August 1930 to compete that fall in municipal elections. The party, to be named the Liberal Republican Party (Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası) was headed by Fethi Okyar, the former prime minister and close companion of Mustafa Kemal, and would only be allowed to challenge the People's Party on the issue of the economy, offering the alternative of a liberal approach against the statist approach of the People's Party and not on any other issue. The party attracted liberal-minded leaders from within the ranks of the People's Party, but also produced a broad coalition of opponents of the People's Party, the wider intelligentsia, and the populace. While the new party did not publish its own papers, two of its most prominent supporters in the Istanbul press were leftists – Arif Oruç began publishing a new journal, *Yarın* (*Tomorrow*), dedicated to supporting Okyar's party, and *Son Posta* (*The Last Post*), edited by prominent social democrat Zekeriya Sertel, also supported the new party. Likewise, support seemed to come from corners of society upset with the hard-line secularism of the Kemalists. Support from pious Turks swelled to the Liberal Republicans, despite no indication from the leadership that they dissented from the same line as the Kemalists. As party leader, Fethi Okyar had difficulty balancing raucous crowds at his public speeches, including at an Izmir speech which nearly devolved into a riot, with increasing pressure from Mustafa Kemal's circle to hold to the strict line of opposition on economic policy (Weiker 1973, Emrence 2006).

The party's performance at the polls was a major disappointment, even when accounting for apparent corruption and little more than a month to build party infrastructure. In early December, a mere 99 days after the party was formed, the Liberal Republican Party was closed down, and its leadership largely exited the political stage. For Mustafa Kemal and İsmet İnönü, who had by now entrenched himself as the leader's right hand, the outpouring of dissent during the elections coupled with the feeble management by the Liberal Republican leaders was taken as a signal that their sociocultural revolution had not gone far enough. The following year would begin a period of engagement with more radical exploration of revolutionary activity. Having won the lopsided battle with its liberal critics, İnönü would take command of a more statist economy, instituting five-year plans and seeking more aggressive industrialization, with significant aid from the USSR. An official ideology, Kemalism, would be articulated by People's Party leadership (Ryan 2017). The government would sponsor several different efforts to produce an expansive articulation of a Turkish ethno-nationalist thought and ideology. The eight years before Kemal's death in 1938 would see the development of the "Turkish Historical Thesis" and "Sun Language Theory," the implementation of a law for surnames, harsh suppression of underground religious movements, laws mandating the relocation of certain populations in order to ethnically homogenize, or "Turkify" areas with significant Alevi and Kurdish populations, and the bombing of rebellious Alevi populations in Dersim in 1937 and 1938, which resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

While dissent and opposition in certain corners became nearly impossible in these years, the wide ideological experimentation that the regime engaged in meant significant articulation with some of the ideas held by regime's opponents, and thus a relative efflorescence of socialist, racial-nationalist, and conservative-modernist political groups and publications. Many leftists and communists who struggled to find an audience in the 1920s enjoyed prominence in the press as the relationship between the USSR and Turkey grew close, signalled by Soviet involvement in the Republic's tenth anniversary celebrations in 1933 (Hirst 2017, İşçi 2020). The engagement with ethno-nationalist rhetoric spurred on the growth of irredentist Turanist

movements, whose members were closely involved in the Turkish Historical Congresses and influenced much of the historical and anthropological writing on Turkish ethnicity during this period (Landau 1995[1981], Özdoğan 2001). And, while underground religious movements had little room to operate, the 1930s saw a new era of prominence for conservative nationalists whose spiritualist arguments for the Islamic character of the Turkish nation presaged the Turkish–Islamic synthesis that would become hegemonic decades later after the 1980 coup d'état (İrem 2002, 2004). In these ways, the 1930s were an era when the finer points of Turkish political culture began to be realized. While the state itself, having consolidated its power, was often capriciously repressive, this period remained one of vituperative debate that would influence life in Turkey for decades to come.

İsmet İnönü: ideological clashes and the transition to the multiparty system

While İsmet İnönü succeeded Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1938, the political divides amongst Turkey's politicians and intelligentsia that were deepening throughout the 1930s were exacerbated by the cataclysmic struggle unfolding in Europe. As prime minister, İnönü had traditionally taken a stance of pro-statist economic development, having served as the pro-regime contrast to Fethi Okyar's Liberal Republican Party and, after that episode, courted the influence of Soviet state planners and the pro-statist intellectuals of the journal *Kadro*. As president, and self-anointed "national chief" and "permanent secretary of the Republican People's Party," he wished to follow his predecessor by carrying the mantle of the nationalist modernization project forward. Steering a neutral course through World War II would severely impact İnönü's ability to bridge political divides that Atatürk had held together and lead Turkey away from Soviet-friendly diplomacy and statist-driven economics to the open embrace of the transatlantic alliance and significant, though limited, democratic reforms.

Turkey's neutrality throughout the war meant that the various belligerents waged active diplomatic, espionage, and propaganda campaigns in the country in attempts to pull the Turkish public to their side. The İnönü government's diplomatic strategy was fixated on preventing Soviet encroachment on Turkish territory as relations between Moscow and Ankara and been slowly fraying since the renegotiation of the Straits Regime at the 1936 Montreux Conference (İşçi 2020, Deringil 1989). Domestically, the government frequently closed newspapers and journals which trumpeted the cause of the parties to the war too loudly or at inconvenient times, for fear of seeming partial (Koçak 1986). Towards the end of the war, the government clamped down harshly on the ultranationalist camps, which had largely taken up positions favourable to the Nazi regime, arresting many of its leading figures en masse in May 1944 and imprisoning them for over a year, before acquitting them after the war (Ryan 2020, Özdoğan 2001).

İnönü and the central government circles would find it increasingly difficult to sustain its control over the political fracturing in the country as the war drew to a close. Dissenting voices within and outside the People's Party saw the dramatic changes in the global balance of power as an opportunity, as many "refused to accept a limited role, and began to put forth alternative strategies for Turkish development in the post-war world" (VanderLippe 2005, 97). The seeds of the multiparty system were first sown on 7 June 1945, when the People's Party announced that candidates for the upcoming byelections would not need sponsorship of the party in order to run, opening up the possibility for opposition parties to form, and, on the same day, four senior members of the dissenting group within the parliament, Celal Bayar, Refik Koraltan, Fuad Köprülü, and Adnan Menderes issued what is now known as the "Memorandum of

the Four" (Dörtlü Takrir), demanding the end to wartime restrictions on civil liberties in accordance with the victory of democratic governments in the war. The larger developments would come in the fall and winter of that year, as it became increasingly clear that the "four" who had submitted the memorandum in June were setting about to form an opposition party that could act as a true equal to the People's Party in terms of stature (VanderLippe 2005, 119–121).

On 1 November, İnönü announced that the next elections, scheduled for 1947, would be direct elections. Exactly a month later, after the other three members of the "four" had left or were expelled from the party, the most senior member, former prime minister Celal Bayar resigned from the People's Party and announced his intent to form an opposition party. At the time, the nature and ideology of the new party were hard to discern, and various members of the press fought over the future direction the party should take. Zekeriya Sertel, a veteran journalist with leftist leanings who had advocated for the Liberal Republican Party in the pages of *Son Posta* and was editing the daily *Tan* (*Dawn*) in 1945, became convinced that the "four" would sanction a new journal under his stewardship and issued on 1 December the first, and only, issue of *Görüşler* (*Viewpoints*). The cover advertised future articles from each of the "four" and the issue featured scathing attacks on the dictatorial excesses of the People's Party. Subsequently, each of the "four" denied any connection with the new journal and anger at the possibility that a leftist journal would claim sponsorship over the new party boiled over into an anti-communist riot on 4 December that wrecked the *Tan* printing house. None of the perpetrators of the violence would face charges, but Zekeriya Sertel, his wife and co-editor of *Tan*, Sabiha, would be arrested and convicted on multiple charges of defaming members of parliament in articles that were published months before the riot took place (Ryan 2017, 155–211 and Ryan 2020).

On 7 January 1946, the "four" announced the formation of the Democrat Party. The initial platform called for greater liberalization of the electoral system and urged the state to transition to a system that would be friendlier to free enterprise (VanderLippe 2005, 138–139). The Democrats appeared more sanguine about the burgeoning supremacy of the Atlantic alliance than İnönü and his circle. Demands from Joseph Stalin to renegotiate the Straits regime and annex formerly Russian territories along the border in Eastern Anatolia remained fresh, and it was unclear whether the Western hegemons would be able to provide adequate assistance in the face of those threats. İnönü and the People's Party, needing to respond to criticism from the Democrats at home and pressure from an uncertain geopolitical situation, made a series of moves in 1946 to both signal its intent to liberalize the political system and pin back the ambitions of the Democrat Party. The People's Party eventually forwarded more relaxed revisions to the Law on Association, which allowed the formation of unions (although severely restricted their right to strike) and shifted the adjudication of the draconian Press Law to the judicial branch, relieving the government of some of the heavy-handed authority it had exercised during the war. At the same time, it moved municipal elections that had been scheduled for September up to May and general elections that had been scheduled for summer of 1947 up an entire year to the upcoming July. These moves severely impacted the Democrat Party's ability to organize itself, as it had only just begun opening regional branches, and the results of both elections would demonstrate this as the Democrats boycotted the municipal election in May and made only a feeble showing in the July generals (VanderLippe 2005, 140–142). Heading into 1947, the future of multiparty democracy in Turkey remained highly unclear, despite these steps in that direction. Following the July election, Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu was replaced with a more hard-line People's Party figure, Recep Peker, who was a stalwart supporter of the single-party state and the statist economic model.

Pressure would continue to build on İnönü in the spring of 1947 to commit one way or the other on multiparty democracy. The campaign in 1946 had been very contentious and İnönü increasingly "saw domestic tension as not only distracting, but as having potential to lead to destructive alternatives" as Turkey's economy was seriously ailing and demands from both sides of the Cold War hegemons were ratcheting up (VanderLippe 2005, 145). People's Party representatives refused to bring discussion of major Democrat initiatives to the floor of the Assembly, thus leading the Democrats to again boycott a byelection in April 1947, and in June, martial law, which had been in place since shortly after the start of World War II, was extended another six months. At the same time, however, İnönü and his diplomatic corps were deep into discussions of a Treaty of Assistance with the United States – a treaty that would mean that Turkey would join the Marshall Plan and finally ensconce itself in the Atlantic alliance in the Cold War. On the same day that the treaty was signed, 12 July 1947, İnönü made a surprising declaration committing Turkey to a two-party democracy going forward:

> In my opinion, the last year and a half have been full of painful experiences and quite a few hopes have been broken. But, there is much to see and rightly hope for in our future. It is the mission of the majority and the opposition to protect that situation and to develop in a healthy manner.
>
> *(İnönü 1947)*

Not long after this statement, Peker resigned in favour of Hasan Saka, and plans were set in motion for a general election in 1950.

The commitment to multiparty democracy would only bring a partial liberalization of the political sphere, however. As long as it held power, and even as it modulated on economic and civil liberties issues, the İnönü government would be eager to protect its relationship with its new American sponsors, and zealous in its continued suppression of any activity that could be the slightest bit confused with Russian sympathies. The year 1947 saw the prosecution of many suspected members of the Turkish Communist Party and the liquidation of posts held by prominent leftist faculty members of Ankara's famed Language, History, and Geography faculty (Gökatalay 2020). Far-right figures, including many of the ultranationalists who had been tried in 1944, were rehabilitated into the public sphere in a time when redbaiting had become a lingua franca. At the same time, after the 12 July Declaration, the People's Party platform made moves to box in the Democrats, espousing desires to support free enterprise, committing to reform the Village Institutes (Köy Enstitutleri), and reneging on key aspects of the Land Reform law they had previously championed (Zürcher 2004[1993], 214). The anti-communist Cold War paradigm had pervaded the Turkish political scene by the time the 1950 elections came.

The results of the elections on 14 May 1950 were an enormous shock to all observers. The Democrat Party massively improved on its performance in 1946, winning 408 out of the 487 available seats when it had held only 64 in the previous parliament. Power transferred peacefully from İnönü to Celal Bayar, who became president, and Adnan Menderes, who assumed the office of prime minister; a moment that was and still is celebrated as the crowning achievement of the Kemalist project, and the signal event that has justified the existence of a "Turkish Model" for democratization and modernization for decades. However, it is important to remember the foundation upon which that step was taken, that the mere transfer of power following a successful and free (but not fair) election did not on its own bring about the liberal political sphere many thought it would. For many, the election in 1950 was as much a

rebuke of the overweening authoritarianism of İnönü and the People's Party as it was a decided commitment to one or the other's political platform – indeed, by that time, the stated political platforms of the two parties were quite similar in most respects. Particularly given the exclusion from the election of left-leaning political parties, and the subsequent exile of many prominent leftists under the Menderes government, it is perhaps best to understand the election of 1950 as one that, despite appearances, limited rather than expanded officially acceptable political and ideological discourse.

Notes

1 It is worth noting here that less than three months prior to Abdülhamid II's ascension, his uncle, the deposed Sultan Abdülaziz, was discovered dead in his apartment. The death was ruled a suicide, but plenty of rumours had begun to circulate by July that he had been murdered by one of the ministers with whom Abdülhamid II was now dealing. Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, Vol. II: Reform, Revolution, Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 164.

2 For further reading on the Young Turk and Young Ottoman engagement with scientific materialism, see Yalçınkaya, *Learned Patriots*.

3 Yusuf Akçura's work was initially published in *Türk Gazetesi* in 1904; a transliterated critical edition may be found in Yusuf Akçura *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1976).

4 In something of a contrast, the Palestine question was met with considerably more flexibility by the CUP in this period, as revealed in Fishman, *Jews and Palestinians*.

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3

VIOLENCE AGAINST THE KURDS IN THE TURKISH REPUBLIC

Uğur Ümit Üngör and Ayhan Işık

Introduction

The Kurds' experience with modern mass violence, from civil wars to genocides, is long and complex. Whereas Kurds lived for centuries in pre-national conditions in the Ottoman and Persian Empires, the advent of nationalism and the nation-state system in the Middle East in the twentieth century radically changed the situation. World War I was a watershed for most ethnic groups in the Ottoman Empire, and some political minorities such as Armenians and Assyrians suffered genocide – including at the hands of Kurds. Moreover, the post-Ottoman order precluded the Kurds from building a nation state of their own. Kurds were either relegated to cultural and political subordination under the Turkish and Persian nation states, or to a precarious existence under alternative orders (colonialism in Syria and Iraq, and communism in the Soviet Union). The nation-state system changed the pre-national, Ottoman imperial order with culturally heterogeneous territories into a system of nation states which began to produce nationalist homogenization through various forms of population policies.

In the modern Republic of Turkey, Kurds became victims of policies of genocide and genocidal massacres. After the establishment of the Republic in 1923, the Kemalist government launched violent and invasive 'Turkification' policies, for example, by suppressing the Sheikh Said rebellion of 1925 through genocidal massacres, and the 1938 genocide in Dersim, which went beyond mass murder and included forced cultural assimilation of the Kurds in the region. Counterinsurgency in northern Kurdistan (eastern Turkey) in the 1980s and 1990s brought more violence to those areas, resulting in massacres, environmental destruction, and mass displacement. This chapter examines the Kurds' encounter with modern mass political violence in modern Turkey. It looks into three distinct periods: the single-party period (1923–1945) in which the 1938 Dersim massacre was the worst case of mass violence, the counterinsurgency period (1984–1999) during which over 3,000 villages were destroyed, and the spill-over conflict (2015–2016) when fighting blew over from Syrian Kurdistan. These three distinct eras also represent three different political generations, both on the side of the Turkish state (and that of its Kurdish victims): Kemalism, nationalism, and political Islam, respectively. At the same time, the forms and modalities of violence differed, but there were also remarkable similarities between the three periods.

The Kurdish historical experience from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century is a complex process of ambivalent developments, but is generally characterized by a lack of united statehood and a story of collective life in pre-national conditions between the Ottoman Empire and the Persian Empire. Unlike societies with traditions of state formation reaching back to the early modern period, the Kurds' long-term historical experience does not consist of a sustained process of state-building, as most of Kurdistan was governed from Istanbul as the capital of the Ottoman Empire. Kurdish chieftains (*agha*), religious leaders (*sheikhs*), and chiefs (*emirs*) represented political power at the local level, but the conduct of the Ottoman (and subsequent Turkish and Arab) political elites demonstrated that Kurdistan was mostly the object of state-building and not its subject. The destruction and abrogation of the Kurdish emirates until the 1850s eliminated the possibility for an emerging leadership that could formulate nationalist claims around the end of World War I. A town like Cîzre (Jazira), for example, which had been the cradle of the Botan Emirate in the mid-nineteenth century, had by the late twentieth century been reduced to a weak border town with its elites imprisoned, exiled, or assassinated, and its remaining population disenfranchised and terrorized.[1] Cîzre was not an exception among former Kurdish power centres. As the Ottoman and Persian Empires collapsed in the aftermath of World War I, Kurdistan began to be governed by British and French mandates in Iraq and Syria, respectively, as well as by the Turkish nation state. The establishment of Arab nation states in Iraq and Syria then led to the Kurds being pushed into demographic and political minority positions that averted conflict only through weak structures of power sharing. The advent of the nation-state system in the post-Ottoman lands made the Kurds dependent on Damascus, Ankara, Tehran, and Baghdad. Violence against the Kurds in Turkey was part and parcel of the Turkish nation-building process, one that continues with periodic flare-ups of violence.

The Young Turk era, 1913–1950

In Turkey, a generation of Young Turk social engineers was responsible for fundamentally and violently transforming Ottoman society in the period 1913–1950. The Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) and its successor, the Republican People's Party (RPP), presided over a series of massacres, deportations, and forced assimilation campaigns that amounted to genocide of a number of minorities. Kurds suffered mass violence in this authoritarian and Turkish-nationalist period as well. Three massacres stand out for their genocidal nature: the violence in the Diyarbekir region in 1925, in the Ararat region in 1930, and in the Dersim region in 1938. All of these massacres followed organized Kurdish resistance against Kemalist persecution and repression. In all of these cases, the Turkish counter-insurgency that followed during and after the reconquest of territory was exceptionally brutal, barely distinguishing between Kurds who were involved politically or not. In the Kurdish case, it was especially Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his inner circle of military officers and civilian administrators who were responsible for most of the violence, especially the massacres of 1925, 1930, and 1938. Atatürk himself was thoroughly hostile to Kurdish cultural and political rights and was personally involved, from Ankara or Istanbul, in instigating and directing the violence. He was supported by his loyal right-hand man and veteran social engineer Şükrü Kaya and long-time nationalist bureaucrats Celal Bayar and Mustafa Abdülhalik Renda, as well as his army generals: Mürsel Bakü, Kâzım İnanç, Fevzi Çakmak and Kâzım Orbay. What these elites had in common was the background of being Turkish-speaking Ottoman Muslims who disproportionately originated from the Balkans. Their collective experience of exile, modern education in the top Ottoman academies, absorption of Turkish nationalist ideology, and anxieties of ethnic separatism among Turkey's minorities drove them to uncompromising political positions towards the Kurds.[2]

First and foremost, Kurdish elites were specifically targeted throughout the entire twentieth century, both in terms of general persecution and repression, and especially during episodes of mass violence. There has been a long list of assassinations, executions, imprisonment, and torture of religious, cultural, economic, intellectual, and political leaders in all regions of Kurdistan. In Turkey, the most prominent examples are Sheikh Said (1865–1925) and Seyit Rıza (1863–1937), leaders of the uprisings and resistance in 1925 and 1937 respectively.[3] The Kemalists did not only target religious notables; in particular they assaulted secular Kurdish leaders because they could not be co-opted by appealing to Islamic brotherhood. In the post-war era, both politicians who operated within the legal boundaries of the Turkish nation state like Mehdi Zana, as well as commanders and leaders of insurgency movements like Abdullah Öcalan were targeted and imprisoned. In the 1990s, the Turkish government's paramilitary death squads pursued prominent Kurdish businessmen, writers, and journalists, kidnapping and killing them in an effort to destroy the intelligentsia of the pro-Kurdish movement.[4]

The massacres following the 1925 Sheikh Said uprising stand as a good example of the Kemalist-era massacres.[5] In a country-wide circular of 25 February 1925, the government had already promised "severe measures" against the insurgents, though repeatedly declaring the local population to be essentially "naive, innocent, and patriotic".[6] The counter-insurgency warfare that followed after the reconquest of Diyarbekir province was total: villages were torched, civilians as well as combatants summarily executed. The killings followed the methods of the destruction of the Armenians, a decade earlier in the same region. Upon invading a village, the villagers were routinely disarmed, stripped of their belongings (including gold teeth), and collectively tied by their hands with rope. They were then taken to trenches and cliffs, where they were executed with machine guns. Another method was cramming people into haylofts and sheds and setting fire to the buildings, burning the people alive.[7] For example, the Turkish army targeted the Zirkî tribe of Lice for supporting Sheikh Said, and their villages (Bamitnî, Barsum, Zara, Matbur and Çaylarbaşı) were destroyed and the inhabitants murdered. The tribe's large mansion and cemetery were levelled, and all livestock was seized, slaughtered, and cooked as provisions for the soldiers. According to survivors, the same units that had destroyed the town's Armenian population a decade earlier, had been sent to the Kurdish villages with similar instructions. This unit was known among the population as the "butcher battalion" (*kasap taburu*).[8] The attack on certain tribes announced that the killings targeted certain categories associated with the enemy: according to official reports, in the Lice district they "had annihilated most of the sheikhs".[9]

In the north-western districts of Hani, Piran (later renamed Dicle), Palu, and Ergani, Major Ali Barut commanded the army units. Ali Barut became infamous for robbing his victims before killing them. In his districts, too, indiscriminate massacres were committed. In the Palu district, they invaded the village of Gülüşkür and robbed all the houses of their movable property, including cattle. One group of soldiers lashed together and murdered the inhabitants with bayonets, whereas another group burnt the village to the ground. In Erdürük, a large village of more than 100 households, a total of 200 people were crammed into a large stable and burnt alive. According to survivors, the nauseating smell of burnt human flesh lingered in the village for days. Even villages that had never joined Sheikh Said but stayed loyal to the government suffered the same fate. The villagers of Karaman, for example, welcomed the Turkish army with water and buttermilk, but its population was nevertheless massacred and its property seized.[10] As a result of this campaign of carnage, panic and disbelief spread throughout the countryside of northern Diyarbekir. People fled into the hills, caves, and mountain valleys to reach safety, in vain, because army units pursued them into these remote sites as well. According to official army reports, while hunting down a group of survivors on Çotela, a mountain just north of Pasur/Kulp, army units had slaughtered 450 people and burnt 60 villages, rendering the mountain bare of settlement.[11]

Precise data is lacking, but according to one account, during the 1925 massacres, altogether 206 villages were destroyed, 8,758 houses burnt, and 15,200 people killed. During the 1930 massacres in the Ararat area, the army destroyed 220 villages and killed an estimated 10,000 people. Finally, in the 1938 Dersim massacre, possibly 15,000 civilians were killed by the Turkish army and gendarmerie, with widespread destruction to the habitat of the locals.[12] These figures cannot be verified definitively without access to the Turkish military and security archives.

The 1938 Dersim genocide

On 8 December 1936, veteran CUP deportation boss and Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya (1883–1959) convened a conference of all four general inspectorates[13] in Ankara with the aim of evaluating the progress of the regime's governance of the eastern provinces. The conference, chaired by Kaya, featured First Inspector-General Abidin Özmen, Second Inspector-General General Kâzım Dirik, Third Inspector-General Tahsin Uzer, Fourth Inspector-General Abdullah Alpdoğan, and gendarme commanders Naci Tınaz and Seyfi Düzgören. This arrangement of persons at the conference clearly showed that veteran social engineers of the CUP were in charge of ruling eastern Turkey. Over three long days, the inspectors briefed Kaya on how nation-building was proceeding in their districts.[14] Each of the inspectors presented their reports on their own province, promising that the government's measures would obviate the ethnic questions in their areas. The speakers identified Kurds, Armenians, Syriacs, and Yezidis living in Syria as wreckers, who were "working for the establishment of a greater Armenia and unified Kurdistan". Ethnic minority claims were to be prevented by more gendarme presence in the countryside and a continued deportation and settlement programme. Both Alpdoğan and Özmen also argued that simply continuing the physical removal of people would not solve the Kurdish question durably. In their opinion, long-lasting solutions necessitated propaganda and sustained efforts for forced assimilation, such as linguistic and cultural assaults on the Kurds' identity.[15]

In the course of 1937, a radicalization developed in Kemalist policies. On 4 June 1937, the same Şükrü Kaya sent the Ministry of Culture a top-secret circular about establishing Turkish-language boarding schools in Kurdish areas:

> Boarding schools for girls and boys need to be opened and girls and boys from the age of five need to be brought into these schools for education and upbringing. These boys and girls need to be married to each other and settled dispersedly on property inherited from their parents where they can establish a Turkish Nest so that Turkish Culture can be thoroughly implanted [in the region […] Therefore […] it is necessary and essential that small children be placed in this type of boarding schools.[16]

According to Kaya, girls in particular needed to be placed in the schools since mothers were seen as the carriers of the Kurdish culture that needed to be exorcised from their minds. This order had come from Atatürk himself, who had expressed determination to pursue a policy leaving no place for mothers to raise their children with languages other than Turkish. The aim was to drive a cultural wedge between generations in order for Kurds to become "future Turks". The road to the nation was as coercive as it was gendered: women were seen as carriers of national reproductivity, vessels of national identity, and transmitters of culture. The boarding school represented the Kemalist belief that the school's capacity to accomplish the transformation from "savage Kurds" to "civilized Turks" would determine the long-term fate of the Kurds, for if the doctrine of historical progress and the story of Turkish civilization taught anything, it was the incompatibility of "Turkish civilization" and "Kurdish savagism". The assault on cultural

identity was not seen as a racist and colonial practice but as a mission civilisatrice. As such, these policies were not unlike those of the American, Canadian, or Australian governments towards the indigenous peoples (and especially children) of those continents.

Overall, the reaction of the Dersim area to these policies was mixed: whereas some families accepted the new social contract, moved to the cities, and became culturally Turkish, others refused and rejected it. The 1937 Dersim "uprising", much like the 1925 one, was a reaction to these Kemalist policies. The Kemalist counter-reaction then was singularly brutal and possibly the most violent episode of mass murder in the modern history of the Turkish Republic. This period of genocide against Kurds is well documented in terms of its preparation, coordination, societal atmosphere, and ideological justification. Turkish-nationalist social engineers openly called for the deportation and destruction of Kurds, especially in Dersim. Mustafa Kemal personally took the lead in defining the population politics and demographic engineering in this period, assigning his lieutenants to follow a ruthless anti-Kurdish policy of subjugation, deportation, assimilation, and if necessary, elimination. His chief assistant, Interior Minister Şükrü Kaya, consistently called for the comprehensive ethnic and cultural homogenization of the country, both in parliamentary addresses and confidential reports.[17]

The character of the massacres has not been studied in detail due to the lack of access to sources from the perpetrators' perspective. Yet a recent archival discovery has shed some light on this dimension of the killing. A Turkish soldier named Yusuf Kenan Akım kept a diary when he was serving in the army and his unit was ordered to 'clean out' (*temizlemek*) villages in Dersim. His diary entries of 1938 offer a unique insight into the day-to-day perpetration of massacres:

> *13 August*: Today our unit captured 20,000 sheep and 50 Kurds in a valley.
>
> *9 September*: Ah, how I wish I was in İzmir. But we are on some mountain grappling with the Kurds [...] Today we arrived in the valley after combing (*tarayarak*) the mountains and forests. Our unit brought the head of the chieftain of the Şam Uşak tribe Şeytan Ali, and killed and brought the heads of many more people. Now our unit became a favorite, all officers call us the unit of heroes. Ali Galip Paşa told us on the phone that he kisses our eyes. We spent the night an hour away from Ovacık. We are very tired again.
>
> *10 September*: all mountains and forests have been combed. Our unit brought the head of one of the notorious ones. Another unit brought the head of Seyithan. There is a soldier named Ruşen in our unit. He is cutting off all the heads.[18]

The few perpetrator accounts at hand corroborate the eyewitness testimonies of survivors, who recounted in rich detail the massacres, the aerial bombings with confirmed use of poisonous gas, the sexual violence, the mass deportations, and the subsequent policies of cultural genocide.[19]

The "1990s": a new phase of Turkish state violence

The 1990s was a second major period of mass violence against Kurdish civilians. In the conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which became an armed conflict in 1984, Turkish paramilitary units and death squads committed extensive violence against civilians, especially in the 1990s. They were involved in counter-insurgency operations against the PKK, including assassinations, forced disappearances, torture, sexual violence,

material and environmental destruction, and several important massacres of civilians.[20] The massacres of Cizre (1992) and Lice (1993), in which Turkish army forces rampaged through these towns, shelling indiscriminately and shooting at anyone in the streets, left many dozens dead and depopulated entire areas. From 1992 on, the army began 'evacuating' villages in order to cut off the civilian support to the PKK, thereby burning 3,000 Kurdish villages and displacing over three million villagers.[21] The violence not only took place in the Kurdish regions of Turkey, but also targeted Kurds all over: in the western parts of Turkey, government death squads kidnapped and assassinated specific categories of Kurds: journalists, businessmen, politicians, and the like. The Turkish state's violence in the 1990s was truly a watershed in the history of the Kurds. There are various characteristics that distinguish this period from other periods of the Republic, even the most violent periods.[22] With a history of rebellions and resistance led by different political groups with different leaders, the political and sometimes violent struggle of Kurds had been a recurrent feature in the history of the Republic prior to the 1980s and the subsequent war between the PKK and the Turkish state. One of the characteristics of the 1990s that sets it apart from the longer period of conflict was the intensity of violence carried out by the state.[23]

The Turkish state's political violence of the 1990s was importantly a result of the experience the state had gained from violence enacted in previous periods and stands as a reference point for violence enacted in particular in 2015–2016. The years of the 1990s were the most intensely violent decade of a hundred-year history of state violence in northern Kurdistan. It was about the state's new military and political strategy, which it started to implement from the early 1990s.[24] This strategy of violence acted by the state has been named differently. Authors, army, and guerrilla commanders have conceptualized the strategic transformation that occurred at the beginning of the early 1990s in various ways:[25] Former Turkish commander Kundakçı called it 'the 1993 Strategy',[26] Turkish Lieutenant General Altay Tokat defined the strategy as "Low Intensity Conflict" and "field domination",[27] Metin Gürcan, a former soldier in the Turkish army, used the name "Doctrine of Areal Control".[28] On the other side, Murat Karayılan, a PKK leader, called the strategy that state used against them "Total War".[29]

A few key features of the 1990s violence were: Kurdish civilians were massively targeted. The methods of violence perpetrated by the state's official and informal security forces were mainly unsolved murders, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and the burning of villages.[30] Furthermore, next to official armed forces of the state, some of the semi-formal and informal paramilitary armed groups used particularly against Kurdish civilians during the 1990s intense violence as death squads and auxiliary forces.[31] These types of violence were also implemented in the late Ottoman and the Republican periods. But for about a decade, the 1990s, these forms of violence were quite intensely practised against civilians.

In this decade, the most frequent form of violence against civilians was unsolved murders. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report argues that the Turkish government began using a new counterinsurgency strategy against the PKK in 1992 in which the paramilitaries (particularly the village guards) played a major role.[32] Reports prepared in the mid-1990s by the TBMM (*Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi*; Turkish Grand National Assembly) also referred to the JİTEM and counter-guerrilla organization (the Special Warfare Department) as responsible for the unsolved murders in the 1990s.[33] Table 3.1 below demonstrates the dramatic increase in unsolved murders and extrajudicial executions in the 1990s.[34]

Enforced disappearances, which is another form of violence against civilians, was massively applied in 1990 for the first time in the history of modern Turkey. Enforced disappearance by a state's security forces or groups linked with the state is one of the most extreme types of violence against an individual considered to threaten a regime.[35] Therefore, leaving a person

Table 3.1 Unsolved political murders and extrajudicial executions (by year)

1980–1990	*1991–2000*	*2001–2011*	*Total*
103	3285	228	3566

Table 3.2 The numbers of disappeared (by year)

1980–1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*After 2000*	*Date Unknown*
33	18	22	103	518	232	170	94	50	76	33	4

without a grave creates a serious break in the cultural continuity of individuals and society.[36] Moreover, the lack of a grave distinguishes enforced disappearances from extrajudicial executions and unsolved killings. The enforced disappearance of dissidents by the state or its affiliated groups not only end their lives but also serve as intimidation and punishment to all the social and political society to which they belong. Table 3.2 above demonstrates how this method of violence has peaked with the new strategy the state has begun to implement and how it declined in the late 1990s.[37]

Another form of violence was the forced displacement of people living in rural areas as a result of the burning or evacuation of villages in northern Kurdistan. When PKK started the war against the Turkish state, the state established a village guard system to control the rural area and gather intelligence.[38] Accordingly, The state forced many peasants in the rural area to become village guards. Many villages that did not accept the village guards were evacuated and burned.[39] The Turkish state carried out different methods in terms of its new war strategy at the same time: the first was to spread the village guard to control the countryside, the second was to empty the population that supported the PKK and did not accept be village guard from the countryside, and the last was to burn or evacuate villages to emigrate the "disloyal to the state" population. The authorities gave civilians in the countryside "two options": either to stay and become village guards or to leave.[40] These options comprised the choice between loyalty and hostility to the state. TİHV reported that in 1997, 3,500 villages and hamlets had been evacuated and approximately three million people had been forced to emigrate.[41]

Alevis were another target of Turkish state violence (particularly through Turkish nationalist masses, extreme right militias, and vigilantes), specifically in the late 1970s. In 1934 and 1955, the Thrace and Istanbul pogroms, respectively, were state-sponsored attacks against non-Muslim populations to create a homogeneous Turkish nation during the post-Republican period.[42]

The purpose of the Turkish state elites was the construction of a new homogeneous nation, both religious (Sunni Muslim) and ethnic (Turkish). Therefore, in the 1990s, state violence targeted Alevis as well as Kurdish civilians in northern Kurdistan. The first Alevi massacre in the 1990s occurred when an Islamic extremist mob attacked a festival organized by an Alevi association in Sivas on 2 July 1993 and burned down the hotel where the festival was held, killing 35 people. State security forces did not prevent the massacre. The second massacre occurred on 12 March 1995 in the Gazi neighbourhood in Istanbul, where mostly Alevi Kurds lived, after a protest that started as a result of an attack by unknown people with weapons against coffeehouses. There were mass protests that lasted several days in Istanbul due to the

attack against Alevi people. State security forces attacked the protesters in Gazi and other Alevi neighbourhoods, killing 20 people in total. Gazi was an Istanbul neighbourhood where the methods of violence used in northern Kurdistan were tried during the entire decade.[43]

Old habits, new methods: urban destruction in 2015–2016

State violence against Kurds is an old habit, as old as the Ottoman centralization policy and the establishment of the new Turkish nation state. The destruction of prominent Kurdish cities by state forces during the 2015–2016 conflict was a new phase in the use of violence. But, the destroying of the Kurds' settlements is not a new type of political violence. Kurdish villages were burned and destroyed during the Koçgiri (1921), Sheikh Said (1925), and Ağrı (1930) rebellions and the Dersim genocide (1938) just before and after the establishment of the Republic.[44] As mentioned above, in the 1990s, thousands of villages were burned and evacuated, and this destruction was one of the most obvious methods of state violence in the 1990s. However, the destroying of urban centres was a new stage and method of violence implemented by the state. Similar but low-level urban destruction had been caused by the use of heavy weapons by state forces during the conflicts in Şırnak during the 1992 Newroz festival and in Lice in October 1993.[45]

In the Turkish state tradition, which is claimed to have a democratic political system, it is state policy to deny political differences, social problems, and eliminate the opposition that puts on the agenda these issues, and also the method for 'solving' these problems has generally been armed violence. For more than 40 years, conflicts have been going on between the Turkish state and the PKK, and ceasefires and negotiations have been undertaken several times since 1993. The most effective negotiation period was the peace talks between 2013 and 2015.[46] However, while peace talks between the PKK's leader, Öcalan, and state officials continue, the Turkish state has built an enormous military base in Kurdistan, constructing new prisons and many new outposts in rural areas. These newly built military stations are called in Turkish *Kalekol*, which means an outpost like a castle. There were even protests and small-scale conflicts to prevent the construction of these military stations during the peace process.[47]

In the fall of 2014, before the peace process concluded, some newspapers reported that the government had adopted a plan prepared by the Turkish army aimed at eliminating the PKK and its supporters. The name of this strategy, which was discussed in the press, is claimed to be an Implosion Plan (Çöktürme Planı), and it is stated that it aims at a total military annihilation, as in the case of Sri Lanka.[48] The Sri Lanka case refers to the elimination of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), which defended the Tamil community against the government, as well as the killing of many civilians.[49] The Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) MP Alican Önlü also asked the government about the plan, but did not get any answers.[50] However, in the summer of 2015, at a time when many people hoped "this time there will be peace", the war resumed with all its violence.[51]

These war preparations by the Turkish state during the peace process have caused intense conflict and urban destruction since July 2015. Turkish authorities began operations in more than 30 urban and a number of rural locations from July 2015 on the grounds that Kurdish youths had set up barricades and were digging trenches in cities during the peace process. According to the UN report on the conflict and urban destruction in 2015–2016, between 355,000 and 500,000 Kurdish people were forcibly displaced in these military operations by security forces. It says more than 2,000 people have died in the conflicts, including 800 Turkish security forces, 1,200 Kurdish people, and it is not clear how many of them are civilians and how many are armed youths. During these operations, curfews were imposed for weeks, sometimes months.[52]

It is also stated in the report that Turkish air and ground forces used heavy weapons in these military operations to bomb and destroy settlements and that these demolitions are also seen in satellite images. The cities that experienced the most deaths during the military operations and where the most destruction occurred were as follows: Cizre (province of Şırnak); Sur, Silvan, and Lice (province of Diyarbakır); Nusaybin and Dargeçit (province of Mardin); Şırnak Centre and Silopi, Idil (province of Şırnak); and Yüksekova (province of Hakkari).[53]

As is also evident from the testimonies of those who were there during the operations, government agencies re-recruited and used many paramilitaries which had experience in the 1990s conflicts (Interview, conducted in Cologne, 13 February 2017). Like the 1990s, paramilitary groups were used in these military operations with heightened capacities, operating under formal military forces. Among the names used for the teams that participated in the 2015 conflicts were "JİTEM" and "Esedullah" (Lion of Allah).[54] JİTEM (Jandarma İstihbarat ve Terörle Mücadele/Gendarmerie Intelligence and Counter-Terrorism Organisation) was one of the most active death squads during the 1990s conflict in northern Kurdistan.[55]

The Turkish state's use of violence has intensified in northern Kurdistan, particularly in post-2015 cities. The destruction of the towns demonstrates that state violence has moved to a different stage in terms of social problems and relations with the opposition. It could be argued that those military operations aimed at re-establishing the Turkish state's sovereignty in Northern Kurdistan. As a result, those methods of annihilation illustrate that the state authorities aim to re-establish the sovereignty of the state through violent methods, not to resolve the Kurdish issue through the peace talks. The method adopted by the Turkish authorities for this is the same as in the case of Sri Lanka: total destruction.

Conclusion

All in all, these three distinct periods of violence had in common that they were functions of the Turkish nation state's imposition of homogeneity on its society by targeting Kurdish civilians, either individually or collectively. The impact of this violence was existential for the Kurds. In the popular imagination and media representation, victimization became an intrinsic element of Kurdish identity. Without a Kurdish census, however, we do not even know the total number of Kurds who died (or even currently live) in the region. Similarly we do not have reliable figures on the death counts: the Dersim genocide has been estimated as anywhere between 12,000 and 40,000; the 1990s has slightly better statistics, but thousands are unaccounted for, and without proper research on mass graves and state archives, we do not possess any definitive numbers.[56] Significant research has been conducted on the psychological, societal, and cultural trauma that these violent episodes have inflicted on Kurdish society in Turkey. Turkification sowed the seeds of violent contestation, as the Kurdish response to victimization was along the spectrum of fright, flight, and fight – the latter symbolized by the rise of Kurdish-nationalist and socialist political parties (such as the PKK), as well as intercommunal conflict in the Kurdish region.

This chapter has argued that these three distinct violent phases might have been episodic, but also that much of the logic of this violence was systemic. It emanated from specific ideological precepts (nationalism) and security doctrines (preventing cross-border Kurdish unity), as well as significant continuities in practice and cadre. It is unlikely that without the precedent and legacy of Kemalist violence, the 1990s would have been as violent as they were. The institutional and cultural memory of the Turkish army was passed on from one generation to another, and whether it was Sheikh Said's movement or the PKK, the southeast of the country was continuously seen as a soft underbelly of the nation state. The consequence for different

generations of Kurdish civilians was victimization and trauma, which reverberates into the twenty-first century.

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4

REMAKING TURKEY'S POLITY AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Zeynep Kezer

Introduction

Within the first quarter of the twentieth century, the demographic makeup of the territory that corresponds to modern Turkey changed dramatically. Not only did the region suffer a massive population loss during World War I and its immediate aftermath, but it also had its ethnoreligious composition irreversibly altered. Between the beginning of the war in 1914 and the first Republican census of 1927, the percentage of non-Muslims in its total population had dropped from 20% to 2.5% (İçduygu, Toktaş, and Soner 2007:363). In fact, World War I was the culmination of tectonic shifts in the global geopolitical order, which, starting from the mid-nineteenth century had been playing out increasingly more violently in and around Ottoman territories, often resulting in the deportations, massacres, and forced exchanges of civilians on the basis of their ethno-religious identities. The decrease of non-Muslims' share in the population continued under the Republic, and by 2005 they accounted for just 0.02% of the total.

The present chapter examines the rapid reshaping of Turkey's demography and cultural landscapes during its violent transition from a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire to a modern unitary nation-state. Following a brief overview of the transformation of Ottoman ethno-religious categories and the catastrophic events leading to the Empire's collapse, I will turn to the emergence of minority as a novel social category following the Lausanne Treaty (1923), which recognized Turkey's sovereignty as a peer within the system of nation states. Next, I will examine the experience of minorities, within the fluctuating context of state policies and geopolitical concerns, focusing in particular on their presence in the public sphere and the state-sanctioned appropriations of their assets. As a historian of cultural landscapes, my interest is both in the demographic profile and in the relatively less explored, but experientially very significant, spatial dimension of the processes of minoritization by which abstract legal concepts and international covenants became lived everyday reality.

Millet, the mutation of a social category

Having expanded by conquest and the accommodative incorporation of diverse peoples, the Ottoman Empire was, from the outset, an inherently pluralistic society, comprising two main strata: at the top were the sultan and his entourage of top-level administrative, military, and

bureaucratic officials; the rest were subjects (Göçek 1993). Historically, the latter was further subdivided into vertical segments by religion, known as *millet*s. *Millet* was a category based on Islamic law, which recognized, alongside Muslims, other peoples of the book, known as *dhimmi*s, as the sultan's subjects. *Dhimmi*s were not expected to convert, had representation through their spiritual leaders, and enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in handling their own religious and cultural affairs, but they were required to pay *jizya*, an exemption tax, in lieu of military service. Since being Muslim was a prerequisite for accession into the higher strata of rulers, in this arrangement, Muslims had certain structural advantages over the *dhimmi*s.

However, shifts in global trade routes, successive defeats in wars against rival powers that entailed territorial losses, and intensifying integration with the networks of imperial capitalism transformed the Empire's social and economic structures. Especially throughout the nineteenth century, while many entrepreneurial non-Muslims, who engaged in international commerce and nascent modern professions, saw their financial fortunes rise, Muslims, despite their privileged status, saw theirs ebb. The actual fluctuations in wealth and status were more complicated and varied by region. Especially in major port cities, some enterprising non-Muslims acquired a new economic prominence with extensive international commercial ties, though most non-Muslims, who continued to work as farmers, tradesmen, or small merchants, did not see much change in their circumstances. Nonetheless, the visibility of the former reinforced mutually held negative stereotypes and contributed to rising tensions among the *millets*. Moreover, increased contact with the West, through conflict or collaboration, facilitated the influx of Enlightenment ideas, including individual rights, modern citizenship, and national identity. These were absorbed differentially by the Empire's diverse constituencies, and reinterpreted as needed to legitimize new kinds of political activities and demands (Veinstein 1999; Minassian 2006; Somel 2001; Phrankoudakē and Keyder 2007; Zandi-Sayek 2012; Reeves-Ellington 2013; Yosmaoğlu 2013). Their claims were aided and abetted by European powers, all of which had competing designs on the Empire. France, Russia, Austro-Hungary, and Britain variously intervened in Ottoman internal affairs, ostensibly to protect the interests of *millets* with whom they claimed to have affinities (Barkey 1997; Fortna 2008; Keyder 1987). These processes gradually infused the concept of *millet* with an ethnic meaning and a new political dimension, sometimes fanning secessionist flames and increasing the distrust between Ottoman rulers and non-Muslim subjects. They also gave rise to misgivings among the Empire's constituent *millet*s. Towards the century's end, with wars on several fronts and insurrections in many regions (especially where the central authority's reach was weak), the Ottoman Empire experienced great loss of life, assets, and territory. As the Empire shrunk, Muslim residents of ceded territories began migrating en masse to its remaining territories. In this great unmixing process, there also was a parallel outflow of non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, who no longer felt safe at home, to neighboring empires or newly forming states. (Brubaker 1995)

The Balkan War (1912–1913), which triggered an unprecedented wave of Muslim refugees fleeing into major Anatolian cities, severely testing local authorities' ability to cope, was a watershed moment (Findley 2010:204). First, it effectively marked the end of the Ottoman presence in Europe, abruptly truncating the long-standing image, cultivated by the ruling elites, of an imperial domain straddling Anatolia and Rumelia, with Istanbul, the capital, ensconced between the two. Second, it foreclosed all possibilities for preserving a pluralistic society. Shocked by the loss of their homelands, in 1913, a group of Balkan-born military officers assumed leadership of the Congress of Union and Progress Party (CUP), staged a coup, and established a dictatorship (Hanioğlu, 2008:68–70). The CUP, originally formed to devise a plan for shoring up the disintegrating empire, had drawn support from diverse segments of Ottoman intelligentsia including some non-Muslims at first. But its new leaders—Talat, Celal,

and Ethem Pashas, who came to be known as the triumvirate—represented a zealously nationalist faction within the party, and they eagerly seized the opportunity to implement policies to rid the Empire from its non-Muslim populations (Zürcher 1984, 2010).

Under CUP leadership, the Ottoman Empire entered World War I in alliance with the Axis powers. Using the war and Armenian nationalist activities as a pretext, the CUP's leaders ordered a mass deportation that decimated Anatolia's Armenian population. Other non-Muslim communities, such as the Greek Orthodox and Syriacs, would also become targets during the war. Intercommunal violence continued after the Ottoman defeat, when the country came under post–World War I occupation, and later, during the War of Independence, which fought to regain control from the Allies by Turkish nationalists with support from the now nominally defunct CUP's paramilitary wing and its extensive ground operation in the Anatolian provinces.

By the time the Lausanne Treaty, which stipulated a compulsory population exchange between Greece and Turkey, was signed, a signifiicant proportion of Anatolia's Greek Orthodox population had already perished or fled. This exchange, unlike the previous one carried out following the Balkan war, was compulsory. Executed in a rush and with little logistical preparation, almost two million Orthodox Christians, many of whom spoke no Greek, were forced to leave, and 500,000 Muslims, who were a mix of Turkish, Greek, Albanian, and Macedonian speakers, arrived in Turkey (Brice 1954; İçduygu and Soner 2006; İçduygu et al. 2007; Pallis 1938; Ülker 2008). Evidently, although *millet* had acquired an ambiguous—yet growing—overlap with ethnicity in the nineteenth century, when push came to shove, as a social category, it still was moored in religion—especially for the leaders of Greece and Turkey. As a consequence of such large-scale death and displacement, the demographic makeup and distribution of Early Republican Turkey bore little resemblance to what had been there before. Not only had the country become more overwhelmingly Muslim than ever before, but, as non-Muslims had tended to concentrate in cities, the percentage of its urban population had dropped from 25% to 18%. This change would have long-term consequences as non-Muslims in cities typically engaged in specialist trades and modern professions, and their skills departed with them (Akgönül 2007; Aktar 2006; Üngör and Polatel 2011).

At Lausanne, determined to prevent a recurrence of atrocities in the future, Turkey's former adversaries demanded protections for its now largely reduced non-Muslim communities' civil, cultural, and religious rights. They required the Turkish government to grant financial and institutional support for non-Muslims' religious and educational facilities and non-Muslims' ability to provide social services through their respective pious endowments. They called for protections for non-Muslims' performance of religious rites and the use of their mother tongues in public. Maintaining these was considered crucial for their ability to reproduce their cultures. Turkish dignitaries resented such demands, which they saw as compromising national sovereignty, but begrudgingly agreed to abide by said ground rules, promising not to pass laws undermining these protections.[1] They were reluctant to integrate indigenous non-Muslims, whose ancestry predated the Ottoman Empire into the neophyte state's polity, but asserted that non-Turkish-speaking Muslims (such as Kurds, Circassians, or even new immigrants from the Balkans like ethnic Albanians or Bosnians) were not minorities, revealing, yet again, the profound pervasiveness of *millet* as a religious category in their imagination. By establishing non-Muslims as a separate category of citizens with equal civil and political rights, but special protections, the Lausanne Treaty reaffirmed Islam as the basis of membership in the Turkish nation and the exclusion of non-Muslims from it as an unassimilable category of citizens. This mutually agreed conflation of religion and ethnicity from the outset would facilitate the further homogenization of Turkey's population by faith. Moreover, the treaty, much like in the Empire's last decades, granted the authority to monitor non-Muslim citizen's rights to Turkey's

former adversaries. In so doing, it raised long-standing Turkish anxieties about European designs on the country's integrity. It also made non-Muslims vulnerable to both the fluctuations of Turkey's international relations and the vagaries of its national politics, wherein their status as "Turks-in-law" would be frequently exploited by politicians and local pressure groups to mark them permanently as suspect citizens.

Constructing the other in public sphere

Minority was, initially, an unfamiliar social and legal category, one that would be fleshed out through conspicuous—and often compulsory—performances of difference that gradually produced a lesser category of citizenship with diminished participation in Turkey's public, economic, and cultural life (Akgönül 2007; Aktar 2000, 2006; Cağaptay 2007; Levi 1996b; Okutan 2004; Oran 2004; Yıldız 2001). Turkish officials tried to suspend or dilute Lausanne's protections, and leaned on non-Muslims to renounce them, although non-Muslims were not signatories to the treaty, and legally they had no authority nor reason to change its terms. Moreover, in blatant breach of the treaty's terms, at various points, they constrained non-Muslims' movements within the country, demanded extralegal taxes, and suppressed their practices of cultural reproduction. Last but not least, they fostered a legal climate that overlooked constant daily microaggressions perpetrated by fellow citizens that reified the otherness of this new subjectivity. Minoritization was an inherently untidy and contentiously negotiated process wherein various actors vied for extracting compromises from one another or occasionally insinuating themselves into gaps that opened along the way.

From the start, Turkey's remaining Christians faced severe travel restrictions requiring them to obtain special permits. The permits involved copious amounts of paperwork, took a long time to process, and were rarely granted.[2] Even short trips between neighboring localities were under police or gendarme supervision, and frequent inspections on roads and railroads thwarted furtive attempts to evade them (Haker 2002:185–86). By confining non-Muslims to very small geographies, the restrictions acted as extralegal instruments of detention, curtailing their basic freedoms as citizens. They kept extended families apart for long periods and weakened social networks that depended on frequent and regular contact. Moreover, considering that a substantial percentage of the non-Muslim workforce were merchants and middlemen whose livelihood inherently depended on travel, the restrictions, beyond an inconvenience, severely limited their participation in the national economy. In short, non-Muslims were treated as if they were foreigners in their own country, and their emigration was encouraged.[3] Ironically, in stark contrast to the difficulty of getting permits to travel within Turkey, they were issued passports promptly on demand.

Many discriminatory practices were ideologically driven and implemented without regard for their long-term consequences – even when they threatened to damage national interests. A case in point is the imposition of travel restrictions on Jews, who, in the early years of the Republic, unlike Christians, had been free to move. Better disposed than their Muslim Turkish counterparts to facilitate trade due to their broader business experience and, in the case of imports and exports, their ability to speak foreign languages, Jewish businessmen rose to fill the gap left by Greeks and Armenians, expanding their businesses considerably (Levi 1996b:17). But when events following a Jewish funeral suddenly swiveled out of control and were deliberately misrepresented by the nationalist press as expressions of disloyalty, the government banned travel for all Jews throughout the country (Levi 1996a). It was not long before the side effects of this short-sighted decision became evident in the Turkish economy. As suppliers in the countryside, whose ability to send goods to the market was disrupted, began to complain,

three months later, the government was compelled to rescind travel restrictions on Jews (Haker 2002:186–88; Levi 1996a:26–27).

Official policies and attitudes set the tone for the production of new asymmetries in social and economic exchanges between Turkey's Muslim and non-Muslim citizens. The unwillingness of local authorities to prosecute attacks against non-Muslims fomented a hostile environment in which bullies found license to act on their worst instincts with impunity. In particular, religious rites, the performance of which inherently affirmed one's membership in the Jewish or Christian communities, drew unwanted attention (Arslanyan 2005:73–75; Vasilian 1952:115). Attending church was akin to an obstacle course, and local authorities took liberties, disrupting services sporadically and questioning priests and parishioners whether they had a justifiable cause for concern or not. Non-Muslim clergy came under verbal and physical harassment, sometimes endangering their lives.[4] Consequently, many sought to reduce their visibility and resorted to holding church services, baptisms, and weddings in private homes (Arslanyan 2005:75–76; Margosyan 1994:56; Vasilian 1952:116). But funerals, especially in smaller towns, were extremely difficult because the deceased had to be taken in a procession, through public paths, past hecklers, to be buried in a designated cemetery (Vasilian 1952:116).

In the aftermath of decades of massacres, purges, and exchanges, maintaining a critical mass to engage in communion was a challenge. The situation was dire outside of cities like Istanbul or Izmir, where, at least, Lausanne's other signatories had some diplomatic presence to monitor the situation. Few clergy were left in the provinces and rural communities, and new ones were not forthcoming. Itinerant priests were dispatched once or twice a year, typically from Istanbul, to perform major rites such as baptisms and weddings. But the routine activities that kept a community vibrant and facilitated the transmission of culture across generations atrophied, giving further incentive for non-Muslims in Anatolia to either migrate to Istanbul or leave the country altogether.

As embodiments of the Empire's pluralistic makeup, churches, synagogues, and their various endowed ancillary properties had been as familiar components of Ottoman townscapes as their Islamic counterparts. But when they lost most of their primary users, their revenues for maintaining such sites and services also dried up, forcing these communities to sell properties and opening them up to predatory appropriations. Abandoned buildings were put to new uses that altered their use, often intentionally demoting their stature, and significance. Many were used as sources of construction materials for new buildings nearby. Given their distinctive forms, these structures remained just as recognizable for a long time – but they looked out of place now that the webs of interactions that once positioned them at the heart of their respective communities were severed.

Further exacerbating non-Muslims' unease in public was the launch of the "Citizen Speak Turkish" campaign in 1928. This was the most concerted among similar efforts to date, almost all of which were driven by overeager officials and impressionable youth seeking to purge the use of languages other than Turkish in public (Aslan 2007). While never officially endorsed, the campaign counted on implicit support from government agencies and prominent members of the Republican administration. Notably, the standard-bearers (or fronts) for the campaign were university students who also tried to enlist high school students to join the project (Aslan 2007:254). Their endeavor drew frequent and favorable press coverage, which, considering the strict censorship on the media, could not have happened without official consent. Editorials suggested that if they did not learn Turkish, non-Muslims were merely "passport Turks" and recommended tactics to pressure them to do so (Aslan 2007:256). "Citizen Speak Turkish" gained traction mainly in Ankara and in commercial or industrial cities like Istanbul, Izmir, Bursa, and Edirne, which still had sizable non-Muslim populations whose primary language

was not Turkish. To increase its visibility, campaigners posted banners and advertisements in heavily used public spaces such as theaters, cinemas, streets and squares, shop windows, and public transit vehicles. Non-Muslims heard speaking in other languages among themselves or seen carrying foreign-language publications were harassed in public, and reminded to revere the language of the country.[5] Even if it eventually lost steam, the campaign (and the sentiments it tapped into) never really ended. For example, in February 1933, incensed at the Belgian manager of Wagons-Lits travel agency for requiring that Turkish employees use French (the company's official language for communications), university students ransacked the agency and surrounding businesses in Istanbul's main business district in what was a terrifying afternoon for the mostly non-Muslim shopkeepers. Nevertheless, the authorities dismissed the incident as a reasonable reaction to a foreigner deriding the Turkish language and pressed no charges.

The passage of a 1926 law that made "insulting or weakening the Grand National Assembly, the government, the army, the navy, or Turkishness" or the "laws of the Turkish Republic" punishable by imprisonment was yet another tool for intimidating non-Muslims (Koçak 2005). The law was so vaguely worded and open to interpretation that almost anything someone said or did could be considered a violation of it depending on the discretion of the prosecutor. Indeed, the pretext of "insulting Turkishness" was used to break down gatherings, justify arrests, withhold justice, and even condone violence. Although on paper the law did not target non-Muslims, in practice, its effects on them were profound. It did not take long for those who attacked or harassed non-Muslims to begin using it as a cover, claiming that their non-Muslim victims had used anti-Turkish slurs, spoken out against Turkey, or engaged in anti-Turkish propaganda, thereby provoking the attack. Notably, a disproportionate number of those who were tried under this law were non-Muslim.[6] By 1933, frivolous accusations based on the law had proliferated to the point where the *Akşam* newspaper columnist Vala Nureddin argued it had become a catchall for the complaints of "any cruel thug who wants his personal enemies, rivals, debtors, creditors, teachers, or students, in short, anybody whom he fears, loathes, or with whom he has unsettled scores to languish in jail"(Nureddin 1933).

The ascent of hardliners in the government and the outbreak of World War II marked a sea change in policies toward non-Muslims. Whereas previously they were compelled to reduce their visibility and assimilate, the new policies placed their difference on public display as the expression of a presumed essential and unbridgeable chasm between the nation and its others. In April 1941, as the scope of the war in Europe broadened, the government conscripted all non-Muslim males between ages 20 and 40, in a program that came to be widely known as "Twenty Classes Conscription" (Yirmi Kur'a Askerlik).[7] Presented as a "preemptive measure" to nip in the bud "fifth column" activities, for which non-Muslims were assumed to have a proclivity, this was, in effect, the criminalization of religious difference. The gathering and transportation of the conscripts were public spectacles. In Istanbul, the men waiting to be transferred were penned inside a chain-link fence in the city's largest square, Sultanahmet (Arslanyan 2005:40–42; Garavaryan 2004; Yalçın 2007:76–80). This was a makeshift holding area because local authorities were caught just as off guard as the conscripts by the government's decision, and its effect was to turn the square into an outdoor jail with its inmates on display for all to see. The anxiety experienced by the conscripts and their families was understandable. For Armenians, the program was eerily reminiscent of the tragic events of 1915, while for Jews, overt sympathies toward Nazi Germany and its anti-Semitic policies expressed by some powerful members of the government were extremely unsettling.[8] Conscription was internment by another name. It had no military purpose, the men received no weapons or training, and their uniforms differed conspicuously from those of regular Turkish soldiers. They lived and worked under harsh and unsanitary conditions, and were kept under constant surveillance. Coercing them

to perform hard labor and menial tasks was seen as payback for their perceived command of resources and access to cultural and economic capital their incarcerators lacked. Moreover, since the conscription, which lasted 16 months, often comprised multiple generations of a family all at once, it had also affected their businesses adversely by limiting their options to find cover during their absence.

The Twenty Classes Conscription was a practice of segregation that stood in stark contrast to what military service is widely recognized to be: an indispensable tool of national integration processes. Universal conscription facilitates the production of a horizontal comradeship among conscripts of wildly divergent backgrounds who are bound together by the shared experiences of hardship and service it entails. In contrast, the Twenty Classes Conscription was a practice of segregation. It was the public enactment of the absolute conviction that non-Muslims could never partake in that comradeship. Even though Muslim and non-Muslim citizens shared the same constitutional rights on paper, the latter would never attain them in practice.

Nationalizing assets

Creating a Sunni Muslim bourgeoisie that controlled the means of production and distribution was on the nationalist agenda from very early on. Shortly after they took over in 1913, CUP's triumvirate began implementing it opportunistically first in the aftermath of the Balkan War, with supposedly voluntary population exchanges, then escalating it exponentially during the purges and massacres of Armenians and Orthodox Christians during and after World War I. Theirs was as much a wealth transfer on a massive scale as it was a demographic engineering project. The CUP tapped into resentments against the structural differences Muslims felt had favored non-Muslims especially since the early nineteenth century, and leveraged it to obtain support from local Muslim notables. In turn, the notables stood to gain considerable fortunes with the purge of non-Muslims in their respective regions and the reapportionment of their of assets, including homes, fields, farms, and factories to Muslims (Akçam and Kurt 2015; Morack 2017; Onaran 2014; Üngör and Polatel 2011). Albeit in a dramatically haphazard fashion, Muslim immigrants from neighboring countries constituted another class of beneficiaries from this grand redistribution (Arslanyan 2005; Karaosmanoğlu 1953). Said change of hands was far from smooth, and consequently, the redistribution's unevenness spawned new social and economic hierarchies—and grudges—in each locality.

After the devastating defeat in World War I, CUP's top brass exited in disgrace. Nevertheless, their ideas about wresting resources from non-Muslims lived on among the party's rank and file (many of whom went on to become members of modern Turkey's founding cadres). So did their alliance with local notables. This implicit understanding underpinned the permissive legal environment that helped whip up public rage during major violent incidents, in addition to the ongoing everyday microaggressions mentioned earlier. One such dramatic flare-up occurred in Turkey's Thracian provinces in the summer of 1934 (Bayraktar 2006). Aided and abetted by local officials and powerful former CUP sympathizers within the government, angry mobs began attacking Jewish citizens and looting their homes and businesses. Within a few days, the violence spread and escalated so much that thousands of terrified Jews fled to Istanbul, selling off their businesses and properties at below market prices or abandoning them altogether. Official estimates put the number of refugees at 3,000, whereas British diplomats' estimate was closer to 8,000.[9] Most of them would never return, largely ending Jewish presence in Thrace.

At other times, the government deployed its full legal-bureaucratic might overtly to carry out the wealth transfer. In November 1942, ostensibly to make up for a shortfall in revenue

due to the difficulties stemming from World War II, the Wealth Tax (Varlık Vergisi) law was passed. Although the tax was to be collected from all affluent individuals, it manifestly targeted non-Muslims: Its schedule was indexed to each taxpayer's ethno-religious affiliation, requiring significantly more contributions from non-Muslims than Muslims (even when they were partners in the same business). Despite constituting only 1.5% of the population, non-Muslims would eventually pay 53% of the total collected (Akar 1999:160–61; Aktar 2000:40). The government was willing to negotiate reductions with Muslims, and imposed far lighter sentences on them if they failed to pay within the allocated 15 days. In contrast, non-Muslims who could not pay were sent to labor camps in eastern Turkey (Bahar 2003:168–69).[10] Coming on the heels of their discharge from the Twenty Classes Conscription, the tax caught many non-Muslims in an already vulnerable economic situation. Especially for those who had assets but lacked liquidity, the short time frame triggered a massive property sell-off at bargain prices (Clark 1972:208; Aktar 2006, 2000).[11] Considering the general lack of liquidity, with the exception of a few well-placed Muslim Turkish businessmen, the main buyers for these assets were state-supported enterprises. Real estate prices plunged due to the sell off, successful businesses collapsed, and men with much needed professional and business skills were sent off to labor camps – none of this was good for Turkey's frail WWII economy. Yet so blind was the zeal to disenfranchise non-Muslim citizens that companies like the Yarmayan family's foundry, which manufactured equipment for the Turkish military, were confiscated and closed down (Dinçel 1999). Nonetheless, with few exceptions, government officials and the intelligentsia, cheered on by the press, argued the tax was necessary to complete the unfinished business of reconquering Turkey (Akar 1999; Aktar 2000; Onaran 2014; Ökte 1951).

The Wealth Tax forever "poisoned the sense of trust between the state and citizens that is indispensable for a thriving […] economic life," wrote Faik Ökte, who oversaw its implementation in Istanbul, but later publicly regretted it (Ökte 1951:209–10). The tax affected a relatively small number of people, but it was the violation of a fundamental sense of justice. What is more, as with the Twenty Classes Conscriptions, its victims were publicly and unfairly shamed as profiteers, the repossession and auctioning off of their properties and the transfer of debtors were turned into spectacles.

Such policies gave non-Muslims all the more reason to emigrate. Hence, within two years of Israel's creation, 33,000 Turkish Jews left (Aktar 2006:241–42). The remaining non-Muslims, who were already living in anguish, became even more reticent to partake in the national economy, and when they did, they sought a Muslim-Turkish partner to shield themselves (Clark 1972:214–15; Vasilian 1952:114).

Citizens with a kinstate

The Turks of Western Thrace and the Greeks of Istanbul and the islands of Imbros and Tenedos were exempted from the Lausanne Treaty's compulsory exchange stipulation. Consequently, the lives and livelihoods of these populations became indexed to the fluctuations of Turco-Greek affairs and the vagaries of regional geopolitics. Relations improved in the immediate aftermath of the war, and, in 1930, a bilateral agreement allowed another 12,000 people to retain residency status (*etablî*) in Istanbul as Greek citizens, in addition to the 150,000 Turkish citizens of Greek ancestry recognized under Lausanne (Akgönül 2014:28). However, in the 1950s the two countries began having (still ongoing) disagreements over the future of Cyprus, which had a mixed population of Turks and majority Greeks. Cyprus had been a British protectorate with nominal Ottoman suzerainty since the 1878 Russo–Ottoman War. Tensions escalated—not

without British interference pitting the two against one another—and propaganda campaigns claiming Cyprus was Turkish mushroomed among nationalist youths in Turkey. On September 6, 1955, demonstrations, which started at Taksim Square, upon rumors that Atatürk's birth home in Thessaloniki had been bombed, quickly spiraled out of control, leading to a two-day pogrom. By the time the riots died down with military intervention, at least 13 Greek Orthodox and an Armenian had died. Thousands of mostly Greek homes and businesses were vandalized, as were several churches, cemeteries, and other institutions that belonged to the Patriarchate. In later years, it would be proven that the entire event had been orchestrated by the government, which, in addition to plying the media, had positioned secret agent provocateurs in critical locations, bussed the rioters into the city, and supplied them with bats (Karaca 2005; Vryonis 2005; de Zayas 2007).

So long as Cyprus was a bone of contention between Turkey and Greece, Istanbul Greeks, citizens and *etablís* alike, lived in a constant state of alarm. In 1964, following allegations that they supported Greece's designs to annex Cyprus, Turkey unilaterally cancelled the 1930 agreement, and demanded that *etablí* Greeks leave the country, giving them only 48 hours to depart with a single piece of luggage and a small amount of cash (Büyüktaşçıyan and Aurelio 2014; Örs 2014). But *etablí* Greeks had mixed and mingled seamlessly with Greeks who had Turkish citizenship. Consequently, while the order to leave was limited to about 15,000 individuals, when their close relatives—husbands, wives, children, and parents—joined them, the number of departures was closer to 50,000. As on comparable previous occasions, the homes, businesses, and property they left behind quickly changed hands. This was effectively the undoing of Istanbul's Greek community. Although given the various incidents large and small summarized here, their numbers had gradually been declining, the forced exile of 1964 made the community largely unsustainable. Thereafter, the exodus of Istanbul's Greek residents continued in a steady stream, with spikes around major events, such as the 1974 military coup in Cyprus executed by rogue Greek military officials and the subsequent Turkish intervention, which has left the island in a divided state ever since.

Reckonings

With the exception of a few major events that did not stay in the headlines for long, during the early decades of the Republic, the predicament of non-Muslim communities was largely absent from the public discourse in Turkey. From the outset, a triad comprising the bureaucracy, judiciary, and military controlled the production and dissemination of the official narrative. Regardless of their differences, these concurred on maintaining the silence surrounding the violent transition from a pluralistic empire to a unitarian nation-state. Nevertheless, in the provincial lore, especially in small peripheral towns, alternative recollections readily bubbled up to the surface—even if they necessitated reading against the grain to be appreciated (Kezer 2020; Öztürkmen 2003)

The serial assassinations of Turkish diplomats mainly by Armenian militant organizations (1972–1994) pushed to the fore the subject of violence against the country's non-Muslim populations since the final days of the empire. Concomitantly, developments in politics, society, and academia began to seriously challenge the official narrative. These included mounting critiques of modernization processes – not just theoretical observations, but their failures on the ground—and of the unitary nation-state and its destructive impulses. The rise of identity politics, the availability of alternative mediums of communication, and the coming of age of a generation of scholars, public intellectuals, and artists divested of affective ties with the nation's founding fathers and their ideological zeal similarly broadened the discourse. Geopolitical shifts

propelled by the end of the Cold War and the proliferation of brutal ethno-religious conflicts in former Ottoman territories (e.g. wars in the former Yugoslav republics and Chechnya, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict) also informed the conversation.

Despite backlash mainly from nationalist circles, by the mid-1990s, a critical mass interested in probing the loss of Turkey's plural social fabric had begun forming, as evidenced in the increase not just in academic output, but music, literature, and film too. In the early 2000s, the (currently ruling) AK (Justice and Development) Party, with its promise of loosening the tutelage regime and expanding public participation in politics, found surprisingly broad-based support. The AKP's policy changes during its first term, especially with regard to minority rights, played an important role in Turkey's long-awaited accession to candidate status for membership in the European Union. Albeit half-heartedly, the AKP government continued to enact reforms, reinstating previously abrogated civil and property rights. Nonetheless, these continue to fall short of Lausanne Treaty standards, let alone meet the requirements for the European Charter of Human Rights, and in the last few years as the desire for membership has withered, so has the urgency for compliance (Adar 2013; Karaosmanoğlu 2010; Soner 2010; Türkmen and Öktem 2013).

The incentives of this new geopolitical context notwithstanding, non-Muslim experience in Turkey remains under the shadow of imminent threats, and is always indexed to the whims of politicians and rogue groups ready to pounce. A particularly poignant instance of this is the assassination of Hrant Dink, a prominent Armenian–Turkish journalist, who was shot at point-blank range in front of his newspaper *Agos*' offices by a 17-year-old nationalist on January 19, 2007. Encouraged by a promising atmosphere of openness, Dink and his collaborators had founded *Agos*, in 1996, as Turkey's first – and only – bilingual newspaper, to start a much-needed dialogue between Armenians and the broader Turkish public. At the time of his murder, Dink was on trial for violating the contemporary version of the law on insulting Turkishness, having made public claims that Sabiha Gökçen, Atatürk's adopted daughter and Turkey's first female fighter pilot, might be of Armenian origin, thereby destabilizing official history. Despite credible evidence linking the young assassin to at least some elements within the state's security forces, little of the conspiracy has been unearthed in the protracted investigation and trial in the nearly 15 years since the assassination. Nonetheless, Dink's assassination became a pivotal moment for Turkey's history with its non-Muslim citizens, in particular with its Armenian community. In life and death Dink dispelled many long-held myths about non-Muslims, and thousands took to the streets to express unprecedented solidarity with him. Equally important, rather than withdrawing to reduce their visibility – as so many others had felt compelled to do previously – the Dink family and the *Agos* community managed to turn their grief into a spark for social activism and historiographic awareness about a past that has not passed.

Postscript

In the autumn of 2020, just after I completed this chapter and sent it for initial review, tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia – kin states to Turks and Armenians respectively – escalated into open conflict. Repercussions were quickly felt in Istanbul. Ultra-nationalist groups paraded in cars bedecked in Azeri and Turkish flags through certain neighborhoods where a substantial proportion of Turkey's remaining Armenians live. Intimidating incidents such as these are unmistakable signs that the fortunes and experiences of Turkey's non-Muslim citizens continue to be indexed as much to the country's internal dynamics as to regional geopolitical currents, and violence remains very close to the surface. Such outbursts remind us that the sharpened zeal

for constituting a homogeneous citizenry can become an endless and all-consuming pursuit. Internalized at an early age as a habit of the mind though education, popular culture, political discourse, and policy, it can relentlessly produce new "others," fragmenting the social fabric in the name of unity. Turkey's non-Muslims, now constituting less than 0.02% of the population, continue to diminish, but the restlessness about the perceived lack of conformity and the anxieties about enemies within remain pervasive and continue to generate new targets and sites of violence.

Notes

1 Lausanne Treaty, Section III, Protection of Minorities, Article 37.
2 Turkish Treatment of Minorities, FO E6101/225/44.
3 The British Consul in Mersina reported that a local official confided in him that the intention was to get Syrian Christians to "clear out" voluntarily, and that if they went to a government office with a request or complaint, they were being told "if they you do not like it, get out." (FO E 6101/255/44) Report by BJ Catton, Acting British Consul in Mersina, dated October 28, 1929.
4 (FO E 6101/255/44) Letter from George Clerk to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Arthur Henderson; Report by BJ Catton, Acting British Consul in Mersina, dated October 28, 1929. In his dispatch, BJ Catton communicates that the Armenian Catholic priest of Diyarbakır had been murdered and there were rumors that an Orthodox Christian priest in Mardin had suffered the same fate. However, Catton notes that the murder of the second priest, which he describes in gruesome detail, may be an alternative version of the murder of the priest in Diyarbakır. He is, however, certain about the second incident as he notes that it was confirmed by both the American Mission in Adana and the Catholic Mission in Mersina. See also (Vasilian 1952:115).
5 Private personal interview with a retired Jewish teacher in Istanbul, name withheld (September, 2007); (Bahar 2003:164–65; Levi 1996b:88–89).
6 Koçak notes that in 1926–27, out of the 105 lawsuits based on this law, 62 were opened against non-Muslims. The lack of proportion looms especially large considering in 1927, non-Muslims comprised only 2.5% of the population. Koçak also notes that within the Muslim population an overwhelming proportion of the accused were either Muslims who were not ethnically Turkish and Muslims who were claimed or known to be converts (Koçak 2005).
7 The program left profound scars in the memory of Turkey's non-Muslim communities, but has only recently received critical attention. The Turkish name for the program was Yirmi Kur'a İhtiyatlar or Yirmi Sınıf Askerlik. It appears as "Las Vente Klasas" in the narratives of Ladino speakers, as "Ikosi Ilikeis" among Greeks, and "Kisan Tasagark" among Armenians. For a detailed discussion, see (Bali 1999).
8 In Izmir and Istanbul, large-scale construction projects triggered rampant speculation that the buildings might eventually be used as incinerators. Thus when, following the death from typhus of a young Jewish conscript, the commanders ordered the sterilization of the Bursa Mollaköy Military Camp, Jewish soldiers panicked for fear they were going to be gassed (Akar 1999:175–78).
9 Letter from Sir P. Lorraine to Sir John Simon, dated July 7, 1934. FO4633/4633/44, published in (Gökay 1997:131–32).
10 The press, fascinated by the process, provided continued coverage of the shipment of the first two groups. (See, for instance, issues of Cumhuriyet, Tasvir-i Efkar, Tan from 20–28 January, 1942; February 10–14, 1943). The Istanbul daily *Tasvir-i Efkar* sent a young journalist, Feridun Kandemir, who traveled with the debtors and reported on their hardship-filled daily lives for a short period of time, but was summoned back to Istanbul when details began to look like they could induce sympathy among the readership, thus backfiring on the government.
11 In his meticulous study, Aktar has examined the six central districts (*kaza*) Kadıköy, Beyoğlu, Şişli, Fatih, Eminönü, and Adalar. The last one is not part of the central districts, but was a popular residential area for non-Muslims, especially for weekend homes. The majority of the property sold (by value) belonged to Jewish citizens (39%), followed by Armenians (29%), Greeks (12%), minority-owned companies (10%), foreign nationals (5%), Muslim non-Muslim jointly owned businesses, Muslims (0.8%), other non-Muslims (i.e., Bulgarian, Russian, 0.3%), and Muslim-owned businesses (0.1%).

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5

REFUGEES OF THE 1923 POPULATION EXCHANGE BETWEEN TURKEY AND GREECE

Greek efforts for integration and assimilation

Eleni Kyramargiou

Introduction

An exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey was first suggested by Mr Venizelos in 1914 as a way of solving the difficulties which had arisen at the beginning of that year between the two countries. Relations had become strained owing to the refusal of Turkey to recognize the Greek annexation of the Aegean islands opposite the Anatolian coast. In order to put pressure on the Greek Government, the Turks proceeded to expel the Greek inhabitants of a large number of towns and villages in Eastern Thrace and on the Western Anatolian littoral, installing in their place Moslem emigrants from Macedonia. These Greeks, amounting to 270,000, were forced to take refuge in Greece. [...]

A similar situation, this time on a much larger scale, arose after the Smyrna disaster in 1922. Over 800,000 Greeks and Armenians from Anatolia took refuge in Greece during and immediately after the operations, while the whole of the Greek and Armenian population of Eastern Thrace, another 200,000, trekked over into Greek territory before the country was re-occupied by the Turks in accordance with the terms of the Moudania Convention. Thus the position, when the delegates of the belligerents met at Lausanne to discuss terms at the end of that year, was that there were over a million Greek and Armenian refugees in Greece for whom neither land nor houses were available.

[...]

It was inevitable, under the circumstances, that Mr Venizelos should revert to the old idea of an exchange of populations. Under the arrangement, the Moslems of Greece (excepting Western Thrace) were to be forced to emigrate, thus making room for the refugees. This proposal was accepted by the Turkish Government and embodied in the Greco-Turkish Convention signed at Lausanne in January 1923.

(Archive of Alexandros Pallis, Institute of Historical Research/National Hellenic Research Foundation)

The above description comes from a presentation made by Alexandros Pallis, member of the Joint Commission on Population Exchange, in 1925, just one year after the completion of the exchange in accordance with the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty. In this presentation, Pallis seeks to provide context for the Greek–Turkish relations and, more generally, the relations between the newly formed Balkan states following the recent military expeditions in the region. The Balkan wars of 1912–1913 and the First World War that followed are events that defined the development and formation of the Balkan states and influenced the relationships among them. The beginning of the Greek–Turkish war in 1919, the end of the war in 1922 with the defeat of Greece, the disorderly retreat of the Greek army in tandem with the flight of the Orthodox population from Asia Minor, which led, in turn, to the agreement for the population exchange between Greece and Turkey in January 1923, are all events that defined modern Greek and Turkish history and influenced the formation of not only the modern Greek state but also modern Turkey.

Pallis' description indicates that the idea of the population exchange was not merely the result of the Greek–Turkish war of 1919 and the violence perpetrated throughout it by both warring sides. Instead, Pallis highlights how the population exchange actually sealed the demographic and political shifts initiated by the dissolution of two empires at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Russian and the Ottoman; events which forced thousands of people to move according to ethnic or religious criteria and led to the creation of the Balkan nation states as well as the establishment of the Turkish state. The Greek–Turkish war of 1919–1922 and the ensuing population exchange brought an end to a long period of instability within the wider Ottoman Empire, during which the multinational elements of the Empire faded, thus rendering the coexistence of different population groups impossible. That was the moment when Greece became Greek and Turkey became Turkish.

In September 1922, Greece did not merely lose a war; its grandiose dream of expanding its borders and creating the "Greece of two continents and five seas" was virtually devastated. The defeat was so overwhelming that the Greek state had to manage not only the disintegration of its disbanded army, but also the arrival of thousands of refugees in a state of shock. During the negotiations that began in the next few months and resulted in the Treaty of Lausanne, an agreement for a population exchange was characterised by Greek diplomats and officials as the only solution, since it allowed the Greek state to accept within its borders the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire – with the exception of the Christians of Istanbul where the Patriarchate is located. At the same time, the departure of Muslim populations, with their respective exceptions in Thrace, would create the spatial and economic conditions necessary for the refugee resettlement.

Although Greece and Turkey came to the agreement of the exchange of population, for different reasons and with different ideological motives, in the end, both countries utilised it to lay the foundations for the formulation of their national ideology in the twentieth century and the constitution of their national history. In Greek historiography, the exchange is not the crucial historical fact. The destruction of Smyrna in September 1922, and the exodus of Christians are portrayed as the decisive historical events. Similarly, for Turkish historiography, the victory in the Greek–Turkish War and the national independence of 1923 are presented as monumental historical events (Alpan 2012, Mpaltsiotis 2006, Yildirim 2006). The focus will be on the policies of social integration and more particularly their implementation in urban and rural areas, the multiple ways the departure of Muslims from Greece created ample space for a process of "Hellenization" and the pivotal importance of refugee settlements in forging a novel Greek, social and demographic, map.

The refugees of the Balkan wars and the First World War

The Balkan wars not only changed the geography of the Balkans by forming the borders of the states, but mainly gave rise to national ideologies and nationalist movements which made it impossible for different ethnic/religious groups to coexist within the same country.[1] The possibility of a population exchange among Greece, Bulgaria and the Ottoman Empire was posited for the first time shortly after the end of the Balkan wars and before the beginning of the First World War. By that time, it had already become evident to the political leadership of all three sides that the preceding wars had broken the bonds among the various populations of the Empire, leading to violent incidents between different ethnic groups, while thousands of people had been forced to relocate either within the newly formed states or the Ottoman territory. In the summer of 1914, a joint commission of Greek and Ottoman officials was formed in Smyrna to discuss the issue of population movement between the two states for the first time. The Greek side had not yet resolved to proceed with this solution, nor were the Greek people of the Empire ready to abandon their homes and livelihoods, despite the violence that had been inflicted upon them. Then, the Ottoman Empire entered the First World War and the commission was suspended (Archive of Alexandros Pallis).

At the diplomatic level, the ensuing First World War, the Treaty of Sèvres and the Greek–Turkish war interrupted any attempts at an agreement between the two states, while also encouraging violent clashes between their populations, especially in the areas of Pontus and Asia Minor. It is worth noting that, as the Ottoman Empire had been shrinking since the mid-nineteenth century with the Crimean War and up until the Balkan wars, thousands of Muslim people had been forced to find refuge in Asia Minor and other fertile areas of the Ottoman Empire, exacerbating the conflicts between different ethnic groups and making coexistence particularly difficult. According to Stanford J. Shaw, Muslim refugees to the Ottoman Empire were called muhacir or muhajir. In 1914, the muhacir of the Balkan wars constituted 20% of the population of the Ottoman territory, equal to the percentage of Christian minorities living in the Empire at the time (Shaw 1980). These populations had multiple effects on the Ottoman Empire. Although some of them transfused the spirit of European modernization to the Ottoman society, they also contributed to the rise of religious nationalism and the Islamization of the political life of Ottomans and Young Turks. The Balkan wars muhacir, carrying the fresh trauma of their expatriation, joined the ranks of the Neo-Turks and became involved in a violent process unfolding within "a political framework which linked ethnicity with land ownership", thus adding a new dimension to the national conflict. Within this framework, an element of class resentment towards the affluence of Christians further fanned the violence against them (Liakos 2019).

As a result, part of the Christian populations of the Ottoman Empire were forced to abandon their houses and livelihoods, permanently or temporarily, because of the continuous and particularly extreme incidents of violence which were taking place mainly in the area of Pontus and Asia Minor and to seek refuge in Greece, adding to the Greek refugee populations of the Balkan wars. In order to deal with the refugee movement, the Greek state scrambled to set up the required administrative organization and to obtain the financial resources necessary. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the funds for refugee assistance had been raised by charities. A central committee was established in Thessaloniki in 1914 to take on the care and rehabilitation of 174,000 refugees who had settled in Macedonia. It was the first organized state aid to provide assistance to Orthodox newcomers from the Ottoman Empire. In 1917, 60,000 refugees arrived in Greece from the areas of Caucasus and Pontus. In the same year, the Greek state also set up the Ministry of Relief to address the issue of refugee arrivals in a more

organized way, while a number of laws contributed in the same direction (Karamouzi 1999, Kontogiorgi 2006), The arrival of the refugees obligated the Greek government to establish the necessary structures in order to manage the new reality and, in this way, the welfare of the refugees became a state concern.

The constant influx of refugees throughout the First World War also forced the Greek government to reconsider the possibility of the voluntary relocation of populations from one country to another. In the Treaty of Neuilly, signed between the Entente powers and Bulgaria on 27 November 1919, there was a provision for "a kind of voluntary mutual exchange of populations". Greece and Bulgaria seized this opportunity by signing a separate protocol and exchanging a large part of their national, religious and linguistic minorities. More specifically, 30,000 Orthodox Greek-speaking people moved from Bulgaria to Greece, and 53,000 Orthodox-Exarchist Bulgarian-speaking people moved from Greece to Bulgaria (Aktar 2006). The majority of the refugee populations, which had been arriving in Greece since the Balkan wars, settled in 365 settlements in rural areas of Macedonia without the necessary care and assistance by the State (Archive of Alexandros Pallis). Greece was still in the middle of a war, the state administrative organization was inadequate and the financial resources very limited. The attempts to organize the refugee settlements were left unfinished and there was no central planning for their creation. It was with their own money and labour that the majority of the refugees built their new homes.

The refugees from the Asia Minor catastrophe (1922)

On 25 August 1922, the Greek army was crushed in Afyonkarahisar in western Asia Minor and retreated. The defeat marked the end of the Greek–Turkish war. Following the routing of the Greek army, the Orthodox population of many parts of Asia Minor – most of them Greek-speaking – abandoned their homes and villages for fear of retaliation by the Turkish army. Most of the civilian population and the army left for Greece from the port of Izmir. The islands of the eastern Aegean were the first stop for the majority of refugees, while at every Greek port arrived thousands of people who had been travelling for days, packed in ships with little water and often without food. In September 1922 alone, more than 40,000 refugees arrived at Piraeus Port, the largest Greek port. At the same time, refugees also arrived in Thrace from the country's northern borders.

The government of Petros Protopapadakis resigned shortly after the defeat, while in the army leadership there was a general upheaval. At the same time, King Constantine I was pressured to give up the throne. Under these conditions of political instability, the political leadership had to manage the arrival of refugees at the national level and negotiate a ceasefire at the international level. The newly appointed government of Nikolaos Triantafyllakos, in collaboration with the crown, had to immediately accommodate the 150,000 refugees already on the Aegean islands, and the tens of thousands of people who had reached or were heading to the Greek ports. Since the end of August 1922, the Ministry of Relief, in cooperation with other ministries, had been working to coordinate the transportation, settlement and care of the refugees throughout the country.

The provision of free meals, the efforts to decongest the ports and transport refugees to the mainland to temporary camps, the appropriation of public and private buildings to house the most vulnerable of the refugees, as well as the organization of a nationwide fundraiser were the first public relief measures. The seizure of houses and the coexistence with refugees was the biggest and most immediate change in the daily lives of the natives (Kyramargiou 2019).

Despite the ministry's efforts to swiftly transfer the refugees from outdoor camps to sheltered or official temporary accommodation, the camps remained overcrowded due to the constant influx of refugees. On 30 September 1922, the minister of relief, Apostolos Doxiadis, "was granted dictatorial power towards the accommodation of refugees within eight days". It had now become clear that the Greek administration was in a state of emergency which could only be resolved through urgent measures. What was originally a temporary decision was turned into law at the end of November, giving the minister of relief the opportunity to complete the effort he had begun.

In every Greek port, in the centres of the cities and in neighbouring settlements, dozens of refugee camps were erected either by state and municipal agencies, providing barely decent living conditions, or by the refugees themselves. These camps were particularly flimsy and shoddy, as indicated by the description of Henry Morgenthau, who served as president of the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee:

> At the Piraeus, the port of Athens, eleven miles away, the beach was lined with the tatterdemalion encampment of other thousands of refugees. Misery is always picturesque, the one sorry virtue of human sorrow. Shoes made of pieces of discarded automobile tires became almost the standard footwear of the refugees. Clothing made of flour sacks was a fashion born in of necessity, and was hard-pressed for first place by garments improvised out of burlap or pieced together from mere rags. The simplest implements were hard to come by. Tin cans served for cooking utensils. Rusty nails were substituted for pins, and a real needle was as valuable a curiosity as it is to an Esquimau.
>
> *(Morgenthau 1929, 51)*

At the same time, the government had sought the assistance of the International Red Cross, international charity groups and European governments. This assistance included not only food, blankets and meals, but also the creation and maintenance of makeshift camps and hospitals, and began at the end of October 1922 (Diplomatic and Historical Archives of the Hellenic Ministry of Foreign Affairs). As a result, the aid during those first months was entirely based on internal resources, public and private, which were decidedly inadequate to cover the total needs of the more than 500,000 refugees who arrived in Greece in 1922. The arriving refugees had been highly mobile since the first days of their arrival. They moved either individually or in groups, sometimes of their own accord, other times by state order, depending on the potential for settlement and work. This first period was particularly fluid and rife with practical problems that had to be resolved immediately through state aid and private charity. The majority of refugees had not been able to rescue their property and move it to Greece, and even those who were, in theory, able to cover their living expenses and secure decent accommodation, were unable to follow individual accommodation strategies, due to the lack of available options and alternatives.

The signing of the Lausanne Treaty in January 1923, sealed not only the end of the Greek–Turkish war, but essentially of a whole decade of military conflicts and population movements, imposing for the first time a compulsory population exchange based on religion. For the refugee populations, the treaty signified the permanence of the new reality to which they had to adjust, while for the Greek government, it underlined the urgent need for permanent solutions towards the housing and professional rehabilitation of refugees. It is important to note that the Greek–Turkish population exchange was the first compulsory population

exchange between two countries which was ratified through an international treaty. As Asli Igsiz points out,

> population transfers and resettlement policies had occurred before, but the 1923 exchange was the first of its kind in that it has set an international legal precedent whereby forced migration was legitimised as a solution for a greater good: peace. Such legitimisation implies that the segregation of different groups will restore a peaceful order.
>
> *(Igliz 2018, 4)*

On the other hand, the social realities of the refugee arrival posed a novel threat to the internal order of the defeated Greek state. The anxiety that if left alone the destitute newcomers would pose a threat to the unstable Greek political and social realities is often repeated in the rhetoric and writings of those involved in the policies of rehabilitation. In the words of Charles P. Howland, chair of the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission, "relief of despair on such scale is as much a political necessity as a humane responsibility" (League of Nations 1926). The politics of "relief" entailed two major, and intertwined, goals: providing housing and work to the hundreds of thousands that had arrived in the modern Greek state.

Urban settlements

Housing was the biggest and most immediate of the problems that the state needed to resolve after September 1922, while after the signing of the Lausanne Treaty it became clear that any solutions suggested would have to aim towards the permanent accommodation of both the refugees already in Greece and the ones expected to arrive imminently due to the population exchange. The refugees had to be allocated throughout Greece, as well as obtain housing and work. Basically, the refugees could pursue one of the following solutions in their attempt to solve the housing issue: 1) settlement in the buildings constructed by the Refugee Care Fund and the Ministry of Relief, 2) long-term hospitality in requisitioned houses, 3) self-accommodation with state intervention and 4) self-accommodation without state intervention. This last category included, on the one hand, the wealthiest of the refugees, who settled at their own expense in the centres of Greek cities, and on the other the poorest, who fled to deserted or uninhabited areas, which the government gradually ordered to be expropriated and requisitioned. "There were those who could not, and those who did not want to settle in refugee settlements and requisitioned houses" (Gizeli 1984). By 1927, in the cities and villages of Macedonia and in the greater Athens and Piraeus region, almost 35,000 refugee families had built houses – standard or nonstandard – at their own expense (League of Nations 1927).

On 3 November 1922, the Refugee Care Fund was established by the Greek state. This organization reflected the need for a genuine solution to the issue of refugee settlement at a central political level and aimed to develop a comprehensive rehabilitation plan. According to its foundational law, the Fund, which was directed by a ten-member council, operated under the Ministry of Relief and was intended to manage and dispense inheritances, donations and bequests collected for the care and accommodation of refugees. (Government Gazette 227, 9.11.1922). The decision to set up the Fund and the attempt to resolve the issue of refugee settlement through solutions more permanent than expropriation, was linked to the political assumption that the refugees would remain in Greece and not return to Asia Minor. The subsequent Lausanne Treaty confirmed the permanence of the situation. The Refugee Care Fund operated from November 1922 to May 1925 and constructed 6,500 buildings, most of

which – almost 4,500 – were located in Athens and Piraeus, on land owned by the state or newly requisitioned (Gizeli 1984).

In June 1923, the Law "On the granting of public property and the forced requisition of private properties towards the urban settlement of refugees" was passed and allowed the forced requisition of public and private land outside the city plan for the settlement of refugees (Government Gazette 153, 9.6.1923). This law enabled the Refugee Care Fund to secure the space for the creation of its settlements. At the same time, it allowed the Ministry of Relief to requisition land already occupied by refugees, as well as land adjacent to existing settlements, so that refugees could retain their makeshift homes and the state could then expand existing refugee settlements and establish new ones. After the dissolution of the Fund and for the following five years, the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission undertook the task of rehabilitation.

The Greek Refugee Settlement Commission was an organization established with the Geneva Protocol (29.9.1923) under the auspices of the League of Nations and with the participation of the Greek state. The Committee was governed by a four-member council and had at its disposal all exchanged Muslim property, monastic and public lands, the land that was requisitioned through the act of Agricultural Reform of 1924, as well as the two refugee loans received by the Greek government in 1924 and 1928.[2] In addition, the government granted the Committee parcels of land in and around cities to build urban settlements and transferred administrative and technical personnel from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Relief to staff its services.

In the cities, the Committee implemented a multistage housing programme, while in the countryside, it handled the housing and the occupational rehabilitation of refugees. More specifically, the Committee undertook the completion of the residences which the Fund had begun constructing, while at the same time implementing a comprehensive programme of urban rehabilitation in four areas of Athens and Piraeus (Nea Ionia, Kaisariani, Vrion and Kokkinia) and managing a number of refugee buildings constructed by the Ministry of Relief. In these four settlements, the Committee ensured the creation of water and sanitation networks, the opening of roads and the construction of public spaces and buildings (where stipulated). The refugee families who were rehabilitated in the Committee's residences purchased their homes either in instalments of promissory notes, or in bonds received in exchange for their property according to the terms of the Lausanne Treaty.

For the total cost of the rehabilitation effort, the Greek government received a series of refugee loans from the League of Nations, which were managed directly by the GRSC in an effort to avoid the time-consuming Greek bureaucracy and expedite its work. The rationale behind the decision to charge refugees for housing was based on the fact that the rehabilitation effort would continue long after the loans had run out to accommodate as many refugees as possible. The result was, of course, that a large number of refugees were excluded from rehabilitation projects, as they could not afford the corresponding sum. These refugees resorted to self-housing on the outskirts of the cities, expanding the urban boundaries and forming communities composed by makeshift shacks and hovels.

The Committee allocated 40 industrial plots to the refugee settlements of Athens and Piraeus, where mainly carpet and cotton factories were established, employing young girls and older women from Asia Minor and Pontus. The GRSC's decision to refrain from any essential involvement in the issue of urban employment is reflected in its tri-monthly reports, even as it recognized its necessity since almost half the refugees who had arrived in Greece resided in cities and towns (Vogiatzoglou 199, Kritikos 2000). In spite of the lack of support by the GRSC, industry and manufacturing thrived in the years following the refugee arrivals, since a large part of the refugee business elite had managed to transfer their funds to Greece in time

and were able, using their connections as well as the support of the National Bank in the form of loans, to establish industrial and manufacturing units, usually in the vicinity of refugee settlements in order to take advantage of the labour supplied by refugees, the majority of whom were converted to industrial workers despite not having previous work experience.

Rural settlements

At the same time, the Greek Refugee Settlement Commission attempted the implementation of a comprehensive programme for the housing and professional rehabilitation of refugees in agricultural areas, mainly in northern Greece and especially in Macedonia and Thrace, where until then the Muslim and Slavic-speaking populations were the demographic majority. After ten years of military conflict in the wider area of northern Greece and the forced movement of the Muslim and Slavic-speaking populations as a result of the wars and their aftermath, the areas of Macedonia and Thrace had lost a large proportion of their population, farming had ceased and agricultural production had collapsed, affecting the economic life of the country as a whole. Simultaneously, the mass settlement of Greek-speaking Christians from Turkey in the area would change the ethnic/religious composition of the population, transform the Greek Orthodox element from a minority to a majority and, thus, prevent any territorial disputes by neighbouring countries.

The programme for agricultural rehabilitation included both housing and professional rehabilitation schemes and stipulated the allocation to refugees of residences, plots and animals, as well as tools, seeds, fertilizers and so on. The refugees settled either in new settlements freshly established by the GRSC, or in settlements and residences abandoned by the Muslim and Slavic-speaking populations of Macedonia. According to the GRSC, by the time the Committee was terminated, 1,381 new settlements had been established in Macedonia and 236 in Thrace, comprising 50,396 residences in total and housing 552,000 refugees (GRSC 1928). These residences usually consisted of two main rooms, a stable, and ancillary spaces. The farmhouses were built either by the Committee or by the refugees themselves with materials supplied by the Committee. At the same time, the GRSC, in collaboration with the Joint Commission for the Exchange of Population and the Ministry of Agriculture, undertook the distribution of Muslim houses in addition to the registration and distribution of land property. In this case as well, the refugees had to purchase the property in numerous, small instalments at a price similar to the ones stipulated by the urban rehabilitation schemes (Kontogiorgi 2006, Salvanou 2018).

For the refugees who arrived in Greece right after the military defeat, the whole process was more hurried and disorganized, not only due to the adverse conditions they were already living in, but also because of efforts to relocate them according to origin or ancestry. In contrast, in the case of the refugees who arrived after the exchange, the process was relatively better organized, with whole villages moving to Greece in coordinated fashion and settling in areas and settlements that had already been designed and were subsequently constructed by the refugees themselves, or that had been abandoned by the exchanged Muslim populations. During these first years, a large number of refugees moved to several areas regardless of their original place of settlement, either in an effort to reunite with their extended families and neighbours, or in search for better living conditions and professional opportunities.

When Greece became Greek

The more than one million refugees who arrived in Greece between 1922 and 1924 were not a socially or economically homogeneous population, nor had they been homogeneous (culturally

and socially) in their places of origin. Even that large part of the refugees who resorted to the rehabilitation and state welfare programmes did not constitute a homogeneous social group, but was instead a mosaic of diverse people with different social backgrounds and professional skills, who had nonetheless all lived through the experience of forced movement and adjustment to a new, different reality. The urban and agricultural rehabilitation programmes described earlier were the two major policies implemented by the government and carried out mainly by the Refugee Rehabilitation Committee. However, beyond the logistical aspects of the rehabilitation process, there was also the issue of the refugees adjusting to the new reality and coexisting with the country's native populations. Both these processes were lengthy and complex, affecting refugees and natives alike.

In Greek historiography, it is often stressed that the choice by the GRSC and the government to grant arable land to the refugees who settled in the countryside, mainly in Macedonia and Thrace, was made in an effort to establish a class of small landowners in order to prevent revolutionary movements. The land the state granted to refugees from Turkey through the GRSC's rehabilitation programme came from properties abandoned by populations who fled or were exchanged, the expropriation of large estates and church property that remained uncultivated, as well as from the agricultural reform which had begun in 1917 and was concluded in 1923 (Liakos 2019). The claims by the natives on agricultural land which had hitherto belonged to Muslim populations and was granted to refugees was the main cause of the rivalry between natives and refugees, especially in mixed settlements where they had to coexist (Alvanos 2019).

One of the most serious and bloodiest clashes between natives and refugees took place in November 1924, in the county of Phyllis in the Prefecture of Serres. More specifically, native residents of the village Kioup-Kioi (now called Proti) attempted to cultivate agrarian land that had been expropriated by the General Administration of Macedonia for the agricultural rehabilitation of refugees from Turkey in the village of Tserepliani (now called Iliokomi). After they were chased away by the refugees, the villagers of Kioup-Kioi returned with reinforcements and attacked the refugees. The scuffle quickly escalated and several of those involved were injured. Although the refugees retreated and fled to the neighbouring village of Rotholivos, the natives destroyed part of the abandoned refugee settlement, vandalizing and burning residences. Both Kioup-Kioi and Tserepliani were mixed population villages, especially Tserepliani, where 495 out of the 972 residents were refugees (Mavrogordatos 2017). This incident is indicative of the tensions which arose between the natives and the refugees who received land distributed by the state.

In the cities, a large proportion of the refugees found employment in industry and manufacturing in low-skilled positions as they lacked any relevant work experience. The refugees offered cheap and unskilled labour that led to rifts with native workers, while the Greek economy experienced moderate development in the immediate aftermath of the 1922 military defeat. Gradually, the refugee labour fuelled the impetus of local industries that had to accommodate the rapid expansion of the internal market, leading to a brief period of capitalist expansion in the late 1920s and early 1930s. At the same time, the shared labour and social experiences forged a new equilibrium between refugee and native workers, leading to the growth of industrial-based labour unions. In essence, proletarian workers, regardless of their origins, had much more in common due to their life and work conditions, which led to a faster normalization of their relations in cities, especially in the worker–refugee settlements. (Kyramargiou 2019)

The 1920s were a particularly challenging period of transition for Greek society as it attempted to strike new balances and develop new bonds among its populations which were

now almost entirely Greek-speaking and Orthodox Christian. To this purpose, an older central political decision to Hellenize the toponymic map was put into effect. The population movements which took place from 1912 until 1924 affected the residential map of the whole country, especially in northern Greece: a series of settlements ceased to exist, others acquired new residents, while new settlements were established to house exclusively refugee populations. These changes now had to be reflected in the toponymic map of the country. The numbers testify to the extent of the phenomenon: in the three years between 1926 and 1928, 2,479 toponym changes were implemented, most of them in Macedonia. To illustrate just how high this number is, it is worth noting that between 1913 and 1961, 4,075 toponym changes occurred in the entire country, more than half of which were in the period between 1926 and 1928 (*Statistical Annals of Greece 1930*). The hurried nature of the name changes can be also seen in the usual practice of translating "foreign-like toponyms" or in the corruption of existing names towards a more Greek-like version.[3] The following examples are indicative of how toponyms were renamed in inland Macedonia:

Gerakartsi →Gerakareio	Mantalevo → Mandalon
G(k)oumentza →Goumenitsa	Gioupsevon → Gypsochorion
Liparinovo →Liparon	Mantar → Manitari

The epicentre of this activity was the region of Greek Macedonia where Muslim populations had been removed and had been replaced with a large number of Christian refugees. Between 1926 and 1928, 201 toponymic changes were recorded in the Prefecture of Drama, 118 in the Prefecture of Thessaloniki, and 213 in the Prefecture of Kilkis (IHR/NHRF Database, http://pandektis.ekt.gr/pandektis/handle/10442/4968). The populations who were living in settlements entirely made up of refugees advocated for these toponymic changes and welcomed them with satisfaction and relief, since the new, euphonic Greek toponyms in many cases transplanted their past settlements on these new lands (Nea Trapezounta, Nea Santa, Nea Zichni, Assiros) (Kyramargiou, 2015).

Conclusion

In 1924, with the completion of the process for the exchange of populations, a "violent modernization" which had begun in 1912 reached its final conclusion for Greece and Turkey. The Balkan wars, the First World War and the Greek-Turkish war that followed resulted in the destruction of the Muslim communities in the Balkans and the Christian communities in Anatolia. The population exchange finalized the transfer from the West to the East of the nation-state model; a model based on the widest possible homogeneity among citizens. Everything that happened between the two countries from 1912 until 1924 was a consequence of the Western, not the Eastern, Question (Toynbee 1922, Liakos 2019).

By 1924, the Ottoman Empire had given way to Turkey, and the Great Idea of a Greece that would sprawl over two continents and five seas had forever been abandoned in the most painful way. The idea of a demographically and religiously homogeneous nation state had definitively prevailed and the borders and populations of the two countries had been finalized. It was the year when the two countries turned over a new leaf in their modern history, attempting to leave their military conflicts in the past. In Greece, which had ended up on the winning side of the Balkan wars, but had lost the subsequent Greek–Turkish war, the efforts towards the rehabilitation and assimilation of refugees proved particularly complex and time-consuming. Eventually,

it was a new war, the Second World War, which would bring refugees and natives together, first in the barracks and then in the resistance, ushering in a new era in Greek history.

Notes

1 At the beginning of the twentieth century, Greek populations from Eastern Romania began to arrive in Greece. It was the first time that the Greek state had to take care of the housing and professional rehabilitation of populations that were not related to the Struggle for Independence but rather to more general political developments and the emergence of nationalisms in the Balkan Peninsula. A large part of this population settled in Thessaly despite experiencing major problems due to the existence of swamps in the area, which made the terrain completely inappropriate for habitation and the living conditions extremely difficult (Karamouzi 1999).

2 The two major refugee loans from the League of Nations had a particularly high interest rate (7%); as a result, by 1931, repayment costs and the costs of refugee rehabilitation in general constituted 40% of the yearly budget (Tounta-Fergadi 1986).

3 Spyros Asdrachas' remark on this phenomenon is of particular interest. Referring to the paraphrasing or translation of foreign toponyms in Greek, he points out that these toponyms take on new meanings and are misinterpreted: "misinterpretations and mistaken etymologies that derive from a standard intellectual demand, the meaning of names, while the historicity of names is an absent witness" (Asdrachas 1995, 139–140).

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6

THE MAKING OF A NATIONAL CITY

From Mezre to Elazığ

Ali Sipahi

Introduction

Modern nation-states have aspired to create homogeneous national spaces by planning alike cities and towns decorated with material symbols of nationalist ideology. Turkey was not an exception. Dozens of Anatolian cities, the new capital Ankara being in the first place, were replanned by the new regime in the 1930s, an ambitious period for infrastructural investments, comprehensive plans and public works projects. However, from the locals' point of view, such periods are exceptional, temporary and rarely as transformative as they seem at first sight. Towns have a life also when they are not on the agenda of the central governments. If we highlight only flashy events like large military operations or top-down projects, even if it is for critical purposes, we may end up reproducing the nationalist state's narrative. In this regard, Elazığ is an ideal case to study because it seems like a quintessential "national town." Yet, this chapter shows that, in most of its history, this town was carved out by local people in the face of utter indifference by the central state. It is a story of reluctance, negligence and foot dragging, rather than that of interventions, constructions and inventions. The first part of the chapter tells the story of the making of Elaziz in the nineteenth century as an elite enclave for Armenian and Turkish notables, whereas the second part explains the nationalization process in the town in the twentieth century and the local take on the government intervention.

El-aziz: emergence of a modern imperial town

Mezre: a hamlet of landlords

In the imperial world, places used to rise and fall because the official positions travelled to where the person in charge resided, as opposed to nation-states, where people move to fill fixed positions. At the end of the eighteenth century, for Diyarbekir Province, the rising place was Keban simply because the directors of the Imperial Mines lived here. They had exceptional privileges that put them at a more powerful rank even than the nominal governors in Harput and Diyarbekir. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, Keban lost its privileged position to a new place called Mezre, the origin town of Elazığ.[1]

Mezre was simply a shortened toponym for *Ağavat Mezrası*, hamlet of landlords. Located right on the plain below the hill city of Harput, this hamlet had been created by big landlords who were exiled from Harput following orders from the governor in Keban. Had war against Egypt not broken out in 1832, this *mezra* may have never become a subject of history. However, due to turbulence during the war in the south-eastern corner of Anatolia, the sultan assigned the entire region to a local family, the Çötelizades, turning an *agha* family into a *pasha* family, and thus changing the hamlet's destiny for good. As a result, the small hamlet of lords right outside of Harput suddenly and unexpectedly became a regional capital.

The Çötelizade family governed the region for only one and a half years, between 1832 and 1834, but it was enough to seal Mezre's fate as a future provincial capital. Upon the defeat of the Ottoman forces by the Egyptian army, the central government commenced one of the main pillars of the Reform movement (*Tanzimat*), namely an unprecedented military expedition into Ottoman Kurdistan that had hitherto been made up of self-governing emirates. Reşid Mehmed Pasha, ex-grand vizier and the head of the army defeated in the Egyptian war, was the first commander of the grand expedition. He was succeeded in 1836 by Mehmed Hafiz Pasha as the first marshal (*müşir*) of the Sivas-Harput-Diyarbekir region. Most importantly, both of these all-powerful governors resided in Mezre, home of the Çötelizades, turning the small hamlet of landlords into a garrison, a military outpost of the imperial army right at the invisible border of Kurdistan.

In the late 1830s, however, the command centre for the Kurdistan wars gradually moved to the east. Moreover, similar to his predecessor Reşid Pasha, Hafiz Pasha was appointed to stop the second offensive of the Egyptian army (1838–1839), for which he had to move his forces to the south. In other words, Mezre was losing its privileged position. After the Egyptian forces defeated the Ottoman army once again, neither Hafiz Pasha nor the officers turned back to Mezre. They left ruins behind: abandoned buildings, an exploited environment and displaced people. In the 1840s, Mezre's area of influence shrank from almost the entire south-eastern Anatolia to the new independent Harput Province only. The incoming governors wrote pathetic reports about this "village called Mezrea,"[2] a decaying garrison town without a substantial army. They were surprised and disillusioned at having found such a big gap between the pitiable life conditions in the periphery and the seemingly increasing hegemony of the Ottoman imperialism. On top of this, the central government kindly ignored all budget requests. In sum, as soon as Mezre lost its primary function as a military outpost, it was abandoned. At the end of the day, who was to care about a hamlet in the middle of a remote area, anyway? Except, of course, the people who *lived* there. The state did not lift a finger for Mezre. However, Mezre developed anyway, not thanks to the central state but despite its indifference.

Mamuretülaziz: Mezre becoming a suburban town, 1850s–1870s

The decades of the 1850s and '60s were formative in the making of Mezre as a distinctive suburban town that hosted together the Turkish bureaucratic elite and the Armenian nouveau riche. In the population registers from the early 1830s, Mezre appears as "mezra-ı Çötelizade," a small hamlet, but its population increased around tenfold in the following 50 years, granting Armenians a large majority.[3] In the 1880s, the town was composed of 2,126 non-Muslim (79.5%) and 548 Muslim inhabitants.[4] End-of-century Mezre was a town where the official local governance was seated but also where every four persons out of five were Armenians. This special town was the outcome of local suburbanization as much as the existence of state officials (Sipahi 2016).

Mezre's transformation from a hamlet into a provincial capital was correlated with the changing composition of social stature and class in the region. In the 1850s, the political power of the Çötelizade family was recurrently challenged by the new bourgeoisie, mostly Armenian. After years-long cases involving corruption, all three sons of Çötelizade İshak Pasha were finally dismissed in 1860 from the local council. The Çötelizades continued to be a notable family as tax farmers, mayors and later members of parliament (MPs), but the commercial power belonged to the new merchant classes. As a good indicator, in 1884, the Chamber of Agriculture was chaired by a Çötelizade, whereas there was not even one person from the family among the 12 founding members of the Chamber of Commerce, which was chaired by Armenian businessman Senekerim Misakyan.[5]

Armenian embourgeoisement in Mezre was documented both by Armenian priests and American missionaries. Archpriest Boğos Natanyan reported in 1878 the following:

> Until thirty years ago Armenians did not have even a piece of land. The entire plain of Harput was owned by the Turkish *Bey*s and *Ağa*s. But today, Armenians in the city as well as those in the villages have become landowners. One eighth of all land belongs to Armenians. It is always that Turks sell, Armenians buy. Trade and manufacture are in Armenians' hands. Even though they are subjects politically, they became sovereign economically.
>
> *(Yarman 2010: 180–181)*

Similar observations were reported by Garegin Srvandztiants, as well. Both priests had ambiguous feelings about the upward movement of Armenians because the landowning class was as exploitative as the Turkish landowners. Thus, Mezre almost symbolized the corrosion of character among their people. In fact, American missionaries had a similar reserve towards Mezre. In 1860, Herman N. Barnum complained in his letter from Harput that Mezre

> is the residence of the Pasha and though but a mere village is in a certain sense the commercial center for this whole region. Those who live there are worldly minded businessmen who seem to be almost utterly regardless of their spiritual interests.[6]

Similar to the priests, missionaries generally represented Mezre like a sin-city that sank into the money economy and lost its innocence and morality.

In a nutshell, a small elite group in the Armenian community, who was criticized for being alienated from their own people due to their self-seeking attitude and worldly mindedness, collaborated with Turkish businessmen and bureaucrats, and created a special town, Mezre. Consequently, Mezre had a new look in the 1860s, and the European travellers who visited Mezre at the time testified to the unexpected physical characteristics of the new place. Colonel Goldsmid thought "Mazra has a British-Indian look about it in the distance," "rather than a common Asiatic Turkish town" (Goldsmid 1874: 442, 1868: 24). Viscount Pollington took note that "the streets of Mazrah betokened awakening civilisation […] Some of the houses had wooden arched doorways with windows on each side, evidently new, and resembling some streets in German villages" (Pollington 1867: 378).

Mezre's elite inhabitants were aware of the fact that they were building a quite distinctive town, and in 1867 the provincial council sent to Istanbul a detailed report on recent infrastructural developments, concluding that "this hamlet is fairly turned into a town," "a proper town" indeed. The report ends with a special request: a proper name for their brand new town. After all, "Mezra" was not an official place name. "Mezra-ı Çötelizade" or "ağavat mezrası"

was a distant memory now since it was not a "hamlet" anymore and neither the Çötelizades nor landlords in general were the leading element in the town. The council instead requested the name of the province and the town be changed to *Mamuret-ül-Aziz*, meaning "made prosperous by Sultan Abdülaziz" or simply "built by Aziz." As a matter of fact, the imperial government in Istanbul responded positively to this demand and the name of the province was changed from Harput Province (*eyalet*) to Mamuretülaziz Province (*vilayet*). Accordingly, the seat of the governor that used be called Mezre was named officially after the new name of the province: "the town of Mamuret-ül-Aziz," or "El-Aziz" (Aziz's) for short.[7]

Urban transformation in Elaziz, 1880s–1890s

Elaziz/Mezre, the lower town, was grown into a real town as the official capital of the province, but the city of Harput, the upper town, did not die, at all. In fact, not until Republican times did Harput lose its throne as a leading city in the Ottoman East. In 1884, Harput accommodated five of every six individuals in the dual city. A total of 12,974 people were registered in Harput, and 2,674 in Elaziz.[8] It seems that Harput tolerated Elaziz as long as the latter remained limited just to being a government centre. Yet, this division of labour gradually turned into competition. At the end of the 1870s, Srvandztiants (1884: 85–86) indicated that, even though it had been the administrative centre for many years, Mezre

> still cannot say "I am a city." In fact, it is still a village. The original city [Harput] has spent and still is spending enviable effort to retrieve the government, but in vain; on the contrary, it has been left uncared-for.

Soon after, the competition turned into a bureaucratic fight. From 1884 on, the Yearbooks (*Salname*) took Elaziz as the centre, reducing Harput to a district (*kaza*). Elaziz also got "the first-degree municipality" and reinforced its authority with the publication of the official provincial gazette *Mamuretülaziz*. Harput's becoming "the second-degree" was apparently a burning issue for the townsmen of the upper town. When the telegraph office was temporarily moved to Harput, people in Harput refused to give it back. They began sending protesting telegraphs to Istanbul and they impeded the move of the officials to the lower town. Yet, Elaziz managed to keep the main office and won a small but symbolic victory.[9]

Nevertheless, the notables of Elaziz were apparently feeling abashed about the fact that the lower town could not prove itself as a real "city" in the way Harput could. On the pages of *Mamuretülaziz* it was stated that, despite being a provincial centre for 50 years,

> no attention has been paid to order in the planning and construction of the buildings and on the tidiness of marketplaces' forms and streets' directions. […] The city [Harput] mayor and council have submitted to the government some important projects they had worked on and acquired approval from the administrative council. Thus, we humbly suggest that the mayor and council here seriously take into consideration that the works in the city will soon embarrass them. […] No conscientious and refined person can accept the chaotic and miserable situation of Mamuretülaziz.[10]

Elaziz clearly did not keep the promises its looks had given to the British travellers two decades earlier. Thus, the notables pushed for a more organized method of beautification in the hands of the newly founded municipality. After all, unlike Harput, Elaziz was new, it was malleable. Consequently, Elaziz became a laboratory in the 1880s and '90s for planned, modernist

urbanism. The most notable development was the creation of a brand-new, grid-style neighbourhood, Nail Bey, in the west. Still today, in the entire area of the city of Elazığ, with lots of newer neighbourhoods, the Nail Bey neighbourhood is one of the few grid-planned places, and it is by far the most homogeneously organized one with its bigger blocks. By the turn of the century, then, Elaziz's look changed from that of a suburban town to a modernist small city. In 1899, Ferdinand Brockes testified on the unexpectedly beautiful features of Elaziz during his visit: "Mesereh resembled a small German country town. […] Until now, in Asiatic Turkey, I haven't seen any city with such beautiful wide streets and pleasant houses" (Brockes 1900: 111).

From Elaziz to Elazığ: creating a national city

Nationalization of the city and its discontents, 1900s–1920s

Mezre/Elaziz was fortunately abandoned by the central state in the 1840s after losing its importance for military expeditions against the local Kurdish governments. In the following half century, Elaziz developed into a unique town, a provincial capital, in the hands of local bourgeoisie and local bureaucracy. In the early twentieth century, however, the state came back. Elaziz once again turned into an outpost in the east, a military as well as a cultural one. This time, the process of war-making was intertwined with the formation of a new nation state and with ethnic cleansing. Elaziz played a key role during the deportation of Armenians and during the military expeditions against the Kurds, and it eventually rose as a fortress of Turkification.

Thanks to Elaziz's distinctive demography, Armenians here retained their privileged position until World War I. For instance, they were protected during the 1895 massacres, although Harput Armenians were subjected to violence (Sipahi 2017, 2020). Later, in 1908, the Constitutional Revolution created an enthusiastic political climate in Elaziz, and the Armenians joined the celebrations shoulder to shoulder with their Turkish compatriots. The optimism was so high that even upon the 1909 massacres in Adana, Professor Khachadour Nahigian could write that "being Ottoman more than Armenian is our promise" (Kılıçdağı 2005: 72). Similarly, many Armenian intellectuals applauded the abolition of the military service exemption tax for non-Muslims in 1909, referring to the importance of serving the Ottoman fatherland. *Yeprad* proudly announced in September 1910 that the first group of Armenian soldiers, 95 people from Elaziz and its vicinity, set out for Istanbul with a patriotic farewell ceremony.[11]

In spring of 1915, this comradeship gave its place to mass atrocities quite suddenly. The arrests of Armenian intellectuals and notables in Harput started on 1 May, within a week after those in Istanbul. Extensive house searches and arrests took place under the pretext of prosecuting clandestine revolutionary activities. By the end of May, dozens of prominent figures were imprisoned and later killed. On 6 June, the second wave of arrests began, this time as a total assault against the entire Armenian community of the province. In the following days, both Harput and Elaziz were surrounded by soldiers and all Armenian houses were searched one by one, whereupon men and older boys were taken to the prisons in Elaziz. Throughout June, thousands of Armenian men were removed from the prisons in convoys at night, brought to places out of sight and liquidated. Finally, on 2 July, the third wave started with the deportation of women, children and the remaining old men. Elaziz's Derviş, Nail Bey, Çarşı, Karaçöl, İcadiye and Ambar neighbourhoods were subjected to deportation. All notable families of Elaziz were placed in these convoys, including the renowned Fabrikatorians (Kevorkian 2011; Jacobsen 2001; Atkinson 2000).

Elaziz also had a regional role in the deportations. On 2 July, thousands of deportees started coming in caravans to the city from northern provinces. They were kept in designated places

right outside the city of Elaziz before being sent away to the southern deserts. This death camp was a place of wretchedness. Some Turks visited the camp to get girls as slaves/wives. A lot of deportees died in the camp of sickness or hunger, and were buried in mass graves next to the camp; those who did not die were made to journey to the south and replaced by newcomers from the north. Many who left Elaziz in the summer of 1915 were killed on the way, either by soldiers or by bandits. Later, in September and October, American Consul Leslie A. Davis and missionary Dr Henry H. Atkinson made secret trips to the Lake Gölcük area and found things even worse than they had heard: more than 10,000 bodies were piled in small valleys, all naked (Riggs 1997: 146–149).

With the extermination of Armenians, one of the main actors who founded Mezre/Elaziz was destroyed as it was a unique town created by the Armenian bourgeoisie in collaboration with Turkish bureaucrats. After the war, Elaziz was in limbo, and it was slowly taken over by the new national movement in the early 1920s. However, the notables of Elaziz did not always collaborate with the national movement. We recurrently encounter criticism of the local elite on the pages of *Satvet-i Milliye* (Power of the Nation), the local paper of the national defence organization which was going to be the kernel of the Republican People's Party and the new Turkey. When the local notables appeared reluctant to financially support the new government's efforts in relief work, they were called the "brazen" and "self-seeking ones" of the city, "the greedy capitalists."[12] The local dynastic families were openly invited—namely, publicly threatened—to donate for Ottoman Red Crescent. Eventually, the list of donors was published in the paper as part of ideological propaganda. Also, for the elections in June 1923 for the new regime's parliament in Ankara, the People's Party had to campaign extensively in the province. As a result, it managed to fill all of Elaziz's seats (five in total). The city looked to be taken over by the new movement.

Little more than a year later, however, a serious incident was to prove a trial for local nationalists in Elaziz. The new regime in Ankara was challenged by an armed uprising of Sunni Kurdish federations in the Ottoman East. In the first months of 1925, a rebellion erupted from towns in Mamuretülaziz and Diyarbekir provinces under the leadership of Sheikh Said from Palu. The Sheikh Said rebellion has contradictory meanings and memories for Elaziz. The truth is that the city of Elaziz fell after six hours of light armed conflict, and the Ottoman forces, as well as the governor, escaped to Malatya. Thus, it is not surprising that Elaziz was pilloried in the press as incapable or, even worse, collaborative. The memory of this demeaning disrepute did not disappear for decades. In 1957, for instance, a local periodical responded to these apparently unforgotten rumours and laid the blame at the feet of the governor only, trying to rescue the people of Elaziz from the contempt of historians.[13] Nevertheless, it is a fact that Sheikh Şerif, Harput commander of the rebellious forces, entered the city without much resistance.

In the following days, chaos and disorder dominated Elaziz's daily life. After Sheikh Şerif's army left the city to chase the Ottoman army, those who were freed from the prison and those who arrived in the city from the villages began looting and plundering in the city. As a reaction, many notables who had at first been neutral turned against the rebellion and gave support to the resistance forces. A militia was formed under the coalition of officers and nationalist youth. Two days later, Elaziz was taken back from the Kurds (Fırat 1948: 228–231). In accordance with the distinctively elite past of the town, the inhabitants did not care much about who ruled the greater region, but they did not tolerate sans-culottes' insolent ravishing.

A government official who was in Elaziz during the rebellion observed this potential in the nationalist movement. He proposed to institutionalize it by founding public organization networks in Turkish cities adjacent to Kurdish regions. These cities were to be "fortresses of Turkish culture" amidst and at the border of Kurdistan. He suggested that Erzurum in the

north, Gaziantep in the south and Elaziz in the middle were the most suitable places for such a project (Yıldırım 2011: 66). The project was actualized—spontaneously, if not by design. In the following decade, Elaziz was in fact turned into a quintessential national city.

The rise of a Turkish cultural fortress, 1930s

The decade of the 1930s was the golden age for the ideological, cultural and spatial formation of the nation state in Turkey. The nationalist movement had already won the Greco–Turkish war (1919–1922) and defeated the resistance inside, most notably the Sheikh Said rebellion (1925). Moreover, all alternative political parties had been closed down by 1930, which officially culminated in the single-party regime. Finally, due to the Great Depression, the government adopted a central-planning model and increased its control over the economy. Hence, the new state was formed politically and economically, and now it was time for cultural and ideological formation. And, Elaziz was going to have a privileged role in this process.

Regarding the spatial dimension of the process, Tevfik Sırrı Gür was the protagonist. He was the governor of Elaziz from 1933 to 1937 and was known as an authoritative implementer of infrastructural projects. His signature building was the People's House (1935)—a quintessential Republican place for cultural and educational activities. Its monthly periodical, *Altan*, published articles of national-cultural indoctrination, that is, from the non-existence of Kurdish identity and language to the non-Armenian history of the region.[14] Besides the People's House, a big hospital, a stadium, a gym, a movie theatre and a high school were built; confiscations were underway in order to widen İstasyon Street; the main Atatürk and İnönü Streets were paved with cobblestones; the Republican Square was created; and children's playgrounds and primary schools were established.

Gür's overall project was a fight against the imperial past of the city. He saw the classic-style American college buildings in Harput and the Armenian (Fabrikatoryan) Five Brothers' quintuple mansion in Elaziz as a threat to national space in the city as they stood "to ruin your national conscience and to kill your national soul." However, he assured the townsmen, "times have changed":

> You began to breathe the exhilarating air of your independent country, and you continued to rescue your place from foreigners while you always prepare to live better. And, with the Culture Neighborhood you founded in the Five Brothers area, you also managed to efface this name that used to remind us of the foreigners.[15]

By calling a local Armenian family (from Arapgir) "foreign," Gür contributed to the efforts of effacing the Armenian past in toto. Turning the Five Brothers area into the *Kültür Mahallesi* (Culture Neighbourhood), as well, symbolized the Republican culture war against the degenerate Ottomans. Also in Gür's time, inhabitants of Harput were encouraged to dismantle their houses in the upper town and to use the material to build new apartments in the modern city on the plain.[16] Even today one can discern in the walls of the People's House building (today, Teachers' House) marble gravestones carried from the cemeteries of the upper town.

Yet again, the local notables of Elaziz were loath to actively take part in this process of national city building in the 1930s. Tevfik Sırrı Gür's ambition and top-down projects were recurrently confronted by the established elite in the town. The conflict rose to such a pitch that one day Gür published an open letter addressing the "intellectuals" (*münevver*) of the city. He was furious about their loquaciousness and inertia concerning urban affairs. He wrote that they only criticized but never even tried to do a thing.[17]

Gür desired to turn Elaziz into a Turkish, nationalist and modern city, and he more or less achieved his goals. The material accomplishments in Elaziz were real and shining. If we turn Walter Benjamin's famous statement upside down, we can emphasize that there is no document of barbarism which is not at the same time a document of civilization.[18] In the 1930s, Elaziz truly became a candidate for being the Paris of eastern Turkey. During his Elaziz visit in 1937, writer Aka Gündüz could not help being surprised by its clean streets and impressive public buildings. As he wrote in an Istanbul paper:

> Elaziz is not like Malatya. Malatya is like a conservative girl who is jealous of even her own beauty. She is covered head to toe with green, refraining from showing even the tip of her nose. Elaziz, [on the other hand], is in the mood of lively and vampish brides who want to show off their beauty. With her flowery dress you can even see her chaste décolleté.[19]

On the other hand, the city was turned into a "Turkish fortress" in military terms, too. This time, the protagonist was Commander-General Abdullah Alpdoğan. The military operation in Dersim in 1937 and the subsequent massacres and compulsory displacements from 1938 on is the most comprehensive and violent intervention by the central government in Kurdish region until the 1980s. The colonization attempts that had started in the 1830s during Reşid Pasha's rule centred in Mezre culminated in 1937–1938 with the first total war against the Kurdish tribal confederations in Dersim. The operation was planned and commanded in Elaziz (*Dersim Raporu* 2010; Gündoğdu and Genç 2013; Aygün 2009, 2012).

In 1936, General Alpdoğan arrived in Elaziz as the inspector of the supra-province as well as the governor of the newly created Tunçeli province (Tunçeli was the new, invented name for Dersim). In his entire seven-year term, until June 1943, General Alpdoğan lived in Elaziz. In the first year, the way to Dersim was being paved for the 1937 Operation, both literally and metaphorically. Almost every issue of the local Elaziz papers included tender notices on future military garrisons and road pavement as well as for police stations, government houses, construction materials and officers' housing in different parts of Dersim. Finally, the Turkish army launched a comprehensive military operation against the entire Dersim region in June–July 1937.

The most famous leader of the Dersim resistance, Seyyit Rıza, finally surrendered and was brought to Elaziz in mid-September. Tribunals held in Elaziz lasted two months; 58 rebels were put on trial. Perhaps to impress them with the city's modernity, the prisoner leaders were taken to visit the People's House in Elaziz. In the end, seven leaders—including Seyyit Rıza—were sentenced to death and hanged in Buğday Square on 15 November before dawn. Only two days after the executions, on 17 November, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk came to Elaziz (for the first and last time). The entire city centre was decorated for the ceremony; thousands welcomed him at the train station. He stayed only one night in Elaziz; in the meantime, he joined the opening of a bridge on the way to Dersim and officially changed the name of Elaziz to *Elazığ*—supposedly its forgotten, original form. It was announced that the name of the city came from *el* meaning "land" and *azığ* meaning "food," so Elazığ stood for "fertile land."[20] In other words, Mezre's invented name, Mamuret-ül-Aziz (1867), was replaced by another invented name, which ironically took as its main base the abbreviated version of the former (El-Aziz). The second time was farce.

The latter phase of Operation Dersim in 1938 was composed of massacres and deportations. As early as the day Atatürk visited Elaziz, the phrase "internal colonization" (*dahilî kolonization*) was put into words in a secret meeting at the train station among Atatürk, his core group

from the government and General Alpdoğan (Aygün 2012: 171). According to the plan, the inhabitants of these mountainous areas were to be settled in better places where more economic opportunities existed. In 1938, Elaziz was not only the command centre but also the distribution point for the displaced inhabitants (which reminds us of its role during the 1915 deportations). Five thousand people from Dersim were deported to the west of Turkey through Elaziz train station. All oral history accounts mention that during their temporary stay in the city, women were made to cut their hair and men's heads were shaved. They were brought to public baths; their cloths were washed or they were given new clothes and blankets for the journey to the west (Aslan 2010; Gündoğan and Gündoğan 2012). The new Elazığ was going to be the gate to the modern world.

In the aftermath of Operation Dersim, Elaziz continued to play a key role for Dersim Kurds. On the one hand, after the deportations ended, Elazığ became one of the primary destinations for unforced immigration. Some families had to start over since they had lost their homes, jobs or social environment during the Operation; the others preferred to live and work in a modern urban setting. As a result, today's Fevziçakmak and Yıldızbağları neighbourhoods were gradually created by Alawis from Dersim. Some of the deportees in the west also returned to Elazığ (instead of Dersim) after the prohibition was lifted around 1949. On the other hand, Elazığ served as a colonial laboratory where Kurds in the region were supposed to be assimilated. The Elazığ Girls' Institute was such a place. Sıdıka Avar taught at the Institute in 1939–1942 and directed it from 1943 to 1954. Her main aim was to transform the primitive and savage children of Dersim into modern citizens of the new nation. In her memoirs, she tells us how she courageously travelled in the mountainous areas—accompanied by gendarmes, of course—to collect girls from Kurdish villages. Most families resisted, she admitted, but many gradually understood the benefits of the institute for their daughters. Oral history registers reveal that, in order to evade being taken to the Elazığ Girls' Institute, girls either hid in the surrounding caves and forests during the day or they were quickly married off (Avar 2004; Bilmez et al. 2011).

Between abandonment and development, 1940s–1970s

The state elite of the 1930s undertook a far more comprehensive transformation than those in the 1830s did, but after all, when war-making ended, even the new Elazığ fell from grace with the central government. After Operation Dersim, the city was left once again to local dynamics. With the additional help of general poverty and war-like conditions in the 1940s, no discernible progress was registered in the urban history of Elazığ after the late 1930s. In the 1940s, the government withdrew the extraordinary supply of services from this supposedly special city. Elazığ turned into an ordinary province of the homogeneous Republic.

The people of Elazığ must have felt disposable. In the 1950s, they tried to mend their impaired dignity by turning to the supposedly glorious days of the city, namely to Harput. Local press of the '50s frequently published on Harput's lost cultural heritage. In 1955, playwright and journalist Cevad Fehmi Başkut (1905–1971) wrote his new play, *An American in Harput*—a satire on our missing authentic values and the harms of mimicking the west (Başkut 1955). The same year, İshak Sunguroğlu (1888–1977), a native of Harput, began publishing in the local papers about the old days of Harput based on personal experience as well as ambitious research. In 1958, he published the first volume of his four-volume *On the Way to Harput*. Written in two decades, it is definitely one of the most comprehensive studies ever made of an Anatolian town (Sunguroğlu 1958–1968).

Nevertheless, the 1950s was an exceptionally zealous and optimistic period in Turkey's history. Developments like the electoral victory of the Democratic Party, substantive

economic recovery and the Americanization of culture promised a radically different future and prevented the inhabitants of small towns like Elazığ from sinking deep into melancholic nostalgia. For example, when in 1956 the first sugar refinery was opened with the president and the prime minister attending the ceremony, the future Elazığ was imagined as a city of factories on the cover page of *Yeni Harput*.[21] Similarly, the city was dreamed as the cultural capital of the east when a committee of experts composed of government officials and American professors came to Elazığ in 1954 for an inspection connected with a possible future university. However, not Elazığ but Erzurum was selected in the final decision to host the new university of the east, and Elazığ never turned into a factory town.[22] The feeling of inertia covered the town again.

One last glimmer of hope for the townspeople was Nurettin Ardıçoğlu (1913–1982), a native of Harput and an elected MP from Elazığ in the 1960s. His signature accomplishments took place during his short but effective tenure as Minister of Tourism in 1963. In his time, Harput's historical remains were maintained, mosques renovated and streets paved. Harput was really revived as a historic district with tourist facilities, especially for weekend trips by the people of Elazığ. However, it was in his time, too, that Harput's ruined Armenian neighbourhoods were levelled by bulldozers.[23] His disinterest in recent history seems to have led him to protect only some old mosques and turn the remaining, abandoned space into a tabula rasa to be later filled with restaurants and other facilities. It is important to emphasize that most Armenian- and American-built buildings, the above-mentioned Fabrikatoryan Brothers' mansion, had actually survived the deeply nationalist period of the 1930s and '40s, and were torn down in the 1960s–1970s.

Finally, the development of the 1960s and '70s irreversibly changed the urban landscape of Elazığ. The one- and two-storey houses of Elazığ's main street began to be turned into concrete apartment buildings. Thanks to the huge Keban Dam project in the region, the people of the drowned villages poured down into Elazığ and invested the expropriation money in the flourishing construction business. All single houses with gardens and pools gradually gave way to buildings, creating Elazığ's contemporary built environment.

Afterword

Elazığ retained its special position during the apartheid-like state of emergency rule in the 1990s; even though the armed conflict between the Turkish army and the PKK was not officially overseen from Elazığ, the rumour goes that the super-governors used to spend time there. It is manifest, then, over the last two centuries, Mezre/Elaziz/Elazığ has functioned, in certain critical periods, as a military and ideological outpost for the central state at the invisible border of Kurdish and Armenian homelands. With its deep bureaucratic contacts, the city almost reminds one of a war veteran who is called out whenever a fixer is needed for dirty jobs.

Yet, such moments are, by nature, exceptional and temporary. The local point of view adopted in this chapter unsettles the neat and linear story of Elazığ as a product of nation-building in the periphery. To the contrary, like the veteran, the city has lived most of its life on its own account, with a complete blind eye by the governments. The peak periods of central intervention, for sure, irreversibly conditioned the later life of the city. When it was abandoned by the officials in the 1840s, Mezre was already made the seat of the governor, without which nothing discussed in this chapter would have happened. Nevertheless, the creation of an Armenian-Turkish elite suburb in the following decades was not even desired, let alone dictated.

Thus, the making of Elazığ is neither entirely a local story nor solely an imperial/national one. It is rather a perfect case to observe "the structures of conjuncture" (Sahlins 2009: 33–65), the idea that actions are not predetermined by but gain meaning through historical structures at a given moment. The townsmen rose against the Sheikh Said rebellion not with nationalistic fervour but rather with parochial elitism, yet their action made a special sense during the rise of the nationalist movement and caused the local to converge to the national. However, this uneasy collaboration was ready to turn into tacit opposition in the following decade. To sum up, if we do not want to reproduce the state's perspective, we need to stop seeing like a state and resist the tendency to study only the exceptional periods of towns, like Elazığ in the 1930s; instead, we had better take a local perspective and decode the long-term interplay between local and extra-local forces.

Notes

1 This chapter provides a concise summary of the 150-year history of Mezre/Elazığ based on primary research laid out in detail in (Sipahi 2015). In addition to direct references in this chapter, for further information, the reader can consult the dissertation, which is accessible online.
2 PMOA, İ.MVL. 56/1081, 30 June 1844; İ.MVL. 81/1607, 5 September 1846.
3 I initially concluded that 26 Muslim and 10 Armenian households resided in Mezre in the 1830s based on the following population registers: PMOA, NFS.d. 2675, pp. 58–59; NFS.d. 2676, p. 123. However, George Aghjayan kindly took my attention to the possibility that the entries in these two registers might correspond to two different locations.
4 *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 21, 4 March 1884.
5 *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 56, 10 [9] November 1884; no. 22, 11 March 1884.
6 The Fifth Annual Report for the Year Ending May 1860, Harpoot, the archives of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), Reel 676.
7 PMOA, İ.DH. 558/38901, 13 January 1867; A.MKT.MHM. 374/57, 18 February 1867; A.MKT. MHM. 374/75, 20 February 1867.
8 *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 21, 4 March 1884.
9 *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 11, 23 December 1883; no. 12, 30 December 1883.
10 *Mamuretülaziz*, no. 34, 7 [9] June 1884.
11 *Yeprad*, no. 17, 1 September 1910.
12 *Satvet-i Milliye*, no. 9, 24 April 1922, in (Açıkses and Çakmak 2003: 3–4).
13 *Yeni Harput*, 27 April 1957.
14 *Altan* 2, no. 13, February 1936; no. 14, March 1936.
15 Tevfik Sırrı Gür, "Bana Ne Deme, ve Darılma!" *Altan* 2, no. 23, February 1937.
16 Oral History Interview with Mustafa Balaban, 1 June 2012. Also see *Uluova*, 14 April 1953, and (Donabed 2003: 29).
17 Tevfik Sırrı Gür, "Bana Ne Deme, ve Darılma!" *Altan* 2, no. 23, February 1937.
18 For the original statement, see (Benjamin 1968: 256).
19 Aka Gündüz, "Bir Halk Yardım Ederse Bir Vali Ne Yapabilir?" *Altan* 3, no. 29, August 1937.
20 *Cumhuriyet*, 18 November 1937; *Turan*, 18 and 22 November 1937; *Altan* 3, no. 32, December 1937.
21 *Yeni Harput*, 1 October 1956.
22 *Elazığ*, 7 October 1954; 11 April 1955.
23 Oral History Interview with Şükrü Kacar, 1 June 2012.

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7

POPULISM IN TURKEY

From a political style to a model for global politics?

M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu

Introduction

As a concept, populism has been used to interpret political movements for more than a century. Some examples of the populist experiences include the People's Party of the 1890s in the US, the Russian Narodnik movement in the 1870s, agrarian upheavals in many Balkan countries in the aftermath of World War I, the Turkish state-sponsored Halkçılık of the 1930s, the Peronist regime in Argentina and several similar examples in Latin America in the aftermath of World War II. Given the extraordinary diversity these movements exhibit in time and space, it is not surprising that populism has also been one of the most controversial concepts of political science (Stewart 1969, 180). As a matter of fact, scholars so far have not had any consensus as to the nature of populism, although it is true that in terms of *style*, populist regimes display some common characteristics. They have generally shared an understanding of political life based on a duality between people and elites, emphasized a direct and organic link between the ruled and the leader, were against liberal notions of democracy, used overwhelmingly nativist and nationalist discourses and opposed political analyses based on social classes. Despite all these common points, however, populist regimes and movements in the past were all products of different historical and social dynamics. Moreover, many other political regimes have similar characteristics, practises and discourses with populism.

Yet, from around 2010 onwards, a new version of populism, perhaps better labelled as neopopulism, now emerging simultaneously and sharing extraordinary common characteristics, became the hegemonic political Zeitgeist of our time, especially after Donald Trump and Brexit in 2016. This neopopulism, despite displaying national peculiarities, has many commonalities in terms of style, approach, visions and political aims. They all use binary oppositions such as the people versus elites, criticize the liberal world order, condemn globalism, adhere to the notion of a majoritarian view of democracy, abuse democracy by reducing it simply to electoral success, despise the system of checks and balances in politics, advocate an anti-establishment discourse and resort to a "post-truth" discourse. Interestingly, the Turkish political regime that Recep T. Erdoğan consolidated in the 2010s is one of the earliest and most sophisticated versions of this recent neopopulist upsurge.

This chapter intends to shed light on the story of populism in Turkey in four different eras and by so doing modestly aims to contribute to the understanding of the general patterns of Turkish politics in its longue durée. Moreover, the Turkish story also offers comparative dimensions, especially for students of contemporary politics, to make sense of neopopulism in its global political venture.

"The people discovered": populism in the late Ottoman Empire

Populism, like many other concepts and experiences in Turkish history, emerged already in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire where the concept of "the people" was born among the intelligentsia; first for their quest in toppling down Sultan Abdülhamid's autocratic regime, and later for the formation of Turkish nationalism. To this end, the emergence of a new kind of Ottoman intelligentsia with its peculiar characteristics and nationalist ideology is crucial to the rise of an increasingly populist political style.

This new intelligentsia, generally called the Young Turks, can best be defined by its differences, not only from the "traditional" elites but also from the "bourgeois" intellectuals of Western Europe. This new phenomenon, as exemplified in many other countries with similar social formations, coincided with the rise of the "modern" state. As internal and interstate necessities of the nineteenth century forced the Ottoman ancien régime to undergo a modernization movement, the role of the intelligentsia grew. However, from the state's point of view, there was a huge dilemma. On the one hand, the state elite insisted on sustaining the status quo while at the same time giving impetus to modernization attempts. The interesting concurrence of Abdülhamid's police state and his modernization attempts clearly exemplifies the situation. Such was also the case in turn-of-the-century Iran, China, Russia and Mexico (Hart 1987, 187–201, Zürcher 1993, 106). In this context, the intelligentsia wished to pursue a modernization process in its entirety, because they themselves were the *direct* products of this process. From the point of view of the intelligentsia, their future social and material status depended on the continuation of modernization. When the states insisted on the preservation of many of the features of the *ancien régime*, but could not incorporate the intelligentsia, the alienation of the elites intensified, which, in turn, radicalized them. This radicalization led them to search for possible allies from different strata of the society; and the higher the degree of their radicalization, the more their attention turned towards "ordinary people," who were defined most of the time in an "abstract" way, oftentimes meaning the peasants.

Not surprisingly, the Young Turks were engaged in winning the hearts and minds of the people in general and the peasants in particular, especially in the Balkan provinces. In this sense, populism was a political style born out of the necessities of the intelligentsia. Their quest for having ordinary people as an ally in the fight against the ancien régime reached its zenith with the coming of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, which constituted a milestone (Buxton 1909, 43). The quest for revolution necessitated the mobilization not only of the intelligentsia but also of "the people." Having changed the nature of politics in the Empire, the revolution reintroduced the idea of political representation on the basis of elections and brought an interest in public opinion and civic organizations. The revolution ushered in an era of new political forces, new styles, new ideas, new ideals and even a new morality. It was the heyday of "new life" as characterized by the contemporaries. This new political and cultural atmosphere forced the Young Turks to take into account more and more the demands and voices of ordinary people. Modest as it might seem, this was in itself revolutionary.

The greatest momentum, however, came with the destructive effects of the Balkan wars, which resulted in the loss of the most central and crucial lands of the Ottoman Empire in

terms of economic, intellectual and human resources. From then on, in the political, literary and intellectual discourse of the Young Turks, Anatolia became the focal point of interest now that most of the Balkan provinces were gone. As a matter of fact, the famous populist slogan of "going to the people" meant the discovery of the people of Anatolia by the Young Turk intelligentsia. And more importantly, gradually but surely, Turkish nationalism was increasingly incorporated into the ideological repertoire of the Young Turks.

The populist slogans "toward the people" and "going to the people" were used in the context of Turkish nationalism. These slogans, which were initially formulated by Russian *Narodniks* and Balkan nationalists, were already widely circulating among different communities in the late Ottoman Empire. The Young Turks came to know them through a number of social and political interactions. For example, the Armenian revolutionary movements, especially the Hunchaks, were deeply influenced by the *Narodniks*. Both by way of collaborating or struggling with the Armenian revolutionary movements (Akçura 1924, 24; Hovannisian, 1967, 29; Akşin 1980, 63; Nalbandian 1963, 172), there were interactions between the two. All of the founding members of the Hunchakian Revolutionary Party, for example, "were either born in Russia or educated there, and all were well acquainted with Russian revolutionary populism." The populist notions of "going to the people" and educating them for revolution, signified two important aspects of Hunchak propaganda (Nalbandian 1963, 110–113).

The Young Turks were also influenced by the "Internal Organization's populist nationalism in their endeavour to advocate the autonomy of Macedonia (Berkes 1997, 33–34). This organization emphasized the emancipation of the peasants through social revolution and mobilized the peasants (Tekeli 1988, 1806). The Young Turks encountered the "Internal Organization" (Oren 1973, 31–33) in Macedonia, and as Enver Paşa told an acute contemporary observer, H. R. Buxton (1909, 135, 48), "We have studied other revolutions. I myself had studied very closely the Internal Organization of the Macedonian Bulgars. I admired it, and it gave us many hints."

The most significant intellectual impact, however, came with the eminent émigré Tatar Turks from Russia such as Yusuf Akçura and Hüseyinzade Ali, who were passionately nationalists and were deeply influenced by Russian populism (Hanioğlu 1995, 22). They played significant roles before and after the 1908 revolution. Almost all of their biographies illustrate the deep impact of the Russian intellectual milieu, particularly that of populism, in their intellectual formation. More importantly, however, the impact of these émigré Turks was to be definitive in formulating Turkish nationalism. One of their publications, the *Türk Yurdu*, had an enormous intellectual influence in this regard. However, they were also the ones who equated "the people" with the ordinary people, the peasantry foremost among them, and underlined the significance of gaining the hearts and minds of the Turkish peasantry, alongside the nationalist bourgeoisie, as a prerequisite for the emergence of nationalism.

According to Akçura, "the people" meant small or landless peasants of the countryside and the small artisans and wage earners of the cities (Berkes 1964, 427; Toprak 1984, 75). In opposition to the cosmopolitan views dominant among the older generations of the Ottoman intelligentsia, the emerging Turkish nationalism found in the peasants the "preserved pure features" of the nation (Toprak 1984, 71). Many contributors to the *Türk Yurdu,* especially Helpfand Parvus, wrote extensively on many aspects of the significance of the peasantry (Karaömerlioğlu 2006, 31–35). Such a populist outlook had a new purpose in serving the nationalist cause. *Halkçılık* (populism), according to him, would construct the basis of the nationalist ideology within "the people."

As early as 1912, the same intellectuals published another periodical, *Halka Doğru* (*Toward the People*), which was designed to serve as a practical link between the intelligentsia and the

people, especially the rural people. This was due to the belief that, so long as nationalist feelings and consciousness were rooted only among the intelligentsia and state officials, and not among the peasants, the nationalist ideology could not be strong (Toprak 1984, 91).

Among the mainstream Unionists, there were also attempts to interpret what "the people" were. For example, the journal *Halka Doğru* (not surprisingly preferring the same name), and published in 1919 by the famous Unionist Celal Bayar (1967, 1151), the head of the CUP in İzmir, explained in the first issue that they "founded this journal for the people. What we intend by the term 'people' is the stratum of the nation, which forms mentally and culturally the good-mannered and educated middle class."

However, these variants of defining the "people" as summarized above were never regarded as constituting the mainstream understanding of the time. It was Ziya Gökalp, the ideologue of the Unionists and the single most important intellectual to influence the later generations of the Turkish ruling elite, who shaped a specific understanding of populism (Tekeli and Şaylan 1978, 61) that was inherited, on the whole, also by the Kemalist cadres after the foundation of the Turkish Republic. According to him, "the people" were the part of the nation who did not belong to the elite groups (Gökalp 1968, 34). By the term "elite," he meant a small group of people who had the chance to have a superior educational background. It was the cultural capital that mattered for him. What he meant when emphasizing the notion of "toward the people" was the mission as well as the duty of the elite to educate the "people." This was because the elite had the privileged knowledge of what "civilization" was. In return, the people, as the "living museum of culture," would teach the cosmopolitan intelligentsia the merits of Turkish culture, which had survived only among the people.

Unlike Akçura, Gökalp saw Turkish society as a classless society unified around common goals. In that respect, he claimed that "In Turkey, only one class cannot monopolize the title of the people. Everybody, either rich or poor, is of the people [...] There are no class privileges among the people" (Gökalp 1982,116). By arguing in this way, he envisioned society as a sum of different organs which were mutually dependent on each other. Populism, he argued, "sums up its philosophy on this norm: No class, but profession!" (Gökalp quoted in Toprak 1977, 92).

Gökalp's romantic and legalistic way of grasping populism appealed to the Turkish intelligentsia more than Akçura's (Georgeon 1986, 113). But just like Akçura, he also perceived populism as closely related with Turkish nationalism. Gökalp (1968, 125–126) wrote that populists and Turkists together helped create a society "whose name is the Turkish nation."

To sum up, populism in the aftermath of the 1908 revolution was supported overwhelmingly by the Turkish nationalists. Those favouring the idea of "towards the people" were almost exclusively the Turkish nationalist circles. The same people were publishing journals such as *Genç Kalemler* to emphasize the role of using Turkish to reach the "people." The mission was to be conducted by the Turkish youth who had to "go to the people" in Anatolia to lay the basis for a mass movement to survive amidst the growing non-Muslim nationalisms which were thought to be endorsed by European imperialism of the time.

"The people wanted": populism in the single-party era (1923–1946)

During the single-party era, populism became a widely used concept, so much so that it became one of the six pillars of the Kemalist regime and was even included into the constitution. Atatürk's famous "Populist Programme" (Halkçılık Programı), was included in the 1921 constitution. In both the 9 *Umde* of April 1923 and the ruling Republican People's Party's (CHP) Second Congress of October 1927, the impact of populist ideas is clearly visible. In the

Third and Fourth CHP Congresses of 1931 and 1935, populism was officially accepted, along with other important party principles, as part of CHP's basic platform.

One of the central elements with the coming of the Republic was the emphasis on the idea of *hakimiyet-i milliye*, that is, "national sovereignty." This aspect of populism became the foundational principle of Republicanism. In essence, the legitimacy of the new political regime was to be found in the concept of the "nation," which was sometimes interchangeably substituted by the "people," whereas in the past, bases of legitimacy lay either in the dynastic or religious institutions. With the coming of the Republic, this emphasis on sovereignty became an integral part not only of political life but also of the prevailing ideological rhetoric, while the question whether the people or the "nation" in reality possessed sovereignty remained.

The basic emphasis of populism was not simply limited to Republicanism, however. Also important was the relation on between populism and nationalism. Although Gökalp's definition of the people had become more or less synonymous with the nation, it is important to realize the nuance that was inherent in the concept of "the people." This concept was being introduced into what, until recently, had been a multi-ethnic empire. Now these various ethnic groups were being asked to consider themselves to be one singular "Turkish nation" at both the ethnic and the cultural level. "The people" were expected to see themselves as a single unit, indivisible at the cultural and economic levels. They were to believe that they were similar, complemented each other as citizens and represented a standard, united social community. In other words, while nationalism invoked ideas of historical, cultural and ethnic unity, populism created a social foundation for this unity at the societal level.

After the foundation of the Republic, an ideology that was based on the nation and the people—and is, as such, single and unified, and in which social conflicts, classes and differences are kept at a minimum—was crucial. This was exactly the situation and was made visible by the rise of the idea that the nation and the people were entities devoid of classes. Thus, rather than an antidote to the socialist or communist movements that accepted class conflict as a reality, this slogan, first and foremost, was developed in opposition to the prevailing Ottoman social and political order which was characterized by heterogeneity and fragmentation. As such, it constituted one of the building blocks of Turkish nationalist discourse. This, however, does not mean that the leading elites of the single-party period were not at all fearful of socialism and communism. They were. Indeed, the chaos that ensued following both the Russian Revolution and World War I had stunned and frightened the Turkish ruling elites. Mustafa Kemal's so-called *Halkçılık* programme, after all, was a political manoeuvre to pre-empt the growing prestige of socialism during the War of Independence (Toprak 2013, 401–405). In fact, when, in the 1930s, the inescapable development of state-led industrialization created the possibility of the growth of an industrial working class, the leaders within the CHP, such as Recep Peker, who was devoutly anti-liberal and anti-socialist, did everything in their power to stop this from becoming a reality. Yet, Turkey did not have a considerable working class and the power of a socialist intelligentsia was not sufficiently noteworthy to lead to a revolution as such. In this respect, this obsessive fear of the idea of classless, unified masses (*sınıfsız, kaynaşmış bir kitle*) was more related to the fears of liberalism, separatism and the multiplicity of ethnic and social dynamics reminiscent of the Ottoman period.

The leading elites, reminiscent of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's ideas, created a type of political regime in which the people and the nation were cleansed of any historical differences, abstract or concrete, and were perceived as a single and indivisible unit. This allowed the elites to strengthen their positions by creating a situation in which the unified nation and the state were both in opposition to the interests of the individual. Once such a picture of the people had

been drawn, any particularistic opposition that could develop within the state or civil society, or have unique characteristics, automatically became an enemy, not only of the people but also of the general good. (In this context, it is important to remember the relationship French historian François Furet (1990) creates between the ways in which the nation and the people were considered almost identical following the French Revolution, and the way in which the Jacobins pursued bloody terror against the so-called enemies of the revolution.) In countries in which the idea of populism was reinforced by historical, theoretical and practical aspects of the nation, the group that held political power was able to enjoy a monopoly on the use of populist rhetoric. Paradoxically, however, the ruling elites of the regime made it very clear that they, and they alone, represented the nation. In addition, their obvious disdain for and lack of tolerance for any type of uniqueness and diversity, coupled with the fact that the state had a tendency to administrate as it saw fit without truly consulting the people or justifying its actions, simply helped them create a specific version of populism, which they were then able to monopolize. Therefore, this populist discourse, which did not exactly represent the popular groups, managed to create a situation that soon mutated into a type of enlightened despotism. In examining the early Republican period, it is important to note the power that was accorded to this type of "populist" movement.

A noteworthy consequence of the development of this sort of a notion of populism in the early Republican period was that intermediaries, groups or social constructs were no longer seen necessary (or possible for that matter) between the state and the ruling elites. This approach is not confined to the Turkish case, of course. Most nation states would prefer that neither religious nor political intermediaries stand between themselves and their people. In reality, a situation in which intermediaries are present actually would have been much easier and less problematic for both the state and the people. In the Ottoman period, a number of different organizations acted as mediators among various societies and the state, which in this sense served indispensably. For example, the Sufi orders often filled this position in relations between Muslim societies and the state. With the creation of the Republic, the mediating organizations accordingly were seen as obsolete and forced to disappear. Thus, the principle that "sovereignty solely belongs to the people" does not simply represent a new identification of the basis of sovereignty and legitimacy, but, in fact, it signals that intermediaries of all sorts are no longer necessary. What is important now is for the state to speak for and represent the people. If the people and the nation are defined so as to have the same meaning, then, logically and practically speaking, anything that falls outside of these two spheres comes to be considered an enemy of the nation.

It is important to consider that once the idea of "the people" has been defined in such a manner, it takes on serious political implications as well. As strongly emphasized by Kemal Atatürk during his efforts to establish the Halk Fırkası (People's Party), later called the Republican People's Party (CHP) once "the people" had been defined as a unified whole that contained no internal differences or contradictions, the political reflection of this was more or less inevitably a single-party political regime. In fact, an examination of Atatürk's speech, in which he outlined the principles of Halk Fırkası, reveals his belief that the competition between parties within a nation severely paralyses the strength of that nation. It also becomes evident that even as early as 1923, he believed that the people were an indivisible whole and that, given the damage that could be caused by multiparty politics, he supported the idea of single-party politics. Therefore, although it was the *Takrir-i Sükun* Kanunu (Law for the Maintenance of Order) of 1925 that in practice technically resulted in the creation of a single-party regime, it should by now be obvious that the ideological and intellectual roots of this idea were based on the populist ideas already influential during the War of Independence.

An examination of early Turkish populist discourse reveals important common characteristics with the ideology of solidarism, which was the dominant ideology of the Third Republic in France (Toprak 1977). Solidarism, often discussed in the Durkheimian context, is based on the idea that society is made up of elements that complete each other and has no internal contradictions. In this vein, society is not conflict-ridden; it is based on cooperation and coexistence. This ideology goes against liberal ideology, which focuses on the individual as opposed to community or societal groups. As such, the ideological basis of solidarism is not only anti-liberal but also anti-socialist to some extent. The ideas of solidarism strongly influenced Ottoman, intellectuals, such as Gökalp, and continued their impact into the Republican period. For the Republican intellectuals, populism served for the articulation of their solidarist notions of society. Thus the late Ottoman intellectuals focused on society developed out of their belief in solidarism, while for 1930s intellectuals, the state and the leader were the guarantors of social harmony. Looking at the developments in Turkish populism from this standpoint, it is not surprising at all that the populist ideology of the Republican period included a strong emphasis on the role of the state and even on the cult of the leader.

The peak of the Kemalist populist movement, described above in terms of its philosophical and historical background, reached its apogee in the 1930s. In reality, even in the 1920s leading intellectuals, drawing on Gökalp's definition of "the people," had advanced a certain type of populist discourse. Given the relative weakness of the working class and a Muslim/Turkish bourgeoisie, Kemal Atatürk's attitude concerning this issue was materialized in his saying: "biraz parası olanlara da düşman olacak değiliz" (We aren't going to become enemies of certain people simply because they happen to have a little bit of money) (Toprak 2013, 414). However, by the 1930s, the political regime became more and more inward looking as serious political and economic changes took place both inside and outside the country. In the economic sphere, étatism emerged as the dominant model and, in the political sphere, the regime became more compact, rigid and self-contained, together with the merging of the state and the party as a single unit. Needless to say, along with these changes in the political system, an aggressive nationalism could be discerned in the 1930s and 1940s. Although it may seem a bit ironic at first glance, in Turkey of the 1930s, populism as a discourse had actually become a more accepted and utilized tool for both the intellectuals and the higher echelons of the bureaucracy. For example, the People's Houses, at least in theory, were created as institutions that were to provide an arena in which populist ideas could be debated and intellectuals and the people could interact on a one-to-one basis. The creation of these institutions was the result of, in large part, the experience gained by the regime in dealing with the Free Party (Serbest Fırka) experiment of 1930. The leaders of the regime had realized the pressing need to expand the basis of the regime to include greater numbers of the populace.

One of the most important ideologies born out of the single-party populist discourse was the idea of peasantism (*köycülük*) (Karaömerlioğlu 2006). During this period, the majority of Turkey's population was rural and, as such, the fact that peasantism developed alongside the populist discourse is not surprising. Due to the fact that the populist movement was essentially an elitist, top-down movement, the peasantist movement followed much the same pattern. In fact, with the exception of the Village Institute project, peasantism in Turkey rarely ever passed beyond the theoretical stage. Thus, as it was never actually put into practice, it was never supported by the peasants. The leaders of the single-party period aimed to use peasantism primarily as a method for keeping the villagers in their villages and, in doing so, hoped that this would impede the proletariatization of the populace. The idea was that through education, an increased cultural capacity and improved economic opportunities, the villagers would

find no reason to leave their villages. Therefore, peasantism, as an impediment to rural–urban migration and industrialization, had an important impact on the ideological foundations of the intellectuals of the period. However, because peasantism was so out of touch with social reality, it was never truly able to develop beyond being anything more than simply an elitist ideology. The peasantist rhetoric was also thought to be a precaution against the rise of Kurdish nationalism.

Populism in the Turkish single-party period was, therefore, primarily an elitist, top-down, bureaucratic, anti-liberal and anti-democratic discourse. Its slogan "halka rağmen, halk için" (for the people, despite the people) demonstrates the nature of the populist discourse of the period. It was the reluctance of the masses, especially the peasants, to assume an active role during the National War of Independence, that served to stunt the growth of a true popular movement. For the majority of the masses, the National War of Independence seemed nothing more than a continuation of the struggles that had begun in the early 1910s, and, by this time, they were reluctant to participate. This lack of interest is seen clearly in Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's novel *Yaban*. In this historical context, the Republican elites, who were accustomed to perceiving themselves above the society anyway, hardly faced any opposition from below and were, therefore, able to act on their impulses and do as they pleased. This freedom of action was especially important in the cultural sphere. It was at this point, with this level of detachment from the society, that the elites were able to institute their programme of westernization and secularization. Despite the top-down and elitist nature of governance in the 1930s, Kemalist emphasis on secularism should never be underestimated since secularism is an absolute and indispensable prerequisite for any kind of democratic future.

"The people exalted": the populism of the 1950s

The populist discourse discussed above changed dramatically after World War II. This is understandable given the profound changes the world and Turkey underwent in terms of demographic, economic and social developments. In an era of global and domestic change, it was impossible to sustain the political status quo of the single-party era.

With the coming to power of the Democrat Party in the 1950 elections, a salient milestone in Turkish history, radical changes as well as continuities can be discerned in issues relating to the populist discourse. First of all, the abstract populist slogan "sovereignty of the people" (*hakimiyet-i milliye*) of the early days of the Republic was no longer functional as it used to be and was replaced by a more concrete and convenient term called "the national will" (*milli irade*), a term which has been extensively used even today by many mainstream political parties including Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party. After all, it was an era of multiparty politics and the term implied the power of the electors who, perhaps for the first time, actually felt that they were genuine citizens who thought that they themselves could determine the political destiny of the country. The choice of voters, therefore, was perceived as the most important embodiment of the "national will." Interestingly, the term *millet* (nation) increasingly replaced *halk* (people) in the political discourse of the DP.

Another supremely important novelty of this era was the DP's massive political mobilization that forced its politicians "to go to the people" in order to seek their support. The fact that the DP and the opposition consciously mobilized millions of people during the elections should never be underestimated. Indeed, the three elections in the 1950s witnessed genuine, remarkable mass mobilization attempts. Public opinion, more than ever, became a profound concern for politicians. This can best be seen in Prime Minister Adnan Menderes's attempt to increase land taxes in February 1955 that was rejected overwhelmingly in the Grand National Assembly

thanks to the reactions of his own deputy ministers (McCally 1956, 297; *Milliyet* 28.2.1955). Something like this was unheard of and impossible during the single-party era.

Related to the above-mentioned changes, the public relations attitude of the ruling DP towards the people also differed from that of the previous era. While in the first three decades of the Republic the ruling elites aimed to transform and shape the people, who were at the same time abstractly exalted, in the 1950s the belief in the necessity of such social engineering gradually lost its popularity. Rather, the DP circles glorified the authentic cultural traits already embedded supposedly among the "people" (Özkan 2004, 33). This also explains the attitude of the DP towards religion, an attitude considerably more conciliatory than before. In other words, populism, by then, meant "respecting" and "accepting" the existing state of things among the people that were thought to be manifested in the "national will" through elections.

Contrary to what we observe in the previous era, if change was to come, it ought to be spontaneous, gradual and from the bottom up. In other words, rather than the ambitious attempts at cultural transformation of the single-party rule, the DP elites praised reforms that could be sustained by economic development. Compared to the previous era, "the people" were less regarded like a "project." This is understandable since most of the DP propaganda upheld reactionary views based on condemning the single-party's populist mentality of "despite the people, for the people." The fact that the DP propaganda was almost exclusively based on a reaction to the rule of the single-party era also explains the deep polarization of politics in the 1950s that made impossible a definition of "the people" as used during the early decades of the Republic. This political position also helped create an image of the DP as an anti-establishment party conducting a Kulturkampf. In the way they used such a Kulturkampf approach, the DP shared once again a fundamental aspect of a populist agenda. For this reason, the DP used the "people versus elite" dichotomy in that now the elites were the Istanbul intellectuals and the people were the peasants who made up of the overwhelming majority of the population. Menderes is known to have said: "Who cares what the intellectuals in Istanbul think, we have the peasants on our side" (Waldner 1999, 61).

During the 1950s, populist discourse and practices aimed to embrace the people as opposed to the top-down, elitist populism of the single-party regime. This can be best seen perhaps both in the election campaigns and in the social composition of the new party in power. As mentioned above, the DP's dexterity at winning the hearts and minds of the average people, particularly the rural population, in their election campaigns is a well-known salient feature of the DP populism. Moreover, another change of attitude was related to the different social background of the DP members, particularly the lower echelons of the party who differed considerably compared to that of the Republican People's Party (CHP) of the previous eras. The DP members consisted of people of younger, less bureaucratic, less military and more middle-class origins. Furthermore, in the first days of founding the DP, many local branches of the party in cities and the countryside were established almost spontaneously by the initiatives of the masses. Perhaps, due to this legacy, the DP local organizations, compared to those of the CHP, enjoyed more autonomy from the centre. This situation resulted in more representation of the people, although at times it led to severe favouritism, clientelism and, more importantly, factionalism in the party.

Although the DP's emphasis on the "national will" marks a departure from the previous era, paradoxically there were striking similarities in the way the DP used and abused this concept. Since the "national will" was accomplished through the elections that were supposed to pave the way for the "real" representation of the people, any critique towards the government was regarded as subversive, disintegrative and, most of all, against the "will of the people." Menderes in many of his speeches perceived the opposition almost like enemies of the country (Yıldırmaz

2002, 83). Such an understanding, of course, also explains why the DP governments harshly repressed the press during the 1950s.

Worse is the DP's majoritarian view of democracy, a vulgar understanding of democracy prevalent in many populist experiences of the past and the present. The DP ruling elite believed in the absolute execution of political power now that the majority of voters supported them. In this sense, theirs was a populist political discourse which was extremely exclusive, as seen in their lack of respect for the rights of any kind of minorities in Turkish society. Far worse was the fact that they never appreciated a political system based on a system of checks and balances that is a fundamental foundation of a genuine democracy. This can be best be seen in the DP's infamous *Tahkikat Komisyonu* (investigatory commission) attempt that enabled a parliamentary commission to directly prosecute political opponents. In effect, that meant the dismantling of the autonomous power of the judiciary. In this regard, the DP experience in Turkey shared another common characteristic of contemporary populism, that is, a continuous attack on existing institutions.

With its discourse and practice, the DP helped create a political atmosphere infected by a massive polarization in the late 1950s. By founding a political organization called Fatherland Fronts (Vatan Cephesi), the DP used state resources such as radio, then the only mass communication device in Turkey, for the support of this organization, which contributed considerably to the polarization of the country. The state of a deeply polarized country, in turn, gave an excuse to some young military officers to carry out a coup in 1960. Had it not been the populism of the DP that paved the way for chaos, crisis, instability and polarization, perhaps the infamous coup could have been prevented.

"The people polarized": Mr Erdoğan's neopopulism as a model for global politics?

Just after Trump's coming to power in 2016, many international observers in their commentaries, interestingly, mentioned Erdoğan's name in order to make sense of what was going on in the US. They had a point indeed: Mr Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party, the AKP, is one of the earliest and most salient examples of a political genre which gradually began to dominate the political landscape all around the world in the 2010s. Mr Erdoğan's "new Turkey" shares so much with the populist regimes of Donald Trump, Boris Johnson, Viktor Orban, Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin, Jair Bolsonaro and many others that understanding contemporary Turkey can offer many insights into a form of populism, perhaps better called neopopulism, which should be characterized as the Zeitgeist of our time.

Thanks to two social traumas, a devastating earthquake in 1999 and a deep economic crisis in 2001, political psychology in Turkey shifted so radically that the existing mainstream parties in the 2002 elections almost disappeared, paving the way for Mr Erdoğan's Islamist AKP's assumption of power. The AKP in its early years seemed to be a reformist party trying to broaden political and personal liberties and was involved in fulfilling membership requirements of the European Union which revolved mainly around the enhancement of liberal values, especially regulations concerning the rule of law. According to many observers both in Turkey and elsewhere, an era of liberal reforms was underway. It was as if the AKP, coming from the social and cultural periphery with its Islamist heritage, could well be compatible with liberal-democratic values and politics. These were the years when the party, despite controlling the government and the parliament, was constrained by a system of checks and balances sustained by different state institutions at the centre of which stood the military, the real powerhouse of the Turkish political system from 1960 onwards.

It took less than a decade for the AKP together with its former ally, the Gülen movement, to manage either to annihilate or subdue all forms of political forces, including the military. Gradually, but surely, by 2011 the AKP and its infamous ally, Mr Gülen, dominated all the state apparatuses and Mr Erdoğan declared that in terms of the art of politics, he and his party had entered "the period of mastery" in which collaboration with the liberals was no more seen as necessary. Those so-called liberals were actually the ones who had greatly helped build the ideological hegemony of the party in the 2000s. From 2011 onwards, however, it became all the more clear that the AKP aimed to transform the Turkish traditional political power structure in such a way as to establish a more authoritarian rule, eventually leading to a one-man regime with an increasingly anti-democratic discourse and oppressive practices. First, in two referenda of 2007 and 2010 (Kalaycıoğlu 2012), Mr Erdoğan managed to weaken the role of the parliament and the high judiciary, respectively. Furthermore, from 2016 onwards, as a pretext to attack all kinds of opposition to his rule and to change the political regime in a radical fashion, he superbly used the infamous coup attempt of the Gülen movement. Shortly after the coup, he called it "a grace of the God." The final blow to Turkey's already weak system of checks and balances came in the controversial referendum of 2017 when a peculiarly bizarre presidential system was introduced. Perhaps these gradual, yet radical characteristics of regime change should well be conceptualized as a political *metamorphosis*.

Just like the populist regimes in the past, Erdoğan and the contemporary neopopulists use and abuse the "people versus elites" dichotomy. It is indeed difficult to define who the people is, so the distinguishing characteristics of this dichotomy lies in the way these regimes conceptualize their enemies, namely the elites. In many instances, elites are defined on the basis of educational background. Just like Trump, Erdoğan and his colleagues perceive the college-educated professional middle classes as constituting the elites. In other words, cultural capital differentiates the elites from "the people," not social class. Time and again, many from the ruling Islamists, particularly the so-called *Pelikan* circle, who had a significant role in toppling the former prime minister, Davutoğlu, in 2016, pointed out that the college-educated should not be trusted (Cumhuriyet 7.12.2018). Moreover, just like many neopopulists, Erdoğan and his ideologues play around with a notion of a Kulturkampf in which global, secular, westernized elites who are supposedly alienated from their own people, are accused of not being nativist and nationalist enough and even serving the interests of cosmopolitan interests. In this vein, the Turkish bureaucratic elite of the Foreign Ministry, for instance, were despised as being *Monşer* (*mon cher*, dear), a term used pejoratively among the public. Needless to say, such an anti-elitist stance offers an avenue to legitimize a majoritarian view of democracy or a tyranny of the majority, as Tocqueville would characterize it.

Erdoğan's neopopulist regime, just like the others, is illiberal and in essence against pluralism of all kinds. Similar to that of the DP, it is based on a vulgar, oversimplified understanding of democracy reduced solely to electoral success. Whether elections are fair does not matter (Esen and Gümüşcü 2016). Far worse is the fact that the leading politicians of the AKP have tended to deny election results if the results were not in their favour. The 2019 mayoral elections in Istanbul that the AKP failed to win is an important exemplary case in this regard. Although there was no evidence at all, Erdoğan claimed that the elections "must have been" rigged, forcing a re-election that he eventually lost by a landslide.

Furthermore, as mentioned above, a problematic, yet still functioning former system of checks and balances is no more. Gone is the fairly autonomous power of the judiciary, university, military and many other state and civic institutions. Erdoğan's recent removal of the director of the Turkish Central Bank, which has a long history of autonomy, should also be regarded in this context (Balıkçı 2018, 156). Today, Erdoğan directly controls almost 90 percent

of the mass media in Turkey. Needless to say, international and transnational organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the European Court of Human Rights, and even the EU are also targets of the attacks of the Turkish neopopulists.

Like other contemporary neopopulists, Erdoğan's politics is based on the use and abuse of an anti-establishment rhetoric. Perhaps rightly so since he himself came from the margins of society (he is always proud of coming from Kasımpaşa, a humble, non-elite Istanbul neighbourhood) and eventually managed to carry out a political metamorphosis that ended the existing political and cultural status quo.

Just like other neopopulist experiences around the world, the AKP discourse presents all aspects of life as a struggle between irreconcilable binary choices such as good and evil, white and black, and "us" and "them." "Those who are nonaligned will be eliminated," said Erdoğan to intimidate the opposition (*Evrensel* 15.12.2014). In this sense, he perceives life as a zero-sum game—an existential struggle between binary choices. Not surprisingly such a struggle as he envisions leaves no room for a toleration of critics, which has been increasingly rare in contemporary Turkey.

Conclusion

Except for today's neopopulism, to what extent the use of populism offers meaningful interpretive insights into political history has been a matter of controversy, even if we take it as a political style only. And not for nothing. As pointed out before, there is still no consensus as to the nature and definition of populism. Moreover, many of the characteristics associated with populism can be found in many political regimes, from left-wing movements to nationalists and to the Fascists and many others. Although both in time and space it is possible to find many similar characteristics of political regimes which are identified as populist, major differences also prevail. The four populist experiences in modern Turkish history also reveal fundamental common and different characteristics.

Take, for example, the different conceptions of elites: in all our case studies the educated middle classes, namely individuals with cultural capital, emerged as elites who are made scapegoats serving against the interests of "the people." For the Young Turks and the Kemalists, however, this scapegoating of the intelligentsia might seem ironic, since both of them came from these social groups. But for them, the idea was to mobilize the intelligentsia as well as the youth to reach the average "people." What they wanted from the intelligentsia and the youth was to help the state elites. In the case of the DP and the AKP, however, the intelligentsia, particularly the Western and the secular, was perceived as a social group against whom deep contempt should be mobilized.

As for "going to the people," the Young Turks and the Kemalists saw it as an ideal, wishful thinking, if you like. The idea was to strengthen Turkish nationalism. For the DP and the AKP, it was indeed a major, genuine aim to fulfil. Both actually mobilized the masses with spectacular success. Although coming from different social backgrounds from the ordinary citizen, the DP's ability and dexterity to win the hearts and minds of average people is noteworthy. Like the Young Turks and the Kemalists, theirs, in this sense, however, was also a "from above" enterprise. It was the AKP ruling elite who shared so much with the "ordinary," average "people" of the country as far as their upbringing, economic background and cultural baggage were concerned. The AKP, in this respect, is unique in modern Turkish history.

In terms of social engineering, they also differ. While both the Young Turks and the Kemalists were ardent supporters of social engineering, others were critical of it. Especially the DP was very sensitive in this respect. Despite the political rhetoric of the AKP condemning

social engineering, interestingly, almost in a radical Islamist way, Mr Erdoğan and his cadres have been forcefully changing the Republican lifestyle, imposing new Islamic cultural standards and transforming secular education. In this sense, they should well be seen in the tradition of social engineering, although in theory they continue to espouse a discourse against social engineering.

Both the DP and the AKP had a similar attitude when it comes to the majoritarian view of democracy. For both of them, democracy is simply reduced to the ballot box. For the Young Turks and the Kemalists, the majoritarian view of democracy as a criterion should not be applied since both of them are inclined towards a single-party regime in the first place.

As we saw, the Kulturkampf approach has been a characteristics of many populist regimes. In the case of the Young Turks and the Kemalists, because they were the ones who set the cultural standards, we do not come across a Kulturkampf as we witness in the case of the DP and the AKP. The latter parties conducted a considerable Kulturkampf by which they eventually polarized the country to unprecedented levels.

How appropriate it is to use the concept of populism to understand the history of Turkey might be controversial in the cases of the Young Turks, the Kemalists and even the DP. After all, historians and political scientists have used different theoretical paradigms such as solidarism instead of populism in the case of the Young Turks and the Kemalists. However, the case of the AKP regime in this sense is unquestionably indisputable: the AKP regime is one of the earliest and most exemplary of its kind contributing to the neopopulist zeitgeist of our times.

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8

TURKISH SECULAR NATIONALISM AS RELIGION

Ferhat Kentel

Introduction

The Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; AKP), as an extension and derivative of the Islamic movement, whose beginnings can be traced to the 1960s, won a great success in the first elections in which it participated in 2002, just one year after its foundation. This victory also marked the beginning of a long period of radical debate and polarisation in Turkish public opinion. In fact, this polarisation was not brand new but rather a novel manifestation of the tensions that have existed since the founding of the Republic, between the state and religion, the modernizing state and the conservative society, in other words between secular social groups and religious groups. On one hand, it was accepted that the AKP "took off its clothes of old (Islamist) identity", that it was like any other party in the political spectrum, as a liberal albeit conservative-democrat party. On the other hand, it was argued that, Turkey, once again, was catapulted under "the sharia threat" by means of the Islamist AKP, which still had a secret religious agenda.

Despite the existence of important studies (Üstel, 2008; Mardin, 2011; Kara, 2010; Göle, 1991, 2000, 2012) showing the connections between the religious and the secular, and their hybridity in practice, the identity-building processes in the fields of ideological-political discourse are persistently reproduced in a reciprocal polarised opposition. Despite this polarisation, the statist and nationalist outlooks that the AKP has embraced especially after 2013, and the common dimensions that have gradually become more visible, allow us to rethink the intertwined relations between religion and secularism in Turkey.

At this stage, it may be useful to define the concepts of "secularism" and *laicité* that are accepted and positioned against "religiosity" in the context of Turkey. Accordingly, *laicité* is a state policy in Turkey and put into practice as an institution, but also a discourse that creates an identity among social groups. "Secularism" can be defined as a social practice that does not reject religion but exists with it, does not conflict with religion, but pushes it in a secondary zone. For practical uses in this text, as the concepts of laic and secular (or modern, contemporary) can exist tactically, interchangeably, negotiating with reality, I will gather multiple definitions and meanings positioned "against the religious" under the concept of "secular" in this text.

"Religious" and "secular" entities are the product of a common discourse and they mutually produce each other. In line with the approach of Talal Asad (2003), who developed his theory inspired by Michel Foucault, I will claim that this discourse, in harmony with nationalism, essentially produces "religiousness" and "secular" language simultaneously under a new religiosity.

Religious foundation of the secular Turkish Republic

Although in the Republican period, religion, with its popular properties, is officially kept outside the public sphere, it has always been involved in the symbolic centre of the political sphere and, in a sense, this is not very different from the Ottoman times. Even if it seems that religion dominated Ottoman social and political life, the real authority has always rested in the political centre (the royal household and the bureaucratic elites), exceptional cases notwithstanding. In other words, for the political centre also, religion is symbolically at the centre; it is a "reference tool" to legitimize every political activity even though it is against the general religious dogma.

The steps taken in the establishment of the Republic included more detailed efforts to build a new form of citizenship with a renewed state power. Right after the establishment of the Republic in 1923, a law on the unification of education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*) was introduced in 1924; madrasas and dervish lodges were closed, and a law regulating headdress was passed in 1925; new calendar, clock, and measurement applications were introduced to establish a new perception of time in 1925 and 1931; and the Latin alphabet replaced the Arabic alphabet in 1928. All of these actions give clues that basically a new society and a rupture with the old were the official aims. But from another point of view, it seems possible to see the continuity between the old ("religious") and the new ("secular"). Just four months after the proclamation of the Republic, the establishment of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) on March 3, 1924, on the same day the law of the unification of education was passed, a proclamation was made of a very close engagement with religion. Diyanet was undoubtedly a tool to control religion by the state; however, it was established in place of the Ottoman authority of Sheikh ul Islam (the leader of Islam) and the pre-Republican Ministry of Religious Jurisdiction and Foundations (*Şer'iye ve Evkaf Vekâleti*). Sheikh ul Islam, which was in theory superior to the political body, was often a political instrument attributing the "necessary" religious fatwa/approval needed by the "Caliph Sultan". Diyanet was also shaped according to political power relations throughout the Republican history. When the focus of politics produced more secular content, Diyanet itself supported these secular policies. In contrast, when religiousness increased in the government and state administration, the need for Diyanet turned to a more intense religious content. As a result, this institution of "religion" has been integrated with a function of reproducing the state and its basic reference, that is, the nation in every period, and not the "universal message" of religion. Diyanet has become an institution that "obeys" and reproduces the sanctity of the state's official nationalism, just like it was the Sheikh ul Islam that reproduced the legitimacy of the "caliphate" that rested in the Ottoman sultan. As the most central religious institution, Diyanet has become a tool of political power, not shaping its period but rather conforming to various historical periods.

An initiative that gave an important clue about the relations, intentions and capacities of the Republic and its elites with respect to religion was the "Declaration of Religious Reform" (*Dini Islah Beyannamesi*) prepared in 1928. According to this project, religion would be "reformed", similar to the Christian Reformation. One of the most important components of this reform text was the proposed change in the mosques. According to this, the form of worship would be changed, seats would be installed and one would enter with clean shoes to these clean and

neatly organized places of worship. The language of worship would be in Turkish, instead of Arabic; verses, prayers and sermons would all be held in Turkish. In order to ensure that the worship is held in a "very aesthetic, exciting, spiritual manner", "musically talented muezzins [man calling to the prayer] and imams" would be raised. In this context, it was also stated that musical instruments would be accepted in mosques and that there was a "definite need for modern and instrumental music in the content of canticles". In addition, it was emphasized that "religious thinkers, with a capacity of rhetoric" who would be able to teach religious values should be utilized, and that "new religious philosophers" should be produced from the Faculty of Theology (Kara, 1987, pp. 497–499).

The text in question is a text that produces both taming techniques and innovation. Without going into full detail, at least, the writers of the text imagine a "temple" that models the churches of a Europe they aspire to, against the "backward image" of the oriental mosque, but also that they desire to see an "enthusiastic worship" at this new temple. This ambivalent text sets out, on the one hand, with rational touches, with the claim of correcting a "false religion" or pushing the old religion aside; on the other hand, it is looking for a new "enthusiasm" in devotion. In other words, it is probably a result of people with different intentions and interpretations; in the final analysis, it is an unpredictable hybrid outcome involving a modernizing state power.

It was never known exactly how the writing of this text took place, whether Atatürk was involved or not. However, in the years after the text appeared in the *Takvim* newspaper, small reform steps such as *azan* (call to prayer) and sermons in Turkish were taken, even though the items that designed the mosques like a church were not applied.

In order to understand the relationship between secular construction and religiosity, other than the aforementioned features, the examples of institutions and texts produced by the new regime in a mimetic or analogical relationship with religion can be given. A new form of "school", inspired from the physical and symbolic techniques of preaching in churches and as a result and a tool of the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the general process of secularization in Europe, has been adapted in Turkey too, in the process of modernization that started in the Ottoman Empire. Almost all the elements of the sacred place that exist in the habitus of the worshipping person are also present in modern states' schools. The symbolic narration of the dogma that has to be believed are exposed visually on the walls to the believers or the people who are called to believe. In the traditional place of worship, this narrative includes the life of Jesus Christ (birth, journeys, miracles, crucifixion, ascension to heaven and so on) or Islamic references (the names of Allah, Muhammed, calligraphies, plates containing Koranic verses, symbols of crescents and so on). The school of the new times included the development of human history throughout the ages, or the road from the empire to the nation, past victorious moments, visuals depicting the life of Atatürk as the new holy person, images, symbols and references necessary to believe. The figure of Christ, who sacrificed himself for humanity, is presented in the apsis at the centre of the church; the photograph of Atatürk, who saved the nation and showed it the right path, the National Anthem as a credo and Atatürk's "Address to Turkish Youth" (*Gençliğe Hitabe*)[1] are exposed in the centre, new sanctum, of the school classroom. In addition, in this special place (apsis of the church, *mihrab* of the mosque), the guide (priest, imam) who played a special role and taught believers the right way and salvation (the word of God) is replaced, in the school, by the teacher, who explains the light of science and the salvation of the individual and the nation. In Islamic society, the word *hodja* has been a common denomination, linking the past and religion to the new and secular; the *hodja* of religion continued to live in the *hodja* of the Republic's school.

Since it is accepted even by religious authorities that there is no "revelation" to ordinary subjects other than those of the prophets, putting aside its theological dimension, religion and

belief are learned in the society that produces good and evil. According to Émile Durkheim, who developed a classic approach on the sociology of religion, religion is one of the most important institutions produced by society and keep a society together. All religions (from which science and philosophy emerge) produce meanings about all aspects of life, such as time, space, numbers, causes, matter and personality. It is in that sense, then, that religion is a social phenomenon (Durkheim, 2001), or what is manifested as "religion" is "social". In addition, Clifford Geertz, underlines the centrality of the sacred symbols that spread from religious motives to all national or pre-national forms of political life, in all modern or premodern societies. According to Geertz, the gravity and seriousness created in the deification of the great leaders, in the promotion of national icons and pilgrimage venues, and in state rituals and worship are the same (Geertz, 1983, p. 114).

However, according to Talal Asad, there is nothing essentially religious, nor is there a universal essence that defines the "sacred language" or "sacred experience". Religion is not a phenomenon that has been pushed into private life and that "infects" secular life at different times. Secularism is not a continuation of religion or a separation from it; it is neither a "liberation" zone nor a choice opposite to religion. Secularism is a way of perceiving the "natural" and "social" world in a specific way, controlling society and organizing its core values and lifestyles. Therefore, religion is a multilayered concept under secularism that combines certain behaviours, knowledge and sensibilities in modern life (Asad, 2003, p. 25, 191). Although two separate worlds, old and new, secular and religious, seem to continue existing side by side, the result is a secularised religion or a secularism in resonance with religion. The result is religious in any case; the continuation of the religious, a chain of belief in a social world, one of its endless derivatives of belief.

Imagined nation

Whether it is a product of a very new imagination (Anderson, 2016) or it includes a kind of continuous relationship with ancient traditions and tribes (Smith, 2016), secular nationalism is a strategy (Certeau, 1984) shaped by the responses of changing forms of religious thoughts, practices and tactics to power relations, themselves changing through the centuries. This strategy, for the schools, is constructed by weaving and placing space, decor, words, scripts, music, slogans, aphorisms, controls, borders and signs in all areas of life. Instead of the iconography of religion in the church and the mosque, the iconography of the Republic and new secular structures is formed in resonance with the previous ones, and consists of symbols necessary to convince the new believers. As such, as Bauman strikingly underlines, "educating the public" (1989) is not just a function of the social structure or an activity that is reduced to an institution such as a school, but a practice of learning obedience that spreads throughout the whole society and glorifies the state.

In this vein, *Anıtkabir* (literally "monumental tomb"), Atatürk's mausoleum, is one of the most important icons of the Republic. Even it seems like a manifestation of a "God other than God", which is a *shirk*, a very radical sin for a faithful Muslim with strong religious references and who has no religious deity other than God on earth. For citizens with new secular beliefs, it may have almost the attribute of a new "Kaaba". As such, it is both a part of this new iconography and a manifestation of a strategy as an embodiment of belief practices from centuries, which have been interpreted under renewed power relations.

While it carries a direct reference to the architecture of ancient Greek temples, *Anıtkabir* has a symbolic connection with Kaaba, the holy place of worshiping (*tavaf*) for Muslims. In other words, those who planned *Anıtkabir* are consciously aware of their cultural and emotional

capital, and Kaaba may be a reference they use as a footnote in their imaginations. Alternatively, it may not have such a clear reference, but a power that lives in the subconscious of their memory, affecting their attitudes and behaviours. On the other hand, in the Certeauian sense, it is not possible to limit the meanings produced by *Anıtkabir* in the minds of those who saw, visited and in a sense "consumed" this symbol-monument. In other words, "image consumption" is not just "reproduction"; it cannot be expected that those who consume that image attribute the same meaning intended by the producers. According to Certeau, "consumption is a secondary production" (1984, p. xiii). Since consumers have very different cultural and emotional capitals, they can make some rapprochements between *Anıtkabir* and the Doric Greek temples, or Kaaba. A visit to that monument can take place as an expression of respect for a great person, or as a political performance with crowds or a demonstration of identity and power. Mostly, visitors act as they do in a holy place; they can touch the sarcophagus symbolizing Atatürk's grave, ending with touching it with their lips. However, this consumption and the plurality of meanings do not only occur for those who visit it. The tomb of a man, the founder of laicité-secularism in Turkey, can be perceived, positively or negatively, as a religious space with a wide variety of interpretations for everyone.

Undoubtedly, Atatürk is the figure or "institution" that strongly produces religiousness through "secular practices". Atatürk has a central place in the construction of Turkish secular nationalism. The praises and adjectives ("Ata" (ancestor), "father", "saviour", "founder", "great leader", or "*gazi*" (with a religious connotation) and so on) attributed to him have transformed him into an image of a superhuman who is present always and everywhere, including in the hearts of individuals. Especially the poets of the early Republic produced immensely for the deification of Atatürk. Some examples of their poems that have been included in primary school education and books for many years can be given here:

"You are unique … You are the Creator / we worship you …" (Aka Gündüz); "Çankaya [the House of the Presidency] is enough for us, / Let Kaaba be Arab …" (Kemaleddin Kamu); "It creates everything out of nothing like God" (Yusuf Ziya Ortaç); "Atatürk ekber! Atatürk ekber! [borrowing the expression *Allahu ekber* pronounced during the *ezan*, call to prayer, "Atatürk is great"] / He is the only one: Atatürk! / He is the Prophet!" (Behçet Kemal Çağlar), (Yıldırım, 2011).

The Turkish secular state has abundant rituals of "Atatürkism" that can be compared with religious practices. There are many examples of Atatürk "fetishism" or the "cult of Atatürk" expected to produce loyalty to the state: November 10 (the day of Atatürk's death) as a permanent mourning day; establishment of the relationship with the celebration of "supernatural" events such as silhouettes of Atatürk (a shadow of a mountain reflected over another one); Atatürk statues that spread to all institutions; his photographs; his famous maxims (like the "hadiths" of the Prophet Muhammed). (Yashin, 2002, Wilson, 2016, p. 9).

Under this construction, Islamic sacred references continue to live through the Diyanet institution of the state and the traditional religious practices of the society. However, the sacredness begins to be fed from more diversified sources. This increases the religious resources of the new secular society and strengthens its social base; society itself turns into an object of faith: "the divine is the society itself, and society venerates itself" (Durkheim, 2001, cited in Gentile, 2006, p. 8).

For the average individual who has to be built as a citizen, there is almost no place "not to be believed" in. While this individual was already believing in his "holy book", Atatürk's book *Nutuk* (The Great Speech) was added to it. Moreover, the mosques and traditional tombs of holy people, all cities and public spaces are decorated with monuments, sculptures and new avenues and street names. Many military and civil official parades on national

holidays were added to the ceremonies of traditional religion such as Ramadan, blessed nights consecrated to the important moments of Prophet Muhammed (*kandil*) or the feast of sacrifice (*eid al-adha*). Besides rituals such as pilgrimage, "devil stoning" during the pilgrimage in Mecca, new symbolic events such as the "liberation of cities from enemy invasion" (the theatrical representation of Turkish troops entering into the invaded city and killing the enemies) were invented. The new secular language is nourished not only by the religious but also from all fields of knowledge, power and tension that exist and produce meaning in the society. Considering the logic of "intertransposability" of symbols used by Geertz (2002, 63–65), temples (churches, mosques and so on), factories, schools, even shopping malls, church towers, minarets, clock towers – even if they are rivals – inspire each other, replace each other and produce each other. Similarly, rewritten history contributes to existing stocks of emotion, with war narratives, by creating heroes, martyrs and extraordinary, miraculous stories full of sacrifice and pain.

The tactics of emotions between secular and religious

The pendulum described above that swings between religious and secular is part of a strategic construction or discursive fragments. Accordingly, Turkish secularism is a production compiled with the Islamic religion of the society, inspired and established in a mimetic relationship with it. However, in addition to all of these, another religiousness that goes even deeper into this fiction and enables the construction of that fiction has to be underlined.

Referring to Rudolf Otto, Gentile uses the "*numinosa* [numinous –"fascinating and terrifying power"] interpretation of the sacralisation of politics", which corresponds to the "metamorphosis of the sacred" in modern society. He argues that "even the political dimension, like all human dimensions, can become a place where the individual can experience a sacred experience, as frequently occurs during times of great collective emotion such as wars or revolutions" (Gentile, 2000, p. 29). From this angle, without being limited by the politics of modern times, the long historical line shows that there is a strong symbiotic relationship between violence and sacredness, or between war and religion (Caillois, 1951; Girard 1972; Crépon, 1991 cited in Gentile, 2000, p. 29).

I can speculate further on this concept of *numinosa* as a source of religion or different religiosities, in relation with symbolic supra human, metaphysical levels and instances created through the vulnerability of ordinary men. According to this concept, religion, or believing in a supreme being takes place with a mind-blowing, spiritual, mysterious, feeling of the sublime; numinous, in a sense, is helplessness against "divinity". Religion is the drug of helplessness in the face of big, awesome, sublime events that ordinary people cannot interpret. Through religion and the world built around religion (dogma, comments, signs, practices, rituals, sacrifices, body discipline, history and so on), people "surrender" to the forces they cannot cope with; they put the reference they surrender at the top of their world of meaning. These sublime references can consist of evil and good, or they can contain both good and evil under the same figure. Evil is narrated by the devil and goodness by the god. Since evil is very strong, goodness to defeat it is also very strong. In other words, god is a god who both punishes, puts on curses and forgives us when we make sacrifices.

Traumas experienced by societies or events socialized or built as traumas can make a similar image of evil permanent in people's consciousness. According to Jeffrey C. Alexander, the Holocaust trauma, as a "sacred-evil", in a Durkheimian sense, is an event that exists not only for those who experienced it but in the future as well (Alexander, 2012). The history of modern nations contains many events like the Holocaust's traumatic construction, such as revolutions,

civil wars or founding national traumas. Although it cannot be compared with the Holocaust in terms of its nature or outcome, the Treaty of Sèvres in 1920, marking the partition of the remaining lands of the Ottoman Empire between the Allied forces, was built as a trauma and a "sacred-evil" in the establishment of Turkish nationalism. This "evil"-building includes the permanence of the idea that the foreign forces that invaded Anatolia and caused the collapse of the Ottoman Empire always have similar ambitions on Turkey. As such, the Treaty of Sèvres turns into the "Sèvres Syndrome", which is passed on to the next generations.

The map in which the Treaty of Sèvres is depicted is the "map of evil" in all primary and secondary school history books. It is a map of a catastrophe that can be remembered immediately when a reference is required for current news and comments according to the political necessities. In a sense, it is a "sacred" reference; a trauma that constantly releases fear. This "inconceivably (numinous) frightening" event is in turn dealt with as an "inconceivable sacrifice" under the leadership of the "holy leader" Atatürk. Today, there can always be "new Sèvres" – sacred evils – which we cannot know from where and when they can arrive; but there will always be a "sacred-good" that can cope with them. As such, "Sèvres" or similar historical events, even though they do not contain any reference to religion directly, have been included in nationalist discourse in a way that can be perceived as religious. Sèvres is a kind of descent into hell, and this hell is never detached from the idea of heaven.

October 29, Republic Day; May 19, Youth Day; or August 30, Victory Day represent salvation from hell, similar to the feasts of Ramadan and *Eid al-adha* that represent Islamic days of liberation and salvation. This can be related to the idea of "apocalypse" (eschatological), which is expressed in the face of disasters, evil or oppression. This relation is reified in fictions produced, consumed and reproduced with new meanings by means of ideologies, whether they are nationalized or not; whether they are religious, secular, revolutionary or fascist. Just as religious people know how heaven as well as hell were preached religiously, people who do not necessarily believe in traditional religion but who fight for a political cause also believe that "the old bad days", "the old regime" will end one day and "the days of salvation" will come. With an apocalyptic motive, an economically based class solidarity turns into a "glorious" cause that aspires to reach "absolute good". Revolution is the pinnacle of this religious (or socialist) discourse (Gentile, 2006, p. 7).

Beneath these strategic attempts of the powerful actors of the secular nationalist discourse trying to build a new society, it is necessary to consider a cultural environment that feeds the discourse of "divinity" built around the sublime evil of Sèvres and the subsequent sublime liberation. This cultural environment is boiling with beliefs, magic and mysticism in a much larger and deeper sense than in the case of this specific divinity.

An example of this depth is the "Karbala incident", both as a historical experience and the commemoration rituals around it. The Karbala tragedy took place in 680 when the Umayyad Caliph Yazid's army killed Husayn ibn Ali, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, in Karbala, Iraq. This 1,400-year-old tragedy is commemorated every year, in a numinous sense especially in the Shiite geography, with theatrical performances of the suffering and tears of believers by self-flagellation on their bleeding bodies.[2]

Crying while watching the Karbala ceremonies during the "Tear Nights", and even listening to the Quran on the radio, television or circumambulating the Kaaba in Hajj are situations of the "eternal sensation" that occurs in front of an image of numinosity. Parallel to this, during the commemorations of Atatürk's death on November 10, a drop of tears from the eyes of a soldier waiting next to his deathbed in the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul, may also cause tears in the eyes of those watching television at that moment. This is the result of "emotional capital" that comes into play again whenever the "numinous" reminds a person of itself.

The concept of "emotional capital" inspired by Pierre Bourdieu's social practice theory is a form of cultural capital. It includes emotional-specific resources that individuals activate and integrate into different fields. Like economic capital, emotional capital is unevenly distributed in society and "as a trans-situational resource, emotional capital is inextricably linked to variations in power and privilege in contemporary society" (Cottingham, 2016, p. 452).

Emotional capital, like cultural capital, builds a "border" defining the inside and the outside. As social class-belonging and capital accumulation separate, or like in the case of social classes or cultural identities in conflict, there can be separating or unifying resources for emotional capitals. The accumulation of different emotional capitals undoubtedly is fed by and brings different experiences, practices and tactics. Different individuals may feel shame, a sense of humiliation or revenge on different topics, in different cases. Although they may all have a sense of shame and develop a conscious reification of the shame on different issues, these emotions can cause one to feel both fear and hate in a similar way to "class hatred" in front of the other. Therefore, although emotional capital has a "separating" feature, it is also related to other individuals, to different emotional capital owners at the same time. Emotions such as frustration, anger, exclusion, alienation and loneliness become part of emotional capital, not alone but in relation to others. In other words, emotions are learned, controlled, fixed and acted in social interaction. Individuals also are activated by these emotions. Therefore, according to James Jasper, it is difficult to imagine social action without emotion; emotions are the glue of solidarity, the power to mobilize conflict (1998, p. 399).

In different social movements, similar emotions mobilize, but despite these similarities, emotional capitals are shaped in different ways. For example, the rank of "martyrdom" (*şehit*), which has a "religious" reference at its origin, in relation with the emotional capitals within different identities, can "honour" the Palestinians fighting Israel, Turkish security officers fighting against the Kurdish PKK (*Partiya Kerkeran Kurdistan*), or in contrast, PKK fighters against the Turkish state forces. A folk song used by leftist political groups can be a striking example of the intertransposability of meanings between different cultures of the society, but also an example of the continuity of the emotion of the sublime and religiosity in different identities. This particular song is about the story of a charismatic figure of the Turkish revolutionary left, Mahir Çayan, and his friends who were massacred in the village of Kızıldere in the central northern region of Turkey, in 1972. The song, composed after that massacre, beyond the traditional Islamic religious discourse, also has a dimension that includes different religiosities ("cross", "resurrection"):

> In treacherous traps, asleep in blood / We are shot, O my people, don't forget us / We were *crucified* for tortures / O my people, don't forget us! […] Every time in the bloodstream / Red roses bloom at the top of the mountains / In every bullet of fascist barrels / We are *resurrected* o my people, don't forget us![3]

In fact, revolutionary, Islamist or nationalist movements, and individuals of these movements, whether they are aware or not, are doing, as Ulus Baker defines it, a kind of "thought assemblage" or "image assemblage" (2011, p. 135).

However, these assemblages are practices that take place not only in the visible strategic steps of the state or the political movements that oppose it, but in all areas of life. Continuing from Baker's metaphor, each image evokes an emotion, a sort of reaction in the perceptions of the individual, and consequently an emotion whose power is stronger or weaker. So, just as the practices or tactics – the "weapon of the weak" – of individuals who "walk" inside the strategies, building their "place" and "boundaries" (city, company, language, nationalism, religion

and so on) include numerous "ways of doing" or "operational combinations", according to de Certeau (1984), a similar claim can be made for emotions. Emotions are also "tactical" in this sense. According to the environment or context in which they live, they respond and interpret by feeding from their already existing capital and stocks, or "poach" from the strategy they are in ("someone else's area"). These reactions (or "consumption") with "combined" emotions have the power to transform the environment (strategy) in which they are located and to give life to new strategies. In addition, emotions include continuity, such as beliefs; they are transformed and they transform.

From this perspective, performances, perceived as manifestations of secular or religious identities, can be considered as strategic constructions formed through power relations of their time and built in traditional or secular "religiosities", rather than "pure religious" identities (Islam or secularism). Therefore, individuals who continue to exist under different identities, for example, can hate each other, see the other as "dirty", feel disgust in a very similar and reciprocal way. However, they can also interpenetrate each other, transform their beliefs, convert to the other's belief and hide themselves under the identity of each other.

Religious nationalism and fear

The process of encountering religious and secular identities, and the intertwining of the aforementioned emotions moved into a new phase with the AKP coming to power in 2002. This "conservative–democrat" party, carrying the democratic potential of a social movement that emerged with Islamic demands, turned into a party with more authoritative state language, especially after the 2010 constitutional reform and the Gezi events in 2013. In addition to its neoliberal, populist policies, the AKP has gradually shifted to a statist and nationalist language, from an Islamist language.

In the process of the radical change or the rigidification of the AKP, encountered also at its base, we can come across different versions of emotions such as fear and insecurity pervading especially the relationship between the authoritarian state and society. In a sense, the Islamic movement can be interpreted as a form of expression and an attempt to overcome these emotions through religious discourses. The AKP, which is a derivative of the Islamic movement, is a party that carries the emotional accumulation, oppression and the humiliations that are strongly felt especially in the case of the issue of the headscarf. In this sense, the AKP is a "home" for the masses who voted for it. For these masses, this is a home not only in terms of the religious plane in which they live, but also for their physical, economic, geographical, cultural and symbolic displacement. It is one of the homes produced by a society that is always in fear and insecurity, that cannot feel a continuity in the lands it lives on, and that the ground on which it stands always slips, therefore producing permanent communitarianism. For these people, anything that caresses their soul, a person – a leader – or a thought that can give them a sense of stability, continuity or strength is experienced as a home that they can belong to. This home seems like a lifebuoy that will heal their traumas, and on this occasion they are avenged by all the humiliations they had experienced in the past. Provoked by "envy" (or jealousy) as a driving and mobilizing force, like in the revolutionary movements giving way to totalitarian regimes (Kolakowski, 1983), they overcome the previous elites and are satisfied with the elite class rising up from their masses in search of revenge.

Hence, like the previous elite group that established a bourgeois class and a cultural hegemony with an arrogant language, the AKP became the mediator and the manifestation of a similar class hegemony. The language of this new hegemony spreads and strengthens through a shared cultural and emotional capital. The young woman who was once rejected at the university

door because of her headscarf, fears that the same oppression will return in her later years. That fear nurtures the legitimacy of the new regime. This language also feeds on forms, regardless of content. People who grew up with the fear of the *gâvur* (infidel) throughout their childhood and who always fed this fear, who internalized the language, the timbre and the trembling voice games of a preacher of an average neighbourhood mosque, play an ordinary but very strong role in knitting a new emotional hegemony.

In the new era, although the space where the religious discourse is politically mobilized seems to be the religion itself, what is at stage is the "sacralisation of politics" (Gentile, 2000) that rises in the power relations of the time. New practices started to emerge in the public space, with the AKP government. The campaigns organized in the places where the Çanakkale (Dardanelles) wars took place in 1915, had the characteristics of a "circumambulation" by large crowds. Performances like "empathy" with soldiers who fought in Çanakkale; eating similar humble food; performing morning prayers collectively like them became new routinized rituals. These performances that feed national emotions with religious motifs were competing with the secular history-writing but also with the remembrance of the 1915 Armenian genocide. Again, another historical event, the Sarıkamış disaster, can be mentioned here. This event, which also occurred in 1915, when 90,000 Ottoman soldiers died frozen in the snow without fighting, obtains at present a new meaning. With the new ways of remembering and forgetting, today the military ambitions and inadequacies of Enver Pasha (commander of the army at that time) were forgotten and the disaster became an occasion in order to collectively experience a day of "national sadness". By means of trips organized to the region, the event became a case for the reconstruction of "heroism and martyrdom". These performances, which create a kind of catharsis effect in relation to the tragic events in history, are religious efforts to re-establish the nation, with the by-product of the reconstitution of 1915 with a new and refreshed meaning.

The July 15, 2016, coup, attributed to Fethullah Gülen's Islamist organisation, labelled as "FETÖ" (Fethullahist Terror Organization; Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü), which killed 248 people, played a very important role in the reconstruction of nationalism and in giving new power to the AKP and its new regime. July 15 was a strong occasion to build a new national/founding day. This was possible within the strategy that created the "sacred-evil" in the image of the Treaty of Sèvres and the subsequent "liberation" associated with the "sacred-goodness" embodied in the identity of Atatürk. The AKP in the state (or the state in the AKP), by feeding on tactics in accordance with this strategy, tried to build "the terrible and inconceivable evil of July 15" but also the "epic" against that evil. As in all "revolutions", the new elites tried to launch July 15 as a new beginning of history, almost like "year zero". As a party that has made a "revolution" in a way, the Gezi events in 2013 were blamed as a "counter-revolution" by the AKP. But paradoxically, the most appropriate "moment of revolution" came later, on the occasion of July 15, in 2016.

Practices that were expected to convince the masses about the new founding day were implemented in a wide range of communication technologies, starting from the night of July 15 and extending from mosques as sacred places to secular institutions (television channels, social media, NGOs). There was *Salâ* (knelling, Islamic practice for informing about mourning) from minarets every night; special preaching in mosques, and sermons sent from the central religious authority of Diyanet were performed. Agitative political videos, even private companies' commercials referring to July 15, were broadcast on television. In order to mark the public space, new names inspired by July 15 were given to streets, squares, venues and institutions. All these activities became the repeated references and "footnotes" for a new believing process, and with this process, July 15 "icons" were created. Posters showing the moments of "resistance"

and "revolution" were widely placed on billboards on the streets. "Corners of July 15" were prepared in addition to already existing "Atatürk corners" (dedicated to the memory of) in schools. In those places, paintings prepared for the contemplation of students, photographs of bleeding martyrs, and heroes fighting against tanks were presented. The name of Bosphorus Bridge was immediately changed to the "July 15 Martyrs Bridge"; a monument dedicated to the martyrs (15 Temmuz Şehitler Makamı) was built. All these symbols produced a mixed state of mind between the macabre and worship. At least, they were designing images mobilizing emotions aimed at the reconstruction of the nation.

According to Saime Tuğrul, the sacred can be expressed and constructed mainly through four elements: objects of a cult, people, places and moments. All the necessary elements required for the construction of the sacred are provided in the case of July 15, but the element of "human beings" is the most important one as it accomplishes the enlarged religious meaning by means of "giving sacrifices" and "violence". For Tuğrul, the act of sacrificing protects the continuity of the sacred and makes possible the exchange between the sacred and the profane (2010, p. 64). It is in this way that the eschatological imagination between religious – heaven and hell – and secular –perfect order and chaos of enemies – is operational in the emotional tactics of individuals. The rituals organized around the event create, in Gaston Bachelard's sense, "resonances" or "reverberations" (1994) between individuals and between secular and religious references; they become a kind of emotional ritual, giving way to the Durkheimian concept of "collective effervescence" (2001) for the masses.

Coming back to Rudolph Otto's idea of "numinous", an event that seems highly secular is perfectly religious, as "the religious experience is a '*mysterium tremendum et fascinans*' – a fearful and fascinating mystery". In this sense, July 15, an attempt at reconstruction of the national identity is "religious", characterized by an inseparable blending of dread and awe, terror and reverence, powerlessness and presence (Otto, 1950, cited in Miller and Van Riper, 2017, p. 1).

The very negative image of the organisation of Fethullah Gülen, which was strong support and was a companion (or "the brothers of revolution") of the AKP on its road to power, was used as an enemy that was identified with a "terrible" organization of "FETÖ", an "evil" with "many domestic and foreign enemies behind it". Against that negative image of sacred evil, what also emerged is the image of "sacred salvation". Parallel to the process of recreating the society, to the image of a "nation of heroes" that worships itself, were added new adjectives and an emotional retouching of the image of Erdoğan as "chief commander" of the nation. In response to the image of "Atatürk as a founding father", a new image of the "immortal father" created around Erdoğan, "leading the fight in front of his people", formed a new accumulation of emotional capital. At least in the eyes of a segment of society, Erdoğan is "sanctified" as both the "president" and the *reis* (leader) of a "strong Turkey" and of its nation. This sacralisation, as it is expressed by a fan of Erdoğan who admits that "saddening Tayyip is saddening God", works through attributing an extraordinary, almost divine quality to Erdoğan, raising him to the same plane as God (Doğan, 2010).

Conclusion

In this contribution, I tried to show that nationalism, which makes the state a "believable" entity, is an ideology (strategy) that perfectly blends the secular and the religious, although their binary image is one of conflicting poles dominating the political arena. As such, almost all of the actors involved in Turkish politics, by means of religious "believing" technologies, are both the producers and the consumers of a religious–secular assemblage. In its simplest and

metaphoric expression, believing in Atatürk or in Erdoğan is like believing in God and they are both the manifestation of the same ground. In other words, they believe in secular politics as if they believe in the religious, and they believe in their religious references as if they believe in their political parties.

Nationalism has been fed from a rich variety of references under the secular–religious discourse from the establishment of the Republic until the present day. This mixed reference world can be read as stories of people who believe in the "Day of Judgment" in this world and the afterworld, hence the idea of heaven and hell, salvation or the idea of torment and punishment. The most important difference is the transition from a period knitted with the fears, insecurities and hopes of the twentieth century, to a novel period that produces new risks, but less hope. The main difference is that secular–religious discourse shifts from symbols emphasizing more of Atatürk that were produced by a voluntarist elite bureaucrat class to symbols of the AKP and especially Erdoğan. The most important common point is that secular–religious discourse is an earthly production, although it is nourished by a metaphysical world.

In AKP times, religion has become a performance of belonging to a community, enunciating the necessary words, phrases, sending the signs of being religious, believing without knowing what "La ilahe illallah" (there is no god but God) means and therefore believing in "human-gods" produced on earth.

Believing is continuous. Depending on the conditions of time, relations of interest and power, religion as tradition and memory is constantly interpreted and cannot be positioned outside its time. As religion cannot stay outside of time, people who do not believe in religion cannot stay either outside the religious form, the "bowl" produced by religion. Therefore, nationalism produced with reference to religion and secularism is also a model of belief that is constantly emptied, refilled and assembled. Nationalism does not have to be rational; political groups and ruling classes or elites that need nationalism do not have to be rational in the face of class issues as well as spirituality, meanings or identity issues; however, they have to produce "credible" and "believable" references. In this present era that is widely regarded as "post-truth", where the truth is difficult to attain as it is full of uncertainties on a global scale, it is crucial for nationalism to produce ideas such as international conspiracies and enemies of the nation and people. Departing from uncertainties, feelings of darkness and the unknown, reducing targets, even producing a "single target" is easier and the myriad of metaphors around sacred-evil makes this process operational.

In AKP times, nationalism has found a new breath, with renewed emotional capital, recombining the divine and the earthly numinous. Believers are much more modern now; they only believe in "evidence" (videos that produce "sacredness", public ceremonies and so on). Metaphorically, the gods are now on earth. There are all kinds of gods according to every type of evidence; there are shopping malls, airports, temples and huge mosques dedicated to them or where they glorify themselves.

The line followed by modern secular nationalism was originally highly religious; today that religion is highly secular. The society we live in is becoming an increasingly secular area; in this, the authority and ability of religion are constantly being redefined. Modern society, far from limiting the production of religion, produces religiosities at very different levels and contents. In the example of Turkey, at the macro level, secular and religious discourses and polarised identities as political projects are producing each other, becoming part of the same discourse and constructing, strategically, individuals. At the micro level, in everyday life, the emotions/tactics of people who are fed with similar fears and who, themselves, produce insecurity, directly participate in the production of new secular discourses.

Notes

1 This text, which exists in every classroom in all Turkish primary and secondary schools, is a direct address by Atatürk to the present and future young generations of Turkey. It is a call to vigilance against the internal and external dangers and enemies that may face the nation, as well as an invitation to the civic and patriotic duty of each young citizen to fight against those dangers.

2 The non-Shia geography too is not far from painful and tearful memories. An "art organization" called "Tear Nights" (*Gözyaşı geceleri*) has staged thousands of time their "Tear Nights" show created with audio-visual elements based on "religious affection". In the Islamic media organs, it is told that the group gives the audience a "flood of emotions". See "Cries Did Not Stop in Sincan", www.gozyasigeceleri.com/tag/sincan/ (access date: 25.6.2020)

3 This song was inspired by a poem of the famous Kemalist journalist Uğur Mumcu, who was killed in a bomb explosion perpetrated by "unknown" individuals/organizations in 1993. The lyrics are written and composed by Zülfü Livaneli; they are taken from www.sarkisozleri.bbs.tr/sarki/1492/vurulduk-ey-halkim (access date: 27.6.2019)

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9
PARTIES AND POLITICS IN TURKEY

Elise Massicard

Introduction

In Turkey, unlike many of its Middle East neighbours, parties have remained a major force in political life,[1] and are among the country's most powerful political actors (Penner Angrist 2004; Sayarı 2012: 191). High-quality macro-level studies of Turkish parties are available (Rubin, Heper 2002), many of which examine the party system as a whole (Sayarı 1978; Özbudun 1981). This chapter does not intend to provide a synthesis of the extensive literature on parties in Turkey (see Sayarı 2018). Rather, it assumes that some features of Turkish parties can be best explained by focusing on the specific ways that parties relate to state and society. Hence this chapter analyses the role of parties in Turkish political life by focusing on how they link state and society. It thus treats parties as relational entities embedded in external fields of power (Massicard and Watts 2013).

The first part focuses on the specific ways Turkish parties relate to society and to the state. The second part suggests viewing parties as conduits to access and channel public resources towards society, which tends to consolidate parties in office. This consolidation, however, is often interrupted in non-electoral ways (especially by military coups) and by periods of unstable coalition governments. The third part assesses to what extent AKP the rule of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) is new in this respect.

Specific links to state and society

Rather than trying to classify Turkish parties using the standard categories of international party research (such as mass, catch-all, or cartel parties), let us focus on their specificities. "Since they are not commonly found in European parties and party politics, some of the prominent and enduring characteristics of Turkish parties […] either have been overlooked or have received much less scholarly attention than they actually warrant" (Sayarı 2018: 14). Among these prominent characteristics, Sayarı mentions personalism, the pervasiveness of *informal* political and social networks in party organizations, the close ties between major parties and the state, and a widespread spoils system; in an earlier article, he mentions the exceptionally long tenure of party leaders, the continual recurrence of internal party feuds and factional splits, and the importance of political patronage and clientelism in winning votes and maintaining control

over party organizations (Sayarı 2002: 9). Following these suggestions, we shall start by characterizing their links with society, before turning to their links with the state.

Turkish parties' links with society

Most scholars identify Turkish parties as top-down, hierarchical, and fairly autonomous from—or weakly linked to—society (Turan 2006: 570). Most observers view Turkish parties as dominated by a few politicians in Ankara, and as indifferent and almost impermeable to their base. This widespread assumption stems, first, from the difficulty in identifying any clear social bases for parties; second, from the instability of party life; and third, from the centralization of power around party leaders. But it seems simplistic to simply describe Turkish parties' links to society as "weak". Rather, we shall try to characterize further the relation between the two.

The difficulty of identifying stable party bases

Heper once described Turkey as having a "party system largely autonomous from social groups" (1985: 100–101). Since at least the 1980s, many scholars have judged it difficult to identify parties with social groups. Most attempts to pinpoint their social roots result in either a statement of failure or very complex models. Some consider class to be an important determinant of voting behaviour; however, since the voter base of most parties is diverse in terms of class (Tuğal 2016), most observers insist on the need to include other factors—such as religion (Güneş-Ayata 1993), religiosity, ethnicity, education level, gender (Kalaycıoğlu 1999), primary socialization, and past electoral choices (Özcan 2000). Attempts to subsume this complexity into a "centre/periphery" model (Mardin 1973) have been deemed inaccurate (Wuthrich 2013). Especially during unstable periods such as the 1990s, parties tend to shift from one electoral base to another, or abandon the interests of their electoral clientele once in office (Özbudun 2000: 83).

Political parties in Turkey have faced several obstacles in their attempts to establish strong, lasting roots in society. The first of these is their instability over time. "The recent history of party politics in Turkey is notable for the disappearance of what were once major parties and their replacement by new ones, as well as by the frequent changes and rotation of party names and acronyms" (Sayarı 2012: 184). The instability of parties relates not only to loss of electoral support but also to more specific factors. The political process has been repeatedly interrupted by military interventions (in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997). In particular, the ban on all existing parties in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup had drastic effects: it undermined parties' organizational continuity, led to a sharp decline in party identification, and weakened the ties between parties and voters. In the same way, the 1997 "soft coup" led to the most popular party, the Islamist Refah Party (RP), being ousted from government and subsequently shut down. Powerful regulatory restrictions are a second further obstacle to parties' efforts to establish strong social grounding. Successive laws on political parties have restricted their links with society. The 1965 law prohibited parties from establishing formal organizational units below the level of the subprovince. In the same way, the 1982 constitution, drawn up under the aegis of the military, prohibited parties from forming youth and women's branches, and barred students, faculty, and civil servants from party membership. It also forbade all organizational links between parties and NGOs. Some of these restrictions started to be lifted as of the 1990s. However, they have, on the whole, prevented parties from putting down strong roots in society. "In that respect, Turkish parties do not establish or maintain close ties with organized interests or specific sectors of society" (Özbudun 2000: 83).

Interestingly, at the same time, party membership levels in Turkey are very high and still rising, in contrast to their decline in most European countries (Tosun, Tosun, and Gökmen 2018). In 2015, more than 20% of the electorate were members of a party (Ayan Musil 2018: 85). However,

> numbers lose their significance if one asks whether members pay dues or have elementary familiarity with party doctrine [...] the irregular nature of party registers and the loose link between parties and members suggest that in Turkey what is meant by party *member* is often little more than a party *supporter*.
>
> *(Özbudun 2000: 80; see also Sayarı 2012: 190; italics in original)*

So what are the social usages and meanings of party membership?

Specific ties to society: factionalism and clientelism

Özbudun ascribes political parties' failure to develop organizations based on horizontal loyalties, such as common class or group interests, to "the prevalence of vertical clientelistic networks and machine-type politics" (1995: 234). In order to grasp the ties between parties and their members, it is useful to look back at how party membership expanded. This coincided with the advent of multiparty politics in the 1950s, through the politicization of existing factional rivalries between leading notable families and their clientelist networks (Sayarı, 1976; Sayarı 2012:184). Factionalism remains a key feature of Turkish parties (Massicard 2013). Among factors that have contributed to enduring factionalism, Türsan mentions the interclass nature of Turkish parties, together with the looseness and vagueness of party ideology and strategies (1995:171). Party dynamics are thus often embedded in social networks. In her work on Islamist mobilization in an Istanbul neighbourhood in the 1990s, White (2002) shows that social networks and the formal party sphere, though overlapping, are distinct. The persistence of acquaintance networks provides stable and efficient channels for Islamic activism, which is largely unaffected by the ban on parties to which these activists belonged.

Factionalism is strongly related to clientelism: the periphery's dependency on the centre in Turkish politics has resulted in enduring patron–client relationships. "When the DP [Democrat Party, the main opposition party to the Kemalist Republican People's Party (CHP)] came to power in 1950, it built an effective rural machine based on the distribution of patronage and pork-barrel benefits" (Özbudun 2000: 82). In the following decades, clientelistic brokerage between political parties and rural communities that had recently moved to the cities came to underpin political mobilization (Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015: 554–555). Some scholars had expected clientelism to disappear with political modernization. However, clientelism endured, coexisting with other patterns of participation in party politics. Nowadays, scholars agree about the enduring clientelism of party politics in Turkey (Sayarı 2012, Kemahlıoğlu 2012, Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015, Kemahlıoğlu and Özdemir 2018).

Organizational features and the centralization of power

This type of tie to society has consequences for party organization. Some scholars conclude that Turkish parties are close to another standard category used in party scholarship, namely cadre parties (Sayarı 1976: 188). However, Turkish parties do not neatly fit these models: rather, post-1980 Turkish parties "have combined the features of cadre, catch-all, and cartel parties" (Özbudun 2000: 87).

In organizational terms, Turkish parties concentrate power to a high degree. "With weak links to society and reliance on patronage to hold [them] together, parties attempt to reach the electorate through the party leader, which, in turn, enhances the power of the leader vis-a-vis other parts of the organization" (Turan 2003: 157). Party leaders tend to concentrate power (Bektaş 1988, Sayarı 2012: 191).

> A notable feature of party organization in Turkey concerns [...] the relative absence of internal party democracy. Party leaders have traditionally exercised excessive control over the decision-making process. They have also managed to stay in top positions of their parties for very long periods.
>
> *(Sayarı 2012: 191)*

Several mechanisms enable "central headquarters to keep local organizations under control, preventing [the latter] from developing horizontal links to challenge its domination" (Turan 2006: 567–568). Headquarters enjoy extensive legal authority, enabling them to dismiss local units that oppose the line they take and to control the nomination of candidates. In sum, Turkish parties are centralized. They channel resources vertically to their large but powerless membership.

Links with the state

Strong links with the state through the capture of public resources

Several scholars relate the "weak" links between parties and their constituents to the strong links between parties and the state. Parties view "their own relationship with the state as a principal priority. This has reduced their relationship with their constituents along with their desire to court a mass base by being more internally democratic and responsive" (Rubin 2002: 1). The major parties have become entrenched in the state. Indeed, state subsidies have become a prominent source of income for eligible parties, that is, those who in the previous elections received at least 7% of valid votes until 2013 and 3% thereafter (Gençkaya 2018).

When parties win public office, they obtain positions in the administration, giving them the opportunity to decide on the allocation of public resources. More than elsewhere, ruling parties in Turkey tend to capture public resources and use them for their own purposes. Because of its scale, the state is the main channel for accumulating resources. "In a society where resources are scarce and the state is a crucial factor in resource allocation, clientelism is used as a participative strategy by certain social classes and groups to operate an exclusive allocation system in their own interests" (Güneş-Ayata 1990: 181). Parties therefore act as privileged channels for social forces to access these resources (Dorronsoro and Gourisse 2014). "Political parties' control over state resources has an impact on the parties' internal organization and the linkages that they form with voters" (Kemahlıoğlu and Özdemir 2018: 116). This pattern of relating to the state helps explain the enduring importance of clientelism as a way of rewarding activists and sympathizers through the allocation of public resources.

The enduring interpenetration between the state and party in office (1923–1960)

To understand this specific link between parties and the state, it helps to look back at how it originated during the single-party period (1923–1950), when the CHP emerged as the official

organization of the state. The single party functioned "primarily as a mechanism for social control from above" (Frey 1965: 304). "One of [its] main goals [...] was to disseminate the ideas and values associated with Atatürk's modernization and westernization program. Additionally, the CHP served as the main channel for political recruitment to the Turkish Grand National Assembly" (Sayarı 2012: 183).[2] The party was in control of the state, and its leadership ranks were filled largely with civil servants (Rustow 1966: 121). In the late 1930s, governors were appointed as provincial leaders of the single party. State officials therefore supplanted party personnel, and the CHP developed a specific relationship to the state apparatus (Dorronsoro and Gourisse 2014).

Interestingly, this interpenetration of state and dominant party did not come to an end with the introduction of multiparty politics in 1946, and subsequent arrival in power of the opposition in 1950. Ever since the formation of opposition parties was first allowed in 1945, parties have served as vehicles for the political mobilization and participation of the masses (Rustow 1966: 114). "The birth of a competitive multiparty system in the late 1940s significantly expanded the scope of party politics and the role of parties in the political process" (Sayarı 2012: 182). The first free and fair elections were held in 1950. The main opposition party, the Democrat Party (DP), won enough seats to govern alone. After the 1954 and 1957 elections, it retained its parliamentary majority and continued to rule on its own.

When it first came to power, the DP was hampered by a hostile bureaucracy, inherited from the single-party period. The DP government dismissed or transferred numerous officials and brought forward retirement conditions in order to get rid of Kemalist bureaucrats. In 1953, it passed a law granting to the authority that appointed officials the power to dismiss them, thereby enhancing government control over bureaucratic personnel. Prior to the 1957 election, the government passed several administrative reforms to bend the rules of political competition to its own advantage, such as gerrymandering, for instance. Additionally, to secure its electoral victory, it restricted press freedom and censored the opposition by limiting its access to public radio.

The DP time in office shows that the extensive use of power by the ruling party to further its own purposes did not end with the advent of multiparty politics; rather, it changed forms. Despite their ideological differences, and the fact that the CHP was a single party while the DP governed in a multiparty context, there are strong similarities between the CHP and the DP regarding their links to the state while in office.

The deneutralization of the state

The same holds true for the three later periods of sole-party government, when the Justice Party (AP) governed alone from 1965 to 1971, the Motherland Party (ANAP) from 1983 to 1991, and the AKP from 2002 to the present day. Each became dominant and exerted extensive control over the state, in several dimensions.

First, the awarding of lucrative public contracts in return for financial and political support to the governing party is common in present-day Turkey (Sayarı 2018). Second, in the 1970s it was not uncommon for parties governing alone to recruit public servants or employees of public enterprises from among their followers, and to marginalize or even evict the bureaucrats appointed by previous governing parties (Tutum 1976). This concerned not only management positions but also every level of public service. In some instances, parties even managed to short-circuit the official recruitment channels (such as competitive exams) (Gourisse 2013: 125). This provided a way of remunerating followers, while also ensuring that the bureaucracy was lenient

towards the government. Incumbent parties have also frequently changed the laws (including electoral provisions) to marginalize their rivals.

Such practices to appropriate public resources and interfere with recruitment lead to the politicization of the state. The state is not a neutral entity above parties; rather, it becomes entrenched in political struggles. This reinforces the perception of politics as a high-risk game and saps any consensus about the rules of this game.

A high-risk political game with limited alternation in office

Limited alternation in office

The tight control the ruling party exerts over the Turkish state, especially over electoral regulations, reduces the possibility of alternation (by which I mean a change in governing party through electoral processes). For instance, the Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK), established in 1994, monitors broadcasts during electoral campaigns. The fact that its members are elected by parliament from candidates put forward by parliamentary parties undermines its independence and precludes its impartiality (Gençkaya 2018: 72, 74).

The degree of control incumbent parties have over state resources explains their ability to consolidate power, and why sole party governments are so stable in Turkey (Dorronsoro and Gourisse, 2014). Peaceful changes in government have been the exception in Turkish political life. Since the transition to multiparty politics, and despite several decades of mostly free electoral contests, the incumbent party has only failed to win re-election on one occasion, when the ANAP lost the 1991 election after governing alone for eight years. Otherwise, each time a party formed a government alone, it won the following election with a large enough majority to carry on as the sole party of government. This was the case in 1954, 1957, 1969, 1987, 2007, 2011, November 2015, and 2018.[3] How are we to explain this? The electoral rules do not furnish a sufficient explanation, for a large variety of electoral systems have been used over the years. A more satisfactory explanation is the very high incumbency advantage, attributable to the extent to which the incumbent party can capture public resources.

Unstable coalitions

If it is all but impossible for a party to be ousted by electoral means, how are they removed? Given the consolidation of power by sole-party governments, outside intervention becomes the only way to end their rule. In all but one case in Turkish history, sole-party governments have been terminated by military intervention. The main reason for the first military intervention in 1960 was to put an end to the increasingly oppressive dominance of the DP, which had ruled Turkey since 1950. The prime minister and two ministers were hanged, the DP dissolved, and its members of parliament jailed and barred from participating in politics. The 1961 constitution, drawn up under the aegis of the military, endeavoured to prevent elected governments from monopolizing power. The new electoral law changed the electoral system—the previous majority system with multiple-seat districts resulted in the party with the most votes being grossly overrepresented—so as to make representation more proportional. Consequently, the number of parties winning parliamentary seats increased, meaning there was no clear parliamentary majority. The first coalition governments were thus formed.

Indeed, Turkish political history shows an almost cyclical pattern in which periods of consolidating majority governments alternate with unstable coalition periods (Kumbaracıbaşı

2018: 157). The 1950s witnessed strong sole-party governments under majority rule. After the 1960 military intervention, proportional representation led to three short-lived coalitions. The AP became dominant in 1965 and proceeded to capture public resources. Its rule was interrupted by a military intervention in 1971. After the return to civilian politics in 1973, a fragmented parliament once again produced highly unstable coalition governments. Moreover, left-right ideological conflicts escalated amidst increasing political violence. The 1980 coup sought to end the polarization and ensuing ungovernability. After three years of military rule and a new constitution, sole-party governments returned in the 1980s. After the incumbent ANAP lost its majority in the 1991 elections, Turkey had a highly fragmented parliament and high rates of electoral volatility through to 2002. Again, governments could only be formed through fluctuating coalition arrangements or by minority government (Sayarı 2012: 188).

Coalition governments have been highly unstable, lasting on average much less than sole-party governments. With one exception (1991–1995), all coalitions have had shorter lifespans then sole-party governments (Kalaycıoğlu 2002: 66; Kumbaracıbaşı 2018: 157). Coalition periods (1961–1965, 1974–1980, and 1991–2002) have been characterized by very high governmental instability, often leading to the holding of early elections (in 1987, 1991, 1995, 1999, and 2002) (Dorronsoro and Gourisse 2014). Moreover, coalitions prove to be mostly non-cooperative and conflictual, with coalition partners trying to maximize their share of public resources and positions (Dorronsoro and Gourisse 2014: 199). The late 1970s saw the most extreme case in this respect. The way ministries were shared out among coalition partners drained government action of coherence. The state became a sphere for conflict and political mobilization, leading to institutional divisions and policy incoherence (Gourisse 2013).

A high-risk political contest

A competitive electoral system is grounded in the belief that the rights of the opposition will be protected and that it is possible to evict the ruling party at the ballot box. But the weak protection of opposition rights in Turkey and slim prospects of peaceful alternation have led to a widespread perception that politics is a high-risk contest. The frequent interruptions to political life mean that almost all political leaders have been subject to (attempted) military coups, been imprisoned, or else been banned from political life. Indeed, the possibility of a military coup, political violence, loss of elected position, or imprisonment form part of normal expectations. This makes it hard to reach consensus on the rules of political contest.

Equally, at one stage or another, many of the country's leading parties have been banned, or else threatened with prosecution and closure by the Constitutional Court. The 1961 and 1982 constitutions and the laws governing political parties set out several grounds for banning parties, including any activities jeopardizing the country's independence, unity, territorial integrity and indivisibility, or in contradiction with the democratic and secular principles of the Republic. The three main targets of party bans have been pro-Kurdish parties, for supporting separatism and maintaining ties with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an illegal armed organization; Islamist parties, for undermining secularism; and radical leftist parties. These restrictions on certain kinds of political expression have led to major political forces being cast out to the margins of political legitimacy and legality, further complicating their already complex relationship with the system.

Overall, parties in Turkey do not perceive one another as legitimate actors (i.e., there is a lack of interparty trust), and politics is perceived as a zero-sum game (Yardımcı-Geyikçi 2018). Scholars have noted that competition is conflictual and compromise scarce (Türsan 1995: 171).

However, this is not due solely to certain major political movements being considered illegitimate by various other political actors. Writing about the 1950s, Sayarı notes that

> the Turkish party system did not display the type of consensual and moderating tendencies commonly associated with a two-party system. [...] Due to the intensity of factional cleavages at both elite and mass levels, the polity was divided into two diametrically opposed camps. The non-ideological political bi-polarity precluded compromise between the two parties even on the most fundamental principles of democratic process, gave rise to bitter government-opposition confrontation, and frequently undermined the stability of the regime.
>
> *(Sayarı 1978: 43)*

More broadly, scholars have noted a lack of political entrenchment, in other words, that there is disagreement on the rules of political conduct, that the rules of contest are unstable and lacking in legitimacy, and that there is little acceptance by parties of the principles, norms, and codes of political competition (Yardımcı-Geyikçi 2018).

3. AKP rule: a new era?

Looking at AKP rule within this broader context casts new light on the specificities of its time in office. Is it just another period of consolidation by the governing party, or a new kind of rule?

Unceasing consolidation in power

In 2002, when the newly formed AKP won the general elections, the electoral system provided it with a disproportionately large number of seats in comparison to its vote share. Over the years, the AKP has managed to preserve and at times increase its vote. Its successive victories in the 2007, 2011, 2015, and 2018 general elections have enabled it to form highly durable sole-party majority governments.

Several prominent parties in the coalition politics of the 1990s have all but disappeared, reducing the degree of fragmentation in the party system (Sayarı 2012: 189). From 2007 to 2017, just four parties held seats in parliament—the AKP, the centre-left CHP, the pro-Kurdish and liberal Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP), and the Turkish nationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP), from which the Good Party (İYİ) broke away in 2017, taking the number of parliamentary parties to five. This has contributed to the stability of the party system (Sayarı 2018).

Political scientists have consequently started classifying the AKP as a dominant party, (Müftüler-Baç and Keyman 2012), and Turkey as a dominant or predominant party system (Gümüşçü 2013; Ayan Musil 2015), that is, a system in which the same party wins a majority of parliamentary seats in three or more successive elections and governs alone (Sartori 1976). AKP rule is not just another period of sole-party government in Turkish history. Instead, in office the AKP has profoundly transformed its links to state and society. It has combined huge popular support channelled through specific organizational patterns with mass control of the state apparatus and resources, each phenomenon reinforcing the other.

Tight control over huge and diverse constituencies

The AKP has managed to consolidate its position by allying numerous constituencies and factions. From the beginning, the AKP managed to articulate diverse tendencies (mainly

Islamist, centre-right, far-right), as well as various ethnic and class backgrounds (Aydın and Dalmış 2008, Tuğal 2016). A core challenge for the AKP has been to hold diverse constituencies together (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009: 19). It has achieved this notably by governing these heterogeneous constituencies in specific ways.

Erdoğan's leadership has long been viewed by many as "the primary factor that keeps these groups under control and prevents break-aways" (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009: 146), though the establishment of splinter parties since late 2019 shows the limits to this. Indeed, the AKP also has certain organizational features which contrast with those of other Turkish parties. In particular, it possesses the capacity to organize its mass membership through strong organizational networks staffed by large numbers of party workers—a legacy of its forerunner Islamist parties (Eligür, 2010).

Indeed, the main exceptions to the generally weak level of party organization in Turkey have been the Islamist parties. The AKP's forerunner,

> the RP [...] is the only [party] that appreciates the importance of classical door-to-door canvassing by hundreds of thousands of highly motivated, devoted, disciplined party workers. Further, such activities are not limited to campaign periods but continue year-round [...]. Membership entails obligations (such as taking part in party work) rather than rights [...]. A new member is immediately introduced to party work and is assigned to a women's, youth or worker's committee or the polling booth committee.
>
> *(Özbudun 2000: 85, 92)*

As a result, local AKP organizations are the most active and elaborately organized of Turkish parties (Hale and Özbudun 2010: 49).

Moreover, the party has exercised "tight leadership control over the party base and factions" (Kumbaracıbaşı 2009: 78). Through specific organizational mechanisms, it has managed both to integrate its huge membership and keep it under control, fostering involvement by members while leaving little room for bottom-up dynamics (Baykan 2018). This has not only contributed to the AKP's electoral successes, but also to the specific bond it has built up with society once in power.

One way the AKP has maintained and even expanded its constituency is through material benefits. Eligür underlines the role its "strong organizational networks" (2010: 258) play in distributing selective resources to the urban poor. The AKP thus inherited mobilization and distribution practices developed by Islamist parties while in opposition, which drew on their own means and support networks, and has expanded them while in office through access to public resources (Massicard 2014). As a result, the AKP links the state to society in a novel way.

Monopolization of state resources

The way the AKP connects to the state is specific as well. The AKP is currently much more entrenched in the state than any other party (Ayan Musil 2018). First, it has been in office for 18 uninterrupted years, longer than any other sole-party government in the multiparty period. Second, the AKP not only controls the government, but has also held the presidency since 2007, as well as many local elective offices throughout the country, thus dominating all levels (Sayarı 2012: 188–189). Given its elaborate organizational network and unprecedented access to positions at all levels, it is well placed to monopolize public resources, implement clientelistic

strategies, and, more generally, penetrate and deneutralize the state to an unprecedented extent (Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015: 555).

And this is indeed what has happened. Since the AKP came to power, though not prior to that, there appears to be a strategic allocation of discretionary revenues to the AKP's local co-partisans in districts facing competitive nationwide elections (Kemahlıoğlu and Özdemir 2018). From 2005 to 2008, the AKP strategically targeted its conditional cash transfer programme to districts where the party faced stiff competition from a party that was close to it ideologically (Aytaç 2014). Some observers have also mentioned prevalent vote-buying over more recent years, giving an unfair advantage to the incumbent AKP in sustaining its electoral hegemony (Çarkoğlu and Aytaç 2015: 563). Since the mid-2010s, the incumbent AKP has not only channelled public resources but also bent electoral rules to its own advantage. National and international observers have noted that the competition between candidates was not fair and equal in terms of either airtime or financial resources (Gençkaya 2018: 75).

This appropriation of public resources also applies to public sector jobs. In education, the government has provided significant compensation for tenured teachers who accept early retirement. In their stead, it has created numerous contractual positions, enabling it to appoint many teachers known for their links to local AKP organizations (Gazalcı, 2011).

The AKP has thus been very efficient in channelling resources to its constituencies. Its relationship with the Gülen movement (until a split between the two in the early 2010s) suggests that some groups may also have used the party as a channel to access state resources for their own—not just the party's—purposes.

At first sight, the AKP's time in office looks like a classic case of dominant-party rule in terms of partisan channelling of public resources. One could object that since the advent of neoliberalism in the 1980s, public resources have diminished, scaling back the volume of resources an incumbent party can channel. While the resources under the direct control of ruling parties have indeed decreased, the forms of state intervention in the economy have changed, and the AKP has sought alternative sources for distributive politics, through privatizations, for example, or the Mass Housing Administration (TOKI) (Marschall et al. 2016). The government continues to use legislative and administrative mechanisms to give privileged treatment to businesspeople with close political and sectarian affiliations (Buğra, Savaşkan 2012: 27). Transparency in public spending has decreased strikingly since the AKP came to power: nearly half of all public tender results are not made public, despite a legal obligation to do so (Gürek 2008). Additionally, public procurement law has been amended dozens of times under the AKP, each time exempting more public agencies from supervision by the Public Procurement Authority, and restricting the Court of Accounts' ability to audit public spending. This has resulted in an increased reliance on discretionary procedures and less competitive procurement methods in awarding contracts in ever more diverse sectors—not just infrastructure, but also housing, health, energy, and so on. This has drawn repeated criticism from European Union authorities (European Commission 2013: 34). Thus the incumbent party still plays a crucial role in distributing opportunities for capital accumulation, in spite of—or via—neoliberalism.

As a result, privatizations, delegations, and indictments overwhelmingly benefit government partners. As far as public tenders are concerned, quantitative analysis provides systematic evidence of favouritism. It shows that several companies that have been regularly awarded contracts appear to have close ties to AKP circles (Gürek 2008). Contractors who have already entered into long-term contracts with municipalities tend to win the bidding process in others (Gürek 2011). Some business groups have grown from scratch thanks to their close links with political authorities. The AKP government has used public procurement as a tool to increase its electoral success, build its own elites, and finance politics (Çeviker-Gürakar 2016).

The incumbent party's control of public resources has thus altered as a result of neoliberalism, with specific consequences for the role of the dominant party. Many observers conclude that the incumbent AKP has reshaped the business environment, and society more broadly (on housing, see Pérouse, 2015; on labour, see Erdinç 2018), thus providing an unprecedented case of a "party shaping society".

The AKP's time in office is unparalleled in the extent to which it has gathered social support and seized public resources. This raises the question of how its rule may end: in the June 2015 legislative elections, the AKP lost its absolute majority, which would normally have resulted in some form of power-sharing. Unlike the ANAP in 1991, the AKP failed to enter a coalition, and ignored democratic convention, which would have dictated that the president ask the leader of the opposition to form a coalition or minority government. Instead, it called fresh elections in November, in which it regained its majority. Given the AKP's incumbency advantage, there are growing concerns about the fairness of elections, raising the question of whether a change in power can occur through the ballot box—though the AKP's alliance with the MHP since 2018, and loss of major metropolitan municipalities in 2019 have somewhat diminished its concentration of power.

So will AKP rule be brought to an end by a military coup? There have been several attempts, most notably on 15 July 2016. But the fact that none have succeeded throws into doubt the possibility of a coup ousting an elected government, especially after the subsequent far-reaching subordination of the military to the executive and the comprehensive reshaping of institutions.

Conclusion: towards a change in the role of parties in politics

This chapter suggests that a way to understand the specificities of parties in Turkey is to focus on how they relate to both society and the state. Specifically, a crucial dimension of party politics in Turkey is the way parties, on reaching power, connect their social support to state resources, which they often use to consolidate their constituency through various incentives. This pattern leads to the overwhelming consolidation of parties governing alone, an imbalance in electoral competition, infrequent changes in the party of government through the ballot box, and subsequent interruptions of political contest through nonelectoral ways.

In office, the AKP has combined massive and heterogeneous social support with extensive control of public resources. In so doing, it has taken advantage of its unprecedentedly effective organization (for a ruling party). It has made strategic use of state resources in a clientelistic way, opening up many positions in the public and private sectors to its followers. It has channelled opportunities to supportive companies, and targeted regions where it faced stiff electoral competition to reinforce its position there. This "virtuous circle" has enabled the AKP to become a dominant, even hegemonic party.

Despite being one of many episodes of sole-party rule in Turkish history, the AKP's time in office displays some unique features. It has not only curbed electoral competition and restricted checks and balances, but even ushered in regime change. Most notably in the wake of the 2016 attempted coup, the AKP has profoundly changed the pre-existing balances in political contest. No previous sole governing party succeeded in so comprehensively changing the constitution or reshaping the institutional system.

The new presidential system reduces the role of parties. From the founding of the Republic through to 2018, parties have played a crucial political role in Turkey's parliamentary system. It is still early to judge the role of parties under the new presidential regime. However, the government no longer emanates from parliament, and parliament's powers have been curbed. Additionally, the president is elected directly, and henceforth retains party responsibilities,

which was not the case before 2018. It is possible that parties may be transformed into mere electoral machines for incumbent and would-be presidents. Parties' changing role in politics seems to indicate that, after 18 years of AKP rule, the situation is unprecedented, not only in terms of regime change and institutional imbalances, but also concerning the role parties play in Turkish politics, that is, in the political articulation of social interests.

Notes

1 Parties predate the Republic of Turkey, having emerged in the Second Constitutional era (1908–1918), when competing parties campaigned in regular elections, formed groups in the legislature, and acted as the recruitment pool for parliamentary and ministerial elites (Rustow 1966: 117).
2 Some degree of limited pluralism emerged with the formation of two opposition parties in 1924 and 1930, but they were soon shut down by the authorities (Sayarı 2012: 183).
3 For discussion of the June 2015 election resulting in a hung parliament, see section 3.3.

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10

CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS IN TURKEY

Patterns and Possibilities

Burak Bilgehan Özpek

Introduction

The role that the Turkish military has played in the Turkish political space has changed dramatically in recent years. Since the inception of the Republic, the military has functioned as the guardian of national security and the reforms undertaken by the Kemalist elites. This has allowed the military to interfere in the civilian policymaking processes, especially after the multiparty system was adopted in 1945. Scholars argue that the military's influence over the civilian political space started to decline since 2002, following the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) takeover of the government. Many scholars expected the demilitarization process to bolster Turkish democracy. However, Turkey's democracy has suffered from the increasing authoritarian practices of the AKP governments since the withdrawal of the military from the political space. Put differently, the role of the military has been redefined and it has been subordinated to the civilian government, but militarism has continued to survive in the hands of the AKP government.

This study aims to deal with the rise and fall of the military's influence over politics. In doing so, the evolution of civil–military relations is examined from a historical perspective. There are three periods tackled in this chapter. The first period is comprised of a single-party regime between 1925 and 1945 and the multiparty system until the AKP came to power in 2002. The second period is about the AKP's attempts to undermine the military's autonomy and its authority over civilians. The third period, which is defined as the "lost decade", discusses why the expected correlation between democracy and the demilitarization of politics could not be realized in Turkey. The chapter concludes by highlighting the historical patterns of the military's interventions and possible scenarios for the future.

What was the role of the army?

In 1936, the cover of *Karikatür* magazine published a cartoon illustrating how the Turkish Republic was guarded. In the cartoon, the Republic was depicted as a young, elegant and beautiful woman clasped by the arms of a strong and reassuring soldier. The sentence explaining

the cartoon was rather intriguing: *She has a great guardian, so that no one dares to give her a hostile look!* This image summarizes the relationship between the army and the Republic. The masculine character of the military was highlighted, while the Republic was described as a woman, who is supposed to be attractive but weak, dependent and in need of protection. The hierarchy between masculinity and femininity was also reflected between the military and the Republic.

Following the foundation of the Republic, two competing factions appeared in the political arena. Mustafa Kemal, as the chief commander of the Liberation War, established the Republican People's Party (CHP) representing radical reformism in order to establish a secular and modern nation state. This radicalism, unsurprisingly, created resentment among the Islamists, monarchists, pan-Turkists, liberals, moderate conservatives and the Kurdish tribal and religious leaders. Nevertheless, the rival faction of Mustafa Kemal's CHP, the Progressive Republican Party (TpCP), which was led by another war hero, Kazım Karabekir, was not one of the above-mentioned discontents of the Kemalist agenda. According to Zurcher (2006, pp. 52–53), the post-Liberation War intellectual atmosphere was under the hegemony of Kemalism, and there was almost no room for alternative ideologies. Therefore, Karabekir's TpCP did not criticize Kemalism's ideological framework. Rather, they suggested different ways of implementing the reforms initiated by Mustafa Kemal. Karabekir and his friends had been involved in the Liberation War and they did not want to be side-lined in the post-war period. To them, implementing reforms in a radical way would inevitably create a state of emergency and authoritarian rule. That is why they opposed the methods of reformism (not the ideology) and viewed democratic institutions as the most viable way of achieving the goals of Kemalism.

Nevertheless, the competition between these two groups led by soldiers ended up with the elimination of the Karabekir's TpCP in 1925. It is important to highlight the sharp strategy while doing so. The first step of this strategy was the separation of the military and politics, which had systematically overlapped during the Liberation War. In the post-war era, some of the well-known supporters of Karabekir's movement were army commanders. As such, they were both active soldiers and members of the Turkish parliament. In Article 23 of the 1924 constitution, civil servants, including army officers, were prohibited from being members of parliament, unless they resigned from their positions. This article forced Kazım Karabekir and Ali Fuat Cebesoy to resign and lose their influence over the army. On the other hand, Mustafa Kemal asked his soldier friends such as Fevzi Çakmak and Cevat Çobanlı to resign from the parliament and remain in the army (Hale, 2014, p. 112). The disconnection of the opposition figures from the army was followed by a second step, which involved eliminating political competition by exploiting security issues. Upon the rebellion led by Sheikh Said in Diyarbakır, Bingöl and Elazığ in 1925, a state of emergency was declared and security concerns were used to restrict freedom of opposition. Özoğlu (2009) argues that the Sheikh Said rebellion was utilized as an opportunity by the Turkish government to suspend political liberties. Accordingly, radical wing of the government party, the Republican People's Party, exaggerated and manipulated the Sheikh Said rebellion to silence the opposition and media. That is why the anti-democratic Takrir-i Sükun Law (Maintenance of Order) was passed and the Progressive Republic Party was closed down in the following months.

Eliminating political rivals and establishing a single-party rule enabled the CHP, led by Mustafa Kemal, to implement a highly radical reform programme to build a modern and secular nation state. This changed the role of the army. In the absence of political competition, the army was expected to remain committed to serving the regime and its principles. This was the third stage of Mustafa Kemal's strategy regarding the positions of soldiers. As Harris (1965, p. 56) posits, Mustafa Kemal did not aim to keep the army out of the political space. Instead,

he wanted the army to be fully subordinate to the new regime represented by the CHP. That is why the army was assigned to protect both the Turkish homeland and the Republic, in accordance with the Internal Service Act passed in 1935.

This strategy of subordinating the army to the new regime explains the lack of conflict between the political leaders and soldiers in the single-party period from 1925 to 1945. That is to say, there was no tension between civilians and soldiers. This harmony also helped the army maintain its unity. Congruence between the CHP and the state as well as the absence of political alternatives made the army a bureaucratic and neutral organization fully committed to the principles of the Republic. Nevertheless, the transition to a multiparty system created a split within the army. Factions appeared and started to compete against each other, playing a significant role in the national political competition. For example, prior to the 1950 elections, there were two main factions in the military. On the one hand, there were the army officers led by Colonel Seyfi Kurtbek and General Fahri Belen, advocating the multiparty system and expressing concerns about electoral integrity. On the eve of the elections, General Belen assured the Democratic Party (DP) elites that the army would intervene in case of election fraud. On the other hand, there was the high brass and generals who were concerned about the multiparty system. Among them, General Asım Tınaztepe, commander of the 1st Army, expressed his and like-minded generals' discontent to the CHP elites. Furthermore, upon the electoral success of the DP, four army generals made an offer to İsmet İnönü, who was president and the leader of the CHP before the elections, in order to reverse the election results and suspend democracy. However, İnönü rejected the offers of the army generals and allowed the transition from autocracy to democracy (Hale, 2014, pp. 130–131). The friction within the army and potential interventions of the military in electoral politics gradually subsided, due to the reasonable and democratic approach of İsmet İnonü.

The unity of the army and harmony between civilians and the military deteriorated, after the DP revealed its authoritarian face in the second half of the 1950s. As Ahmad (2006a, p. 134) posits, the authoritarian regime of the DP was not surprising because it ruled the country in accordance with the 1924 constitution. This legal framework allowed the single-party government to violate the separation of powers principle and dominate the entire bureaucratic and political system. This model had worked smoothly under the single-party regime of the CHP, largely because the ruling party at the time did not need democratic popularity to remain in office. That is to say, the state apparatus was not used by the political party in government to intimidate or eliminate rival political parties. That is how the army was devoted to both the CHP government and the state. However, with the establishment of a multiparty system, for army officers, adherence to the government started to contradict with adherence to the state. Especially junior soldiers viewed the DP rule as a rollback from democracy. According to them, Prime Minister Adnan Menderes was aiming to build a party-state by intimidating political rivals. Therefore, the continuation of democracy with a modern constitution was the only guarantee for them to serve the state and its corporate body instead of the DP and its political agenda.

Several clandestine organizations were established by junior officers in 1957, and they managed to subvert the Menderes government on May 27, 1960. Following the coup d'état, the National Unity Committee (MBK) composed of 38 army officers was formed. This committee was determined to redesign the political system and assigned a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution. The spirit of the new constitution mainly stressed ways to limit the power of the executive branch. Unlike the 1924 constitution, the new constitution was predicated on efficient checks-and-balances mechanisms and the separation of powers principle. In doing so, the Constitutional Court was established and constitutional guarantees were granted for the

autonomy of the judiciary branch, academia and the media. In addition to these, individual liberties were also extended. Regarding the civil–military relations, the new constitution allowed the army to play a significant role over security policies. Accordingly, the National Security Council (MGK), composed of the head of general staff, chief commanders, president, prime minister and related cabinet members, was established as an advisory body dealing with internal and external security threats. This meant that the army gained a constitutional role for the first time since the inception of the Republic (Zurcher, 2005, pp. 357–358).

Such a constitutional role paved the way for the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) to intervene in politics occasionally in the following years. The military viewed the MGK as an instrument to shape the political arena because any issue, regardless of its scope, could be related to a security concern. That is why the MGK, which was supposed to be an advisory body, turned into a platform that helped the military dictate its agenda to civilian governments. As Cizre (2008, p. 322) argues, the MGK acted like a "shadow government" and restricted the policy-making space of elected governments. It is safe to argue that the MGK's influence over politics undermined the reliability of political parties and the stability of the political system. Following the 1960 coup, radical factions within the army were expelled, and the centre-right Justice Party won both the 1965 and the 1969 national election. They managed to rule alone (i.e., without any coalition partners), while maintaining a competitive political atmosphere. In other words, the stability of politics and the military had been finally established after an interregnum period. Nevertheless, both left- and right-wing radicalism in the universities and violence in the streets created a new configuration among the political groups within the army. Eleven years after the 1960 coup d'état, the TSK published an ultimatum and urged the government to resign. Upon the coup plans of the anti-capitalist, anti-Western and anti-democratic soldiers inspired by the ideas of Turkish academic Doğan Avcıoğlu being revealed, moderate generals, including head of general staff Memduh Tağmaç, reluctantly accepted to publish the ultimatum on March 12, 1971, in order to prevent a radical and bloody coup d'état from happening (Hale, 2014, p. 231).

The military justified this intervention by emphasizing its legal responsibility to protect the Republic. According to the ultimatum, the government was responsible for the violence between right- and left-wing extremists, and the TSK was ready to support an alternative government, which could take emergency measures. As a result of this ultimatum, Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel resigned. Nihat Erim, a relatively non-partisan university professor, was assigned the task of establishing a new government, which was supposed to include parliament members and technocrats. It is safe to say that the government established by Erim was controlled by the MGK. He had very limited autonomy vis-à-vis the MGK and he had no influence over parliament members due to his non-partisan personality. Therefore, his government and the weak coalition governments that followed until the 1973 national elections could not implement the necessary reforms. Those governments only helped justify harsh security measures aiming to suppress left wing, pro-Kurdish and Islamist political parties, foundations and intellectuals regardless of their actual involvement in violence. Furthermore, civil liberties and democratic reforms, such as the autonomy of universities, the independence of the media and individual liberties, granted by the 1961 constitution were drastically reduced after the 1971 ultimatum, as a result of security measures dictated by the MGK (Ahmad 2006b, p. 182)

It should be noted that radicalization of right- and left-wing political groups played a crucial role in the 1971 military intervention. This radicalization was a product of the Justice Party's efforts to eliminate the socialist Turkey Workers' Party (TİP) from the parliament. In the 1965 national elections, the TİP had received 2.9 per cent of the total votes. According to the national remainder system, the TİP had gained 15 seats in the parliament. TİP's leader, Mehmet

Ali Aybar, was an advocate of the democratic process, which was against violence, populism and extremism. In other words, Aybar wanted to keep the socialist party as an elite-based, bureaucratic and intellectual movement functioning within legal limits. A national remainder system provided an opportunity for Aybar's strategy to be successful through democratic means. Nevertheless, the TİP did harshly criticize Demirel's Justice Party and became an influential opposition party in the parliament. In 1968, the Justice Party amended the electoral law in favour of the d'Hondt system, which supports larger parties, prevents minor parties from running separate lists and compels them to build coalitions. This policy of Demirel worked and the TİP gained only two seats in the parliament despite having almost the same vote share it had in 1965. The failure of the TİP resulted in a change in leadership and strategy (Engerek, 2017). Aybar was replaced by Behice Boran and the TİP's ideology shifted from that of a European-style left to a Soviet style of socialism. Consequently, the socialist movement lost its legal-bureaucratic character and supporters, especially among university students, who got more radicalized. In other words, Demirel's attempts to consolidate its power produced unintended consequences, fuelling ideological violence in the streets, which was then used as an excuse by the military to end his government.

Upon the 1971 ultimatum, Demirel's cabinet resigned but parliament was not suspended. The military did expect a neutral figure to establish a technocratic government and implement economic reforms. However, this project also failed and produced political instability. After the March 12 ultimatum, no party could form a government alone. Instead of forming a grand coalition government, the centre-left, led by Bülent Ecevit, and the centre, led by Süleyman Demirel, opted for cooperating with populist and anti-system parties. Such cooperation brought short-lived and fragile coalition governments. For example, in 1973, the leader of the CHP, Ecevit, did form a coalition government with the Islamist National Salvation Party. Similarly, Demirel established two "nationalist front governments" by excluding the left-wing parties between 1975 and 1978. The absence of dialogue between Ecevit and Demirel amplified the power of minor right-wing parties, leading to the undermining of the democratic system and a paralysed the parliament. This political instability was coupled with rising economic problems due to the OPEC crisis in 1973 and the US sanctions following Turkey's military intervention in Cyprus in 1974. Last but not the least, polarization and deadlock in the parliament also paved the way for violence among extremist political factions in the streets. On September 12, 1980, the TSK carried out a coup d'état and suspended the parliament (Zurcher, 2005, pp. 375–405).

The military seized power and banned all of the political parties, labour unions and almost all civil society organizations. The coup abolished the autonomy of the universities, and the 1982 constitution was drafted and ratified. Until December 7, 1983, when the elected parliament members came into office and the civilian government took over the government, the National Security Council, composed of the head of general staff and four army commanders, served as the legislative body. In this new era, the military was the leading player in Turkish politics. The MGK began to design the political landscape by assigning "legitimate figures" the task of establishing two new parties and excluding the pre-coup political leaders from political competition. Accordingly, the People Party (HP), which was supposed to represent left-wing politics, and the Nationalist Democracy Party (MDP), which was supposed to attract right-wing voters, were created by bureaucrats. The Social Democrat Party (SODEP, then SHP) and the True Path Party (DYP), on the other hand, were not allowed to run for elections. Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP) was neither a puppet party nor was it vetoed by the MGK. Surprisingly, ANAP received 45 per cent of the total votes and gained 211 seats out of 400 in the 1983 national elections (Hale, 2014, pp. 316–324).

The 1980 coup was a relatively successful one when compared with the previous coups. The MGK managed to stop violence and terror in the streets. The economic indicators were better than in the pre-coup period. And the problem of political instability of the 1970s was overcome by the single-party government established by Özal upon the electoral success of the ANAP. Nevertheless, shadow of the military over politics did continue to appear hitherto unprecedented. That is to say, the 1982 constitution allowed the military to be permanently involved in the bureaucracy and the decision-making process. According to Cizre (1997, p. 154), the "military's political predominance rests on its guardianship of national interest". In doing so, the military took the advantage of the 1982 constitution, which entrenched its veto power and made blatant military intervention unnecessary. For example, the military was provided with a role in shaping the composition of the Constitutional Court. Accordingly, the 1982 constitution allowed the High Military Administrative Court and the Military Court of Cassation to nominate two judges for the Constitutional Court. Similarly, a representative of the general staff was supposed to be a permanent member of the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Finally, the 1982 constitution enhanced the status of MGK, which had been designed as an advisory body on national security issues in the 1961 constitution (Shambayati, 2008, p. 104). Its status was upgraded as follows:

> The National Security Council shall submit to the Council of Ministers its views on taking decisions and ensuring necessary coordination with regard to the formulation, establishment, and implementation of the national security policy of the State. The Council of Ministers shall give priority consideration to the decisions of the National Security Council concerning the measures that it deems necessary for the preservation of the existence and independence of the State, the integrity and indivisibility of the country, and the peace and security of society.

The agenda of the MGK meetings was being prepared by the secretary general, who was also a soldier. The civilian cabinet members needed to deliberate on the agenda assigned by the military member, and had to give priority consideration to their decisions. Moreover, decisions taken by the MGK were not being discussed in the parliament. Therefore, the MGK decisions were limiting the policymaking space of the executive body and preventing parliament from exercising its checks-and-balances function (Ünlü Bilgiç, 2009, p. 805).

It is safe to argue that the MGK continued to exert influence over politics by the help of two security issues following the inauguration of the civilian government. The first issue was related to the Kurdish question. In 1984, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) initiated an armed struggle and aimed to inflame Kurdish secessionism. This was an obvious threat against the "unity of the nation" and "territorial integrity" principles of the Republic. The second issue was the rise of political Islam under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan's Welfare Party. This was a direct challenge to the secular character of the Republic. Those threats justified the military to intervene into the political space. According to Article 35 of the TSK Internal Service Code, "the duty of the Armed Forces is to protect and safeguard the Turkish homeland and the Turkish Republic as stipulated by the Constitution". Therefore, the military pointed out its legal responsibility to avert these problems. Nevertheless, this article gave a free hand to the TSK to define what the threat to national security was and power to determine how to tackle this threat (Cizre and Çınar, 2003, p. 320).

The aforementioned issues were regarded as security threats rather than political problems by the Turkish military, which in turn enabled the MGK to dictate its own road map to the civilian governments. In other words, the military opted to handle both the Kurdish question and the

rise of political Islam through security measures rather than political projects. That is to say, the military drew a red line and did not allow political parties to develop alternative solutions to those problems. On the other hand, previously banned politicians, such as Süleyman Demirel, Bülent Ecevit, Necmettin Erbakan and Alparslan Türkeş, returned to politics after the referendum held in 1987. The Turkish political space became more diverse and this fuelled the political competition. Until November 1989, General Kenan Evren served as the president. Subsequently, Özal claimed the post. Due to his popularity and his party's majority in the parliament (until November 1991), the military could have limited influence. However, Özal's presidency caused ANAP to lose ground and alternative parties emerged. According to the constitution, the president needs to remain neutral. Therefore, Özal had to resign from ANAP. But by doing so, he lost his grip on the party. His resignation triggered a competition between conservatives and liberals. Özal was charismatic enough to keep conservatives in harmony with liberals. Yet, conservatives started to leave ANAP after Mesut Yılmaz, representative of the liberal wing, became the leader of the party (Gurpinar 2013, p. 108).

In November 1991, Süleyman Demirel, head of the centre-right DYP, and Erdal İnönü, son of İsmet İnönü and head of the centre-left SHP, established a grand coalition, which signalled reconciliation and maturity for the Turkish democracy. The military's influence increased following the death of Özal in April 1993, largely because he was succeeded by Demirel. Demirel's succession to the presidency shook the grand coalition between the DYP and the SHP. Tansu Çiller was elected as the leader of the DYP and she became the first female prime minister of Turkey. Additionally, İnönü abandoned politics in June 1993 and he was replaced by Murat Karayalçın. The harmony between Demirel and İnönü could not be replicated by the new cabinet because new leaders wasted their energy to eliminate their rivals both on the right and on the left. Çiller's DYP was in a competition with the other centre-right party, ANAP, while Karayalçın had to eliminate intraparty opposition led by Deniz Baykal. This caused Çiller to pursue populist economic policies and adopt a nationalist discourse regarding the Kurdish question. On the other hand, Karayalçın failed to implement his party's progressive programme on the Kurdish question, both as part of the governing coalition and as a member of the MGK. Upon the sharp increase of the PKK attacks in 1993, the government gave priority to fighting terrorism in line with the recommendations of the MGK. This policy not only undermined the popularity of the SHP among Kurdish voters, but also helped the Kurdish question be viewed as a security problem. In a nutshell, the escalating fight against PKK terrorism opened the door of politics to the military (Kıbrıs 2010, 234–243).

The Islamist Welfare Party scored a historical victory in the 1995 general elections, by gaining 158 seats out of 550. The centre-right DYP came in second and gained 135 seats, while its rival, the centre-right ANAP, won 132 seats. The Republican People's Party, which was reopened in 1992 and merged with the SHP in February 1995, received 49 seats, while another centre-left party, Democratic Left Party of Bülent Ecevit, secured 76 seats. It became apparent that the CHP had lost the Kurdish vote, as well as its leadership position in the centre-left. On the other hand, Çiller's DYP had won nothing from nationalism and militarism. Following the elections, centre-right parties established a coalition government with the external support of Ecevit. However, this coalition failed, largely due to the personal rivalry between the party leaders. Subsequently, Çiller and Erbakan formed a new coalition government in June 1996, once again triggering alarm bells for Turkish democracy. Having an openly Islamist prime minister dragged the Turkish military back into politics. On February 28, 1997, the MGK gave an ultimatum to the government and highlighted that the TSK were the guardians of secularism. In the following months, pressure orchestrated by the military over the governing coalition increased and Erbakan was forced to resign in June 1997. This intervention is known as the

February 28 postmodern coup. What made the coup postmodern was its methodology, because the military managed to eliminate the Welfare Party without suspending the whole political system. It would not be wrong to argue that the MGK played a tutelary role in the following years and acted as a regulatory body of politics in order to prevent the revival of Kurdish secessionism and political Islam. However, the military's tutelary position was challenged after the Justice and Development Party won a landslide majority in the parliament and established a single-party government as result of the 2002 general elections (Kadercan and Kadercan, 2016, pp. 93–94).

How did the power of the military decline?

The Turkish military was the absolute kingmaker of the Turkish political space in 1999. At the time, PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan was arrested and the PKK declared a ceasefire. On the other hand, after the Welfare Party was closed down by the Constitutional Court and its leader Necmettin Erbakan was banned from politics, the popularity of political Islam considerably declined and a new coalition government was formed by the social democrats (Democratic Left Party), nationalists (Nationalist Movement Party) and centrists (Motherland Party) after the parliamentary elections in April 1999. The military's guardianship role and its capacity to exercise this role were not being questioned by domestic or international actors.

Nevertheless, two remarkable developments took place following the establishment of the new government. The earthquake in August 17, 1999, hit the heart of the economy, devastated housing and infrastructure in the Marmara region, costing approximately 17,000 lives. This tragedy and the following period revealed how Turkey's governance capacity was weak. It diminished the reputation of politicians and bureaucratic system in the eyes of the public. Secondly, in February 2001, financial and political instability triggered a serious economic crisis and the Turkish lira crashed. Inflation and unemployment sharply increased and Turkey entered into a recession. Coupled with the unresolved identity issues regarding the conservatives and the Kurds, this poor governance capacity also undermined the popularity of both civilian and military elites (Akarca and Aysit, 2008).

The AKP won the 2002 national elections under these circumstances. At the time, coalition parties had lost their credibility due to the ineffective economic reform packages implemented after the 2001 crisis. Moreover, the military's struggle against Islamism and Kurdish secessionism during the 1990s had offended/alienated both the conservatives and the Kurds. The AKP did take full advantage of these conditions and came to office just one year after its inception. Critics of the AKP point to the influence of the ex-Islamist character of the party elites, demonstrated by the fact that prominent figures of the AKP had been members of Islamist parties in the past. Nevertheless, these figures expressed their adherence to the universal values of democracy and liberalism in the party programme, when they established the AKP in 2001. They had already publicly disowned the anti-Western discourse of political Islam after the Turkish military intervened in politics and forced the government of Prime Minister Erbakan to resign in 1997. Although Erbakan and his inner circle insisted on defending the political ideas of Islamism, the younger generation of the Welfare Party – including Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Abdullah Gül and Bülent Arınç – founded the AKP and became known as strong defenders of democracy, civilian control, the European Union membership process and a free market economy. This was a dramatic reversal for these politicians, but it had a strong rationale.

The military's influence over politics did not suddenly disappear when the AKP took over the government. This is the main reason why the AKP elites needed to use democratization and the EU accession process to contain the military's intervention. They were very well aware

that they could easily be subverted if they did use the language of political Islam. According to Satana (2008, pp. 382–383), the Turkish military has a unique character and it was not resilient to democratic transformation. On the one hand, the military wanted to keep Turkey as part of the NATO and the EU accession process. On the other hand, it positioned itself in accordance with domestic political conditions. Therefore, in the absence of domestic threats such as terrorism and radicalism, the military would not resist democratic reforms. This explains why the army did not criticize the EU reforms that broadened the influence of civilian politicians and the basic rights and liberties of citizens. In a similar vein, Aydınlı et al. (2006) underscore the military's commitment to Turkey's westernization process and argue that

> recent changes have already dramatically curbed the power of the Turkish military in several of its traditional areas of influence and reduced its long-standing authority in some civilian institutions. Not all of these adjustments have been greeted with open arms, but the Turkish General Staff (TGS) has largely complied with the EU's demands even though doing so has forced it to let go of power it had felt necessary to build up and carefully guard for decades.

Such a liberal and centrist approach not only helped the AKP shut out the military impositions from the government's policymaking agenda, but also attracted the moderate sections of the society. Additionally, the AKP managed to get support from both domestic and international liberal circles. These groups viewed the AKP government as an opportunity to undertake democratic reforms and abolish the shadow of the military over politics. According to İnsel (2003, p. 293),

> results of the November 3 elections created the possibility of leaving this conservative statist-authoritarian regime behind under the leadership of a conservative-democratic political/social movement. This development signals a possibility of political transformation that is important in the context of Turkey's recent history.

Similarly, Öniş (2012, pp. 145-146) defined the political spectrum as a dichotomy between the AKP as the leader of the conservative–globalist coalition, and the defensive/nationalist bloc, which was composed of secularist and nationalist parties. Accordingly, the conservative–globalist coalition led by the AKP showed that there was no contradiction between traditional values and democracy, human rights, a free market economy and the EU membership process. On the other hand, the defensive nationalist bloc aimed to preserve the status quo that was predicated on secularism and the nation state.

Two separate positions can summarize the debate regarding the attitude of the military towards the rise of the AKP. Satana (2008) and Aydınlı et al. (2006) argued that the military was ready for democratic transformation, as long as domestic conditions were favourable. Therefore, this position implied that the military had no political ambition to exert influence over politics and recommended that civilians undertake democratic reforms in cooperation with the military. On the other hand, some scholars viewed the relation between the armed forces and the government in a dichotomous way. This second position encouraged the AKP to pursue a reformist agenda and push the military out of politics, regardless of the attitude of the military.

In the ensuing years of the AKP government, the civil–military relations evolved in such a way that it undermined both the chances of a democratic consolidation as well as the strength and integrity of the military. The EU accession reforms provided a safe haven for the AKP governments against a possible military intervention. In this period, the AKP acted as European

conservative democratic party and reiterated its commitment to universal values. It expanded civil and political liberties in line with the Copenhagen Criteria stipulated by the EU. Moreover, the AKP also encouraged anti-establishment political groups, such as leftists, Kurds, Alawites and conservatives, to express their voices and viewed a pluralistic political space as a protective shield against the military. This strategy worked to a degree. On April 27, 2007, on the eve of the presidential elections, the TSK released a memorandum text, known as an e-memorandum, on its website and highlighted the army's commitment to secularism. The target of the military was apparently the AKP's presidential candidate, Abdullah Gül, and his headscarf-wearing wife. Four days after the e-memorandum, on May 1, the Constitutional Court decided that two-thirds of the parliament (367/550) was needed for a quorum, to vote for the president, who only needed a simple majority to get elected. This decision allowed the opposition parties to block Gül's presidency because the AKP had only 352 seats in the parliament. Unable to legally resolve the stalemate, the AKP called a snap election and increased its vote shares from 34 per cent to 47 per cent. The crisis has been avoided, thanks to the solidarity within the AKP ranks, the support of voters and the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), which gained 71 seats in the parliament after the snap elections.

In March 2008, another clash between the AKP and the bureaucratic establishment erupted, when the chief public prosecutor, Abdurrahman Yalçınkaya, filed a lawsuit charging the AKP with violating the secularism principle in the constitution and requested the AKP be closed down and 71 party members be barred from politics for five years. Nevertheless, the Constitutional Court eventually decided not to close the AKP but suspended 50 per cent of financial aid provided by the Treasury (Jenkins, 2008, pp. 8–9).

The AKP made a counter-manoeuvre in the second term of its government that started after the 2007 snap elections. Public prosecutors initiated the Ergenekon (2008) and Sledgehammer (2010) cases to reveal clandestine juntas within the TSK and their collaborators in the media, academia and civil society. The AKP government fully supported those cases, while many politicians, scholars and journalists criticized the inconsistent, fallacious and partisan structure of the indictments (Rodrik, 2011). Furthermore, the critics argued that the AKP government exploited these cases in order to intimidate legitimate opposition. During the investigation and trial processes, high-ranking active and retired generals, academics and journalists were arrested and jailed. During this process, the guardianship role of the military drastically depreciated in the eyes of the public. Simultaneously, the AKP also tried to address parts of the 1982 constitution that allowed the military to exercise control over civilian institutions. On September 12, 2010, a constitutional referendum was held. The amendments aimed to remove articles that granted the military immunity from democratic control and allowed it to intervene in politics. In the end, 58 per cent of the voters approved the amendment package proposed by the AKP. Accordingly, the interim article of the 1982 constitution (Article 15), which provided immunity from prosecution to the members of the National Security Council, the cabinet and the advisory board of the September 12, 1980 coup, and the two-year interim period, was abolished. Additionally, dismissal decisions taken by the Higher Military Council (YAŞ) could now be appealed in civilian courts (Article 125). Last but not the least, the referendum restricted the jurisdiction of the military courts (Article 145). As a result, civilians could no longer be put on trial by military courts, except during wartime.

Nine months after the referendum, the AKP received 50 per cent of the total vote in the 2011 general elections. The AKP's struggle against the military significantly contributed to this decisive victory. Nevertheless, following the fall of the military, unlike the expectations of many liberal and democratic circles, Turkey's democracy fell short of consolidation. Political scientists defined the regime with reference to concepts such as the dominant party model (Sayarı, 2016),

competitive authoritarianism (Esen and Gümüşçü, 2016), illiberal democracy (Kirişçi, 2016) or populist authoritarianism (Özpek and Yaşar, 2018). Therefore, the correlation between the withdrawal of the military from the political space and the consolidation of democracy has been refuted in the Turkish case. Since then, civilians seemed to be responsible for the failure of the democratic transformation rather than the military.

Turkey's lost decade

Turkey spent a great deal of energy dealing with its domestic problems during the 2010s. The withdrawal of the military paved the way for the AKP to build its authoritarian rule. Rising authoritarianism not only led to the disintegration of the AKP, but also inflamed social polarization. During its struggle against the military tutelage, the AKP benefited from the Gülenist bureaucrats within the judiciary and military. Gülenist media outlets, universities, civil society organizations and academics had entrenched moral and intellectual dimensions of the anti-military tutelage campaign. Moreover, the Gülen movement, a global religious cult, also staged pro-AKP propaganda, especially in the United States and Europe, in order to gain international and diplomatic support. In return for this support, the Gülen movement could infiltrate the Turkish bureaucracy and managed to capture strategic institutions. Gradually, they began to assert more power. In December 2013, Gülenist public prosecutors initiated a massive graft probe targeting Erdoğan's inner circle, including his own son. However, Erdoğan survived these attacks, increasing his popular support in the March 2014 local elections and the August 2014 presidential elections. This was the first sign of friction inside the AKP. This friction helped the Ergenekon and Sledgehammer culprits be released from prison, largely because the AKP government denounced all the Gülenist judges and public prosecutors in order to invalidate corruption claims. Therefore, anti-Gülenism has become a venue for the AKP and secularist wing of the military to cooperate (Bashirov and Lancaster, 2018).

Another politically significant move by the AKP was the peace process. Between January 2013 and July 2015, the party took radical steps to sort out the armed conflict between Turkish government and the PKK. The peace process failed upon the electoral success of the Kurdish backed HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party) in the June 7, 2015, general elections. Before the elections, the AKP had asked the HDP to nominate independent candidates as a condition for the peace process to continue. In other words, the AKP's majority in the parliament would be at stake if the HDP exceeded the 10 per cent electoral threshold and gained a significant number of seats. In the June 7, 2015, general elections, the HDP received 13 per cent of the total votes and the AKP lost its majority in the parliament. This moment was a milestone for the AKP, as it switched from the peace process to a militaristic policy to fight the PKK. This policy gained the AKP the support of the nationalist voters in the snap elections held on November 1, 2015. In addition to anti-Gülenism, militarization of the Kurdish question constituted another opportunity for cooperation between the AKP and the military. This coalition also required a revision of Turkey's policy towards Syria, which had been formulated by then-prime minister Ahmet Davutoğlu since the beginning of the Arab Spring (D'Alema, 2017, p. 12). Davutoğlu aimed to collaborate with the Kurds and Sunni Arabs against the Assad regime. Yet, the rising anti-Kurdish coalition necessitated Davutoğlu be sidelined. He was forced to resign in May 2016. This was another brick in the wall.

Finally, on July 15, 2016, Turkey experienced a coup attempt, allegedly organized by Gülenist army officers. This attempt failed due to the collaboration of the Joint Chief of Staff Hulusi Akar and commanders of the army, navy and air force with the government. Following

the failed coup, the AKP government declared a state of emergency, began ruling by decree and suspended judicial restraints. In such an authoritarian atmosphere, another referendum was held to replace Turkey's long-established parliamentary system with a new presidential system in April 2017. Upon ratification of the presidential system by 51 per cent of the total vote, Erdoğan was elected as the first president of the new system in June 2018, and the national state of emergency was terminated in July 2018. Nevertheless, both the problematic structure of the haphazard presidential system and Erdoğan's authoritarian policies based on nationalism, militarism and security immediately escalated economic and diplomatic crises. In August 2018, Turkey faced a serious currency crisis, which had negative effects on unemployment, inflation and economic growth. Furthermore, relations with both Russia and the United States were strained, due to Turkey's assertive policies against the Kurds of Syria. Such economic and diplomatic blunders, combined with the victory of the CHP mayoral candidates in the local elections, cost the AKP both the Istanbul and the Ankara municipality. This triggered the liberal and pro-Western wing of the AKP – led by ex-finance minister Ali Babacan – to resign and establish a new centrist party.

Erdoğan used a populist strategy to build his authoritarian and personalistic rule. This strategy required him to create social polarization on the basis of identity and morality. He deliberately humiliated the educated and urban middle classes, while praising the values of ordinary and provincial Anatolian people. This strategy helped Erdoğan be seen as the voice of silent majority against privileged elites. The Gezi Park protests in 2013 also illustrated that Erdoğan and his personal supporters are inclined to polarize society and criminalize opposition groups. When threatened by a popular uprising demanding pluralism and transparency, they resorted to an Islamist, anti-Western, conspiratorial and majoritarian language. The popular support obtained as a result of this polarization strategy allowed Erdoğan to reduce the autonomy of bureaucratic institutions and increased his personal grip on the state. As a result of this process, the governance capacity dramatically declined and the popularity of the government decreased, particularly in the metropolitan centres. In sum, Turkey entered a new decade with a polarized society, a personalistic regime, weak governance capacity and a populist authoritarian regime losing popularity.

Conclusion

Revisiting the historical patterns of civil–military relations can help us estimate how the military could take up a position in the future. The first pattern is that the military itself is not an unitary actor. There have always been different factions within the army. There might be competition between rival ideological groups, as seen in 1971 memorandum, or in the aftermath of the 1960 coup d'état between the radicals and the moderates. Such factions in the military seem to be a product of democratic competition during multiparty era, since the military behaved as a unitary actor under the single-party regime between 1923 and 1945, and also after the 1980 coup, which did not allow a competitive political atmosphere until the 1987 referendum. The second pattern is related to how political competition triggers the military's motivation to intervene in politics. The history of civil–military relations in Turkey also witnessed political leaders who try to consolidate power and eliminate their rivals through undemocratic ways, which end up increasing political mobilization and violence in the streets. Moreover, the reluctance of centrist politicians to establish coalitions with each other either produced political deadlocks or caused them to cooperate with anti-system parties. Such attitudes of the political elites also provided an opportunity for the military to intervene in politics for the sake of security, order, stability, democracy and secularism.

In sum, we cannot be certain about the possible reactions of the military under AKP rule. There is an ongoing political negotiation, but the rules are undemocratically manipulated in accordance with the survival needs of the AKP. Furthermore, instead of having a dialogue with the mainstream parties, Erdoğan opts to cooperate with the extreme nationalist and Islamist groups in order to secure a simple majority, leaving almost no room for the voices of opposition. This means that the patterns derived from history as well as the military's shadow over politics are still available, despite all the amendments and legal restructuring during the AKP rule. The fact that the military can still intervene as violently as it did in the July 2016 coup attempt, shows that Turkey needs a consolidated and liberal democracy to be built among civilians for sustainable, democratic control of the armed forces, rather than exerting legal and political pressure on it.

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11

COUPS AND STATE FORMATION IN TURKEY

Nikos Christofis

Introduction

On 15 July 2016, Turkey faced the eighth attempt at a military takeover in its modern political history, and – as history would have it – the fourth to fail.[1] Even though the coup attempt was quickly quashed, it was more violent than any other in Turkish history, leaving 284 people dead, including 36 of the putschists (Çiçekoğlu and Turan 2019: 2), and more than 2,000 injured.

Military interventions in politics – whether in the form of coups d'état or more subtle forms of interference – are a major problem for democratic consolidation and Turkey is no exception. Since the country's transition to a multiparty system in the mid-1940s, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has complicated democratic processes by its outright interventions in 1960, 1971, and 1980 by forcing the government to resign in 1997, and by restricting the authority of civilian governments. Moreover, there have been a number of coup plots and attempts that were aborted thanks to the vigilance of the higher echelons of the military hierarchy (Karaosmanoğlu 2012: 149).

More recently, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) has been frequently challenged by the military establishment. The first overt instance was the so-called e-memorandum (*e-muhtıra*) or 'e-coup' in 2007. This had the opposite effect as intended by boosting Abdullah Gül's election as president in November of that year. The second – and most serious – was in July 2016, when flag officers in the Turkish army and air force sought, unsuccessfully, to seize President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, topple the government, and take over the country.

Scholars have long noted that the *coup d'état–as–political–instrument* has been central to the exercise of the TAF's tutelage over Turkish politics, and has been a roadblock on the path of Turkish democratization. However, it is something of a cliché to assert that long-standing military tutelage has forestalled Turkish democratization altogether. Turkey hardly meets the procedural minimum for being called a democracy, due to an absence of broad protection of civil liberties and non-elected tutelary authorities (Levitsky and Way 2010: 5–6), and since 2012 Turkey has developed characteristics of 'competitive authoritarianism' (Ergun Özbudun in this volume).

What is more is that, despite the introduction of multiparty politics, and its robust durability over many decades since, it would not be unreasonable to assert that 'illiberal',

semi-democratic – even *authoritarian* – tendencies among the representatives of the Turkish state have persisted. This is undoubtedly (at least in part) a legacy of the country's long period of single-party rule (1922–1946). Thus, while certain 'rights' and 'institutions' of democracy, such as elections, have significant purchase in Turkish political life, they are *ultimately expedient* rather than *immutable*. Representatives of the state have no hesitation in dispensing with these institutions (or at least attempting to) when they deem them a hindrance to political objectives. The AKP period highlights this logic perfectly, most notably after 2007, when – rather than *eradicating* the authoritarian habits of the Kemalist period – the ruling party merely replaced them with its own version, in effect *mimicking* the approach of the very groups that had long marginalized the AKP base of support.

The present chapter aims to show how the July coup attempt was a culmination of a process towards the authoritarian shift of Turkey that started long before the coup attempt, and one that still is ongoing. In order to do so, a brief presentation of previous interventions will be provided to see what was the role of the state and the agents that instigated the previous coups. Against this background, the different narratives of the July events will be presented to reveal how the AKP capitalized on and instrumentalized the situation to eliminate all its political opponents from the political arena, and thus, accelerate the political crisis that was already in motion in order to achieve the government's vision of 'New Turkey' (Yeni Türkiye).

A brief history of military interventions in Turkey

All coups d'état and coup attempts in Turkey until 2007 were undertaken in the name of Kemalism – or, better put, on the pretext that the incumbent government had deviated from the main principles of the secular Kemalist Republic. Against this background, the TAF was presented as the guardian of the state, which through ideological alliances with the judiciary, political parties, and the media, and the support of some segments of society, were granted the sought-after political power and encouragement. 'Islamic reaction' (*irticaci*), or fundamentalism, 'Kurdish separatism', and 'communist threat', were capitalized by the military, which used them 'to keep its allies constantly alert and its political role justified' (Kuru 2012: 38).

Military coups were sometimes the work of salon plots by narrow army cliques, as in the 27 May 1960 coup d'état. At other times, the entire chain of command has been involved in the planning and execution – as in the 12 September 1980 coup. The 1960 coup targeted the incumbent Democrat Party (Demokrat Partisi, DP) government of Adnan Menderes, which had actively courted the political support of religious leaders like Said Nursi, a move seen by the Kemalist Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), which has ruled since 1922, as a betrayal of the very foundations of the country – namely, its secular character. However, immediately after a new constitution was ratified, political power was restored. A new constitution, considered by many as liberal, introduced several checks and balances and several civil liberties, such as a constitutional court and a council of state, the ban on political activity was lifted, and new parties were given a chance to register for the elections later that year (Karaveli 2018: 121). The coalition of forces, however, that had been nourished during the 1950s quickly reasserted their ascendancy through the Justice Party.

On 12 March 1971, the chief of the general staff handed the prime minister a memorandum – an ultimatum, in fact – from the armed forces to confront what they called 'anarchy' and social 'chaos' (Zürcher 2017: 261), actually ousting a government one could consider the follower-up of the democratic party ousted in 1960. Unlike those behind the 1960 coup, the architects of the 1971 intervention were set against the unprecedented social mobilization that had been influenced by the student revolutionary spirit of the global '68 (Alper 2019).

They brokered a new compromise between the state elite and the rapidly growing ranks of the bourgeoisie, suppressing the radical wings of the political and social movements that had burst out after the 1960 coup (Keyder 2020). The proclamation in 1974 favouring left-wing militants after three years of general amnesty was not enough to resolve the tension. The leftists rebounded, and alongside radical right-wing mobilization led by Alparslan Türkeş – a former colonel who had played an outsized role in the 1960 coup – bloody clashes between left and right intensified, leading to virtual civil war by the end of the decade (Bozarslan 2004: 65–66).

Against this background, the 1980 coup, which gave rise to the '12 September' regime lasting nearly three years, was a critical turning point in modern Turkish politics and, indeed, the lives of many citizens, even today. Until July 2016, it was the most memorable coup for the loss of life incurred, particularly among intellectuals and leftists. Unlike in 1960, the army chose not to cede power quickly and continued to rule the country for nearly two years as it sought a 'permanent' settlement to the country's instability. The 'solution' the military dictatorship developed was to impose on the society an authoritarian and conservative statist conception of politics on the assumption this would rid the country of its habitual tendency of lurching from one crisis to another.

> It systematized the authoritarianism that was one of the innate characteristics of the Turkish Republic, and institutionalized the transfer of the administrative center of this authoritarianism from the civil to the military bureaucracy, to achieve a politically and socially stable but economically dynamic new regime placing the state as the centre and the society as the periphery (İnsel 2003: 293).

In 1983, the transition to democracy was 'almost a textbook example of the degree to which a departing military regime can dictate the conditions of its departure' (Özbudun 2000: 117). Against this backdrop, both the constitutional referendum and the elections did not take place in a free and competitive setting, while all political parties were closed down and many political leaders of the pre-coup era had been either imprisoned and/or banned from politics. Furthermore, after 1984 the Turkish state entered a protracted and bloody conflict with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK). It imposed a state of emergency in large swathes of the country, which both consolidated the neoliberal, conservative orientation of the political order and ensured 'the authoritarian conception of politics that constituted the heart of the third republican regime [i.e., after 1980] was prevented from weakening' (İnsel 2003: 295). The crackdown on leftist parties, associations, and trade unions opened a political vacuum that was filled by Islamist-oriented parties. Erdoğan himself emerged in this milieu, becoming mayor of Istanbul in 1994.

Turkish political Islam was given official status through an ideological formation called the 'Turkish–Islamic Synthesis', a rather incongruous mix of religiously oriented moral instruction and Turkish nationalism. The 12 September regime championed it as a way to leverage religion to 'inoculate' the population against leftist thought in the waning years of the Cold War, but also to become an instrument under their control as the military remained suspicious about political Islam. On 28 February 1997, Necmettin Erbakan, the Turkish prime minister since 1996, was forced into accepting the National Security Council's 20-point programme, and the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) that came into power was forced to step down. The party's anti-Westernism and its ideology of Milli Görüş (National View) that laid down its vision as 'a form of economic modernization that was authentically Turkish and based on Muslim ethics' (White 2014: 14), provoked the military as these were once more labelled as reactionary. The 1997 'postmodern coup' put an end to the RP experiment: 'It was one thing for the military

to sponsor a synthesis of Islam and nationalism and quite another to accept Islamic policies in government' (Waldman and Caliskan 2016: 56).

The 15 July 2016 coup attempt: competing narratives

Late in the evening of 15 July 2016, units from the Turkish military attempted to take control of the government, state institutions, national media, and critical points of communication in the country. Operating under the label 'The Peace at Home Council' (Yurtta Sulh Konseyi) – a nod to Turkey's Kemalist past – the putschists declared on national television that the army had seized control of the state to reinstate the constitutional order, human rights and freedoms, the rule of law, and general security. Soon after, however, it became clear that the coup plot had failed, and the reaction of the AKP government was firm and uncompromising unlike in some of the previous military interventions.

Both President Erdoğan and Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım denounced the coup, with Erdoğan encouraging people to take to the streets to resist the coup attempt. This was successful, with crowds soon forming in public in significant numbers. Following the 'restoration of order' by the people, President Erdoğan returned to Istanbul and rallied the people around him, signifying in all essence the end of the coup attempt. The regime immediately pinpointed the Gülen movement, later hinting that the ultimate culprits were Western (read: American) security agencies engaged in a 'disinformation plot' to undermine a rising Islamic country (Aktürk 2018: 96–100). This narrative was lent some weight in many Turkish eyes due to the tepid response of some Western countries in condemning the putsch (Akman 2018). This criticism only intensified when the Americans refused to immediately extradite Fethullah Gülen, for which the Turkish government had petitioned with little hard evidence of his guilt. These events deepened the chasm between Turkey and the West as to the events surrounding the coup (Zürcher 2017: xii).

The facts of the events of 15 July are themselves confused and obscured, with different narratives of the truth competing in the court of public opinion.[2] The truth itself has had little bearing on the way the government has narrated the coup and handled its aftermath in any case. The AKP regime has been – as so many governments appear today – on a quest to craft a favourable 'post-truth' reality. As McIntyre (2018: 3) has noted, this 'amounts to a form of ideological supremacy, whereby its practitioners are trying to compel someone to believe in something whether there is good evidence for it or not'. Thus, the selective use of facts by the AKP, and the complete rejection of any evidence that contradicts its position, produce a 'common sense' among its voters in which the primacy of individual affects – the injunction to 'believe in what feels plausible and intuitively true' (Taş 2018: 14) – emerges as the driving force.

According to the AKP dominant narrative – indeed, a narrative that ignores many facts that do not fit – the coup attempt is perceived as a serious assault on the country's system of government and against its citizens by rebel flag officers orchestrated by the Gülen movement (and perhaps backed by foreign powers). To that end, both supporters and political opponents of President Erdoğan and the ruling party rallied to defend the civilian government in its fight against treacherous forces seeking to undermine it through nationwide rallies, referred to as 'democracy watches' (*demokrasi nöbeti*). Furthermore, and despite ideological differences within the leftist movement, several, but not all, leftist parties, like the Revolutionary Socialist Workers' Party (Devrimci Sosyalist İşçi Partisi, DSİP) and the Communist Party (Komünist Partisi, KP), used similar discourses to condemn the military coup attempt (Ulus 2020).

Against this background, the clampdown and mass-scale purges against the Gülenists are considered as a *catharsis* – a cleansing of the 'bad elements' of the state, or even a 'heroic action'

(İçener 2016) of 'glorious resistance' (Yayla 2018). Expanding party support and a powerful concordat with the Gülenist movement within the state apparatus (Watmough and Öztürk 2018; Watmough 2020), through which Gülen members obtained key positions in the state apparatus, the AKP succeeded in leveraging the various coup plots that came to light after 2007, most notably to tame the armed forces, not so much in extricating the power of the army from politics per se but instead capturing and directing it in the interests of the ruling party. Now, however, their collaboration turned to open confrontation since they turned from partners into traitors after 2011, due to the Gülen's attempt to sideline Erdoğan through corruption investigations, which involved Erdoğan's son as well. Against this backdrop, Erdoğan pointed directly to the once-close ally Fethullah Gülen and his brotherhood as the propagators of the 'coup from abroad' marking, thus, the beginning of a fratricidal war between the leadership of the AKP and the Gülen movement, which continues to this day.

In this reading, the Gülen terrorist organization was seeking to undermine the democratic reforms the AKP had undertaken, notably the so-called silent revolution (2002–2013), through several plots against the democratically elected government and Erdoğan himself (Aktürk 2018). The coup of 15 July 2016, as this story goes, was a final attempt by the Gülenists to capture the state after many years of apparently trying to do so. Interestingly, there has been a long and conspicuous silence about the equally long and conspicuous alliance between the movement and the AKP government since the two parted ways.[3]

On the other hand, another perspective focuses on the coup attempt as an *event*, which marks a clear cut between the pre- and post-coup period and considers what Turkey is undergoing to be a complete democratic breakdown and a transition from semi-democracy to a 'new authoritarian regime' (Somer 2016 and 2017; Esen and Gumuscu 2016). In other words, this narrative argues in a way that the post-coup period, and the measures that were taken by the AKP government, mark a post-coup, or a counter-coup period, as government policies have aimed at the unseating of judicial and legislative authorities by the executive. This, however, presupposes that there was a breakdown of democracy in Turkey and the putsch only facilitated the emergence of a new form of authoritarianism.

Both narratives share common ground, namely, that the coup attempt marks a point of transition in Turkish political history. A closer look of the AKP regime, especially from the mid-2000s onwards, is quite revealing in the sense that the coup attempt not only marks a break but also catalysed an ongoing sociopolitical crisis already in motion (Christofis 2020), culminating in the 'organizational coup' of 15 July 2016 (Jongerden 2020). In other words, the coup attempt is marked by its astounding continuities with the pre-coup period, rather than by its ruptures.

A 'gift from God': but to what end and for whom?

The coup attempt was immediately named a 'gift from God' by the Turkish president. Contrary to the beliefs, or hopes, the Turkish political system did not enable a democratization process, but instead legitimized past policies and provided a carte blanche to the Turkish government to proceed with its vision of reforming and transforming the state in a vision the AKP calls 'Yeni Türkiye' or 'New Turkey'.

The 'Yeni Türkiye' concept first appeared among AKP party members in interviews and speeches in 2010 (Bora 2018: 11). It was officially introduced into the political vocabulary of the party programme during the presidential election campaign in 2014. In a nutshell, Yeni Türkiye is not just an electoral/political *slogan* but a socio-economic and political *process* that seeks to 'reform' (read: transform) the Turkish state by foregrounding a new national identity, one that is the polar opposite of the old Kemalist one (Christofis 2018). Through that process,

the AKP makes extensive use of Islamic discourses but also of Kemalist practices – indeed more often than not by *mimicking* aspects of the old Kemalist playbook (Polat 2016: 11). AKP officials and Erdoğan himself thus appear equally comfortable citing verses from the Qur'an (*Son Dakika* 2014) and referencing Republican historical triumphs by referring to current events as Turkey's 'Second War of Independence'.

Yeni Türkiye has been 'a mobilizing tool as well as a tool to decontest that which is fundamentally contested – namely, national identity' (Alaranta 2015: 94). On the eve of the constitutional referendum in 2010 and the national elections the following year, campaigning stressed the point that the people had to choose – between a 'new' and an 'old' Turkey, emphasizing, thus, the desired rupture with the old days of military tutelage, short-lived coalition governments, and economic instability. Fear and anxiety are central here: 'Just like in the "old Turkey", which Erdoğan denounces with virulence, the "new Turkey" he is building uses crises' (Bozarslan 2020: 35) to polarize the people.

The referendum came shortly after the AKP managed to remove the Kemalist establishment from the political scene, following the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases – a series of cases against high-ranking military, opposition lawmakers, and journalists for plotting against the state – through which the TAF planned to overthrow the government, and the attempt to put a halt to the election of Abdullah Gül as president in 2007. The latter incident in particular, in remembrance of 1997, took place through a memorandum posted on the general staff website. The proclamation read that 'nobody should forget that the army was a participant in the debates about the secular nature of the state and that it would clarify its position when needed', living hints of what was to follow (Zürcher 2017: 342). Unlike in the past, this time a civilian government – empowered by its economic success, and popular electoral and international diplomatic support – was able to stand up to the military, and managed to prevail in a crucial turning point for Turkey.

By the late 2000s, then, a 'war of manoeuvre' (Gramsci 2007: 169) was already in motion. The AKP was physically overwhelming the coercive apparatus of the state with the assistance of the Gülen movement, and empowerment of the government with the support of the civil society (Buttigieg 2005: 41). The reforms proposed by the AKP for constitutional change were often held up as a 'democratization' package. In fact, they have been instruments opportunistically employed in the AKP struggle to conquer the state, replace the Kemalist elite, and contain a vibrant Kurdish movement that has long fought for a pluralistic conception of citizenship and the strengthening of civil rights (Jongerden 2020). Whether 'tactical' or 'ideological', the moderate face the AKP tried to present in its early years does not necessarily imply democratization as the party and its support from partisan think tanks, like the pro-AKP SETA (Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfi) (Ataman 2018) would suggest. On the contrary, regardless of its appearance, Erdoğan's parliamentary monopoly, combined with his extensive public support, has meant that he has been able to instrumentalize reforms with arbitrary treatments (Baser and Öztürk 2017: 6). As Taş (2015: 787) notes: 'Considering the authoritarian leanings of the government the outcome of what initially was celebrated as a form of "Muslim democracy" has been neither totally Islamic nor democratic'.

Furthermore, the period signified a particular ad personam understanding of power, with Erdoğan at the centre, as well as the party's authoritarian ambivalence. For example, while Erdoğan stated that he supports that Turkey should not be a 'second, or third category democracy' but an advanced one for the entire world, he warned the media owners to control their reporters who 'create problems for the country and shake the economy' (as quoted in İnsel 2017: 169). This was not the first time Erdoğan had criticized the opposition press and referred to subversive foreign forces. Even during his first pro-democratic and pro-European

Union term in power significant transgressions were evident, with the prosecution of Hrant Dink, a journalist of Armenian descent, for insulting the Turkish state in his claims that the Turks committed genocide vis-à-vis the Armenians in World War I (Lavigne 2019). From 2007 onwards, the Doğan Group, a media conglomerate, was gradually sold off under government orders on the pretext that it supported the banning of the AKP, and its assets were transferred to pro-government business groups (İnsel 2017: 170–171). Following the coup attempt, most, if not all, the Gülen strongholds (universities, schools, banks, and media outlets) have been transferred to or directly taken over by the government. The same goes for Kurdish municipal administrations. Since July 2016, over 100 media outlets have closed and more than 250 journalists been arrested under the state of emergency and the pretext of terrorist activities, while human rights abuses, the oppression of minorities, and increased attacks on the freedom of the press and freedom of speech, in general, have become all the more evident (Başer and Öztürk 2017: 5).

In the process of the AKP coming to power 'the Turkish state establishment, the Islamic movement, right-wing authoritarianism and neoliberal economics were [all] intertwined' (Karaveli 2018: 126). The government's shift to 'authoritarian neoliberalism' – a set of state strategies that reinforce the variegated processes, shielding them from popular pressure – began during that period and has only accelerated since the 2010 referendum (Christofis 2020), 'triggering various conflicts in the social formations on the received end of neoliberal reforms which has resulted in the rise of various forms of authoritarian statism' (Özden et al. 2017: 189).

As part of the process of coming to power, the AKP has steadily built a loyal class of business supporters through an elaborate system of rewards and punishment, intending to consolidate its business constituency by politicizing state institutions. At the same time, it has eroded the rule of law to distribute rents and resources to its supporters, transfer capital to them from its opponents, and to discipline dissidents in business circles (Esen and Gumuscu 2017; Somer 2016). Large-scale construction and urban renewal projects have been allocated to pro-government business people and entrepreneurs in exchange for their support. More recently, one such 'megaproject', the so-called Istanbul Canal, raised questions of financing and political favours to well-connected construction conglomerates, not to mention core environmental concerns. Furthermore, the Administration for Collective Housing (Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı, TOKİ), which was set up in 1984, was privatized and then given sole authorization for land and housing development in AKP-governed municipalities (Esen and Gumuscu 2017: 7–8). Thus, despite being a fervent supporter of 'shrinking the state by delegating tasks considered as secondary and cutting back on public spending [the AKP] actually perpetuates in its own way the centrality, necessity, and cult of the state […] especially with regards to security issues' (Perouse 2015: 169). In this respect, TOKİ becomes indicative of the extent of the state's scope of action in Turkey, as this has become a matter of new contours, new modes of action, and new alliances.

Against this backdrop, the AKP set about 'constructing a new Turkey in its own image in a fashion that was increasingly indifferent and inconsiderate of oppositional groups' (Akça et al. 2014: 248), through the 'protection of the pillars of neoliberal accumulation, and in protecting the regime, repressive apparatuses, like the army, the police and the judicial' (Poulantzas [1978] 2014). As a result, the erosion of institutional checks and balances has blurred the dividing line between state and party. These changes have marked the transformation of the AKP from a party functioning on collective processes to a party dominated by one man (İnsel 2017).

This has become even more evident since Erdoğan's election as president in 2014. Although, in theory and practice, the Turkish president's role was to be above politics and not involved

in partisan politics before the introduction of the presidential system, Erdoğan's 'commanding personal popularity [has] allowed him to offer appointment and policy "guidance" to the party that he had theoretically left behind', as the replacement of Ahmet Davutoğlu, former adviser, foreign minister, and prime minister, with Binali Yildirim, a devoted 'yes man', shows (Turan 2017). The introduction of an 'active presidency' by Erdoğan meant nothing other than constant interventions into day-to-day politics and open partisanship in favour of the AKP-led parliamentary majority. Under the pretext of repairing the dysfunction of the current structure to advance the interests of a 'stronger Turkey' (*AA* 2017), the constitutional amendments not only eradicated the principle of separation of powers but also rebuilt the state according to the interests of ruling groups, without much consideration being paid to the overall integrity of the system and long-term implications (Petersen and Yanaşmayan 2017). In other words, the aim has been to increasingly centralize the state apparatus in the hands of one office, thus bypassing important constitutional counterweights. Now with the presidential system changed, Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch, stated that we see 'concentrate[d] power in the hands of President Erdoğan and further [eroding of] already weak checks and balances on the exercise of that power' (HRW 2017).

The AKP based its dominance on winning electoral majorities, but sustained this by the use of repressive and increasingly violent practices. As a response to the success of the pro-Kurdish party, challenging the AKP in the southeast, the KCK (Koma Civakên Kurdistan, Union of Communities in Kurdistan) – an organization linked to the PKK – trials in 2009 were an indication of this tendency of competitive authoritarianism (Casier et al. 2011).

In a similar vein, what started in May 2013 as an environmental protest against the urban reconstruction of Gezi Park in Istanbul turned into a massive anti-government movement that was seriously challenging the hegemony and credibility of the neoliberal government policies. Erdoğan did not hesitate to use violence to suppress the uprising or to use derogatory expressions, like *çapulcu* (marauder), to delegitimize the revolting masses (Harding 2013). Since then, violence has become a 'legitimate' means of suppression which would become only 'institutionalized' after the attempt in 2016 and the imposition of the state of emergency by the government. The 'state of exception' imposed in Turkey after the failed coup demonstrates how institutionalized violence – both physical and psychological/emotional – and neoliberalism have become entwined. In other words, '[N]eoliberalism operates in a disciplinary capacity, employing a variety of regulatory, surveillance and policing mechanisms to ensure neoliberal reforms are instituted and "locked in", in spite of what the populace might desire' (Springer 2012: 1139). Indeed, during the camping for the referendum, which proposed nothing less than the establishment of an autocratic regime,

> the 'no' camp was accused of treason and of complicity with 'terrorism' embodied by the PKK, the Gülen movement and/or the Islamic State, as well as collaboration with external enemies of the state. On the other hand, the 'yes' camp was presented as part of a divine order and a condition to win access to paradise.
>
> *(Bozarslan 2020: 32)*

The no-camp, or more general opposition to Erdoğan, became equated with terrorism. Thus, all opposition parties, and anti-government businessmen and media, stand accused of collaborating with Gülen and 'dark foreign forces' to overturn Erdoğan's personal power.

Thus, conspiracy theories – long a staple in Turkish politics – have emerged as the currency of the realm after the attempted coup d'état on 15 July 2016. More than just a long-standing reflex of Turkish political culture, then, the increasing resort to ever-more wild and outrageous

conspiracy theories served to bolster the regime's narrative agency, gravely threatened by mass resistance (i.e., from the Gezi protesters) and violent usurpation (i.e., from the Gülenists). This makes sense, given conspiracies theories are invoked when majority groups, political parties, and even entire political systems find their popularity, and hence their legitimacy, at home and abroad, is cast into doubt. For Erdoğan, then, conspiratorial politics can become a strategic alternative as a struggle for political survival and 'by framing opposition as conspiracy, and setbacks – be they economic, social or political – as evidence of secret scheming' (Medeiros 2018: 23).

In many ways, the AKP's narration of 15 July resembles the Republican tradition, but contrary to the Kemalist paradigm,

> a bold disregard for truth, discrediting sources of evidence-based knowledge and an avalanche of emotion-and crisis-driven content informed AKP's post-Gezi narrative and of 15 July in particular. In this endeavor, the party could be compared to its strange bedfellow: the contemporary anti-Western variant of Kemalist nationalism, called *Ulusalcılık*.
>
> *(Taş 2018: 14)*

While the Gülenists are now considered to be 'the internal threat in the central state apparatus, working top-down, the Kurdish movement is considered the bottom-up threat' (Jongerden 2020: 202–203). The post-coup crackdown went beyond punishing those involved in the coup and extended to the entire Gülen community, Kurds as well as secular and liberal critics, using even 'guilt by association' charges. Given the political threat that the Kurdish movement presented to Erdoğan's rule, especially since the legal Kurdish-oriented Democratic Peoples' Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) has elected representatives in the National Assembly, the government's blatant suppression has now gained an intensity that is greater than that between the years 2013 and 2015 when it was already quite strong (Bozarslan 2020: 32). Within a year, more than 150,000 people were subject to legal proceedings with blanket accusations of terror links, thousands of people arrested, and the government moved to seize billions of dollars' worth of corporate assets. The same pretext was also used to dismiss hundreds of civil servants from the judiciary, education, media, and elsewhere, while according to an HDP report, only in 2019, 32 Kurdish mayors were replaced by appointed 'transitional administrators' close to the AKP (*Diken* 2020), by criminalizing them using the discourse of counter-terrorism.

Conclusion

All military interventions in modern Turkish history have been turning points for the country, with each involving its own specific socio-economic and political implications. Focusıng on the July 2016 attempt, this differed in many respects, not least because of its obscure origins and causes. Still shrouded in a fog of conjecture today, the 2016 failed coup nevertheless reinforced an increasingly militarized atmosphere in Turkish politics. Similar tools and methods – like categorizing political activity as criminal, lifting the political immunity of 'illegitimate' (often Kurdish) members of parliament and then removing them from office and imprisoning them – have been employed against opponents. Threats of the same were directed at other political actors to curb all dissent.

This brutalization of politics has been in motion for over a decade, although it certainly intensified in the aftermath of the coup attempt. From this perspective, the 15 July 2016 coup attempt not only marks a breaking point that led to authoritarianism but the overall trajectory

of the AKP policies, measures, and repertoires has been to centralize power and develop the party–state, markedly by also resembling the Kemalism of the early Republic. Personalized authoritarianism around the 'cult' of Erdoğan is consistently and persistently constructed through a patron–client system, pro-government media, and the judiciary.

Facing challenges to his hegemony and vision, Erdoğan often regressed into the old ways of the Kemalist ancien régime, that is, the old system's centralist and illiberal spirit, better expressed in the motto 'Tek millet, tek parti, tek şef' [One nation, one party, one leader]. At the same time, with the gradual accumulation and complete control of the state apparatus, one cannot but notice a repetitive syntax of power that profoundly divides the people and shows that a dynamics of brutalization is ongoing in the country (Bozarslan 2020). This is a language that is used consciously to divide society between 'friends', that is, Sunni Turks who are faithful to the leadership, and 'enemies', that is, the Kurds, the Alevites, non-Muslim minorities, and also Turkish Sunni dissidents.

Through polarizing practices, Erdoğan can mobilize the people, as in the coup attempt, but also present his own version of the truth, or 'post-truth', where conspiracy theories replace facts and evidence as the only unquestioned truth. In that respect, popular sentiment, that is, of his 'loyal' electoral base, is often recalled to legitimize his agenda for the reformation/transformation of 'New Turkey', indeed, a Turkey that needs to be protected at any cost by his loyal and obedient subjects. As Giddens argued (1987: 89), the development of an absolutist state is undoubtedly associated with significant advances in internal pacification, which, in the Turkish case, is – indeed, as during the Kemalist period – a consolidation of powers by the Erdoğanist movement. This consolidation, however, is not taking place because of the coup attempt, but it was ongoing, to a greater or lesser, extent long before that.

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Notes

1 Alongside the 1960, 1971, 1980, 1997, 2007 and 2016 interventions, there were two more attempts by General Talat Aydemir in 1962 and 1963. Aydemir was tried, convicted and executed in July 1964. I have not counted the coup plot orchestrated by Kemalist leftists in 1970–1971, as this was superseded by the high command's memorandum of March 1971.

2 Metin Gürcan, who provides perhaps one of the most balanced accounts of the plot, argues that three distinct groups of officers were involved: those affiliated with the Gülen movement acting under direction of the GM leadership; those not affiliated with Gülen but nevertheless willing to join the putsch, motivated by their hostility toward the AKP government and their deep concern that AKP rule was extinguishing Turkey's long-standing secular tradition; and those who were simply acting out of self-interest or to advance their military careers (Gürcan 2016; see also Turan 2019, 220 and Tittensor 2018, 229–231).

3 To that respect, a series of publications can be classified into three categories depending on their end-game: those that try to prove the democratic character of the government and the popular support of the people through the heroic action of resistance by the people (Ataman 2018); those that try to deconstruct, demythologize and delegitimize Gülen, because of his secret agenda (Özkan 2017) and present the Gülen as a pawn of the West (Petek 2019); and finally, those that attempt to present Erdoğan as a great leader that instils fear in world leaders, who hate him (Özkan 2018). On the opposite side, and even earlier, the one that tried to delegitimize Erdoğan by the Gülen movement, see Vatandaş (2013).

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12

CONSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

Ergun Özbudun

Drift towards authoritarianism

In my contribution to the previous edition of this book ("Constitutions and Political System," in *The Routledge Handbook of Modern Turkey*, 2012), I had a cautiously optimistic view of the prospects of democratic development in Turkey. Indeed, the strong military and judicial tutelarism over popularly elected powers had been somewhat limited both by the constitutional amendments of 2010 and the changing political climate in the country. The creation of the Parliamentary Constitutional Reconciliation Committee, in which the four parties represented in parliament were equally represented, following the 2011 parliamentary elections had created high hopes for the making of a fully democratic new constitution based on broad popular consensus.

Towards the end of 2012, however, developments took a diametrically opposite direction. Corruption allegations against four cabinet ministers and members of their families created a panic in the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) and triggered a number of steps to weaken the independence of the judiciary (Özbudun, 2014a; 2015a,b; 2016; ICJ, 2016). The High Council of the Judiciary (HSYK) elections in 2014, strongly influenced by the AKP government, produced a body almost completely controlled by government supporters. Furthermore, the legislature passed a "court-packing" law on 9 February 2011 (Law No. 6110) adding 137 new members to the Court of Cassation and 61 new members to the Council of State. The court-packing practice was repeated several times in the following years. Thus, on 2 December 2014, 129 new members were added to the Court of Cassation and 49 new members to the Council of State (Law No. 6572). On 1 July 2016, this time the numbers of judges of the two high courts were drastically reduced (Law. No. 6723). On 20 November 2017, 100 new members were added to the Court of Cassation and 16 new members to the Council of State by the emergency rule decree No. 696. Needless to say, all these new appointments and discharges were made by the HSYK, now completely controlled by the government (Gözler, 2018, pp. 992–996). The final and most fateful step came with the constitutional amendment of 2017 which practically put an end to the independence of the judiciary, as will be spelled out below.

In the meantime, the work of the Parliamentary Constitutional Reconciliation Committee came to an end in 2013, chiefly because of the AKP's strong insistence on a

presidential system of government which was rejected by the three other parties represented in the Committee. The Committee had also failed in reaching consensus on the two most divisive issues in Turkish politics, namely religion–state relations and the Kurdish problem (Özbudun, 2014b, pp. 69–78; Barın, 2014). Debates over the system of government have dominated Turkish politics since then, leading to further political polarization that reached an unprecedented dimension. While the AKP's project came to the fruition through the 2017 constitutional amendment, the question still remains one of the most divisive issues in Turkish politics.

The constitutional amendment of 2017

Although the AKP had started to advocate a presidential system of government since 2013, it lacked the parliamentary majority for a constitutional amendment. However, after the failed coup attempt of 15 July 2016, the ultra-nationalist Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) suddenly changed its position and gave its support to this project. Thus, the two parties reached the minimum constitutional amendment majority of three-fifths of the total membership of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA). The amendment proposal, prepared in close collaboration between the AKP and the MHP, was submitted to the TGNA on 16 December 2016, swiftly debated in the Constitutional Committee and the Plenary, and adopted by 339 votes against 142, that is, above the minimum required number of 330 (3/5) but subject to a mandatory referendum on 21 January 2017 (Law No. 6771). It was published in the *Official Gazette* on 11 February 2017, and was submitted to a mandatory referendum. The referendum took place on 16 April 2017, and the text was adopted by a narrow majority of 51.4 per cent. The amendment law adopted an unusual system with regard to the effective dates of the amendments. Certain amendments, such as the restructuring of the HSYK, the abolition of the two military high courts, and the abolition of the provision forbidding the president of the Republic to be a member of a political party, took effect immediately by the publication of the referendum results in the *Official Gazette*. Certain amendments were to take effect with the start of the election period for the next presidential and parliamentary elections. The third, and the most important, part would take effect with the publication of the results of such elections. In fact, these elections, normally scheduled for 3 November 2019, were anticipated. These early elections took place on 24 June 2018, and thus the entire amendment law became effective, and the AKP–MHP block maintained its majority in the TGNA.

Most observers agree that the referendum occurred in highly unequal conditions. The government freely used the state resources, while the opposition campaign was restricted by the emergency rule measures. While a sense of victory-drunkenness dominated the government supporters, a feeling of fear dominated the opponents. Debates became a matter of confidence or no-confidence for President Erdoğan, rather than focusing on the merits and disadvantages of the proposed change. Thus, in Gözler's words, the process resembled a plebiscite as often seen in authoritarian regimes designed to consolidate the position of the incumbents rather than a real referendum (Gözler, 2017a, ch. 5). Still, despite these highly unequal conditions, the narrow victory of the government is a good indicator of the deeply divided nature of Turkish society. The amendment law No. 6771 consists of 18 articles, but it involves changes in a total of 67 articles. Some of these changes, such as the deletion of the words "prime minister" and "the Council of Ministers" in many articles, are technical in nature, but many others will have far-reaching political consequences. This chapter will concentrate on the latter, leaving aside the changes of secondary importance.[1]

The system of government

Clearly, the system of government designed by the 2017 amendment is not parliamentary since it lacks two sine qua non conditions of a parliamentary government: (aa) The executive has a monistic, not dualistic, structure. The executive power is vested entirely in the president. There is no prime minister or a Council of Ministers, or the requirement of a counter- signature. (bb) The president of the Republic and the ministers are not politically responsible to the legislature; there is no vote of confidence. On the other hand, it is equally clear that the system is not presidential either, since one of the fundamental characteristics of the presidential system is that the president and the legislature are elected separately for a fixed term of office, during which neither can put an end to the other's office. The current Turkish constitution departs from this rule by allowing both the president and the three-fifths majority of the legislature to end the office of the other, provided that they also subject themselves to new simultaneous joint elections (Art. 116). Of course, the weapons are not equal. While the president can dissolve the TGNA at any time on his own will, the TGNA can force the president to an early election only by the three-fifths majority of its full membership, which is very difficult to obtain in practice. The AKP leaders, becoming aware of this fundamental difference with a presidential system, finally decided to call it "the President of the Republic system of government" (*Cumhurbaşkanlığı Hükümet Sistemi*), a term which does not exist in international practice or the academic literature. As Gözler states, "this system has so far never been seen, known, or heard of. If it has to be given a name, it can be called the 'neverland system of government'" (2017a, ch.3, ref.p.72).

Separation of powers: legislative–executive relations

A democratic presidential system is based on a strict separation of the legislative and executive powers, even though both have certain checks-and-balances mechanisms to be used against the other. The advocates of the 2017 amendments claimed that the new system establishes a real system of separation of powers. This is far from the truth. In fact, the new system posits a highly strengthened president of the Republic against a much weakened parliament.[2] The TGNA's supervisory powers over the executive have been seriously limited with the abolition of interpellation and oral questions. Parliamentary inquiries leading to the impeachment of the president, vice presidents and ministers for official duty-related crimes, are preserved, but the qualified majorities required for each step were substantially raised. Thus, a motion for the opening of a parliamentary inquiry can be given by the absolute majority of the full membership of the TGNA (previously, one-tenth), the TGNA can decide to establish a commission of inquiry by a three-fifths (previously simple) majority, and the decision to send the person concerned to the High Court (Constitutional Court) requires the two-thirds (previously, absolute) majority of its full membership (Arts. 105 and 106). Obviously, in practice, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to secure such qualified majorities. Furthermore, under the amended Articles 105 and 106, the decision to send the persons concerned to the High Court does not end their office; they continue to stay in office until the decision of the High Court, again in contrast to the previous system. Another important characteristic of the 2017 amendment is the substantial enlargement of the regulatory powers of the executive, that is, the president. Under the new Article 104, the president can issue presidential decrees in all matters related to executive power. It is true that the same article puts certain limits to this power. Thus, presidential decrees cannot regulate fundamental (civil) and political rights; cannot be issued in matters clearly regulated by an existing law or prescribed by the constitution as to be regulated exclusively by law. In case of a conflict between a law and a presidential decree, the law shall take

precedence. If parliament passes a law in conflict with a previously issued presidential decree, the decree shall become null and void. Despite these limitations, however, the regulatory power of the president is still too broad, since it is difficult to define the limits of the "executive power". Furthermore, it is explicitly stated in certain articles that the matter shall be regulated by presidential decrees. Whether this means that such areas can in no way be regulated by law is not clear. If this interpretation in adopted, it will mean an "exclusive" (reserved) regulatory area for the executive, again a fundamental departure from all previous republican constitutions that considered the regulatory powers of the executive as clearly derivative from and secondary to laws.

As a natural consequence of the monistic structure of the executive, the president is empowered to appoint or dismiss the vice presidents (one or more than one), the ministers and all higher public functionaries. He also regulates the procedures for their appointment by a presidential decree (Art. 104). Thus, unlike in the American case, the legislature has no "advise and consent" role in these appointments. The president also has the power to send back a bill to parliament for reconsideration, in which case its readoption requires the absolute majority of the full membership of the TGNA (previously, a simple majority was sufficient) (Art. 89).

One of the most consequential changes in the amendment concerns the budgetary powers of the TGNA. Indeed, in all systems of government, whether parliamentary or presidential, the legislature has the final word in matters of taxation and budget, going back to the medieval principle of "no taxation without representation." However, according the amended Article 161, in case the president's budget bill is not approved by the TGNA in due time, the previous year's budget shall continue to be applied with increases according to the new re-evaluation figures. Clearly, this provision deprives the legislature of one of its most potent weapons.

All these rules favouring the president were made even more effective in practice by the simultaneous elections of the president and the legislature (Art. 77). Indeed, this rule makes it highly unlikely that an elected president will face a parliament with an unfriendly majority. The fact that the president is the leader of his party, as it is now and most likely will be also in the future, and has a strong influence on the nomination of his party's candidates makes such a situation even more likely. Thus, the Venice Commission calls attention to this danger saying,

> The proposed constitutional amendments [...] are not based on the logic of separation of powers, which is characteristic for democratic presidential systems. Presidential and parliamentary elections would be systematically held together to avoid possible conflicts between the executive and the legislative powers. Their formal separation therefore risks being meaningless in practice and the role of the weaker power, parliament, risks becoming marginal. The political accountability of the President would be limited to elections, which would take place only every five years.
>
> *(2017, Para. 126)*

The judiciary

Whatever the system of government (presidentialism, semi-presidentialism, or parliamentary), the independence of the judiciary vis-à-vis the two political branches is an indispensable requirement of a democratic system, and the key to such independence is the security of tenure for the judges. In many European democracies this is secured by the creation of high judicial councils, a majority of which is composed of judges elected by their peers, and competent to decide on all personnel matters of judges (Venice Commission, 2007, 2010; Consultative Council of

European Judges, CCJE, 2007). Such a system was introduced in Turkey by the constitution of 1961 and maintained, despite certain important modifications, until the amendments of 2017.

The 2017 amendments completely reversed the system by creating a body (HSK; interestingly the word "High" was dropped from its title), all members of which shall be appointed by the two political branches (the president and the TGNA). Furthermore, this article was among those that immediately took effect with the announcement of the referendum results, an indication of the high priority given by the AKP government to the restructuring of the judiciary.

Under the amended Article 159, the HSK is composed of 13 members. The Minister of Justice is its president, and the undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice its ex-officio member. Four members shall be appointed by the president of the Republic. Since the minister and the undersecretary are also presidential appointees, the number of members appointed by the president amounts to six. Seven members are chosen by the TGNA with a qualified majority, that is, a two-thirds majority on the first round, and a three-fifths on the second. If such a majority is not obtained, there will be a lot taking between the two highest vote-getters. Even though such qualified majorities may, in theory, help produce a more pluralistic composition, it had no such effect in the HSK elections following the amendment, since the AKP–MHP block commanded a three-fifths majority. Thus, the present HSK is completely under the control of the government. The Venice Commission (2017, para. 119) strongly criticizes this system:

> The Commission finds that the proposed composition of the CJP is extremely problematic. Almost half of its members (4+2=6 out of 13) will be appointed by the President [...] (T)he President will no more be a *pouvoir neutre,* but will be engaged in party politics: his choice of the members of the CJP will not have to be politically neutral. The remaining 7 members would be appointed by the Grand National Assembly. If the party of the President has a three-fifths majority in the Assembly, it will be able to fill all positions in the Council. If it has, as is almost guaranteed under the system of simultaneous elections, at least two-fifths of the seats, it will be able to obtain several seats, forming a majority together with the presidential appointees. That would place the independence of the judiciary in serious jeopardy, because the CJP is the main self-governing body overseeing appointment, promotion, transfer, disciplining and dismissal of judges and public prosecutors. Getting control over this body thus means getting control over judges and public prosecutors.

Indeed, control over the HSK is the key to control over the entire judiciary, including the two high courts, since all judges of the two high courts are also appointed by the HSK. If need be, such a process can be speeded up by the frequent court-packing laws, as alluded to above. Domination over the high courts, in turn, leads to control over two other highly important constitutional bodies. One is the High Council of Elections (YSK), charged with the duty of the conduct of elections and with deciding on electoral disputes. The Council is composed of 11 members, six of whom are chosen by the Court of Cassation and five by the Council of the State. Thus, the independence and impartiality of the YSK has become a matter of deep political controversy since the constitutional referendum of April 2017, especially following the local elections of 31 March 2019. Finally, of the 15 members of the Constitutional Court, three are appointed by the president from among nominees of the Court of Cassation, and two from among the nominees of the Council of State. In addition to the four members appointed by the president at his own discretion, this amounts to a strong governmental influence over the Constitutional Court.

Under these conditions, it seems impossible to speak either of the independence of the judiciary or the separation of powers. Gözler (2017a, p.19) describes the present system of government as one of "unity of powers concentrated in the President of the Republic." The Venice Commission (2017, para. 130) has arrived at a similar conclusion, arguing that the proposed amendments "would introduce in Turkey a presidential regime which lacks the necessary cheeks and balances required to safeguard against becoming an authoritarian one." Thus, it may be concluded that the 2017 amendment was not limited to a simple change in the system of government, but it amounted to a radical "regime change" from imperfect democracy to competitive authoritarianism.

The serious deterioration of democratic standards in Turkey is also reflected in the reports of the international democracy-rating agencies. Thus, according to the Freedom House (FH) ratings, Turkey had never been among the "free" countries, but has always been a "partly free" one. In the early 2000s, an improvement was observed; thus, in 2006, Turkey's scores rose to 3 for civil rights and 3 for political rights, namely on the border between free and partly free countries (Piano and Puddington, 2006, p. 123), and remained the same for several years. In 2012, the scores fell to 3 and 4 (Puddington, 2013, p. 51). These scores were maintained in the 2014 report, but Turkey was marked with a "downward arrow" indicating a deterioration (Freedom House, 2014, pp. 3,14,22). A more serious deterioration is seen the FH's 2017 World Report, according to which Turkey's political rights score fell to 4 and civil rights score to 5. Turkey was the country with greatest deterioration in the year 2016, with (-15) points (Freedom House, 2017). The most dramatic decline took place in the 2018 report of the FH, in which Turkey's scores further fell to 5 for political rights and 6 for civil rights, thus putting Turkey into the category of "not free" countries for the first time since the start of the ratings. FH explains this decline as

> due to a deeply flawed constitutional referendum that centralized power in the presidency, the mass replacement of elected mayors with government appointees, arbitrary prosecution of rights activists and other perceived enemies of the state, and continued purges of state employees, all of which have left citizens Hesitant to express their views on sensitive topics.
>
> *(Freedom House, 2018)*

Competitive authoritarianism and abusive constitutionalism

Countries that are placed in the so-called "grey zone" between full (liberal) democracies and full (closed) authoritarian regimes have attracted the attention of a large number of political scientists in recent decades. Such regimes have been termed with various adjectives, such as "semi-democracies," "pseudo democracies," "defective democracies," "facade democracies," "delegative democracies," "hybrid regimes," "electoral authoritarianism," "competitive authoritarianism," and so on (Collier and Levitsky, 1997).

The term that best fits the present Turkish political system is probably "competitive authoritarianism."[3] Competitive authoritarian regimes, according to Steven Levitsy and Lucan A. Way, who coined the term,

> are civilian regimes in which formal democratic institutions exist and are widely used as the primary means of gaining power, but in which incumbents' abuse of the state places them at a significant advantage vis-à-vis their opponents. Such regimes are competitive in that opposition parties use democratic institutions to contest seriously

> for power, but they are not democratic because the playing field is heavily skewed in favor of incumbents. Competition is thus real but unfair... Obviously, a degree of incumbent advantage – in the form of patronage jobs, pork-barrel spending, clientelist social policies, and privileged access to media and finance – exists in all democracies. In democracies, however, these advantages do not seriously undermine the opposition's capacity to compete. When incumbent manipulation of state institutions and resources is so excessive and one-sided that it seriously limits political competition, it is incompatible with democracy. A level playing field is implicit in most conceptualizations of democracy.
>
> *(Levitsky and Way, 2010, pp. 5–6, 15)*

Thus, the authors correctly consider these regimes not as a subtype of democracy, but as a subtype of authoritarian regimes.

Levitsky and Way call attention to the disparities in access to resources, to media and to the law as factors seriously hindering the opposition's ability to compete. Thus, the incumbents may make direct partisan use of state's financial sources and its machinery. They may also "use discretionary control over credits, licenses, state contracts, and other resources to enrich themselves via party-owned enterprises, benefit crony or proxy-owned firms that then contribute money back into party coffers." Access to media is also uneven. "In many competitive authoritarian regimes, the state controls all television and most – if not all – radio broadcasting. Although independent newspapers and magazines may circulate freely, they generally reach only a small urban elite." Finally, and most importantly for our purposes, the judiciary is under the control of the government.

> In many competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents pack judiciaries, electoral commissions, and other nominally independent arbiters and manipulate them via blackmail, bribery, and/or intimidation. As a result, legal and other state agencies that are designed to act as referees rule systematically in favor of incumbents.
>
> *(Levitsy and Way, 2010, pp.10–12)*

These observations would sound extremely familiar to most Turkish observers. Indeed, gross disparities appeared between the incumbents and the opposition in all three areas. With regard to access to resources, the AKP governments have created a large private sector of crony firms, mostly in the construction field, through highly profitable state contracts and cheap credits from state banks. Access to media has become extremely uneven in recent years, with the incumbents now controlling, directly or indirectly, at least 90 per cent of the written and visual media. A few remaining opposition journalists are under the serious threat of judicial investigations, arrests, imprisonments or heavy financial penalties. The 2018 Freedom House report mentions "the closure of over 160 media outlets and the imprisonment of over 150 journalists" (2018, p. 7). Finally, access to the law is clearly one-sided, as explained above. All this means that the playing field has become extremely uneven in recent years, even though the system can still be considered "competitive." As Levitsky and Way (2010, p. 12) observe,

> whereas officials in full authoritarian regimes can rest easy on the eve of elections [...] in competitive authoritarian regimes, incumbents are forced to sweat [...] Government officials fear a possible opposition victory (and must work hard to thwart it, and opposition leaders believe they have at least some chance of victory.

The narrow victories of Turkish incumbents in recent parliamentary and presidential elections, the 2017 constitutional referendum and the March 2019 local elections despite such gross inequalities, confirm this observation. The incumbents were really "forced to sweat."

Competitive authoritarian leaders often attempt to amend or replace the constitution by methods, even though legally correct, in essence aimed at undermining democracy. Such practices are called "abusive constitutionalism" by David Landau (2013, p. 191). In his words,

> abusive constitutionalism involves the use of the mechanisms – constitutional amendment and constitutional replacement – to undermine democracy [...] Powerful incumbent presidents and parties can engineer constitutional change so as to make themselves very difficult to dislodge and so as to defuse institutions such as courts that are intended to check their exercises of power. The resulting constitutions still look democratic from a distance [...] But from close up they have been substantially reworked to undermine the democratic order.

Judged by these criteria, the 2017 constitutional amendment in Turkey no doubt constitutes a prime example of abusive constitutionalism (also, Gözler, 2017a, ch.4).

In the light of a serious deterioration of democratic standards since the end of 2012, it seems impossible to be optimistic about the near future of democracy in Turkey. The term that best describes the present Turkish political system is competitive authoritarianism. Even though it has a tendency to move towards more authoritarianism and less competitiveness, there is still some room left for a meaningful competition. In other words, it has not as yet turned into a full or closed authoritarian regime. It is not clear which way the cat will jump.

Notes

1 For a fuller analysis, see Özbudun (2018), chs. 15,16,17,18; Gözler (2018), chs. 15,16,17,19; Kaboğlu (2017); Serap Yazıcı (2017).
2 For a comprehensive comparison between the American and Turkish systems, see Gözler (2017a), pp. 56–74.
3 A Turkish scholar argues, however, that the present Turkish political regime is no longer competitive authoritarian, but is displaying a tendency towards full authoritarianism (Çalışkan, 2018).

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COMPETITIVE AUTHORITARIANISM IN TURKEY UNDER THE AKP RULE

Berk Esen

Introduction

When the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) was founded in 2001, few students of Turkish politics probably calculated that it would still be in office after nearly two decades. Led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the party won its first parliamentary majority in the 2002 general elections and claimed plurality in five consecutive parliamentary elections (2007, 2011, June and November 2015, 2018) to become the dominant actor in Turkish politics. The party's control of national power was also extended to the local level, where the AKP candidates won control of a majority of metropolitan municipalities in the 2004, 2009, and 2014 local elections except for the Kurdish-populated south-eastern Turkey. It was only in the 2019 local elections that the ruling party tasted an electoral defeat by losing control of its key municipality governments. The parliament has remained under the AKP's control, except for a brief period (June–November 2015), though the ruling party currently maintains the majority thanks to support from the National Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) after June 2018 elections. With nearly two decades in office, Erdoğan's AKP has indeed become the party with longest period of uninterrupted rule during the multiparty era. This electoral success catapulted two AKP leaders, namely Abdullah Gül (2007–2014) and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (2014–) to the presidency. In short, the AKP's meteoric rise in 2002 has constituted a sharp break with Turkish political history and paved the way to a dramatic restructuring of the political regime.

This chapter argues that Turkey has regressed to a competitive authoritarian regime in which the ruling party enjoys uneven access to public and private resources and the playing field is tilted against the opposition parties.[1] Following its re-election victory in 2007, the ruling party gradually broke the tutelage of the military and judiciary only to introduce its own majoritarian system by capturing the state institutions through its partisan appointees. The 2010 constitutional referendum, which politicized the judge nomination process under the pretext of creating a representative system, was a critical juncture in the subjugation of the judiciary by the AKP government and its ally, the Fethullah Gülen movement. During this period, the

liberal intellectuals gave strong support to the ruling party and concentrated their criticisms on the main opposition Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), which, in their view, epitomized the country's authoritarian legacy.[2] Thanks to this marriage of convenience, the government undermined the rule of law and criminalized opposition groups through several controversial trials by special courts after 2007. Based on its expanding control over the state bureaucracy, the government financed pro-AKP business groups, punished its critics in business and civil society, and imposed strong control over the media sector. The ruling party legitimized these actions by appealing to its popular mandate and portrayed its opponents as elitist actors who were out of touch with the electorate. This polarizing discourse vilified the AKP critics and harmed relations between the government and the opposition parties, skewing the playing field in favour of the incumbent.

Turkey's authoritarian trajectory caught those scholars who considered the AKP as a moderate Muslim party by surprise (Ozbudun 2006; Hale and Ozbudun, 2009; Hale 2005; Insel, 2003; Tugal 2009). According to them, the AKP was allegedly most suited to neutralize the tutelary actors and consolidate the democratic regime by incorporating pious Muslim and Kurdish voters excluded by the Kemalist regime over the decades. Turkey's failure to achieve democratic consolidation was thus attributed to the extrajudicial interventions of tutelary actors that constrained democratically elected government (Ozbudun 2000: ch. 5; Cook 2007: ch. 5; Akkoyunlu, 2017; for a critical view, see Esen 2021). However, this analysis ignores the strong support given by a long line of Turkish right-wing parties for a majoritarian democracy that glorifies the popular mandate received in elections and leaves limited room for dissent against elected officials. At best, this governance style has historically paved the way for delegative democracy (O'Donnell 1994; Tas 2015) in which the incumbent erodes horizontal accountability and exercises expanded powers over different branches of government based on his popular support.[3] During times of electoral decline, however, the incumbent seeks to consolidate his party base through polarizing discourse and adopt heavy-handed measures against the opposition, including the violation of civil liberties, systematic censorship, and harassment of government critics.[4] Tutelary powers in the Turkish context arose in some cases to restrain such majoritarian impulses that paved the way for authoritarian rule. By ignoring this populist majoritarian scenario, liberal intellectuals have placed excessive trust in the AKP's ability to voluntarily limit its control over the state apparatus and introduce a liberal democratic regime.

AKP's path to national power

Having won the 2002 general elections, the AKP came to power in an unconsolidated democracy that was still reeling from the effects of the 2001 economic crisis. Against this backdrop, all centrist parties except for the CHP had failed to cross the electoral threshold (10%) for parliamentary representation, while the AKP, founded only in 2001, obtained a clear legislative majority. This electoral outcome represented a sharp break with the 1990s politics characterized by high levels of party system fragmentation and electoral volatility (Öniş and Keyman 2003) and was interpreted by many as a blow against the 'tutelary democracy' that had characterized Turkish politics for much of the post-1960 coup period. For instance, Ahmet Insel (2003: 306) asserted that the November 2002 election created an opportunity for a 'radical exit' from this undemocratic system and would 'finally make the normalization of Turkey's century-old Westernization adventure possible'. Although many AKP elites came from the ranks of the banned Welfare Party, they claimed to have moved to the centre and moderated their political agenda and discourse (Hale 2005). The party's chief ideologues classified the AKP as a conservative democratic party that supported democracy and a market economy (Akdogan 2004).

In its first term, the AKP government retained its predecessor's economic and foreign policy agenda (Cizre and Yeldan 2005) and maintained close ties with the International Monetary Fund by following its economic programme under the management of Minister of Economy Ali Babacan. In the international arena, the AKP elites were accommodating towards the US and the European Union (EU), as Turkey's main diplomatic partners (Öniş and Yilmaz 2009). Despite these moderate policies, the secular establishment worried that the AKP elites, who clashed with the government on a number of issues ranging from domestic politics to foreign policy, had a hidden Islamist agenda. Whereas the government pushed for diplomatic settlement in Cyprus as a prelude to launching accession talks with the EU and persuaded the Cypriot Turkish leadership to bring the Annan plan for a referendum (Celenk 2007), opposition actors remained ambivalent towards the EU and opposed this diplomatic settlement in Cyprus. To its credit, the CHP supported the democratization packages passed by the parliament (2003–2004), but included in its ranks many Eurosceptic politicians who criticized the EU, opposed the Annan plan, and resisted the US war effort in Iraq in 2003 (Gülmez 2008). As a result, the AKP's diplomatic agenda generated enormous goodwill and support among European governments as well as liberal intellectuals (Ersoy and Ustuner 2016), who perceived the AKP as a 'conservative globalist' (Öniş 2007) determined to deepen Turkey's ties to the financial markets and international organizations.

There was a division of labour among the secular actors who opposed the government's agenda. The main opposition CHP, for instance, sought to bring the AKP's legislative agenda to a halt in the parliament and frequently took bills to the Constitutional Court for constitutional review. Meanwhile, President Sezer was instrumental in blocking many of the AKP government's high-level bureaucratic appointments and vetoing government-sponsored bills. Lastly, acting as a veto player, the military elites pressured the government to change its policies through thinly veiled threats and warnings behind closed doors (Ciddi and Esen 2014). The AKP government counteracted its elite opponents by sponsoring legislative bills to modify Turkish laws in accordance with the EU *acquis communautaire* through harmonization packages that included the abolition of the State Security courts and the death penalty along with the removal of the ban against broadcasting in languages other than Turkish (Genckaya and Ozbudun 2009: ch. 4). Turkey also recognized the supremacy of the European Court of Human Rights over domestic courts. These changes won the government strong praise from international circles and liberals in Turkish media and civil society. Although the Greek Cypriots voted against the Annan plan, the AKP government's conciliatory stance lifted the final hurdle against Turkey, starting accession talks with the EU.[5] In supporting Turkey's membership to the EU, the AKP broke with the Islamist tradition that saw the European integration project as a Christian club (Gumuscu and Sert, 2009: 959).

By the end of the AKP's first term in 2007, Turkish society was polarized over the question of President Sezer's successor. Given Sezer's critical role in blocking the AKP's legislative agenda and bureaucratic appointments, the secular establishment wanted to replace him with a moderate AKP figure and therefore vehemently opposed the candidacy of then-prime minister Erdoğan and then-foreign minister Gül. AKP's opponents organized Republican rallies in major metropolitan cities and waged a strong media campaign against Gül's candidacy (Borovali and Boyraz, 2015: 438). Meanwhile, Chief of the General Staff Yaşar Büyükanıt penned an electronic memorandum to oppose Gül's candidacy without explicitly stating his name. Although the AKP elites stood firm behind their candidate Abdullah Gül and elected him as president, the CHP caucus boycotted the presidential vote in parliament so that the meeting fell short of a two-thirds quorum. The secular establishment's concerted campaign against Gül also found support from the judiciary when the Constitutional Court overturned Gül's election

as president due to that lack of a two-thirds majority.[6] In response to these obstructions, the AKP called for early elections and got re-elected with 46.58 per cent of the vote (Carkoglu 2007). The party's re-election became a major step in its consolidation of power over the next decade. Although the CHP retained its vote share and the MHP re-entered the parliament after the general elections, the AKP won a parliamentary majority to form its second single-party government.

Democratic backsliding under the AKP rule

Based on its parliamentary majority, the AKP quickly elected Gül as president, won a constitutional referendum to make the presidency popularly elected, and lifted the ban on the headscarf in 2007, which paved the way to a closure case against the AKP on the pretext that the party had become the centre of anti-secular activities (Genckaya and Ozbudun 2009: ch. 6). An emboldened AKP government went on the offensive against its opponents after the Constitution Court decided not to ban the party, thereby breaking with the tradition of political bans against Islamist parties (on party bans, see Kogacioglu 2004). Amidst favourable macro-economic conditions, the ruling party achieved huge success by expanding its vote share to 49.83 per cent in the 2011 general elections (Ciddi and Esen 2014). Thanks to this electoral mandate, the ruling party reduced the military's role in the decision-making processes and resisted its extralegal interventions to politics, albeit with some support from the military leadership (Aydinli 2009). In particular, the number of military members on the National Security Council was reduced and its decisions were downgraded to the level of recommendations as opposed to directives to be followed by the government (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016: 1584).

Against this backdrop, the AKP government, together with its then-ally the Fethullah Gülen movement, engaged in what Corrales (2015) calls 'autocratic legalism' to eliminate their secular opponents. Trials by special courts served as the primary tool to discredit and eventually arrest government critics with the backing of civil society and the media (Esen and Gumuscu 2016; Gumuscu, 2016). Retired and on-duty officers of the Turkish military, along with journalists, academics, and civil society leaders, were accused of conspiring to overthrow the AKP government in Ergenekon and Balyoz trials. Many prominent figures from the Kurdish political movement were similarly tried, due to being accused of having links to the KCK (the PKK's urban network). For some, trials against officers would contribute to democratization in the country (Gursoy 2012). However, the legal system was abused in all of these cases: fabricated evidence against the accused was distributed to the media to gain public support; the fundamental rights of the defendants were frequently violated; many remained in pre-trial detention and were kept in prison despite the minimal risk of their ability to destroy evidence if freed; and secret witnesses and anonymous accusation letters were used.[7] These cases served their original purpose of demoralizing the opposition and purging government critics, who were subsequently replaced by pro-government figures.

Starting from its second term, the AKP elites undermined rule of law and imposed strong control over institutions of checks and balances (Esen and Gumuscu 2016). Portraying courts to be tutelary and out of touch with voters, the government pushed through the parliament a set of constitutional amendments that sought to enlarge the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors (Hakim ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu, HSYK) and the Constitutional Court with the deliberate purpose of 'court packing'. Ironically, at the time, many liberal intellectuals gave their support to this move in the name of providing the judiciary a pluralistic and representative structure (Ozbudun, 2015: 45). Although these amendments failed to receive the necessary three-fifths majority in parliament, Turkish voters ratified the changes in the 2010 referendum

after a heated campaign that saw many liberals join ranks with prominent AKP elites and Gülenists (Kalaycioglu 2012). After the referendum, the AKP government proceeded to change the composition of the Constitutional Court, the High Council of Judges and Prosecutors, and the Supreme Election Council (YSK) without seeking compromise with any of the political parties.

During this period, Gülenists provided much-needed educated manpower for the government to help AKP elites replace their critics in the upper ranks of the military, judiciary, and civilian bureaucracy. Through their contacts in the bureaucracy and the media, Gülenists also allegedly organized a smear campaign to discredit many of the AKP's critics. The AKP's second and third terms were notorious for illegal phone tapping, sex tapes released to the public, and negative media campaigns against politicians and intellectuals who were opponents of the AKP and the Gülen movement. In turn, the AKP government 'ceded the control of the ministries of education, internal affairs and judiciary to the Gülen movement', which also expanded its influence within the media and civil society (Gumuscu, 2016: 8). In addition to its campaign against the secular military and the judiciary, the government also took control of fiscal management by consolidating its authority over regulatory institutions, such as the Public Procurement Authority, the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency, and the Energy Market Regulatory Authority, which were established after the 2001 crisis to limit executive discretion on the Turkish economy and populist spending (Esen and Gumuscu 2018a). The ruling party also politicized state institutions as part of its partisan agenda to favour its supporters and hurt opponents. State institutions that provided the AKP with direct access to material benefits to voters were exempted from judicial and parliamentary control to give the ruling party more leeway in its patronage politics.[8]

The illusion of the AKP's democratization agenda finally began to wear off in its third term in office. Having received nearly half of the electorate's support in the 2011 general elections, the government shifted to a very conservative political and cultural agenda and hardened its attitude towards the opposition (Yardimci-Geyikci 2014; Ozbudun 2014). By that time, the EU accession process had already slowed down and the enlargement fatigue and rising xenophobia in member states created a rift between Turkey and the EU. As Erdoğan enacted an agenda of creating a pious nation, the government began attacking secular lifestyles, challenging liberal groups, and offending the Kemalist electorate by ridiculing or denigrating Republican symbols. Confronted with resistance from opposition groups, the AKP government engaged in what Arslanalp and Erkmen call 'mobile emergency rule' (2020a and 2020b) that enabled state authorities to ban or restrict both the scale and the location of protests without the need for the government to declare a state of emergency each time. As a result, the government could suppress dissent and curtail space available to the opposition under an air of ambiguity without harming the regime's hybrid characteristics. While its restrictive actions had hitherto concentrated on the radical left, Kurds, and organized labour, the government now began to take on wider segments of the society. Six out of 14 protest bans enacted in 2012 targeted Kemalist groups that were prevented from celebrating October 29 Republican Day with a public march (Arslanalp and Erkmen, 2020a: 959).

The popular protests against the government that broke out in May 2013 to prevent the destruction of Gezi Park became a watershed moment for Erdoğan's leadership (Ozen 2015; Yardimci-Geyikci 2014). In response to the government's refusal to negotiate, the protests quickly escalated into a mass movement against the AKP rule itself and spread across the country. Faced with widespread protests, the government engaged in a massive crackdown with the excessive use of teargas and rubber bullets that killed 11 and injured thousands of protesters. Many protesters were charged with anti-terror activity, unauthorized demonstration, and damaging

public property in what turned into a massive witch hunt (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016: 1594). The government also accused members of the civil society initiative Representatives of Taksim Solidarity, which had catapulted the Gezi protests and raised awareness in public opinion, with the charge of 'founding a criminal organization'. In the aftermath of the Gezi protests, the government's low tolerance for dissent turned into a widespread policy of protest bans that systematically targeted opposition groups, including LGBT activists, leftist football fans, environmentalists, and feminists, among others (Arslanalp and Erkmen, 2020a: 959).[9]

Following the political fallout between Erdoğan and the Gülen movement after the 2013 corruption probe, the government purged hundreds of police officers, judges, and prosecutors, and seized control of the judiciary (Ozbudun, 2015), but the movement remained intact until the failed 2016 coup attempt that was reportedly organized by Gülen sympathizers in the armed forces (Esen and Gumuscu, 2017a). In order to maintain power, Erdoğan tightened his grip on the state apparatus, placed partisan control over the judiciary, and mobilized AKP voters to consolidate his electoral base. He frequently portrayed the Gezi protesters as bandits (*çapulcu*) and terrorists sponsored by foreign interests, who attacked his government to undermine Turkey's stability and welfare. Supported by the national media, this discourse consolidated the AKP base behind Erdoğan's hardened agenda and served as a signalling device for the party cadres and bureaucratic authorities to criminalize the opposition (Arslanalp and Erkmen, 2020a: 957). In March 2015, for instance, the parliament passed the 'Internal Security Package' to give elevated powers to the police, extend legal detention periods, and make police detainments and surveillance easier (Esen and Gumuscu 2016). The AKP also spent considerable effort to create a pro-government media and control the mainstream media through intimidation, lawsuits, censorship, blackouts, and payoffs that gave the ruling party favourable coverage during this period (Yesil 2016; Uzunoglu 2020).

After the Gezi protests, Erdoğan pushed the country on to a series of elections to gain popular support for these highly controversial and increasingly authoritarian moves. Indeed, Turkish voters went to the polls eight times in the 2014–2019 period (three parliamentary, two presidential, and two local elections as well as a constitutional referendum) during which the playing field was increasingly tilted in favour of the incumbent and Erdoğan emerged as an uncontested leader within his own movement (Lancaster 2014). In the lead-up to the 2014 local elections, illegally tapped phone conversations among Erdoğan's close circle were shared on YouTube and Twitter to cause voter outrage against Erdoğan. The government responded by blocking access to both sites and campaigned heavily across the country. In the end, the ruling party gained 43.39 per cent of the vote and maintained its control over major metropolitan municipalities, including İstanbul and Ankara (Carkoglu 2014). Erdoğan further enhanced his power by winning the country's first presidential elections in July 2014 to replace Abdullah Gül. His main rival was Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the joint candidate supported both by the CHP and the MHP. The campaign's biggest surprise was Selahattin Demirtaş, the People's Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) presidential candidate, who managed to appeal to leftist Turkish voters as well his party's Kurdish base with his sharp wit, calm demeanour, and anti-Erdoğan discourse.[10] While İhsanoğlu ran a lacklustre campaign, Demirtaş achieved huge success by garnering 9.8 per cent of the national vote (Kalaycioglu 2015).

As president, Erdoğan lacked strong executive powers at the time, since the prime minister is vested with constitutional authority to head the national government. Therefore, instead of the outgoing president Gül, Erdoğan threw his support behind Ahmet Davutoğlu, who was easily chosen as leader of the party and formed the next government. Davutoğlu, a former professor of international relations, was no match for Erdoğan's charisma. Despite having limited constitutional authority, Erdoğan relied on his popularity within the ruling party to intervene

regularly in government affairs and prevented Davutoğlu from taking independent action. In order to legitimize his actions as a partisan president, Erdoğan and his entourage consistently called for the introduction of a presidential system. With Erdoğan appointing his sycophants to upper echelons of the state and party apparatus, the demarcation line between the public bureaucracy and the AKP organization became blurred.

Rising competitive authoritarianism

The AKP's electoral fortunes changed dramatically after Erdoğan stepped down from the party leadership. While Erdoğan remained an extremely popular politician, the AKP led by Davutoğlu won a plurality of the votes in the June 2015 election but lost its parliamentary majority for the first time since its initial victory in the 2002 general elections (Kemahlıoğlu 2015). This electoral outcome was largely caused by the HDP's success in becoming the first pro-Kurdish party to cross the 10 per cent electoral threshold despite systematic attacks against its party workers and campaign rallies (Grigoriadis 2016). However, the election did not produce the expected 'liberalizing electoral outcome' (Howard and Roessler, 2006) due to the failure of the opposition parties to form a new government. President Erdoğan subsequently took advantage of major rifts both within his party and the opposition to block any coalition deal between the AKP and CHP as well as other parties, and refrained from giving Kılıçdaroğlu a mandate to lead coalition talks in Davutoğlu's stead (Esen and Gumuscu, 2016: 1595). Instead, he let the constitutionally mandated 45-day mark expire so as to call for early elections in November under an interim government led by the AKP.

It was in between the two elections that the last traces of democracy collapsed in Turkey.[11] Thanks to its uneven access to public resources and the national media, the AKP organization effectively spread the propaganda that Erdoğan was attacked by a coalition of outside powers and their domestic allies, and that the ruling party's electoral defeat would only render chaos in the country, as evidenced by the instability following the June elections. The November election campaign also coincided with the intensification of clashes between the security forces and the PKK that adopted the strategy of ditch-digging in urban areas in predominantly Kurdish southeastern provinces to create an autonomous zone free from the Turkish state's control (Ercan, 2019). The AKP government responded with the use of heavy force against Kurdish units that demolished large parts of residential areas in Sur (Diyarbakır), Silopi (Şırnak), Cizre (Şırnak), and Nusaybin (Mardin). The HDP's denunciation was not seen as genuine by many voters who sided with the government's violent campaign in the region. This ambivalent stance hurt the pro-Kurdish party in the 2015 November elections, while the AKP gained some support from nationalist voters and Kurdish voters amidst the escalation of violence and intimidation against the HDP cadres. The state authorities subsequently arrested hundreds of HDP politicians and seriously weakened the party's organizational capacity, while also taking advantage of the military operations in the region to restrict voting areas. The campaign was tainted by terror attacks, violence, voter intimidation, and intensified polarization that destroyed the last vestiges of the democratic regime in Turkey.[12]

Under these extraordinary circumstances, the AKP won the November 2015 snap elections with 49.5 per cent of the vote share, though the HDP nonetheless managed to cross the electoral threshold for the second time in its history (Öniş, 2016). Due to Turkey's slide into competitive authoritarianism, the uneven playing field was further tilted against the opposition parties and each election became less free and fair than the previous one (Sayari 2016; Esen and Gumuscu 2016 and 2019). State institutions were completely politicized under Erdoğan's control, while the AKP enjoys uneven access to both public and private resources

against an opposition that is already faced with strong government pressure. Similarly, the media and civil society have come under government control to a large extent (Yabanci 2019; Uzunoglu 2020). President Erdoğan also enhanced his authority by replacing Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, who has undertaken some independent moves, with the more loyal Binali Yıldırım.

So the democratic regime had already collapsed by July 2016 when a junta within the Turkish military staged a coup d'état that was put down by the government, resulting in civilian deaths (Esen and Gumuscu 2017a). Instead of reversing the autocratization process, the failed putsch gave Erdoğan the pretext to securitize the opposition and monopolize power through an extension of his presidential prerogatives and frequent use of executive decrees under the state of emergency. The government subsequently purged tens of thousands of civil servants and academics; closed down hundreds of schools, media companies and civil societal associations; amended laws and issued directives; and appointed trustees to hundreds of companies reportedly linked with the Gülen movement. In one decisive blow, Erdoğan rooted out Gülenists from the public bureaucracy and reduced their influence in civil society and the private sector. Space available for dissent was also curtailed for Erdoğan's other critics, particularly for members of the Kurdish political movement (Jongerden 2019). In September 2016, the government replaced several Kurdish mayors in south-eastern provinces with state-appointed administrators and removed the legal immunity for members of parliament to arrest HDP elites, including the party's co-chairs, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ, on charges of support for terrorist activities (Gurses 2020: 7).Through the heavy use of libel law, direct criticism of Erdoğan was increasingly criminalized and used generously against opposition voters on social media and occasionally in the public space, which contributed to the rise of a culture of fear and widespread self-censorship.

In this heightened political environment, Erdoğan gained the MHP leader Bahçeli's support to instate an executive presidency that would limit horizontal accountability and have vast powers over the other branches of government. These proposed amendments were designed to institutionalize Erdoğan's de facto control over the political system, creating a super-presidential system with only limited parliamentary control or oversight.[13] Thanks to the MHP's support, the constitutional package was accepted by the parliament and later ratified in the 2017 referendum marred by major electoral irregularities and campaign restrictions (Esen and Gumuscu 2017b). Although 51.41 per cent of voters accepted the amendments, the opposition camp ran an effective campaign despite the state of emergency that was still in place, and effectively cooperated with each other in an attempt to counteract Erdoğan's monopolization of power. In particular, the campaign had emboldened Bahçeli's critics in the party, who later formed the Good Party (İYİ Party) – to appeal to the centre-right and the nationalist voters. Growing ties between the CHP and IYI Party in subsequent months laid the groundwork for an opposition alliance that would challenge the ruling AKP and its ally the MHP.

The opposition faced an uphill battle in the twin 2018 elections due to the ruling alliance's unfair access to public and private resources as well as the national media (Sozen 2019). Erdoğan strategically turned the presidential race into a contest with the CHP presidential candidate Muharrem İnce to consolidate his nationalist–conservative base, while side-lining his other rivals like Meral Akşener, Selahattin Demirtaş, and Temel Karamollaoğlu, who had reasonable chances of pushing the election to a second round by drawing AKP voters away from Erdoğan (Esen and Yardimci-Geyikci 2020). Due to his incarceration on political charges, Demirtaş could not even physically campaign as a candidate. The government also enacted various extra-judicial methods such as voter intimidation and candidate harassment to secure a parliamentary majority by pushing the HDP below the 10 per cent electoral threshold, albeit with no success.

Despite these measures, the AKP's vote share declined in the legislative elections and the party failed to secure a parliamentary majority, with only 295 out of 600 MPs. Meanwhile, Erdoğan surprised most pundits by winning the presidency in the first round with 52.6 per cent of the vote and thus solidified his hold over the political system.

After his election as president, Erdoğan felt comfortable enough to not extend the state of emergency beyond July 2018 since the recently designed presidential system went into effect. The new regime legitimized Erdoğan's neopatrimonial rule (Cengiz 2020), making him the country's most powerful leader since the transition to multiparty rule in 1950. Relying on this popular mandate, Erdoğan quickly redesigned cabinet ministries, appointed loyal and mostly technocratic ministers, rewarded his sycophants with lucrative advisory positions, and formed political councils to oversee state affairs directly (Esen and Yardimci-Geyikçi 2020). In the subsequent months, the entire state apparatus was reformulated to give the office of the presidency full control over bureaucratic agencies, a process that culminated in the abolition of the Prime Ministry. All agencies tied to the Prime Ministry, as well as the newly created the Finance, Technology, Investment and Human Resources Offices, were placed under the control of the presidency to enable Erdoğan oversee the entire state machine. Since Erdoğan's party lacked a majority in the parliament, the legislative body has largely been sidelined in the new political system. The opposition MPs are given very little room for dissent in the parliament, while pieces of legislation pass with minimal debate thanks to the tacit alliance between AKP and MHP legislators. Erdoğan prefers to govern through presidential decrees and government fiat that allows him more discretion.

Ironically, Erdoğan's monopolization of power at the presidential level weakened the AKP's organizational capacity at the local level. This is partly caused by the shift to the Turkish-style presidential system that embodies a high level of personalism and weakens the importance of political parties. In the past, the AKP's strong local party machine used to reach out to and mobilize millions of voters for campaign rallies and elections; gather substantial information at the local level; and keep centrifugal forces at bay (Baykan 2018; Kumbaracibasi 2009; Dogan 2016). The party's dense network of operatives and volunteers have served as the conduit to disseminate the party's message to mass voters and provide social assistance across the country.[14] While the AKP did not entertain intraparty democracy under Erdoğan's leadership, the intense focus on winning elections kept party cadres disciplined and success-driven. The party cadres were in turn rewarded with the perks of being in power. However, after his rise to the presidency, Erdoğan had surrounded himself with a small circle of family members and close advisers who, despite their political inexperience and lack of popular support, gained enormous power over the state apparatus and party organization. As Erdoğan sought total loyalty from his followers, this small circle purged competent bureaucrats and party cadres to appoint sycophants in their stead. Loyalty to the party cause lost much of its initial appeal for many AKP stalwarts since the path to power lay through Erdoğan and his small circle. This created major fissures within the AKP organization, which increasingly came under the control of officials who professed a strong commitment to Erdoğan but lacked the political experience and skills to reach out to voters. In the end, the AKP turned into what Baykan (2018) describes as a 'personalistic mass party'.

Aside from the AKP organization's decline, the government faced two major challenges that reduced its ability to achieve electoral dominance over the opposition in this period. First, the economic downturn limited the government's capacity to deliver material benefits to its constituencies. Turkey's strong economic growth in the 2000s initially helped the AKP reach out to a large portion of the electorate and consolidate this voter base. The effective distribution of resources and provision of public goods in this period were indeed some of the key factors behind

the ruling party's electoral success (Gumuscu 2013; Yoruk 2012). As Erdoğan consolidated his neopatrimonial rule, however, the government began to cater largely to a small group of political and economic elites, alienating many low-income voters hard hit by the recent economic crisis. Second, these economic problems were compounded by the sharp increase in the number of Syrian migrants, many of whom lived in poor neighbourhoods of major metropolitan municipalities and put pressure on cash-strapped social assistance programmes and public services.[15]

As a result of these factors, the AKP received its most serious electoral defeat to date in the 2019 local elections. Despite gaining the plurality of votes, the ruling party lost five out of the six most populous metropolitan municipalities to the CHP candidates and saw the provincial municipalities it controls decline from 48 to 39 (Esen and Gumuscu 2019). Given the enormous importance of Istanbul for the party's operations, the AKP leadership worked tirelessly to repeat the municipality race in the city, which they eventually succeeded in doing with the YSK's decision.[16] However, the AKP candidate Binali Yıldırım's loss against İmamoğlu in this second campaign became an even bigger shock to the party and demoralized the ruling party's cadres. Thanks to its electoral alliance with the İYİ Party and tactical support from the HDP in several metropolitan races, the CHP emerged as the big winner in this election (up to 21 provinces from 14). Those Kurdish voters alienated by the government's ultra-nationalist course threw their support behind the CHP candidates, while the İYİ Party drew votes away from the ruling alliance. In major metropolitan areas, the CHP mayoral candidates ran a very coordinated campaign with other opposition parties, focused on local issues, and adopted a positive discourse that also appealed even to pro-government voters (Wutrich and Ingleby 2020). Its choice of moderate candidates, many of whom had mayoral experience, allowed the CHP to expand its electoral base. The opposition party also established a strong ground operation that mobilized voters and kept track of vote counting.

The 2019 local elections demonstrated that the competitive authoritarian regime is still intact (Esen and Gumuscu 2019) and that the country has not yet drifted into full authoritarianism (Caliskan 2018) or neo-fascism (Tugal 2016). The pro-government candidates lost in many mayoral races despite the ruling party's uneven access to public and private resources, partisan use of the state bureaucracy, and heavy media control. The opposition candidates could still contest the elections and appeal to voters once they lined up popular candidates and a positive agenda (Esen and Gumuscu 2019). Nonetheless, the opposition still had to meet higher standards since the politicized state institutions worked against their favour. The ruling party did not attempt to rig the elections but tried to intervene to change the results in some areas. For instance, six elected HDP mayoral candidates were prevented from taking office by the YSK due to having been initially purged from the civil service by an executive decree and replaced by runner-up AKP candidates. The government's decision to purge elected HDP mayors since March 2019 without any clear evidence is also testing the boundaries of the regime's competitiveness and the incumbent's tolerance for any direct challenge to Erdoğan's leadership.

The AKP's electoral upset left a huge vacuum in the political arena that may be filled by these opposition mayors who now have the chance to undermine the AKP's clientelist networks at the local level. As already noted by several scholars, municipality control increases the vote share of parties by providing them with patronage resources (Sayari 2014) such as contracts handed out to private companies and jobs to supporters (Kemahlıoğlu and Bayer 2020; Yildirim 2020). In the AKP's case, its control over metropolitan municipalities enhanced the party's uneven access to public and private resources since local governments are a major source of contracts. Its control over major metropolitan governments catapulted the Islamist movement into national power in the early 2000s (Gulalp 2001; White 2011). The opposition mayors currently have a similar opportunity. Should they successfully provide municipality

services and social assistance to mass voters in their cities, they can boost their political careers and expand the opposition's vote share. In turn, this can really compensate for the government's uneven access to monetary resources and raise the level of interparty competition in Turkey.

Conclusion

After nearly two decades of AKP rule, Turkish democracy broke down (Esen and Gumuscu 2020). Despite its long history of multiparty democracy and free elections, the country is governed by the neopatrimonial leadership of President Erdoğan under a competitive authoritarian regime. The ruling party used its electoral victories during this period to redesign the political system with the purpose of tilting the playing field against the opposition parties. The government systematically eroded the rule of law, captured the state apparatus, financed pro-AKP business networks and civil societal groups, and targeted its critics to weaken the opposition (Bugra and Savaskan 2014; Esen and Gumuscu 2018b, 2020). This autocratization process enabled Erdoğan to monopolize power in his own hands. Having eventually pushed his party aside, Erdoğan increasingly relies on a small circle of family members and trusted advisers who operate the state machine on his behalf. Most bureaucratic appointees are chosen due to their loyalty to Erdoğan and his super-presidential regime inaugurated after the 2018 elections. This is a sharp reversal from the trajectory that many thought Turkey would follow after the tutelary powers were weakened in the 2000s by the AKP government. The Turkish case demonstrates that placing sole trust in the electoral process as a driver of democratization may be misguided. There is need for some soul-searching among the AKP's early supporters on their culpability (Kubicek 2020), as they supported for years the ruling party's attacks on the judiciary and state bureaucracy in the name of democratization.

Although Erdoğan remains popular, the 2019 local election results demonstrated that his party is haemorrhaging votes in major metropolitan areas. Erdoğan's strategy of consolidating the nationalist–conservative vote through a polarizing discourse seems to have reached its limits. Indeed, the alliance with the MHP did not halt the AKP's electoral decline. For instance, the AKP–MHP coalition received fewer votes in the 2019 local elections than the combination of each party's individual vote in the 2014 local election. As a result, both parties lost their key strongholds in this election to the main opposition party. The governing coalition has also experienced major difficulty to win the popular majority in its last electoral campaigns. This puts the presidential system under severe risk, as the new regime hinges on the popularity of the governing coalition. Erdoğan's popularity remains above that of his party but the neopatrimonial nature of the regime has left the president with full responsibility over all problems facing Turkey. These electoral upsets compelled President Erdoğan to remain in permanent campaign mode against the rising opposition, but his government's failure to address the massive economic dislocation triggered by the global pandemic may further reduce his base. Opposition mayors in metropolitan areas have already begun to fill this vacuum by delivering economic assistance to low-income families hard hit by the economic crisis. Should these mayors continue this performance, one of them may emerge as a credible alternative to Erdoğan in the next presidential election cycle. Such a victory may break Turkey's pendulum swings between populist majoritarianism and tutelary intervention in favour of democratic victory against a populist autocrat.

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Notes

1 For more on the competitive authoritarian regime, see Levitsky and Way 2010. On Turkey's competitive authoritarian regime, see Esen and Gumuscu (2016).
2 Liberal intellectuals are a group of prominent secular journalists, academics and activists who gave strong support to the AKP government during its first three terms to weaken the military and the judiciary's influence in Turkish politics. For more on this, see Ersoy and Ustuner (2016).
3 Horizontal accountability refers to the existence of state institutions that are legally empowered to check and restrain the actions and policies of the incumbent, including parliamentary oversight, legal action and impeachment, among others. For more on this concept, see O'Donnell (1998).
4 Confronted with rising electoral discontent, for instance, Prime Ministers Demirel and Özal changed the electoral system before the 1969 and 1987 general elections, respectively, and criticized the judiciary and tried to colonize the state bureaucracy to remain in office. After its electoral decline in the 1957 general elections, the Menderes government targeted his critics in the media and universities and systematically harassed the main opposition CHP politicians to create an uneven playing field.
5 Hintz (2018) suggests that the AKP government used the EU support for the aforementioned reforms to undermine its domestic opponents without the intention of pushing for further democratization.
6 For a critical take on the Constitutional Court's role, see Genckaya and Ozbudun (2009: ch. 6) and Köker (2010).
7 Since the Turkish military had a history of staging coups, many in academia, civil society and the media believed the accuracy of rumours of aborted coup plans during the AKP's first term and in turn supported the Ergenekon and Balyoz cases, even though legal irregularities were repeatedly mentioned by some writers.
8 For instance, the Mass Housing Development Administration (Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı, TOKI), which was responsible for the construction of social housing to low-income citizens, served as the centre of jobs and contracts for AKP supporters (Marshall et al. 2016).
9 The only exception during this period was the relative calm witnessed in Kurdish areas that did not have significant Gezi protests, possibly due to the ongoing Kurdish resolution process. Protest bans were nonexistent in the region in 2012 and 2013, and Kurds were allowed to organize Newroz celebrations in 2013 and 2014, while the state authorities were engaged in negotiations with Öcalan in prison (Arslanalp and Erkmen, 2020a: 959).
10 For more on Selahattin Demirtaş, see Celep (2018: 737–738).
11 For a detailed discussion of the rising competitive authoritarian regime in Turkey in the aftermath of the June 2015 parliamentary elections, see Esen and Gumuscu (2016).
12 For more on the escalating levels of polarization in Turkey, see Aydin-Duzgit and Balta (2019).
13 For a more detailed discussion of constitutional amendments related to the presidential system, see Özsoy Boyunsuz (2016); Esen and Gumuscu (2018b).
14 Erdoğan himself rose through the ranks of the party organization of the National Salvation Party and the Welfare Party, eventually becoming the RP's Istanbul provincial leader in his early 30s.
15 Although Fisunoglu and Sert (2018: 308) did not find evidence to suggest a reduction in the AKP vote due to the negative effect of refugees in the 2015 general elections, they suggest that this impact may be higher in local elections.
16 The loss in Istanbul was arguably the most symbolic and devastating for several reasons. First, Erdoğan is a former mayor of Istanbul (1994–1998) and sees the metropolitan municipality as his springboard to national power. As one of Istanbul's largest employees, the metropolitan municipality functions like a major conglomerate with 28 companies and 24 billion Turkish lira in annual revenues that have in previous years provided the ruling party with enormous rent through construction permits, land deals and public contracts (Esen and Gumuscu, 2019: 335).

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14
POLITICS OF TRUTH AND POST-TRUTH

Hakkı Taş

Introduction

According to a 2018 survey of 37 countries, Turkey topped the list of news consumers complaining about fake stories, while fewer than one-third of respondents expressed trust in the media (Yanatma 2018). Decrying the decaying role of fact-based truth in shaping politics and society, Turkish journalist Ece Temelkuran writes, 'Truth is a lost game in my country' (2016). Temelkuran's cri de cœur reinforces an alarming global phenomenon, which sees public opinion as increasingly molded by both a disregard for facts and a rejection of expertise. To explain the contemporary dynamics, several terms have been put into circulation, such as 'alternative facts', 'fake news', 'post-truth', 'post-factual', and 'post-reality'. These terms index a new political culture in which debates are disconnected from empirical facts (Ettema 1987; Gibson 2018; Tesich 1992).

Several observers consider contemporary Turkey to be an emblematic case of post-truth politics (Akyol 2019; Cook 2018; Temelkuran 2016). Yet, in these discussions (and beyond), the post-truth is used as either an ambivalent catch-all term or an accusatory label against incumbent populists. In the polemical use of the concept of 'post-truth', anti-populists speak from a point of epistemic superiority when combating 'their "irrational" opponents and the "ignorant" masses that support them' (Galanopoulos and Stavrakakis 2019, 11). The concept is then emptied of its explanatory potential, leaving the power dynamics behind post-truth politics unexplored. This chapter moves beyond quotidian and polemical uses of post-truth to initiate a theoretically informed debate that will guide an empirical analysis of the Turkish case. Compared to the 'regime of truth', in which '"truth" is centered in the form of scientific discourse and the institutions which produce it' (Foucault 1980, 131), this chapter considers post-truth politics as a regime of common sense that directly attacks and discredits authorities of truth and saturates the public sphere with half-truths, fake news, and conspiracy theories. Such a regime aims to induce a general cynicism about reliable truth and construct commonsense knowledge that is immune to factual rebuttal. This chapter first elaborates the concept of post-truth, then traces the historical course of the politics of truth in modern Turkey. Upon these theoretical and historical backgrounds, it identifies the continuities and novel post-truth strategies pursued by the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi; AKP).

Truly a new era?

Post-truth is not about the denial of the big truth as it is in the postmodern critique, but denotes the irrelevance of facts in shaping public opinion and, instead, 'a reliance on assertions that "feel true" but have no basis in fact' (*The Economist* 2016). Most notably, the 2016 Leave campaign's victory in Britain's withdrawal from the European Union (EU) and Donald Trump's successful run for the United States (US) presidency the same year, both accelerated by the dissemination of fabricated stories and conspiracy theories, gave strength to the claim that we have entered 'the post-truth era' (Keyes 2004). Several other scholars, however, criticized the presentist bias in such a bold claim, arguing that truth has always been twisted by politicians (Blackburn 2018; Malik 2017).

In a misleading way, current debates reduce post-truth politics to the prominence of fake news, conspiracy theories, and outright lies on the political landscape. However, those elements, both in Turkey and beyond, are not unprecedented. For instance, Turks invented the term *asparagas*, to refer to deliberately fabricated news – a concept that emerged in the 1960s and spread after subsequent waves of sensationalism and tabloidization in the national press (Arabacı 2017). The most cited example of post-truth politics in Turkey is the AKP government's series of fake news released during the 2013 anti-government Gezi protests in Istanbul. Through these fake news stories, the AKP portrayed Gezi protesters raiding Bezmi Alem Valide Sultan Mosque to drink beer inside or harassing a veiled woman in a central location by Kabataş Pier (Dinçer 2017). Such fabricated stories were part of governmental efforts to reduce the protests to a secular–religious divide. Nevertheless, such political maneuvering only reminds of the September 6–7, 1955 pogrom against the Greek minority in Istanbul, which was sparked by the spread of fake news in print media about the bombing of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's birthplace in Thessaloniki, Greece. Similar to the resurgence of fake news in the 2010s, the recent deluge of conspiracy theories framing the 15 July 2016 abortive coup as a Western ploy to weaken and divide the country is not without precedent, either (Taş 2018). A century earlier, supporters of Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamit II considered the 1908 Revolution as part of a Jewish conspiracy backed by Western colonial powers to weaken the empire and promote betrayal (Baer 2013). Drawing on the same siege mentality, conspiracy theories remained part and parcel of political culture in Kemalist Turkey.

Is post-truth then only a matter of the intensification of fake news and conspiracy theories, or is there something truly disruptive in it? When considering the temporality implied by the use of the 'post' prefix, it is obvious that it does not 'suggest the eclipse of a better time for truth' (Waisbord 2018, 20). The prefix also does not imply that the past is left behind, but accounts for 'a present whose past continues to capture and structure it' (Brown 2010, 21). Post-truth reflects some continuity with, rather than a break from, the past while also illuminating an emerging phenomenon of contemporary events (Gibson 2018).

This chapter differentiates post-truth as a condition of the contemporary era of globalization and style of politics. The post-truth condition is the backdrop against which politics has been conducted and reveals the implications of contemporary 'reflexive modernity' (Beck et al. 2003; Giddens 1991). In early modern societies, individualization was still limited by collective life patterns of premodern structures such as the nuclear family or sexual division of labor; however, globalization in late-modern societies has weakened past forms of sociality and solidarity. The new social landscape undermines certainties and does not provide grand narratives and stable anchor points. It requires the individual to commit to 'a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change' in a world of contingencies, insecurities, and uncertainties (Giddens 1991, 33). Life becomes increasingly experimental, and this reflexive process

involves individualization based on the demonopolization of expertise, open decision-making, and interaction between the public and norms of self-legislation. The deep belief in rationality and progress loses momentum with the rising recognition of extra-scientific justifications and dissolution of fundamental distinctions (Beck et al. 2003). Trust in expertise exists but is partial and ambivalent in nature, which Giddens describes as a 'bargain with modernity […] governed by specific admixtures of deference and skepticism, comfort and fear' (1990, 90).

The digital media environment has accentuated, but did not create, the late modern reflexive individualization and the concomitant loss of faith in the institutions of truth (Gibson 2018). Therefore, the invention of the concepts to describe the new landscape predates the Internet age. While the term 'post-factual' was used as early as 1987 by academic James Ettema, post-truth as a concept first appeared in a 1992 article by American playwright Steve Tesich (Ettema 1987; Tesich 1992). The rise of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the diversity of news sources, however, have obviously broadened the reach and scale of the dissemination of all sorts of information, thereby multiplying and amplifying opinions and truths for public consumption while challenging the authority of traditional institutions to fix the truth. ICTs have provided a ripe environment in which the line between fact and fiction has become increasingly blurred, paving the way not to a lack of truth, but to a lack of concern for the truth.

Theories of reflexive modernization, in some ways, carry the neoliberal claim that the nation-state has a more diminished role now in everyday life with the increasing individualization and global political and economic changes (Ray 2007, 82–83). Nevertheless, governments have developed new strategies that respond to and exploit the anxiety created by rapid social changes, the loss of foundation, and the proliferating skepticism in late modern societies. Historically, the modern state perpetuated its truth claims 'under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses (university, army, writing, media)' to establish its 'regime of truth' (Foucault 1980, 131–132). Yet, currently, the politics of truth is subtler and craftier, as no single institution can control the flow of information (Tufekci 2017; Wedeen 2019).

The post-truth condition is an opportunity structure exploited by political leaders blatantly breaching the traditional epistemic norms in pursuit of political agendas. Their old-school tactics such as legal constraints, censorship, and intimidation may continue. In the multiplication and fragmentation of news sources, however, the goal is no more centered around imposing a particular truth or suppressing unwanted facts; rather, the post-truth politics is about inundating the media with information to drown out oppositional voices, create a cacophony overwhelming the audience, and sow doubt. Post-truth politics begins by delegitimizing traditional institutions of truth, then forges a smoke screen at which it is more difficult than ever to sort fact from fiction and truth from lies. Finally, post-truth politics invents a commonsense knowledge immune to facts. Unlike the centrality of the scientific authority in the modern regime of truth, post-truth politics undermines it, and instead praises the folk wisdom and aims to mold it. In such an environment, the rise of fact-checking sites in the 2010s turns out to be a losing game as people rather tend to isolate themselves into echo chambers, fashioning a comfort zone in an atmosphere of uncertainty and further fortifying political polarization.

The historical trajectory

In its early years under one-party rule (1923–1950), the young republic undertook an ambitious project of establishing a centralized regime of truth by launching new state institutions, such as the Turkish Historical Society and the Turkish Language Institute, among others, and

refashioning the mediums of education and culture (school textbooks, radio programs, theater plays and so on), all of which would promote the foundational values and truth claims of Kemalist nation-building. The founding elite viewed the press and radio as mediums of their civilizing mission to educate the masses about the Republican lifestyle and mold the new national identity (Ahiska 2010). While the 1931 Press Law left some room for loyal opposition, censorship, repression, and suspension of publications were commonplace during the one-party era (Kejanlıoğlu 2001). Overall, however, narrow circulation and low literacy rates coupled with insufficient state resources and infrastructure to initiate this hegemonic project limited the success and reach of Kemalist truth-making.

In the Cold War period, the centralized regime, actively generating and amplifying its truth claims and suppressing undesired ones, had to tackle the new conditions demanded by the transition to a multiparty system in 1950. Despite occasional improvements in press freedoms, new legal clauses enabled the government to pursue authoritarian policies and increase control over the media and culture. Due to the narrow media market, the emerging commercial press was still dependent on direct and indirect state subsidies, mostly in the form of government-financed advertisements, leading to some clientelist relations between media owners and the political elite (Kaya and Çakmur 2010, 524). In this period, radio gained widespread use and became the main propaganda tool of the government. After the 1960 coup d'état, military trials prosecuted the overthrown Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*; DP) leaders for their 'partisan' use of the state radio. This is why the public broadcasting agency, Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (*Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyon Kurumu*; TRT), was established in 1964 as an autonomous body under constitutional protection, though the latter, too, would face the same criticism in later years (Kejanlıoğlu 2001, 116). To avoid a second DP experience, the 1961 constitution tied up the executive with several burdens and introduced some institutions like the National Security Council, by which the military could keep monitoring the construction and dissemination of truth with a broad interpretation of national security (Cizre 1997). Yet, the strict control of the state did not eliminate the flourishing of rival political ideologies defying the state-imposed truths and pervading younger generations throughout the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1982 constitution, drafted and legitimized under military tutelage, reflected the ambition of its military architects to locate the state at the center of the political sphere and strengthen its institutions at the expense of the civilian sphere (Insel 2003, 194). The political engineering of the September 12 regime, however, went far beyond legal amendments and attempted to create a new morality through the idea of Turkish–Islamic Synthesis to fill the ideological void upon suppression of different politicized groups and expand the social base of the state (Grigoriadis 2013). Parallel to the introduction of a neoliberal program, they tried to incorporate Islamic values into nationalism and redefined Kemalism to promote national unity, which was challenged by the leftist, Kurdish, and Islamist movements (Hale 1994, 299). Nevertheless, several other crucial factors, such as the end of the Cold War, the overwhelming impact of globalization, the accelerated EU integration process, and the import of advanced communication technologies shaped the trajectory of politics and truth in post–Cold War Turkey.

The relatively liberal environment made space for a richer media landscape in which official doctrines could be challenged in the public sphere, later termed post-Kemalism. While various facts and opinions circulated simultaneously, the state, adapting to the new context, manufactured new instruments and strategies. In the late 1990s, the military took an active role in shaping public opinion by directly addressing the public and establishing its own support base (Cizre and Çınar 2003). In this post–Cold War context, the strategy shifted from 'dictating their views to strategies of persuasion', making it softer but 'necessarily more ubiquitous' (Wuthrich 2012, 264). In addition, whereas the new media moguls, owners of giant business corporations,

replaced the usual journalist-press owners, the commercialization and oligopolization did not eliminate the political parallelism in the media market with clientelist instrumentalization of the Turkish press for business gains and the continued decline of journalist autonomy (Turkan 2012; Yavçan and Ongur 2016).

The rise of private television channels in the early 1990s ended TRT's monopoly and increased the television penetration rate, making the 'magic box' the main outlet for entertainment and information. To tackle the diversity of political orientations in the mediascape, including Islamic and Kurdish ones, in 1994, the state established the Turkish Radio and Television Supreme Council (Radyo ve Televizyon Üst Kurumu; RTÜK), a licensing and supervision authority with extensive regulatory and punitive powers (Kaya and Çakmur 2010, 528). The regulatory function of the truth regime is most visible in its deliberate silence on and silencing of excluded identity groups, most blatantly the Kurds (Sezgin and Wall 2005). The state's policy included several measures from restricting the journalists' access to Kurdish provinces to imposing directives on how to cover the PKK conflict to applying international pressure to revoke the license of the Kurdish MED TV and ROJ TV. Through the regulatory and oppressive provisions of the Press Law, the Penal Code, and the Anti-Terror Law, applied with a broad interpretation of terror and national security, the Turkish courts criminalized and punished many media activities by confiscating newspapers, imposing monetary fines, and imprisoning reporters and writers – all to guard the Kemalist truth regime and suppress counter-truth claims (Yeşil 2016).

The AKP and truth

Although the military went back to the barracks after each intervention, it heavily censored the public sphere until the very end of the twentieth century. Through successive maneuvers, such as the 2008 Ergenekon and 2010 Sledgehammer trials, as well as the 2010 constitutional referendum, the AKP managed to diminish the tutelary role of the secularist civil–military bureaucracy in politics (Taş 2015). Whereas the main patterns in the politics of truth still hold despite this shift of power, the reflexive modernization in the post–Cold War era and the new complex web of information enabled by ICTs have generated new dynamics.

In the past, when the military directly intervened in politics, one of its first targets, along with the capture of key political and bureaucratic institutions, was to seize state-run radio and television stations, which was initially enough to control the flow of information. When the Internet was introduced, however, the control of the digitally networked public sphere was less straightforward. The first Internet connection in Turkey dates back to April 1993 via routers installed at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara, with the first internet access provider founded in 1996 (Akdenizli 2015). Not long after, the Internet became firmly entrenched in Turkey. In multiple global rankings, Turkey appears as one of the top countries in terms of social media usage and online communication for political purposes (Ünver 2019). In such a context, the politics of truth and post-truth did not develop as an alternative to each other, but were conducted together, albeit inconsistently.

Politics of truth as usual

In 2017, President Erdoğan complained about the deficiencies in 'ruling the cultural and social field' despite his party being in power for 14 years, while also noting some 'pleasant developments': 'Curriculums that were prepared with an animosity-filled approach to our ancestors and culture in many fields, from our language to our history, have been changed [by

the government]' (*Hürriyet Daily News* 2017). In its Kulturkampf, the AKP indeed followed in the footsteps of its Kemalist predecessors by capturing, controlling, and erecting new ideological state apparatuses to cultivate and promote its own truth claims while suppressing adversarial voices. Mostly challenging the Kemalist truth-making about the nation, religion, and the Ottoman past, the ultimate goal of such policies is to manufacture a new national identity and raise a 'pious generation' (Düzen 2018; Yabanci 2019). Successive AKP governments have imposed their truth claims in already established channels from school textbooks to Friday sermons. Nevertheless, with better penetration of state and society and expanded state resources after almost two decades of uninterrupted rule, they exploited these channels of dissemination more effectively and boldly. While staffing state institutions, from theaters to universities with regime cronies, the AKP deliberately marginalized and criminalized others daring to call the government's truth claims into question. An illuminating example is the purging of over a thousand academics, called 'Peace Academics', from their universities for having signed the 2016 document 'We will not be a party to this crime', which demanded the peaceful resolution of the Kurdish conflict (Baser et al. 2017).

The more the AKP penetrated the state, the more it used this political, economic, and bureaucratic power against oppositional voices, leaving the media without any protection from the government, but with two options: exit or loyalty. Doğan Media, the largest media conglomerate, was silenced through several bureaucratic and economic maneuvers, such as excessive auditing, tax fines, and exclusion from receiving government contracts. The eventual 2018 transfer of Doğan Media to pro-government figures is not unprecedented because, only a decade before, Doğan itself had seized the media outlets of Cem Uzan, a fierce opponent of Erdoğan. Uzan was forced to disband his companies after heavy auditing (Akser 2018). Through the Savings Deposit and Insurance Fund (TMSF), which took over media outlets in debt before auctioning them off, and/or public banks providing large credits, Sabah/ATV, Çukurova, and Doğan media groups changed hands to the pro-government Çalık (in 2007), Sancak (in 2013), and Demirören groups (in 2018), respectively (Tunç 2018). In its war with the Gülen movement, the AKP government also seized the affiliated media outlets, called *cemaat medyasi* (Feza, Samanyolu, and Koza-Ipek), in 2015 and early 2016. After the 2016 abortive coup, the AKP destroyed most of the oppositional media, shutting down more than 150 media institutions and arresting over 120 journalists (Bulut and Yörük 2017).

Turkey has been cited for having the largest number of imprisoned journalists in the world, while ranking only 157th among 180 countries in the 2019 World Press Freedom Index (Reporters without Borders 2019). The AKP already had the regulatory public agencies like the RTÜK and prohibitive legislation wrapped around its finger to intensify the media crackdown. Despite the initial legal improvements in press freedom in anticipation of EU membership talks, the legal suppression of news reporting has selectively targeted critical journalists, with accusations such as making propaganda of terror organizations and endangering national security and public order – all listed as crimes under the Press Law, the Penal Code, and the Anti-Terror Law. Cases of countering adversarial truth claims vary from the 2011 suppression of an unpublished book, *The Army of Imam*, by journalist Ahmet Şık, during the Ergenekon trials to the immediate imposition of reporting bans in the wake of critical events such as terror attacks or military operations (Karatas and Saka 2017, 387). While the AKP relied on a mixture of consensual and coercive measures in establishing its monopoly over truth, after the 2013 Gezi protests and especially the 2016 abortive coup, the 'AKP has unabashedly swung the pendulum towards formal and direct interventionism' (Yeşil 2018, 253).

Since the early 2010s, the country has become more isolated and the flow of information has been more severely restricted (Genç 2019, 8). Establishing digital borders to control

information coming from abroad, the 2007 Internet Law, No. 5651, and the 2014 amendments, No. 6527 and 6552, empowered the government-controlled Telecommunications Directorate (TIB) to block access to the content without a judicial warrant. Every year since the 2013 Gezi protests, Turkey has submitted the highest number of content removal requests to Twitter, as well as shutting down *Wikipedia* in 2017. According to a recent study, Turkey blocked a total of 245,825 websites and domains between 2007 and 2018, along with a surge in arrests for criticizing the government and a rise in self-censorship, especially during the post-coup crackdown (İFÖD 2019).

The tripod of post-truth politics

Although the AKP government embarked on a Sisyphean task of restricting opposition voices through Internet shutdowns, social media blackouts, and mass online censorship, the current information ecosystem required new measures encapsulated in post-truth politics. First, the ruling elite has constantly delegitimized established institutions providing fact-based, accurate information. Second, it has inundated the mediascape to drown out oppositional voices while building a cacophony of news to hinder informed debate. Finally, it has aimed to manufacture a common-sense truth that is immune to factual rebuttal.

First of all, Erdoğan has consistently targeted the formerly respected sources of factual truth and fact-based expertise as part of his anti-intellectual populist discourse. In the first decade of his rule, Erdoğan made attacks on the press a cornerstone of his political strategy of motivating culturally conservative and alienated Anatolian people. Framing it as the main voice of the secular establishment, his war on the media gained Erdoğan popular support (*Milliyet* 2008). By delegitimizing credible mass and online media, as well as launching aggressive campaigns against adversarial voices, the AKP ultimately sought to detach public debate from the factual infrastructure. Similarly, Erdoğan's name-calling of the Peace Academics as 'pseudo-intellectuals', as well as his constant rejection of conventional economic theories and insistence on unorthodox arguments (e.g., 'elevated interest rates cause prices to rise'), demonstrate his disregard for either facts or expertise (Baser et al. 2017; *Hürriyet* 2015).

More explicitly, in praise of ignorance, Bülent Arı, a professor who was later promoted to the Council of Higher Education, claimed: 'I'd rather trust ignorant people who have not attended university or better yet, not even attended primary school […] because their minds are pure'. With a romanticized conception of people's wisdom and unhappy about the rising literacy rates, Arı argued that people with higher education had blurred minds (Shafak 2019). In fact, the stigmatization of the intellectual elite as shallow, alienated, and inauthentic, crystallized in the term 'White Turk', has marked AKP populism in general (Gürpınar 2020). Capitalizing on the ongoing erosion of trust in and reliance on facts and technocratic expertise, however, the AKP elite deliberately exploited and furthered such mistrustful, anti-intellectual sentiments to neutralize adversarial actors and undermine the common ground for informed debate.

The second leg of the tripod is mainly about saturating traditional and digital media with fake news, half-truths, and conspiracy theories, all to spread confusion and doubt, ultimately leading to political apathy among the oppositional or undecided groups. Creating the impression that everyone is lying, it eventually makes the quest for truth worthless. This endeavor requires resources and tools, which the AKP incrementally obtained. While the media bosses' urge to curry favor with the government has remained the same, the usual political parallelism reached an unprecedented level that would crystallize in the emergence of what is called *havuz medyası* (pool media) or *yandaş medya* (pro-government media) during the AKP era (Akser and Baybars-Hawks 2012). Following the liquidation of commercial mass media through suppression and

acquisition, the field was almost entirely dominated by the ultra-partisan media serving as propaganda tools of the ruling AKP. Online spaces were not free of this influence. Especially after the 2013 Gezi protests, the AKP formed a 6,000-member social media team to respond to the adversarial climate on social media (Albayrak and Parkinson 2013). In June 2020, Twitter took down a centrally managed network of 7,340 troll accounts linked to the youth branch of the AKP (Twitter Safety 2020). In addition to bullying, harassing, and discrediting dissidents online, as well as illegal data harvesting, these cyber troops are tasked with inundating online spaces with false or misleading content, which produces doubt, confusion, and distraction, so that it ultimately becomes harder for users to navigate the muddied waters (Tufekci 2017). Post-truth politics operates in the new digital setting where the pay-per-click business model of the Internet has created incentives for sensational 'clickbait' stories, with online fake news traveling much faster that fact-based stories (Sim 2019). Beside the coordinated use of hyperpartisan commentators, news sites, automated bots, and fake followers to amplify the messages, some AKP-supported formations such as the Pelican Group and its think tank Bosphorus Global assumed an operational role in manufacturing and spreading their truths to determine the tone in Turkey-related debates (Saka 2018; Sözeri 2016).

With this formidable political machine, the ruling elite deliberately aimed to overwhelm the public to challenge the credibility of oppositional narratives. In its war in the southeast against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) since Summer 2015, the AKP government shut down all Internet service in parts of the region. However, when pictures documenting the atrocities in this fight emerged in online platforms, the government countered by flooding social media with photoshopped pictures, hoaxes, and counter-claims to refute the credibility of the claims and complicate navigating the contradictory information (Tufekci 2017, 245–246). Here, politics is not about imposing some other fact or blocking particular information, but confusing the public and inducing cynicism about reaching reliable truth. Another instance is the smear campaign against Ekrem Imamoglu, the opposition's 2019 mayoral candidate for Istanbul. The pro-government newspapers saturated the public debate with conspiracy theories, claiming Imamoglu's candidacy to be a project run by the US, FETÖ (Gülenist Terror Organisation), and the PKK, as well as rumors about his alleged non-Turkish origin (Ayasun 2019; *Evrensel* 2019). A rational public debate about the electoral campaigns was hindered by producing such distractions to dilute the focus. The proliferation of fake news has led to several local fact-checking platforms invested in checking politicians' claims and providing factual rebuttals, such as Dogrulukpayi.com or Teyit.org. Yet, ironically the fact-checking organizations are also polarized in the Turkish context, with each political camp running its own platforms and even sometimes offering fake 'fact-checking' service as in the case of Bosphorus Global's platform Gununyalanlari.com (Erdoğan 2018; Sözeri 2016).

Lastly, the targeted and purposeful spread of fabricated information aims to manufacture a common-sense truth that is immune to factual rebuttal. The disregard for fact-based truth and expertise comes along with an acclamation of the knowledge of the common people, what Paul Saurette and Shane Gunster call 'epistemological populism' (2011). This folk wisdom, 'Anadolu Irfani' (The Wisdom of Anatolia) in the Turkish case, has yet to be cultivated. Post-truth politics here employs the availability heuristic – a pervasive mental shortcut making the opinions biased toward the latest news – and the ensuing 'availability cascades'. Timur Kuran and Cass Sunstein define these 'availability cascades' as 'a self-reinforcing process of collective belief formation by which an expressed perception triggers a chain reaction that gives the perception increasing plausibility through its rising availability in public discourse' (1999, 683). Enveloping individuals with millions of channels of information, 24-hour news cycles, and constant updates on breaking news and developing stories, post-truth politicians frame the surrounding phenomena

on a scale that had previously been virtually impossible. Under such (mis)information, repetition works because people act like cognitive misers, avoiding computation, while heuristics minimize time and effort to process the surrounding phenomena (Brashier and Marsh 2020). The construction of common sense gets more feasible considering the prevalence of the political polarization and echo chamber effect, which denotes the tendency to selectively tune in to only discourse that matches one's political inclinations, solidifying one's opinions further. This is further reinforced by the filter bubble effect, which social media algorithms, based on each user's history of likes and clicks, selectively feed with news and opinions they want to see (Gross 2017).

An indicative example is how the AKP narrated the July 2016 abortive coup, manufacturing a common-sense truth about it and eroding the factual infrastructure for informed debate. While flooding traditional and online media with conspiracy theories, fake news, and selectively leaked materials, the ruling elite saturated the public space with its unquestionable narrative and propagated the plot as a Western assault on Turkey and a matter of national survival (*milli beka*) (Taş 2018). Especially noteworthy is the role of popular Turkish television series in creating a political cosmos giving meaning to the present and elevating this narrative to a commonsense knowledge. Played on state-run or pro-government TV channels, these series, such as *Diriliş: Ertuğrul* (Resurrection: Ertuğrul), *Filinta*, or *Payitaht Abdulhamid* (The Last Emperor), revolve around Turks' struggles against enemies of the nation and domestic traitors. Although the themes are derived from Ottoman history, the scenarios are especially carved to establish parallels between the past and present, shaping a kind of folk wisdom about perpetual war between the cross and the crescent (Çevik 2020).

In this endeavor, the government has been tapping into Turks' Sèvres Syndrome. Though never put into action, the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres that envisaged the dismemberment of Ottoman territory along ethnic and religious lines after its defeat in World War I, has been used to justify anti-minority attitudes and nurture a conspiratorial mind that Turkey has been encircled by hostile powers within and without. The 1923 Treaty of Lausanne debunked Sèvres. Nevertheless, the pro-government newspapers dispensed conspiracy theories about the annulment of Lausanne after its centennial anniversary in 2023, feeding both a sense of insecurity and irredentist aspirations of claiming former Ottoman territories (*Akşam* 2017). Distorting factual truth, such paranoid narrations of current contingencies and comfort stories reflecting imperial fantasies in the form of soothing self-deception create a common-sense truth free from the constraints of facts. According to a recent survey, 48 percent of Turks believed that Lausanne will expire in 2023, and a quarter of the respondents were ready to believe a made-up story about a faked radioactive element, 'contorium', which Turkey was supposed to have in abundance worth billions of US dollars, but was prevented by foreign powers from using it (Akyol 2019). Once common sense is established, anything fitting the template works.

Conclusion

The advancement of information technology led to both a 'liberal optimism', heralding the expansion of the public sphere by new means of connectivity, and an 'Orwellian pessimism', warning about complete totalitarianisms buttressed by digital surveillance and manipulation (Taş 2018, 2). The outcome has been post-truth politics as modern states have found novel ways to reconfigure the public sphere, including the new digital mediascape. While academic studies largely focus on the repressive practices of current non-democracies, they fail to see today's more complex information ecologies and the post-truth, which reflects another twist in the fragile relation between truth and politics. Discrediting the established sources of fact-based truth

(or also truth-based facts in the Foucauldian sense), and inundating the mediascape with fake news, hoaxes, rumors, and distorted information to sow doubt and manufacture a common sense truth, the ruling Turkish elite aimed at something beyond the reach of repressive policies. The success and resilience of post-truth politics, however, are limited by the very factors (like growing Internet access) that accentuated it in the first place.

Simultaneously, albeit inconsistently, the AKP elite has pursued both the politics of truth and post-truth. On the one hand, they tended to exploit the post-truth condition in the political game against their rivals. Yet on the other hand, unlike other cases such as the 2016 Brexit campaign or US president Donald Trump's post-truth politics, President Erdoğan had a more profound ambition than attaining and/or remaining in power and aimed to become the founding father of his 'New Turkey.' In this endeavor, by eroding the Kemalist heritage and ushering in a new era, the AKP ironically walked in the footsteps of Kemalist nation- and state-building that required a centralized and programmatic agenda of truth-making. Having more sources than Kemal Atatürk did a century ago, the AKP could amplify its truth-claims at every platform from media to schools to mosques. Nevertheless, the AKP may be shooting itself in the foot as this grand project could backfire due to the immense cynicism generated by its post-truth politics.

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15
KURDISH POLITICS IN TURKEY

Cengiz Gunes

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the main political developments in Kurdish politics in Turkey since 1960. During the 1960s, Kurdish political demands were articulated as part of demands for political and economic equality in Turkey, but the state chose to suppress the debate on the Kurdish question rather than take steps to address some of the popular Kurdish demands, which forced the Kurdish activists at the centre of these debates underground. During the early 1970s, the idea that a forceful challenge to state authority was needed to obtain Kurdish rights in Turkey began to gain wider acceptance among Kurdish activists. In the second half of the 1970s, a number of Kurdish political groups emerged, but the repressive environment in Turkey persisted throughout the 1970s and intensified following the military takeover in 1980. With the exception of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), these political groups ceased their activities or existence after the September 1980 military coup, and since the early 1980s, the PKK has been the dominant force in Kurdish resistance in Turkey. The PKK's influence and popularity increased after it started its armed struggle in 1984, and by the late 1980s, it began to present a powerful political challenge to Turkey's authority in the Kurdish-majority regions. During the early 1990s, numerous instances of *Serhildan* – popular protests and demonstrations in support of the PKK and Kurdish rights in Turkey – took place in various Kurdish cities and towns, which marked a new stage in the PKK's evolution as a movement (Gunes, 2013, p. 258). The Turkish state attempted to eliminate the PKK's presence in the region throughout the past 40 years, but despite that it has managed to survive and grow as a movement.

With the emergence of the pro-Kurdish democratic movement in 1990, a legal platform for the advocacy of Kurdish rights was established. It too faced various forms of state repression and several of the pro-Kurdish political parties were closed down by Turkey's constitutional court, including the People's Labour Party (HEP) in 1993, the Democracy Party (DEP) in 1994, the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) in 2003, and the Democratic Society Party (DTP) in 2009 (Bayır, 2013, pp. 191–2). The political demands that these parties have been raising include the constitutional recognition of the Kurdish identity and rights and a peaceful political solution to the armed conflict with the PKK, and the articulation of these demands made them 'outsiders' in Turkish politics (Gunes, 2017, p. 14). However, despite the repression the pro-Kurdish

political parties have been experiencing, they have managed to build a strong presence in the Kurdish-populated provinces as well as in western Turkish cities where large numbers of Kurds reside. The strong performance of the current representative of the pro-Kurdish democratic movement the Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in elections since June 2015 has made it a key actor in Turkish politics.

This chapter first discusses the emergence of the Kurdish movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and focus on the growth of the PKK as the dominant force in Kurdish resistance. Second, it discusses the emergence and development of the pro-Kurdish democratic movement since 1990, highlighting the specific political demands it has been raising and the challenges it has been facing in its attempts to represent the Kurds through the political institutions in Turkey. Finally, an account of the evolution of the ongoing armed conflict and the major transformations it has experienced since 2015 is provided.

The emergence of the Kurdish national movement in Turkey

The rise of the Kurdish national movement in Iraq during the 1960s and the emergence of a new generation of politically active Kurdish activist and organic intellectuals influenced the politicization of the Kurds in Turkey during the 1960s. The 1961 constitution made room for oppressed voices, and the Kurds were able to express some of their demands and concerns. During the 1960s, the organic intellectuals managed to generate a discussion on the status of the Kurds in Turkey and focused their efforts on raising awareness of the issues that affected the Kurds, such as regional inequality, underdevelopment of the Eastern Anatolia and discrimination that Kurds faced. Several books and magazines that interrogated these issues were published during the 1960s. The new generation of organic intellectuals included Musa Anter, Edip Karahan, Ziya Şerefhanoğlu, Yusuf Azizoğlu, Mehmet Emin Bozarslan, Faik Bucak, Sait Kırmızıtoprak and Sait Elçi. The latter two were involved in the establishment of the Kurdistan Democrat Party of Turkey (TKDP) in 1965. Edip Karahan and Musa Anter published the Kurdish political magazines *Dicle-Fırat* (1962–3) and *Deng* (1963). Also, a number of events in Turkey brought the Kurdish question back into the political arena and highlighted the oppression that the Kurds faced. The first major event that drew public attention to the Eastern question came to be known as 'the 49'ers incident' (*49'lar Olayı*) and involved initially 50 Kurdish students and activists (one died during the detention) who were arrested on 17 December 1959 and whose trials lasted until 1967 (Kutlay, 1994, pp.7–11).

The second half of the 1960s was characterized by the evolution of Kurdish activism towards a more organized form. The reinvigoration of the Kurdish national movement in Iraq had a direct bearing on this development. This is evidenced by the establishment of the TKDP in Turkey advocating a similar programme as the KDP in Iraq. The TKDP brought various sectors of Kurdish society together, including urban notables, craftsmen and students, and its establishment marked 'a new stage in the autonomization of the Kurdish movement in terms of the worker and student movements' (Bozarslan, 1992, pp.98–9). However, soon after its establishment the party was marred by internal divisions, and in January 1968 many leading members were arrested.

Another source of Kurdish activism in the 1960s was the Workers' Party of Turkey (TİP) and the socialist movement in general (Gunes, 2012, pp.58–61). The TİP offered Kurds a platform where demands could be discussed, and through their involvement in the left-wing organizations, Kurdish activists developed and disseminated an alternative interpretation of social reality of the Kurds in Turkey and challenged the official ideology of the Turkish state. The debate within the left-wing parties and organizations gradually led to the reconceptualization

of Kurdish identity; it was originally conceptualized in the context of underdevelopment of the Kurdish region, then as a national problem and finally as an issue of colonialism. The nascent Kurdish movement started to attract mass support, as was evident at the 'meetings of the East' (*Doğu Mitingleri*) during which Kurdish demands were publicly expressed. The meetings are considered as the pinnacle of Kurdish activism in the late 1960s (Gunes, 2012, pp.61–4; Gündoğan, 2011).

In 1969, the Revolutionary Cultural Centres of the East (DDKO) in Istanbul and Ankara were established. The DDKO's programme was framed around popular issues, such as underdevelopment and the lack of state investment in the majority Kurdish regions. The DDKO activists questioned the legitimacy of the Turkish nationalist policies that the state pursued to assimilate the Kurds. However, the military intervention of 1971 intensified the political repression, closed down the DDKO and prosecuted its leaders and members. During the DDKO trial and the TKDP trials in 1971, Kurdish activists openly challenged Turkish state discourse by defending the existence of a separate Kurdish nation and the oppression to which this nation was subjected. During the mid-1970s, numerous Kurdish left-wing groups emerged: the Socialist Party of Turkish Kurdistan (TKSP) in 1974, Rizgarî (1976), the Kurdistan National Liberationists (KUK, 1978), Kawa (1978), the PKK (1978, initially formed as a small political cell in 1973), Ala Rizgarî (1979) and Tekoşin (1979). In varying degrees, all of these groups were committed to the Kurdish struggle and to socialism (Gunes, 2012, pp.77–80). Rizgarî, Ala Rizgarî, Tekosin and Kawa were able to exist only as small groups publishing pamphlets and magazines, while others such as the TKSP proved to be more durable, but none have achieved the level of support or activism that the PKK managed to gain.

Most of these parties were blighted by schisms, and efforts to revive them during the 1980s were not successful. According to Jongerden and Akkaya (2019), there was two reasons for this: first, the ideological programme they adopted could not effectively address the concerns of the people because they could not 'link their politics to the daily lives and struggles of the people'. Second, the areas outside Turkey where they choose to build their party bases were either too close to the Turkish border or too far from it:

> On the one hand, being active in or close to the territorial zone of war, the actual area of conflict, proved to be dangerous. […] Being far away from the contested territory, on the other hand, implied a loss of agency.
>
> *(p.278)*

Those who remained close to the border faced attacks by the Turkish army, and those 'who left to Europe, such as the TKSP, could not do much more than a symbolic politics' (p.278).

The PKK was formally founded on 27 November 1978 as a clandestine organization advocating the liberation of Kurdistan from the states that divided it. It was inspired by other national liberation and anti-imperialist struggles around the world and sought to unify Greater Kurdistan under an independent, united and socialist republic. The PKK articulated its challenge on the basis of signifiers such as 'socialism', and 'freedom' and sought to achieve its aims through a protracted people's war. Soon after its establishment, in 1979 and 1980, the PKK was involved in political struggles with rival Kurdish groups and traditional tribal elites, especially in the province of Urfa. The tribal elites were seen as legitimate targets participating in the oppression of the Kurdish working class and peasantry and cooperating with the Turkish state in assimilating Kurds.

On 15 August 1984, the PKK embarked on its guerrilla war with attacks on military posts in the towns of Eruh and Şemdinli, near the Turkey–Iraq border. In 1986, it organized the People's

Liberation Army of Kurdistan (ARGK) and fought a guerrilla war that continued until 1999. At the height of its power in the early 1990s, it had a guerrilla army of 15,000 with supporters and sympathizers numbering several million drawn from all parts of majority Kurdish regions and among the Kurdish diaspora communities in Europe. The PKK-led Kurdish rebellion has lasted the longest in the history of the Kurds in Turkey (Gunes, 2012, p.101). The conflict cost the lives of more than 45,000 people (mainly soldiers, guerrillas, village guards and Kurdish civilians), and resulted in the forced displacement of a significant section of the rural Kurdish population (Bozarslan, 2014; Jongerden, 2001).

During the late 1980s, the numbers of PKK guerrillas increased significantly, which allowed it to build its presence in the region. This led to a gradual increase in the number of the attacks against the Turkish security forces and the village guards as well as a widening of the area within which they occurred. The mountainous terrain alongside the Turkey–Iraq border provided many hiding places for the guerrillas to shelter and was particularly suitable for the successful execution of the guerrilla war. The guerrillas were able to connect with local populations, who provided important logistic support. Predominantly targets of the guerrillas were the state security forces and the village guards. The main form of military activity by the ARGK consisted of raids on gendarme stations and other forms of military installations near the borders with Iraq and Iran, raids on gendarme and army stations in rural areas, ambushes, road checks, raids on villages where the village guards were located and sabotage against economic facilities or state institutions in the Kurdish regions.

Although mainly hit-and-run tactics were deployed, the Turkish army's numerous large-scale operations against the guerrillas and other forms of 'hot pursuits' during the early 1990s resulted in large-scale skirmishes that lasted a few days or even weeks. Therefore, the early 1990s were exceptional years in terms of the level of violence with attacks becoming much more frequent and widespread. The areas in which the guerrilla attacks were carried out also became widespread. The guerrillas were organized extensively in many areas, though the main conflict zones were the border areas primarily comprising the provinces of Hakkari, Şırnak and Siirt (the mountainous areas that Kurds popularly refer to as *Botan*). During the mid-1990s, PKK activities expanded to a wider area extending towards southern Turkey to Hatay and Antakya, and towards the Black Sea region in north-east Turkey. The Turkish army and the security forces found it very difficult to eliminate the PKK's presence in the region despite its numerous military campaigns and large-scale operations. The Turkish state's counter-insurgency strategy initially focused on defending the large villages and towns and other urban centres, which allowed the PKK the space to establish a presence throughout the provinces in the southeast of Turkey.

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, as the PKK's insurgency intensified, it managed to gather popular support from the Kurds and increased its influence. That popular support was demonstrated in the spring of 1991 and 1992 when large numbers of Kurds took part in popular uprisings, known as *Serhildan*, across Kurdish towns. Shop closures and boycotts were organized by many Kurds in most towns in the south-east, especially in Diyarbakır, Batman, Şırnak and Siirt. However, with the evacuation of rural Kurdish settlements, the Turkish state cut off logistic support to the PKK. As a result, during the mid-1990s and onwards the PKK weakened militarily. In addition to its military activities, the PKK established a complex, well-organized political network through the Kurdistan People's Liberation Front (ERNK), established in 1986 and active in the Kurdish region as well as in Western Europe. The conflict had other significant social, political and economic ramifications, including mob violence against Kurdish civilians and a corresponding rise in Turkish nationalism during the 1990s (Gunes, 2012, pp.109–11).

In 1993, the PKK declared its first unilateral ceasefire in an attempt to initiate a process that would eventually lead to a negotiated solution to the conflict. It moderated its aims and suggested that a form of extensive autonomy would be acceptable. In 1995 and in 1998, again the PKK declared unilateral ceasefires to initiate dialogue and discussion. In September 1998, large numbers of Turkish Armed Forces were moved to the Syrian border, threatening invasion if Syria continued to shelter PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan. On 9 October 1998, Öcalan left Syria for Europe. Having failed to secure protection in Europe, on 15 February 1999, he was captured in Nairobi, Kenya, and has been imprisoned in the İmralı Island ever since.

Since Öcalan's imprisonment, the PKK has undergone a number of organizational and ideological transformations. In August 1999, the PKK withdrew its guerrillas from Turkey to Iraqi Kurdistan and declared a permanent ceasefire. In 2002, the PKK became the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress (KADEK) and in 2003 changed its name to Kongra-Gel (People's Congress). Until March of that year, the PKK remained more or less dormant and maintained its guerrilla units as a defence force. But from June 2004 onwards, citing the lack of dialogue and initiatives towards resolving the Kurdish question peacefully, the PKK resumed attacks on the Turkish military.

The PKK's ideological reorientation has generated a lively debate on the resolution of the Kurdish question and the possible steps that can be taken to accommodate Kurdish demands within the borders of the existing states in the Middle East (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). In the new party programme the PKK accepted in 2005, its proposal for the solution of the Kurdish question was described as the 'democratic solution' and the central tenet of which was described as the 'democratic transformation' of the current state system in the Middle East into federal and con-federal entities. It put forward the proposals to reconstitute the Kurds as a nation without constructing their own nation state or being based on a particular territory (PKK, 2005, p.13). This proposed confederal Kurdish entity would neither challenge the established and internationally recognized boundaries nor resort to nationalism or establishing a nation state (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2014). While the construction of a Kurdish nation state is seen as unnecessary, the central focus would be on developing an administrative framework for Kurdish self-rule (Gunes, 2019a, p.257). The mid-2000s noticed the establishment of a new organization, the Union of Kurdistan Communities (Koma Civakên Kurdistan, KCK) was established with the specific objective of putting into practice the 'democratic confederalism' proposals (Gunes and Gürer, 2018, p.169).

In addition to the 'democratic confederalism' proposal, since August 2010, the 'Democratic Autonomy' proposal has also been developed as a framework to organize the relations between the states and the various Kurdish communities. This proposal involves the establishment of Kurdish autonomy in each of the states that has a large Kurdish territory and population. Similar to the earlier proposals, it puts forward the view that Kurdish rights in Turkey can be realized through democratization; however, it also represents a more detailed proposal for decentralization and creation of a new administrative and institutional framework (Gunes and Gürer, 2018, p.169). Democratic autonomy proposes to delegate power downwards to the local council level which will exercise power over local decisions. These local-level administrations will be able to take part in and represent themselves at the provincial, the regional and the national levels (PKK, 2009, p.90). As well as organizing Kurdish communities within decentralized administrative levels, the democratic autonomy proposal involves the establishment of Kurdish national representative bodies, which would have decision-making power on specific issues relevant to the Kurds but whose areas of influence are not confined to a particular region or territory: 'Within the territorial integrity framework, many identities can establish their administrative structures and exercise self-governance' (PKK, 2009, p.94).

The pro-Kurdish political parties in Turkey

Article 78 of the Political Parties Law (Law No: 2820) forbids the establishment of a political party that advocates rights of a particular class, ethnic or religious group or sect in Turkey. However, with the politicization of Kurdish identity and the intensification of the conflict during the 1980s, the idea of group rights for the Kurds and a peaceful solution to the conflict became a part of the domestic political debate in Turkey. The parties advocating such a position were predominantly supported by the Kurds and were described in English-language studies as pro-Kurdish political parties. The first of these parties was the HEP, which was established on 7 June 1990 by Kurdish and Turkish socialists who were previously active within the Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP). The need to form a new party arose after some members of parliament (MPs) were expelled from the SHP for participating in an international conference on the Kurdish question held in Paris in September 1989 (Demir, 2005, p.61). Soon after the expulsions, six other MPs and the local leaders of the 12 cities in the majority Kurdish regions resigned from the SHP in protest (Ölmez, 1995, p.88–90). Although throughout its existence the HEP sought to extend its appeal to the wider Turkish society, it was strongly associated with the Kurds as the core of its members and most of its MPs were Kurdish. Also, its political programme combined the demands for the democratization of the state and society in Turkey with a democratic and peaceful solution to the Kurdish conflict in Turkey, which strengthened its association with the Kurds (Gunes, 2012, p.159).

Despite the acrimony of their expulsions, the HEP candidates contested the parliamentary elections held on 20 October 1991 on the SHP's list and 22 of whom won a seat in the parliament, which was a unique event because for the first time in Turkey's history, a party committed to the recognition of Kurdish rights and demands was represented in the parliament. However, it did not take long before state authorities began scrutinizing the HEP's activities, and on 22 May 1992, the State Security Court prepared a case to remove the HEP MP's parliamentary immunity. This was followed by the Supreme Court's attorney general filing a case at the Constitutional Court to close down the HEP permanently, which was concluded on 14 July 1993. On 7 May 1993 and prior to the HEP's closure, the DEP was established to continue the HEP's mission and activities in the parliament. The DEP also advocated a peaceful and democratic solution to the Kurdish question and comprehensive constitutional reforms to enable Turkey to institute a pluralist democratic regime, being the key demands raised by the party (Gunes, 2012, p.162).

The Turkish government and the security establishment described both the HEP and the DEP as the 'political wing' of the PKK. Throughout the early 1990s numerous Kurdish activists connected with the pro-Kurdish political parties were persecuted, including the frequent arrests and torture of many activists, and the murder of some leading members and many grass-roots activists. Between 1991 and 1994, more than 50 members of the HEP and the DEP were murdered. The DEP's headquarters were bombed on 18 February 1994, which caused the death of one person and injured 16 people (Ölmez, 1995, p.465). On 2 March 1994, the parliament lifted the legal immunity of the DEP MPs, which enabled the State Security Court in Ankara to hear the case against them. The DEP was closed down on 16 June 1994 and the trial of its MPs ended on 8 August 1994 with MPs Hatip Dicle, Orhan Doğan, Leyla Zana and Selim Sadak receiving 15-year sentences. In addition, six DEP MPs left Turkey in order to avoid imprisonment (Gunes, 2012, p.164).

The next decade or so following the closure of the DEP and the elimination of the Kurdish parliamentary opposition was spent attempting to rebuild the pro-Kurdish democratic movement. In this period the HADEP and the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) were

the main representatives of the pro-Kurdish movement. The 10 per cent electoral threshold prevented the parliamentary representation of the pro-Kurdish parties, but they both enjoyed some level of success at the local level and, more importantly, the pro-Kurdish parties managed to construct a grass-roots organization and a wide-ranging organizational network covering many of the cities in Turkey. The HADEP obtained 4.76 percent and 3.82 percent in the parliamentary and municipal elections held in 1999 respectively. In total it managed to win the control of 37 councils across the majority-Kurdish regions, including the Municipal Councils of Diyarbakır, Ağrı, Bingöl, Hakkari, Siirt, Van and Batman. The HADEP was closed down in 2003, and the DEHAP contested the 2004 local elections as part of a leftist coalition winning 54 councils including the Municipal Councils of Diyarbakır, Batman, Şırnak and Hakkari (Gunes, 2012, p.167).

While the case to close down the DEHAP was being considered by the constitutional court, the formation of a new pro-Kurdish political party was on the agenda. The DTP was formally established on 9 November 2005. Although the personnel of the party included many members of the former pro-Kurdish political parties in Turkey and it certainly represented the pro-Kurdish tradition in Turkey, it was established to represent broader sections of the society and attract other political groups in Turkey that its predecessors were unable to connect with. After the 22 July 2007 general election, 21 DTP MPs who stood as independent candidates in order to avoid the 10 per cent national election threshold were elected to the parliament. The DTP remained active until it was closed down by the Constitutional Court on 12 December 2009.

From then onwards, the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), which was established on 3 May 2008 took the task of Kurdish political representation in Turkey. In April 2011, the BDP in alliance with 17 other political parties and non-governmental organizations formed the pro-democracy 'Labour, Peace and Democracy Bloc' and supported independent candidates in the general elections scheduled for 12 June 2011. In addition to the leading members of the pro-Kurdish BDP, independent socialist and pro-democracy candidates were also included in the list, including the film director and columnist Sırrı Süreyya Önder for Istanbul; the leader of the EMEP, Abdullah Levent Tüzel, for Istanbul; and the socialist activist and journalist Ertuğrul Kürkçü for Mersin. Broad democratic demands, such as gender equality, better working conditions, comprehensive constitutional reform and political reconciliation are the key demands articulated in the election campaigns. In total 35 pro-Kurdish MPs were elected as independent candidates. Bringing together Turkey's progressive opposition groups strengthened the possibility of forming a new political party that could act as the vehicle to achieve the unity of Turkey's left, which resulted in the HDP's establishment.

The HDP was founded to bring together various political movements, parties and civil society organizations that represent different social and minority ethnic and religious groups in Turkey. It was a new attempt to build a stronger, pro-democracy, left-wing alternative to the existing mainstream parties in Turkey. As a way to overcome the problem of disunity of the left and as a precursor to the HDP, the Peoples' Democratic Congress (HDK) was established as a representative body for the diverse oppositional social and political groups and parties in Turkey. Each political group or party that is part of the HDK is described as a component and maintains its independent existence. The HDP is the national-level parliamentary representative of the HDK, and in the Kurdish majority regions at the local level the Democratic Regions Party (DBP) is active, which is mainly organized in and orients its politics towards the Kurdish region, and one of the main components of the HDK and the continuation of the BDP, having changed its name and party symbol at the third congress on 11 July 2014.

The HDP's key political objective is to represent the demands of the section of the society that have been historically marginalized by the state and ignored by the mainstream political

parties (HDP, 2012). While the HDP aspires to bring about political change via parliamentary politics and constitutional change, it also advocates a form of participatory democracy (HDP, 2015, p.5). A new democratic constitution to strengthen the parliamentary system and that guarantees the civil and political rights of citizens in Turkey is another key demand raised by the HDP. The new constitution should embody the ethos of pluralism and promote multiculturalism by recognizing and protecting Turkey's ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. At the same time the new constitution should incorporate features to resolve Turkey's long-standing conflict with its Kurdish minority and provide stronger safeguards for the rights of all minority groups in Turkey.

The HDP proposes a decentralized political system for Turkey to break the guardianship of the centre over the regions and develop models of autonomy to meet the needs of different minority groups to protect and develop their culture and identity. More specifically, it advocates the 'Democratic Autonomy' model for Turkey and proposes to decentralize power to autonomous and self-governing regional administrations (HDP, 2015, p.10). Such decentralization of the state in Turkey is needed to empower local administrations, to ensure citizens' direct participation in the decision-making processes at the local, regional and national levels and to develop socio-economic policies that address the needs of the whole of society. Such a decentralized and democratic framework would be able to address the demands of the Kurdish minority for autonomy and pave the way for a peaceful solution of the Kurdish conflict (HDP, 2012).

In the June 2015 election, the HDP managed to win 13.1 per cent of the popular vote and secured 80 seats in the parliament. Judged by the electoral performance of any of its predecessors, the HDP's success is unparalleled in the history of Turkish democracy. Its achievement represents the overcoming of barriers created by the marginalization of the pro-Kurdish movement. By choosing parliamentary candidates from a wider network and representatives of diverse political, social and cultural groups, the HDP managed to connect with a much larger portion of the electorate, win their support and establish itself as the voice of the left in Turkey. The failure to form a collation government resulted in a fresh election being called for 1 November 2015, but the domestic context in Turkey changed completely in the summer of 2015. Soon after the election, the HDP came under increasing pressure and state repression, and the anti-HDP fervour reached its height on 8 September 2015 when large-scale mob attacks targeted and vandalized the HDP's offices in many cities in western Turkey, including its headquarters in Ankara and many of the district offices in Istanbul. In addition, terror attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) targeting Turkey's pro-Kurdish peace network in Suruç and Ankara, on 20 July 2015 and 10 October 2015 respectively, made running a campaign for the November election very difficult for the HDP. As a result, there was a reduction in the HDP's vote in the November 2015 election, but despite that, it still managed to obtain 10.75 per cent of the popular vote and 59 seats in the parliament (Gunes, 2018, p.265). The repression of HDP activities is ongoing, and despite the repression and imprisonment of many of the leaders of the HDP, the party performed strongly in the June 2018 general elections as well. Although its vote decreased slightly in the Kurdish majority provinces, the results confirm that it is maintaining its support base with the HDP obtaining 11.7 per cent of the national vote and winning 67 seats in the parliament. As I discuss below, from 2016 onwards, the local base of the pro-Kurdish movement was also targeted as part of the state repression and almost all of the pro-Kurdish mayors elected in 2014 were replaced by trustees appointed by the government.

A number of other Kurdish political parties are active in the Kurdish majority regions and some take part in the elections. These include the Rights and Freedoms Party (HAK-PAR, 2002), the Islamist Free Cause Party (Hüda-Par, 2012), the Participatory Democracy Party

(KADEP, 2006), the Kurdistan Freedom Party (PAK, 2014), and the Kurdistan Democratic Party-Turkey (TKDP, 2014). None of these parties has managed to win sufficient votes in either the parliamentary or the local elections.

A new violent phase in the conflict: 2015–present

The significant reduction in violent incidents between the PKK guerrillas and the state security forces during the 2000s and the first half of the 2010s and the democratization reforms introduced as part of the country's European Union (EU) accession process since 2005 created the conditions for a peaceful end to the conflict. The legal reforms the government carried out to meet the EU accession conditions during the 2000s increased the democratic space for Kurdish political actors, while reforms in the area of Kurdish-language broadcasting and tuition enhanced the legitimacy of Kurdish demands in Turkey. The Justice and Development Party's (AKP's) appetite for reform was high during its early years, but from the mid-2000s onwards, the pace of reforms started to slow down and from 2013 onwards, it came to a complete standstill. Also, the AKP toyed with the idea of peace with the Kurds, and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan often indicated that he was willing to carry out reforms to broaden Kurdish rights in Turkey. However, in practice, very little effort was put into developing policies to address the rights of the Kurds (Gunes, 2014). There was dialogue between the state and the PKK in 2009, 2013 and 2014, and a framework on future negotiations (the 'Dolmabahçe Agreement') was agreed upon and made public in February 2015. However, signs of tension appeared as early as 22 March 2015, when President Erdoğan declared that the so-called Dolmabahçe Agreement did not exist and he did not approve of a negotiated end to the conflict with the PKK (Hacaloğlu, 2015).

The main Kurdish political actors advocate the accommodation of Kurdish rights within the unity of Turkey, but the state's approach to the Kurdish question has not shown any substantial changes, with Kurdish national demands, such as education in the Kurdish language, continuing to be rejected on the grounds that they promote separatism. The AKP's foreign policy choices in the Syrian conflict also increased the tension between the Kurds and the government. The government's refusal to aid the Kurdish fighters in Kobani was met with widespread protest by Kurds across Turkey on 6–8 October 2014; excessive use of police violence to suppress the protests resulted in the death of 46 people. This event symbolized the government's unwillingness to accommodate the Kurds and further eroded the trust between the parties (Gunes, 2019b, p.52).

From 2013 onwards, after the Gezi Park protests in particular, the AKP openly turned towards authoritarianism and Turkish nationalism in order to weaken the growing opposition it faced. As part of this trend, since the summer of 2015, we have witnessed a process of resecuritization of Turkey's Kurdish question and the government's reliance on the use of force on a massive scale to dismantle the pro-Kurdish opposition and repress any form of Kurdish dissent. The policies and actions the AKP government has applied to the repression of the pro-Kurdish movement have been the bedrock of its close alliance with the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP). The AKP's harsh approach to the Kurdish movement also enabled it to extend and consolidate its Turkish nationalist base in the November 2015 elections and further marginalize the HDP. The failed coup attempt on 15 July 2016, carried out by the supporters of the US-based cleric Fethullah Gülen, provided the ideal environment for the AKP government and President Erdoğan to further weaken centres of opposition and undermine democratic institutions. The government declared a state of emergency on 21 July 2016 for an initial period of three months, but it has been extended several times.

Kurdish youth groups, particularly those that are affiliated with the PKK, have been targeted by the state security forces since the summer of 2015. The state crackdown intensified on 24–25 July 2015, with mass arrests in Istanbul and other major Turkish cities following the ISIS terror attack on 20 July 2015 and continued throughout 2015. Although ISIS and Turkish left-wing groups were also targeted, the majority of those arrested were close to the PKK and on suspicion that they were members of its youth branches (Bianet, 2015). In the autumn of 2015, the military operations focused on the Kurdish majority regions and resulted in huge destruction in Diyarbakır's old city, Şırnak, Cizre and Nusaybin, and resulted in many civilian casualties, widespread human rights violations and forced displacement of an estimated half a million Kurds (Yeginsu, 2015). According to the International Crisis Group (2017), a total of 2,712 people lost their lives, including 921 security forces, 1,215 PKK militants, 393 civilians and 219 youth who could not be definitively identified as a civilian or as a member of the PKK. A number of suicide bomb attacks targeting the police, soldiers and civilians carried out by the group the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons (TAK) in 2016 in a number of locations in Turkey have further increased tensions (Al Jazeera, 2016).

The government also took steps that eroded the institutional base the HDP had managed to construct at the local and national levels. On 20 May 2016, the Turkish parliament passed legislation to remove the legal immunity of MPs, which can be understood as a measure designed to end or at least significantly weaken HDP representation in Turkey's parliament. Legal proceedings began against a number of HDP MPs. On 4 November 2016, 11 HDP MPs were detained and nine are currently remanded in custody, including HDP's co-presidents, Selahattin Demirtaş and Figen Yüksekdağ (Bianet, 2017). The MPs and co-presidents are charged with offences ranging from 'carrying out propaganda for a terror organization' to 'being a member of an armed terror organization', and the prosecutors are demanding long sentences for all of them. On 6 October 2017, Burcu Çelik, the HDP MP for Muş province, received a six-year sentence, and the HDP MP for Diyarbakır province, İdris Baluken, received a sentence of 16 years, eight months on 4 January 2018 (Kamer, 2018).

The government targeted local-level representation of pro-Kurdish parties and on 15 August 2016 passed a decree enabling the government to remove elected mayors from office and replace them with appointed trustees. On 11 September 2016, pro-Kurdish mayors were removed from their office and replaced by the provincial governor or their deputy and the district governor. At the local elections held on 30 March 2014, the pro-Kurdish Democratic Regions Party (DBP) won the following 11 municipal councils: Ağrı, Batman, Bitlis, Diyarbakır, Hakkari, Iğdır, Mardin, Şırnak, Siirt, Tunceli and Van. Currently, all but the Iğdır municipality remain in the DBP's control and almost all of the co-mayors are remanded in custody awaiting trial. In addition, 72 DBP-controlled district councils and 12 DBP-controlled town councils have been taken over. In total, 94 councils were been taken over by the government-appointed trustees. Ninety-three of the DBP co-mayors were detained in September 2016, and in December 2017, 70 of them remained under arrest. Eleven have been convicted and are serving jail sentences (DBP, 2017, pp.30–5).

In the local elections held on 31 March 2019, the HDP concentrated its efforts in the Kurdish majority provinces, and its main objective was to take back control over the municipal and district councils won in 2014 but taken over by government-appointed 'trustees' in 2016. The HDP won the metropolitan municipalities of Diyarbakır, Mardin and Van and the provincial municipalities of Batman, Hakkari, Iğdır, Kars and Siirt. In addition, it won 50 district councils and 12 town councils (Secim.Haberler.com, 2019). However, in six districts and towns, despite winning the election, the HDP candidates were not able to take their position on grounds that they were removed from their positions in the civil service by a delegated decree issued by the

government in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt in 2016. Prior to the elections, President Erdoğan hinted that the government policy of removing the elected mayors and replacing them with district and provincial governors will continue. On 19 August 2019, the HDP co-mayors of the Diyarbakır, Mardin and Van municipal councils were removed from their positions and replaced by the provincial governors who were appointed as 'trustees'. Since then, more of the HDP mayors in other municipal and districts councils have been removed by the central government and replaced by a trustee. By October 2020, only in six district and town councils did the elected co-mayors remain in their position. The HDP chose not to field candidates in most of western Turkey and encouraged its supporters to back the opposition candidates in an attempt to weaken the AKP's power base. This support proved crucial and enabled the opposition to take back the municipal councils of Istanbul, Ankara, Adana, Antalya and Mersin form the AKP and its nationalist ally the MHP. On 7 May 2019, Turkey's Supreme Electoral Council (YSK) decided to repeat the Istanbul mayoral election, and the HDP's Kurdish votes proved decisive again in the outcome of the election held on 23 June 2019 (Gunes, 2021, p.49).

Conclusion

The long-term stability of Turkey's political system is only possible if Kurdish demands are accommodated. There is an urgent need for a public debate in Turkey about the specific steps that need to be taken to address Kurdish group rights, but so far, the debate has been framed around the question of whether it is desirable to recognize Kurdish rights or not. The government's approach since the summer of 2015 marks a significant departure from the policies adopted during the past decade. However, rather than an aberration, this needs to be seen as a return to the dominant policy the state pursued during much of the twentieth century. The AKP government pursued a dialogue process with the PKK and Abdullah Öcalan and continued it between January 2013 and April 2015, but it failed to develop a new policy framework for the accommodation of Kurdish rights in Turkey. The current situation of the Kurds in Turkey is precarious, and the majority of the positive developments have been reversed in the space of a short period. So far, the HDP seems to be maintaining its core support base, but the armed conflict in the region is likely to have a significant impact on Kurdish–Turkish relations and on attempts to devise a long-term political solution to the conflict. The AKP relies on conflict acceleration to mobilize Turkish nationalist voters and pacify the HDP as a centre of opposition to its authoritarianism. This leaves very little incentive for the de-escalation of the conflict and a return to the peace process with the PKK.

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16

TURKISH NATIONALISM AND PATRIARCHY

Simten Coşar

Introduction

In Turkey's political history, nationalism has been the most persistent style of politics at the governmental level. It has permeated state politics as well as mainstream party politics in their ordinary running. Types of Turkish nationalism from statist to ethnic, to racist, to fascist – not necessarily exclusive of each other – marked the political discourse of the early-republican era: one-party rule of the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası/Partisi, CHF/CHP) (1923–1945), and persisted in different phases of Republican history, extending well beyond the regime change in the 2000s. Nationalist rhetoric permeated the electoral agendas and policy programmes of different political parties on the left and the right. The prevalence of nationalist rhetoric at times curbed the radical discourse of some leftist movements/political parties to fit into the boundaries of Kemalist establishment.[1] Turkish nationalism has functioned also to evade the radical promises of the women's/feminist movements for gender egalitarian regimes. The connection might be read in terms of the nationalist versions of the patriarchal bargain between women's rights/feminist activists and maleist discourses.[2] In this respect, it is tied to the gender regimes implied – that is, gender relations in workplaces and labour markets, in governmental institutions, and at the level of men–women encounters in private and public spheres through sexual and emotional marks – by different modes of patriarchy in Republican Turkey. This chapter starts from the argument that an analysis of gender regimes that have emerged in the first two decades of the 2000s – marking the final phase of regime change in the country – calls for a critical reading of the place that Turkish nationalism has occupied in the reproduction of the patriarchal order.[3] It is based on a critical reading of the junctions and niches in the interface among nationalist rhetoric, the neoliberal order of things, and authoritarian politics to understand the play of gender relations. I offer an account of the gender regimes that reveals the patriarchal connections between the social policies and familial priorities of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) governments. I consider the 2000s as the latest phase of the regime transition that started in early 1980s. I try to elaborate the unfolding of the AKP's liberal approach, unfolded from a pro-negotiation stance to the colonization of women's rights demands, and finally, to the permeation of an anti-feminist stance into the gender agenda with a view to nationalism as a tactical tool in the party's discursive policies. I argue that the new gender

regime is based on the depoliticization of women's claims for gender equality by familializing women's rights.

The chapter is composed of three parts. In the first part, the meaning of regime change is explored from a feminist perspective. In the second part, the shifts and relocations in the nationalist state discourse are discussed with a comparative look at the dominant Republican political stance – that is, a Kemalist stance – vis-à-vis the AKP's Islamist stance. This part also explores the critical role of the Turkish–Islamic Synthesis (TIS) in (dis)connecting Kemalist nationalism to religious nationalism – as it is represented in the AKP's discursive practices. The third part situates the discussion in the context of feminist politics.

Regime crisis, crisis regime

The terms "regime in crisis" and "crisis regime" are symbolic of the AKP's attempts to come to terms with the global neoliberal crisis. In its first two terms in government, the AKP pursued the strategies of a party in the making (Coşar 2012). Starting with the 61st government (2011–2014), the AKP governments adopted religion-based and authoritarian political practices. Their performances have increasingly been presented through crisis-prone rhetoric. The accent on government as commercial activity and politics as administration were lost to the increasing dependency on the rhetoric of survival – of the party, the government, the leader, the family, and the nation:

> Thank God, we put an end to the Gezi incidents, which aimed at dividing our society, in solidarity with our nation as we had done in the case of every attack against our country. They tried to accomplish what they failed to achieve in Gezi, in the Security-Judiciary initiative on December 17–25. We eliminated this trap, too, together with our nation. Yet again, they tried to divide our land […] We disrupted this trap, too, by the heroic struggle of our Security Forces, burying the terrorists to the pits that they themselves opened. July 15 military *coup d'état* attempt was, in fact, a follow-up to the same thread of attacks. Thank God, we defeated this betrayal, too, together with our nation. We consider the fight we are waging in Syria, today, as part of this process. The target of this chain of attacks that extend from Gezi to Syria is directly the integrity of the State of the Republic of Turkey, the unity, togetherness, *brotherhood* of the Turkish nation.
>
> *(Erdoğan 2020) (emphasis mine)*[4]

The background to the current regime was the restructuration of the sociopolitical landscape in the 1980s. The critical juncture for the restructuration is marked by the 1980 military coup d'état. Basically, the measures under military rule (1980–1983) were framed in terms of a neoliberal order of things, pertaining to the sociopolitical dynamics and the (desired) role of Turkey in the global finance flow (Balseven & Önder 2009; Berksoy 1982). The 1980s were characterized by a narrow political space, making it convenient for building the institutional frame for neoliberal practices. The military and civilian rulers shared the preference for neoliberalization. They also conceded to Muslim/Islamist sensitivities as matters of policy preferences. For military rulers this meant the increasing appeal to the Muslimhood/Islamhood in Turkish national identity and history. The appeal was accompanied by the reorganization of the national education system at all levels, along the TIS (Kaplan 2005). For civilian governments, this meant civil societalization of Muslim/Islamic/Islamist sociopolitical claims. Starting with Turgut Özal's prime ministry as the head of the Motherland Party (Anavatan

Partisi), religious groups, *tarikats*, could gradually gain visibility in the institutional political sphere (Mardin 2005).

The TIS turned out to be the modus operandi of the post-1980 political landscape in the country. On its foundation in 2001, the AKP managed to manipulate different aspects of the post-1980 political restructuration process. It emphasized consensus, moderation, and stability in party politics and government. This emphasis was also instrumental in distancing the party from the Islamist origins of its founders. Moreover, the TIS offered the AKP the grounds to pursue religiously conservative policy preferences while disclaiming against Islamist politics. It manipulated the neoliberal bottlenecks of the early 2000s that brought in a new set of structural adjustment requisites, which regulated Turkey's experience with neoliberalism. While staying loyal to the requisites, the party played in populist rhetoric and practices – both in terms of short-term distributive measures and, as the party tended towards authoritarian rule, in terms of the increasingly discriminatory approach that marked the opposition as the outsiders-as-threats to the nation vis-à-vis its supporters as *the people* (Coşar & Özman 2013).

From TIS to continuous national liberation war

The AKP's acquiescence to the TIS in its early years can be read as a pragmatic preference that also characterized the party's flirting with a liberal attitude to social and political opposition. The statist–nationalist rhetoric of the military president of the 1980s, Kenan Evren, and his appeal to Islam in addressing the masses resonate in the rather bizarre appeal of Erdoğan, as well as the members of *his* party to the rhetoric of a (Turkish and Muslim) national liberation war as a strategic tool in electoral politics. In this rhetoric, the place spared for the perplexing diversity and multitude of the foes of the nation-as-terrorists, the glorification of martyrdom, and the inevitability of the idea and practice of war has consistently widened.

Through its terms in government the party moved from a pro-negotiation stance to the colonization of women's rights demands, and to the permeation of an anti-feminist stance into its gender agenda. The first strategy – negotiations with women's civil society – brought in legal reforms, in line with the gender equality demands of the women's rights organizations (WROs). The amendments in the Penal Code (2004), and in the Law on Municipalities (2005), and the establishment of the Parliamentary Commission for the Equality of Men and Women (2009), are examples in this respect. In the meantime, the AKP was keen on keeping up its male face to its religious and conservative constituencies by openly denouncing feminist claims as unfit for Turkish–Muslim morals. This strategy was also evinced in the systematic relationality between the state agencies for women's status and problems, and the women's civil society that would come to an end by 2013. The colonization of women's rights demands was managed by the tactical appointment of Fatma Şahin as the minister responsible for family and women. Şahin came from within the party's women's branches, and had formed positive relations with the WROs. Seemingly contradictory developments took place in this interval, as seen in the change in the name of the Ministry of Family and Women to the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı, ASPB) (2011), on the one hand, and Turkey's ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on Preventing Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence (widely known as the İstanbul Convention) in 2011 as the first signatory, on the other hand. However, the contradictions ended in the delimitation of the concern for rights-based claims to women-only rights demands, and so long as these are defined through the prioritization of familial orders, and especially the *Turkish* family order. The withdrawal from the İstanbul Convention has to be understood against this background. (The most recent development in this respect was the presidential decision to withdraw from the İstanbul Convention, which was

issued in the official *Gazette* on March 20, 2021, in the middle of the night.) This period also signalled the final stage in the gender regime change under the AKP's rule by the introduction of gender justice to counter the feminist demands for gender equality. The amendment to the Law on Protecting Family (No. 4320) stands as another seeming contradiction and as a step in the colonization of women's rights claims. The drafting of the new law, the Law on the Protection of Family and Prevention of Violence against Women (No. 6284), unfolded first through negotiations with invited WROs/feminist organizations, and then through their exclusion.

The symbolic turn in 2013 brought a resolution to the AKP's contradictions regarding gender equality; it also introduced the harmonization of Erdoğan's continuous anti-feminist stance based on conservative familialism with policies that were pursued in relation to women. While Erdoğan insisted on separating justice from equality due to essential differences between the sexes, and increasingly tended to do so in events related to women's rights,[5] the AKP governments launched "family projects" that aimed to strengthen the heterosexual, Turkish–Sunni Muslim family. Exemplary in this respect is the ASPB's family project (2013), and Ahmet Davutoğlu's family projects during his prime ministry (2014–2016). The family projects of the AKP governments are heterosexual by definition since in Turkey marriages and related legal claims are limited to heterosexual couples. They are heterosexist through the cooperation between the ASPB and the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı) – a Sunni–Muslim organization addressing the Sunni–Muslim citizens in the country – in such policies as the formation of Family and Religious Counselling Desks as well as Family Spiritual Guidance and Counselling Desks in affiliation with the latter. The families envisaged in these projects are by definition Turkish, considering that it is the *Turkish family structure* that has widely and consistently been promoted as essentially solidaristic.

Both sets of projects were consistent with the party's pronatalist policies, which are clearly not the first of its kind in the history of modern Turkey (Erten 2015). The foundation of the Republic, as it overlapped with the Turkish nation-state construction witnessed almost four decades of pronatalist discursive practices at the governmental level. As the AKP started to mimic Kemalist tactics especially with regard to the construction of its historic leader within the scope of a *new* national liberation, it is possible to identify the two kinds of pronatalist discursive policies in one prototype. However, they have their own patriarchal codes with seemingly overlapping nationalist sensitivities. Briefly, Republican pronatalism was embedded in the nation-state construction process, calling women out of the traditional family structures into the modern Republican family settings. The period was characterized by a global regime change that hosted nation-state construction processes – as the new sociopolitical setting for world capitalist relations (Hobsbawm 1992; 1977). The AKP's terms in government involved the reshaping of nation states at times extending to reterritorialization, the emergence of regional units as global actors, the currency of transnational regulations, the ascendancy of multinational corporations, and the typical coexistence of mutually exclusive political units as contestants to rule the peoples – all signs of the ongoing crisis of the neoliberal version of world capitalist relations. The AKP's response to the deepening of the crisis has so far been the extension of its conservative and authoritarian stance in the political space, a deepening of its nationalist sentimentalities, which increasingly tended towards fascistic practices.[6] The transition from the TIS to a fascistic stance can be traced in the way the new regime is pictured by Erdoğan, symbolically representing both the AKP as its chair and the state as the president. Starting from the presidential campaign in 2014 and extending through the last phase of the regime transformation in the past six years, Erdoğan's featuring both in party and state politics has increasingly been based on the rhetoric of independence war, national liberation/salvation.

Especially through the coup d'état attempt of July 15, 2016, and the following two-year-long state of emergency (2016–2018), this featuring pushed for the narrowing of the political space – domestic and foreign - into a *war zone*, occupied exclusively by the military nation and its enemies. The war model for the pursuit of national politics is best summarized in a recent public statement for the placement of Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) in Syria and Libya. In the words of Erdoğan, the TAF is there "not because we are obliged to; but because we are destined to" – hinting at the conception of policy-making as a matter of *existence* that goes beyond the exigencies of everyday politics. The politics of the new regime asks for an aggressively unfolding construction of the nation if not the Republican state. It is here, too, that the fascism of the twenty-first century can be located:

> Ladies, are you ready to nurture the generation of Asım, who deserve the heritage of Alparslan, Fatih, Yavuz, and all of our martyrs? The youth, are you ready to march with the nation when your Father gives the sign? O İstanbul! Are you ready to challenge the world as the symbol of Islam and the Turkish nation for 566 years? For this, we shall conquer our hearts and minds every day. For this, we shall refurnish our flag and starboards like Ulubatlı Hasan […] For this, we shall make our hearts immaculate like Akşemsettin, [and] submit to our God. For this, like Fatih, we shall continue in our path without stopping, attending to sedition, with steps that would go beyond our age. Our martyrs and ghazis would be content with us if only we could succeed. We shall work more, struggle more, control and examine ourselves more in order not to grieve their beloved spirits. You shall not forget that "The fairy, called Victory, runs away from those who keep silent, and approaches the ones who effervesce." Then, are we ready to march on this path [where] the alive are honourable, and the dead are glorious? My God, may he be content with all of you.
>
> *(Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'dan Darbeye Direnişin 3. Yılında Önemli Mesajlar 2019)*

Nationalisms and gender regimes – competing modes of patriarchy?

The contemporary regime change in Turkey implies a transition in the mode of patriarchy – in the structural organization of the gender regime. Here, I distinguish the newly emerging patriarchy from the Republican patriarchy that has persisted at the policy-making level through most of the Republican history. The neoliberal–conservative patriarchy of the AKP governments' policies symbolized a transitory phase in the gender regime (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu 2011). The Republican mode of patriarchy has always been middle-class based, secular, and heterosexual. This mode corresponded to social policy patterns within the scope of Fordist capitalism that worked through heterosexual familial patterns, social policies based on nuclear familial bonds, and in keeping the husbands/fathers as the breadwinners, and wives/mothers as dependents on the former (Buğra & Keyder 2006). It inscribed a form of gender relations in the society where gender equality was understood in terms of equality of opportunity and mostly in education. In this respect, it did not omit the opportunity spaces for women's/feminist claims to legal amendments in formal terms.

The AKP came to power when WROs/feminist organizations had been for some time tactfully utilizing the opportunity spaces to press for their claims. The party used the assets of the Republican gender regime that discriminated against women – as in the case of the headscarf issue – as well as the nationalist rhetoric that defined motherhood as part of women's national responsibilities – giving birth to and raising ideal Turkish citizens. It brought in a transitory mode of patriarchy – neoliberal–conservative – that inscribed a gender regime regulating women's

impoverishment in the informal labour market and an official call back to the domestic sphere through the flexibilization in work conditions. This mode did not embrace a specific form of nationalist rhetoric, but it complied with the TIS. The current mode of patriarchy is different in that it brings in a gender regime that dissolves the social into the familial and/or personal, ascribing both essential features, representative of *a Turkish nation*. The cross-gender resource allocations in this gender regime have so far been framed in a personalist style between the state and the recipient, where the state is expressed in the person of the president.

Feminist organizations in Turkey have had to face maleist attempts to monopolize women's rights issues. This was the case in the early-republican era, in which male powerholders continued to claim to hold the most viable knowledge of how to solve women's issues in the following decades. The attitude persists today, when the Republican regime is deconstructed, and in the newly emerging establishment as it is being gradually shaped. The maleist claim to monopoly has so far been accompanied by the prevalence of nationalist sensitivities in rhetorical form and/or at the level of policy-making. It is no secret that patriarchy is most attractive in nationalist tunes. The AKP benefited from this attractiveness in the construction of a new (gender) regime. It used the (neo)liberal vocabulary that could fit into the TIS until it found the grounds for endorsing Islamist priorities, exclusively. The transitions in the AKP's gendered discursive practices and in the way it manipulated nationalistic sensitivities in instituting the gender regimes that characterized the 2000s cannot be classified in clear-cut time frames. But a rough time frame might read as follows: a relatively liberal approach to civil society in general and WROs in particular (2002–2010); the distancing of women's rights from feminism, and gender equality from women's rights (2010–2013); and the institutionalization of an anti-feminist political stance as the basis for the party's gender regime (2013–).

The main differences between the neoliberal–conservative mode of patriarchy and the Republican mode can be observed in the form of familialism, in the style in which women-as-mothers are linked to the nation and the state, and in the conceptual frame that defined women's rights.[7] Here, regarding familialism as an asset of nationalist rhetoric, it is apt to emphasize that the manifest contradiction that has surfaced in the AKP's political stance is the relation to Kemalism, and the republican priorities, set in early-republican years. The party's first two terms in government were dominated by an anti-Kemalist discursive toolkit. The turn in discursive strategies that started with Erdoğan's presidential campaign might be read as a sign of the match between the pro-natalist policy preferences that characterize the Republican mode of patriarchy and the newly emerging mode of patriarchy. A closer look brings to attention the nuance between the two modes: The first nuance is related to the role of Islamism, Islamic values, and religious morals in the call to reproduction of new generations for the Turkish nation. The second is related to the way familialism is promoted at individual and national levels. And the third is observed in the positioning of the state and the *historic* leaders in relation to the ruled.

First, it is no secret that the Republican patriarchy was built on secularist gender inequalities where Islam was pacified – if not excluded. The inequality that marked this mode of patriarchy hinted at the only sphere where secularist rulers of the early-republican era could manage to institute a morals – relatively free from the dominance Islam – that is the call to citizens to care for the have-nots as a matter of citizenship responsibility, a matter of being a member of the same nation. This was the case, certainly, at the decision-making level, and had to concede to the weight of religion at the societal level (Buğra 2007). The main addressees were the yet-to-be-instituted national middle classes, the national bourgeoisie, and, particularly, the urban middle class and/or bourgeois women. The nationalist discourse of the early-republican ruling cadres was devised so as to represent a secular national identity, whereas Islam appeared

to be the matter-of-fact identity reference for the majority of the society.[8] Muslim women were invited into the public sphere on the condition of leaving their religious identities in private and intimate spheres. The state party of the period, the CHF/CHP, claimed monopoly over the know-how of women's rights, preventing the existence of independent feminist organizations. According to Tekeli, the early-republican era was marked by state feminism. The modernization reforms were considered as evidence for that (Tekeli, 1986). The justification for such reforms addressed nationalistic sentimentalities: the greatness of Turkish culture. AKP governments' distant openness to dialogue with WROs/feminist organizations within the scope of the neoliberal–conservative patriarchy can be compared to such state feminism (Coşar & Yeğenoğlu 2011). Likewise, the AKP instituted its own women's rights GONGO, the Women and Democracy Centre (Kadın ve Demokrasi Merkezi; KADEM, 2013), one signifier of its claim to monopolistic rule – running against the neoliberal tide, which it manipulated tactfully until the last phase of regime transition. Some legal reforms can be cited as instances of state feminism. But when the overall legal restructuration is considered, one might note the manipulation of women's rights as a fragment in the neoliberal order of politics by the party in consolidating its institutional power: On the one hand, the party was credited with its compromise to some of the feminist demands in the legal sphere. This initially gave the AKP a relatively handsome look on the European Union stage, as well as a response to the claims about its hidden Islamist intentions. It also helped the party play with the civil societal support through a fragmentary policy strategy. This play is most manifest in the party's management of different opposing groups singly, pre-empting the possibility of cooperation among different social rights groups, with a certain degree of success. Above all, the party has consistently been anti-feminist and the (Muslim–Turkish) nationalist rhetoric on a friend–foe line has increasingly been the main instrument in sewing together the fragments of the political sphere:

> Aren't these [feminists, insisting on March 8 night march] the ones who burn our flags? With pipes in your hands, do you [really] need to whistle during the call to prayer? You, as you walk there for the International Women's Day, don't you know the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations? [...] Is this land so unattended that any stranger passes by? Is this the old Turkey? […] we did what should be done. They were pushed out of the space that night.
>
> *(Erdoğan Yine Feminist Gece Yürüyüşünü Hedef Aldı 2019)*

> I say that the woman is entrusted to man by God. You know these feminists et cetera [...] They say […] "woman as a trust; this is insulting." You see, you do not have any relation to our religion, our civilization. We consider the address of the beloved of the beloveds.
>
> *(Erdoğan: Bu Feministler Filan 2015)*

Here, the convergence of the two modes of patriarchy over anti-abortion rhetoric is important. In the case of the Republican patriarchy, abortion was outlawed from the very start. The early-republican ruling cadres opted for pronatalist policies as a matter of nation-building in a war-torn county. They promoted the rise in birth rates; they also brought in strict measures to punish not only the practice of abortion but also the demand and/or support for it – labelling abortion as a form of treason. The AKP was born into a political context where abortion had already been recognized as a legal right (1983) – ironically during the military regime.[9]

The second nuance is manifested in the picturing of the family as a solidarity network that is specific to Muslim–Turkish culture, as well as in the calls to marriage as a means to preserve this

culture with promises and practices of financial incentives. This was clearly stated by Davutoğlu, the prime minister of the eighth AKP government (the 64th government of the Republic, 2014–2016), when he was promoting the merge between family policies and social policies:

> If the youngster says, "my money may not be sufficient to turn into capital," then we will say "here it is, TL 100 thousand, interest-free." We will not tax the young people in the first three years of their enterprise […] The state is your beloved [*yar*], *like the mother, like the father.* It is the one who prepares you for the future in her/his compassionate lap. […] The state will pay for the salaries of those young people who are employed for the first time; this is the incentive to the employers. Now, you have a job, you have your salary, you have food. What is left behind? Your partner is left behind […] We want fertility for the people of this land; we want them to get multiplied, but at the same time to have jobs. When you say, I need a partner, you will first address your mother, your father; and may God's will, they will find you the right partner. If they cannot, you will come to us […] Is not this sort of state lovable? Wouldn't one be proud of being a citizen of such a state?
>
> *(Aileniz Hayırlı Bir Eş Bulamazsa 2015)*

The reference to the state as a familial figure is not new in Turkey's politics. There is ample literature on a strong state tradition in Turkey where the paternal state is read as a historical fact. The state-centric literature aside, the state was envisioned as the *father* of the nation in general. In the early-republican period, the leader was pictured as the *father through generations – as the Ata of the Turks* – thus, reckoning the father–children connection between the yet-to-be citizenized – read as nationalized – population and the state. The symbolic importance of the family was then completed by a rather uneasy call to women to assume the morals and responsibilities of *national motherhood* (Sirman 2005). The Republican patriarchy had to endure the contradictions of inviting women to equal citizenship regardless of differences in gender and sexual identities – it had to endure the contradictions of asking women to conform to maleist citizenship norms while staying true to motherhood responsibilities in the domestic sphere as well as in the national imagination. This contradiction did not result in the state claim to assume a role similar to the role of husbands. The familial policies were based on a traditional gender hierarchy that reproduced the dominance of husbands in the heterosexual domestic sphere. In this frame, the paternal state conveyed the symbolic identification of the household with the *motherland*, and that of fatherhood with the leader. The Republican *father* was pictured as an enlightened patriarch opting for a maleist understanding of equality for women. He was not supposed to hear feminist demands, and/or independent women's organizations were not considered viable venues for women's claims. In the case of a contemporary mode of patriarchy, AKP governments' policy preferences have so far aimed at a *locus* for the state in the household, a place in the familial sphere beyond the regulation of population growth and the regulation of marriage. The exclusion of feminist claims from regulations concerning women's access to care services and retirement benefits, as well as workplace dynamics, which have increasingly worked through the individualization of the relation between the government and the beneficiary, are functional in this respect. Legal regulations enabling married women and/or widows to have direct access to financial benefits – all related to the domestic roles traditionally identified with women's nature – attest to a positive step for the long-voiced feminist claim. But the fact that related regulations primarily address the familial sphere, and are accompanied by practices that reinforce gender inequality, signify the dismissal of the intermediaries between the state and women as citizens. The state in the person of the leader seems to be situated as

another figure of the patriarch, this time calling women *back* into the familial sphere as a moral workplace, as a social service institution, and as the cradle of the nation. The personified state differs from the Republican patriarchy by closing the distance between the leader and the ruled: It is no more the state that mimics parenthood, basically the fatherhood; rather, it is the state that is rhetorically pictured in familial terms – as a male acquaintance, reaching women bypassing fathers, brothers, husbands, while at the same time urging them to prioritize their motherly and wifely responsibilities as a matter of national duty. This frame offers comfort to the leading members of the AKP to call women to national duty by giving birth to more children (Davutoğlu Aile ve Nüfusun Korunması Programını Açıkladı 2015), by marrying as young as possible to prove their loyalty, to define abortion and/or a C-section as murderous as well as an act of complicity with the foes of the nation:

> For years, they have operated birth control mechanisms in this country. They have almost sterilised our citizens, our people. They did everything, including medical interventions, for this. The case, called "C-section" is this; the case, called "abortion" is this. They did these all the time. In so doing they almost committed murder; they almost deceived. They said, "you are dying, we will save your life." They said, "that is the reason to do a C-section." But their aim was different. [...] The aim was to see a decrease in the population of this nation, and to see that this nation lags behind the race among the nations. But now we are putting an end to this trap; we have to do so. That is why in this country families have much to do.
>
> *(Erdoğan'dan Kürtaj ve Sezaryen Yorumu 2013)*

The first two periods of the AKP's gender regime hosted a neoliberal–conservative patriarchy as a transitory mode. In this mode of patriarchy nationalism was always present in the form of the TIS and with a supplementary function to the conservative sociocultural stance of the governments. It surfaced in the conflict on the criminalization of adultery during the reform process of the Turkish Penal Code (2004), as well as in the denial of abortion as a woman's right. It was embodied in the Law on Social Security and General Health Insurance, as well as in laws regulating flexible labor and work–life balance. In this gender regime WROs were not totally excluded from the policy-making process. They were relatively effective in pushing the governments for related legal reforms. In the last phase of regime transition, the basics of the new establishment have been set – thus, the new mode of patriarchy. This new mode of patriarchy can be defined in terms of an Islamist–nationalist discourse with a survivalist accent. The Islamist–nationalist discourse here relies on a rather uneasy combination of multiple sources, extending from Ottomanism to the Turkish–Islamic ideal, and to the expansionist will to leadership of the Islamist world. The survivalist rhetoric prevents disintegration between these parties to the discourse.

In this new phase, nationalism extends beyond rhetoric into everyday politics. It does not only function as the rhetorical frame, used by the rulers to address the ruled. It also functions as the referential frame to define the government's domestic and foreign security preferences, educational policies, familial-cum-social policies, and employment policies as well as commercial and financial policies. The survivalist rhetoric that forms the modus operandi of this form of nationalism as a decisive feature of the mode of patriarchy fits well into the newly emerging establishment in the country. The way it will evolve depends on how it is perceived by the feminist resistance, how it is countered and bargained with. The feminist movement in Turkey has had experience in solidarity to struggle for gender equality at a time when the government has taken steps to dissociate the understanding and practice of justice from the principle of equality.

Concluding remarks

The taken-for-granted site of nation(-state)s in the twentieth century facilitated the integration of women's rights demands into the maleist patterns of nationalist politics, especially in the construction phases. The narrations of nations, owned, constructed, and/or put into force by nationalists have contained gendered regimes (Walby 1992). Feminist claims naturally addressed the lands of the nations in settings where the nation-state structure worked as the normal of the institutional politics. Thus, intervening in gender regimes in national settings brought in the adjustment to various versions of nationalist rhetoric that are framed within the scope of nations as "discursive formation's" (Calhoun 1999: 217–231). Women's claims coming from the marginalized ethnic groups, ethno-religious minorities, and/or from the underclasses hint at a tension between these claims to political rights and nationalist rhetoric in the major part of the twentieth century – the century of nation states. The tricky position of the *Turkish* women's/feminist movement with respect to nationalism in the major part of the Republican history can be read with a view to two stances: a strategic and/or ideological alliance with the nationalist movement and/or disinterest toward the implications of Turkish nationalism for gender equality that would integrate non-Turkish ethnic identities. In either case, it continued to speak from within the nationalist rhetoric. In this respect, the explanation by Nezihe Muhiddin, a Turkish feminist who advocated for gender-egalitarian Republican citizenship in defence of her stance for women's rights, attests to the normalcy of nationalism for even those political activities deemed marginal by the ruling cadres (Gülen 2015; Yurdsever-Ateş 2009, Zihnioğlu 2003). This shall not come as a surprise, considering the literature on the place, positioning, and situatedness of women's/feminist movements in times of nation-state construction, and in nationalist movements (See Waetjen 2001; Nilsson-Ranchod and Tétrault 2000; Mangaliso 1997; West 1997; Jayawardena 1986). In the contemporary politics of Turkey one can observe the ascendancy of a religious–nationalist discourse at the governmental level and at the civil societal level. Independent WROs/feminist organizations have to endure, come to terms with, and bypass – if not overcome – the conservative setbacks to their activism and achievements in the increasingly authoritarian political atmosphere.

The patriarchal working of politics in modern Turkey is well documented (Dönmez & Özmen 2013; Kadıoğlu 1998; Arat 1989). Until after the formation of independent feminist groups in the late 1980s, women's rights claims in Turkey have developed within the scope of different – and at times rival – ideological preferences and political movements. In this respect, feminist claims can be traced to the demands raised mostly by leftist women's organizations (Pervan 2013).[10] In the 1990s, one can note the prevalence of the encounters among women's rights advocates/feminists with diverse perspectives on issue-based platforms. It was mainly the (physical) violence against women (VAW) that enabled these encounters, leading, in turn, to collaboration against patriarchal structures on a broader scale. These encounters enabled Turkish feminists to face the *banal* nationalism that works as the modus vivendi in certain nation-state structures. Feminist organizations in Turkey that did not necessarily embrace an anti-nationalist, non-nationalist stance and/or that were not necessarily engaged in a critical stance vis-a-vis nationalism had to wait to get into contact with Kurdish feminists in order to question the pervasiveness of nationalist rhetoric in Turkey's political landscape and its implications for women's rights (Çağlayan 2019; Sirman 2016): questioning the prevalence of nationalism in bypassing the links among different aspects of VAW and reducing it to domestic violence. It involves exploring the implications of nationalism for the mainstreaming of militarism – that is, the prioritization of militarist solutions to existing political conflicts within and outside the country and assimilating rights-based concerns to securitization. In the encounters with the

Kurdish women's movement this meant becoming acquainted with the historical connection among domestic violence, the multilevel marginalization of Kurdish women, and the maleist citizenship culture. Certainly, this is not an easy process, and it is still in the making, ironically enabled by the fragmented style of politics that has characterized the neoliberal order of things. It involves the possibility for a radical alternative to the forms of relations between feminism and nationalism – extending from feminists' integration into nationalist movements, especially in the Third World as a broader scope for women's empowerment to an anti-nationalist stance among feminists – suggesting the possibility for feminists to step outside the nation-state imaginary in their struggle for egalitarian gender regimes.

The new regime in Turkey presents new challenges and opportunities for collaboration among feminist organizations across ethnic lines. The challenge comes with the increase in authoritarian politics, pursued on a fascistic track. The AKP continues to appeal to the electorate-as-nation with a survivalist rhetoric that works as a means of instituting the basics of the new regime, including the gender regime. The new gender regime that can be observed in the policy preferences of the AKP governments involve the depoliticization of the rights-based claims into the private and intimate spheres, implicating the nationalization–communitarianization of the family, and the familialization of the society. In the contemporary gender regime the state is male symbolically and a metaphor to represent the gender inegalitarian policies that favour men as citizens. It is also male in the person of the president claiming to *perform* the state when addressing women directly and in personal terms. This gender regime works through a form of Turkish nationalism that combines the Sunni–Muslim identity with survivalist calls to the nation-as-family. This gender regime is built in the new regime of Turkey, identified with personalist presidential rule, revealing the fascistic line of politics that the country is facing.

Notes

1 Belge (2009) discusses the Kemalist legacy for the left in Turkey in the 1960s and 1970s. He outlines the nationalist–leftist nexus as a continuity that starts with the nation-state construction. Belge's account evinces the persistence of nationalist motives in certain issue areas. Although I do not consider the persistence of nationalism as acute as Belge's reading suggests, it would be apt to note nationalist rhetoric as a reflex in the conventional leftist practice.

2 Kandiyoti (1988 286, fn. 1) proposes the term, patriarchal barga'n '"..to indicate the set rules and scripts regulating the gender relations to which both genders accommodate and acquiesce, yet which may nonetheless be contested, redefined and renegotiated." Kandiyoti notes that bargaining is the form of relation to the patriarchal structure in times of crisis, when women – and not necessarily feminists – manipulate certain assets of the dissolving mode of patriarchy. Here, I try to locate this notion in different periods of AKP governments: In the first two periods, I refer to the feminists' bargaining with AKP's anti-feminist familial policy preferences in their attempts to ensure legal amendments. For the third period, I refer to the possibility of bringing in the bargain with the republican mode of patriarchy as a frame that does not dismiss the principle of gender equality *vis-a-vis* the current replacement of gender par excellence. vocabulary that hosts the word is maleist neoliberal practices. litics - based Turkish nationalism on the one ha equality with the conservative conceptualization of gender justice.

3 Here I follow Connell's (1987) definition of gender regimes, and the distinction she makes between gender regimes and gender orders. I adopt a political science perspective by considering gender regimes primarily in terms of resource allocation that crosscut all three levels.

4 Here and elsewhere I translate the word *kardeşlik*, which has a unisex connotation as "brotherhood" since its context is maleist par excellence.

5 "You cannot put the weak and the strong into the same race. Some insist on "equal[ity] [...] Can this be just? No. [...] You cannot keep the oppressor and the oppressed in the same circle" (Hükümetin Hedefi: Ailenin Lokomotifi Kadın 2018).

6 I follow the definition of fascism, proposed by Geoff Eley (2014) in approaching the style of ruling in contemporary Turkey with reference to fascistic practices. I understand fascism as a form of relation to politics. In my reading, fascistic politics is manifested in the centrality of fear in the ruler–ruled relations: fear of losing power; fear of punishment by the institutional powerholders; personalization of politics; and anti-intellectualism.
7 For parallelisms between the past and the present regarding "control over women's sexualities and subjectivities", see Cindoğlu & Ünal 2017.
8 The uneasy relation between Turkishness and Muslimhood as envisaged by the founding cadres of the Republic was not stable; it changed frequently depending on the weight given to the elements defining Turkish identity – either in its ethnicist versions and/or territorial frames, at times extending to racist approaches. For a detailed account of the varieties of Turkish nationalism at the governmental level in the early-republican era, see Yıldız 2019.
9 Feminists have been demanding improvements in legal arrangements for the practice of the right to abortion. See Türkiye'de Kürtajın Tarihi 2017.
10 Keşoğlu-Talay (2010) elaborates feminist claims raised by the İlerici Kadınlar Derneği (Progressive Women's Association).

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17
YOUTH POLITICS

Ayça Alemdaroğlu

Introduction

Turkey is a young country; about half of the population is under the age of 30.[1] Young people's thoughts and feelings about power and politics are essential not only to determine the winners and losers of elections but also how political meanings and demands will evolve in the country in the decades to come. However, since the 1980 coup, the most widespread perception about youth politics has been its absence. The argument about youth apathy or disinterest in politics has often come as criticism about excessive individualism and obliviousness of the 1980s and 1990s generations about social problems. However, the apathy argument has little to offer for understanding young people's political meanings, demands, and the conditions in which these meanings and demands take shape. Nor does it take into consideration the various ways in which young people are involved in thinking and talking about politics.

Surveys often ask young people about their interest in politics, in the narrowest sense of the term as what governments, political parties, and politicians do, which might have little resonance for young people. Although what governments do fundamentally influence their life chances, meanings, and practices, youth might have little or no interest in following political developments. For instance, in one such survey in 2017, only 7% of the youth said they regularly follow political developments.[2] However, politics is also about how people are engaged in the prevailing terms of political discourse; how they employ, negate, and articulate these terms to make sense of, adapt to, and contest circumstances and hierarchies that inform their lives. In this second sense, youth narratives of politics provide a crucial understanding about the formation and effects of political power and hegemony.

This chapter employs these two senses of politics to examine three episodes of youth politics in Turkey's recent history. The first episode examines young people's political narratives based on the findings of a qualitative study of young adults in Ankara in the mid-2000s, a few years after the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power in 2002. It shows that nationalism and cynicism are the two dominant narratives, which young people employ to make sense of politics both in the narrowest sense of the term as formal politics and in the broadest sense of the term as how people make sense of formal politics and power hierarchies in society. Both narratives provide a framework and a story to make sense of and talk comfortably about politics, political exclusion, and a political order in which they have little faith.

The second episode focuses on the 2013 Gezi protests, to reflect on the significance of this unprecedented mobilization, which rallied the politically excluded and alienated with a new imagination of politics. This politics gave prominence to solidarity, participation, and democracy, in which young people gained faith, albeit briefly, in the power of collective action. The final episode issues the AKP government's approach to young people following the nationwide protests in 2013. In particular, it examines how the government's heightened concern about containing and co-opting youth dissent found expression in increasing coercion, indoctrination, and patronage.

Episode 1: Apathy, nationalism, and cynicism – narratives of politics in post-1980

> I do not discuss politics with friends or family. My father always advised us to stay away from politics because of what happened in the 1970s. We lost people in the right–left conflict; my uncle and two of his friends got killed. They were not radicals or anything like that; they were just nationalists. My father thinks politics isn't good for anyone. It turns friends into enemies. We do not have much to do with politics, in any case. We work hard all day in trying to earn our livelihood. I deal with fifty different kinds of people – the leftists, the rightists every day. I cannot have politics in such a place.
>
> *(Murat, a 24-year-old car mechanic)*

My simple question, 'do you talk about politics with your friends or family?' frequently elicited narratives of distance and avoidance from the interviewees during my fieldwork in the mid-2000s in Ankara. The interviewees were young people between 18 and 30 years of age. A majority came from low- and middle-income families, and none were full-time students. They worked as hairdressers, security guards, repairmen, secretaries, sales agents, and home-sitting young women. One-third was either unemployed or not working. Their proclaimed disinterest in politics initially confirmed the prevailing academic and popular opinions about youth political apathy. Since the 1980s, researchers in Turkey and elsewhere have argued that the modernist idea of youth as a vanguard of social and political transformation was no longer valid (Lüküslü 2009; Neyzi 2001). Young people came to be increasingly seen as individualistic consumers with no concern for issues that mobilized the previous generations in the 1960s and the 1970s. My interviewees' avoidance talk was at one level, an example of apathy. However, when asked further questions – thanks to the benefits of the in-depth interview method – young people's responses indicated that their "avoidance" and "disinterest" did not come from a lack of thinking or concern about politics. Nor were they necessarily disengaged; most voted in elections and some had stronger connections to political parties.

Murat, for instance, when he was in his teens, was a regular of his local Ülkü Ocakları branch (Idealist Hearths) – the radical right-wing, pan-Turkist organization founded in 1969 by student supporters of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP). The idea was to spread a nationalistic consciousness against Marxist–Leninist influences and to raise individuals committed to Turkish race and ethnicity (Bora 2003; Çınar and Arıkan 2002). As Tanıl Bora (2003: 445) explains, the Idealist nationalism was a "fascist ideology founded by the pan-Turkist intelligentsia, which has pursued the idea of the racist-ethnicist vein of Atatürk nationalism to its extreme." In the 1970s and later following the 1980 coup, the racist

overtones were subsumed in a new discourse based on a cultural–historical identity, in which Islam became central.

The military council that conducted the coup banned the MHP as well as all other political parties but helped nationalism, with a religious emphasis, move into mainstream politics. This religio-nationalist ideology came to be known as a Turkish-Islamic" synthesis. It aimed to fortify the national unity, while also, in line with the US "green belt" strategy of supporting Muslim groups in countries around the Soviet bloc, to stand against the influence from the USSR. In this context, young people who went to school in post-1980 studied religion as a part of the compulsory curricula (Copeaux 1998; Kaplan 1999; Kaplan 2005; Kaplan 2006). The state prioritized policies that prevent young people from engaging in politics outside the state's ideological scope and criminalized dissenters. Young people born in the 1970s and the 1980s grew up in a political environment which aimed to depoliticize and then repoliticize society by restricting politics outside the state nationalist framework. The depoliticization and repoliticization were not only carried out by and through state institutions; the family also played a central role in spreading the restraint and fear about politics. Parents across social classes guided their youngsters to stay away from politics and focus on their careers as students, workers, and professionals.

Kurdish youth remained an exception. The heightened state security regime following the coup and the long bloody conflict between the Turkish military and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) did not allow them the freedom to stay away from politics. The influence of the PKK and the omnipresent state repression awakened and mobilized Kurdish youth from young ages across Turkey (Darıcı 2013; Neyzi and Darıcı 2015). Another exception was the Islamist mobilization in schools and universities in the 1990s. Both Islamist and Kurdish mobilizations helped generate a critical consciousness among young people about the repressive legacy of Turkish nationalism and the Kemalist state (Saktanber 2007). However, the expansion of Islamism and Kurdish nationalism in society ironically also led to the reactive resurgence of neo-Kemalism and ultra-Turkish nationalism (Özyürek 2006).

Nonetheless, the majority of Turkish youth grew up in a context in which they no longer figured in the political discourse as saviours and protectors of the nation – a political myth that defined the role of youth in politics in the previous periods (Lüküslü 2009). The military nationalism in the 1980s cast youth as a problem. Intellectuals, politicians, and laypersons from both the left and the right also talked about young people as lacking ideas, ideals, and the will to take on the role of a vanguard that marked the previous generations. Thanks to the legacy of the military regime, nationalism became the core political lexicon in post-1980 (Bora 2003). The widespread criminalization and repression of politics outside the state's ideological scope did not allow a different language about the self and the nation to develop and become hegemonic.

In this context, the ultra-nationalist party had a unique appeal among youth. Not only young workers from disadvantaged backgrounds like Murat but also university students from well-off families subscribed to the organization in the 1990s. For instance, in the 1990s, the ATA group, also known as Alparslan Türkeş'in Askerleri (Soldiers of Alparslan Türkeş, the leader of the ultra-nationalist party for almost three decades until his death in 1997) was a dominant political group with many members at Bilkent University, Turkey's first private university with a student body composed of upper-class and upper-middle-class youth. The appeal of nationalist groups also lay in the everyday struggles for empowerment and respect. One of my interviewees, Pelin, who was a student at the end of the 1990s at Bilkent observed among her peers that membership in the ultra-nationalist group was a source of prestige and respectability.

Other interviewees indicated that association with the group helped with the transition from childhood to manhood, providing a model of strong masculinity and a support group to deal with everyday challenges such as school bullies.

However, young men often became estranged from the Idealists as they grew up. In Murat's case, ironically, it was his experience during his compulsory military service – a sacred institution in the nationalist ideology – that led him to question the merits of Idealist youth. "There was a lot of unfair treatment and waste of resources in the military," Murat thought. In any case, Murat said he had "no time for idealism" after he came back from the military service. He worked two physically demanding jobs, a car repairman during the day and a bouncer at night, in hopes of saving sufficient money to start a family and his own business. His everyday struggle diverted him from his Idealist friends, whom he came to view as "a bunch of vagabonds."

Although Murat was alienated from the Idealist youth organization, he continued to identify himself as a nationalist. He believed nationalism needed no formal affiliation. He saw nationalists as "people who just love their country and work for its good." His view of nationalism as a "natural" inclination rather than a political ideology is very much to do with the environment he grew up in the 1980s and 1990s. These were the decades when Turkish nationalism gained momentum in parallel to the rising nationalism worldwide. The rise of nationalism was in tandem with the dynamics of globalization, economic deregulation, the rise of identity politics, and unleashed disputes over borders and military conflicts following the end of the Cold War. The Kurdish political demands and the heated conflict between the PKK and the Turkish military also played a critical role in inciting nationalism. So, does Turkey's long wait in front of the European Union (EU) door for accession, which was often interpreted by Turkish nationalists as the last blow in the history of the complicated relationship between Turkey and Europe from the Crusades to the Sèvres Treaty at the end of World War I, to westernization reforms, to the Cyprus issue. Not only the global developments that led to a revival of nationalist politics but also the nationalist ideology's foundational place in the establishment of the Turkish Republic, and its ability to bend and merge with other ideologies was reflected in young people's discussion of politics.

Nationalism provided youth with a framework and a public narrative to make sense of power and politics. It provided a story, an explanation, and a selective group of facts to make sense of and talk comfortably about political affairs (Somers 1994). Their narratives indicated mainly two approaches to nationalism (Bora 2003). First, the reactionary nationalistic movement that sees Turkey's unity at constant danger from enemies within and outside Turkey. This defensive version is embraced by right-wing politicians, by the military, and by some sections of the state bureaucracy. The second is a more open and pro-Western nationalistic movement, which sees that the nation's best interest lies in complying with globalization trends and embracing multiculturalism and integration with the EU proponents of this nationalism included the new urban middle class, the internationalizing sectors of big business, and the media elite. For Murat and many of his peers, nationalism was a core language of political talk; however, what is interesting is that their nationalist viewpoint takes different forms in line with their life trajectory. For Murat, it was a shift from the former – defensive – nationalism of his Idealist years to a more pro-Western stance.

This shift was evident in Murat's vote for the newly established AKP, which came to power promoting a more pro-Western and liberal agenda, in 2002 and 2004 elections. As someone who had first-hand experience with bankrupted businesses and closed shops in his environment, Murat believed that the existing parties and their defensive position about the EU were a failure. Despite the novelty of the AKP and his readiness to embrace it, Murat was deeply cynical about politics at the time of the interview. Murat's cynicism was prevalent among a vast majority of the youth I talked to in the mid-2000s.

Cynicism was the second dominant political narrative among youth. My interviewees frequently expressed lack of trust in political parties and politicians, and in people's power to change politics. This trust problem owed partially to the adverse effects of the economic transformation from a nationalist developmental to the neoliberal model, facilitated by the 1980 coup. The neoliberal model brought the deregulation of commodity, financial, and labour markets, the privatization of state enterprises, and a retreat of the state from its previous duties. Under the structural adjustment policies ushered in by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, the economy came to be regarded as a non-political field and left to technical expertise and management (Cizre Sakallıoğlu and Yeldan 2000; Keyder 2004). The mainstream political parties had to accede to austerity programmes, while politicians have continued to make populist promises and distribute resources through clientelist relationships. Nevertheless, the technocratic model of policymaking engendered a sense of powerlessness in society. The outcome of economic restructuring, for the most part, was boom-and-bust cycles, high inflation, decreasing real wages, rising unemployment, and high-income inequality. Governments grew more inept and unwilling to meet the expectations of the growing youth population. Often, this found expression in disbelief in Turkey's inability to govern itself, as expressed by one of the interviewees in the following way: "America governs Turkey. That's what I think. The World Bank, IMF and the US government have the power. Turkey has never ruled itself. There is always dependence and debt" (Cemal 28, secondary school dropout, unemployed).

The sense of place in social hierarchies made a difference in the formation of youth's political subjectivities and their narratives of cynicism. While both the upper-class and lower-class youth I talked to, felt alienated from politics, the differences in their socio-economic situations fundamentally informed their perceptions. For instance, for Turan, a 24-year-old security guard, access to politics, just like other fields such as a good education and a rewarding job, was out of his reach. However, for Kaan, a 25-year-old engineer with a graduate degree from a prominent university, politics was not out of reach but a waste of time. In the end, though, they were both cynical about the political process.

Therefore, young people avoided politics not because they were careless but mainly because they did not trust the political order to deliver what they need and what is good for the society. Demet Lüküslü (2008) found similar reluctance among young people who work in NGOs for societal good, but who refrain from participating in political organizations because young people find political parties corrupt, not open to change, and authoritarian. Hence, young people saw political parties as unwelcoming to their demands and ways of doing things. Three consequent surveys on youth political participation in 1999, 2003, and 2008 showed that youth party membership remained below 10 per cent, and political participation in all other ways declined, including a decline in voting from 62 per cent in 1999 to 48 per cent in 2008) (Erdoğan and Semerci 2017).

Young people, especially in lower-income groups, felt an erosion of trust in society. They felt increasingly unsupported in this world; they criticized their parents for lost economic opportunities, for their emphasis on money and conservative spending habits. When resources were limited, family relations and altruism became burdensome. For instance, one of my interviewees, a hairdresser named Hasan, thought that there was "no respect and love in society," and one would be better off by not depending on anyone "even one's father."

Cynicism tells us a universal story of disillusionment with politics and politicians across borders. Jeffrey Goldfarb (1991) defined cynicism as a tremendous challenge to democracy because it attacks the social bonds that bring society together and generate "legitimation through disbelief." While cynicism does not stop people from voting in elections, it legitimizes

the political order by putting an emotional distance between expectations and reality. People support a candidate or a political party for making promises, but not out of the belief that these promises will come true. Slavoj Zizek (1995) refers to this as "cynical distance," the distance that provides legitimacy to the state power and democratic order.

I concluded at the time that nationalism and cynicism were two dominant modes of talking and thinking about politics among young people (Alemdaroğlu 2011). On the one hand, nationalist and cynical narratives evoked a paradox between belief in the nation and disbelief in the goodness of its leaders, members, and future. On the other, they worked in complementary ways to provide young people with an explanation and a selective group of facts to make sense of and talk comfortably about the state, government, political parties, and politicians. Overall, nationalism and cynicism did crucial political work: Nationalism provided a common framework that soothes potential disagreements, covering up the disadvantages and domination under the rubric of the nation, while cynicism, based on an encompassing narrative of disbelief, created an alienation that ironically helps preserve the legitimacy of the polity.

Episode 2: From cynicism to protest[3]

In the Summer of 2013, Turkey witnessed large-scale nationwide protests where young people played a significant role. The protests began as a peaceful sit-in against the government's plan to build a shopping mall in Gezi Park in central Istanbul. The number of protesters exponentially grew as they met with police brutality and the government's accusations of terrorism. The local sit-in evolved to a full-fledged nationwide protest against the AKP's profit-driven, socially conservative, and autocratic rule. In the 112 days following May 28, over 3.5 million people participated in more than 5 thousand protests in 80 cities in Turkey.[4]

The government and pro-government media portrayed protesters as pawns of foreign powers, seeking to weaken the Turkish economy and its increasing role in world politics (Nefes 2017). Protests were initiated and organized by local solidarity groups but expanded to the disorganized sections of the society. The novelty, diversity, and humour that protesters displayed were remarkable for most analysts, as was the massive youth participation (Arda 2015, Kaptan 2016, Patton 2013). Young people were out on the streets in masses. In response to the AKP's continuous assault on rights and freedoms, the widespread cynicism I had observed in the mid-2000s was replaced with widespread protest in the 2010s.

Although, according to the Konda poll,[5] 45 per cent of the people gathered at Gezi Park were first-time protesters, the 2013 protests built on a track record of public demonstrations, including the Tekel strikes, May Day protests, Republican rallies, and the Saturday Mothers, and the growing youth discontent in the country. The METU protests in 2012[6] and the revolt of Kurdish youth under the banner of the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (YDG-H),[7] following the breakdown of the peace process between the government and the PKK, in 2015, epitomized this widespread discontent.

During the Gezi protests, I wondered whether the young working-class men and women that I had interviewed about a decade earlier, had joined the outcry. I imagined that Pelin, Murat, Kaan, Turan, and many others would get excited about the protests even if they did not personally participate. The polls conducted at Gezi Park proper by Konda during the demonstrations in June indicated that over 50 per cent of protesters had undergraduate or graduate degrees, which made them highly educated in their society, where the average years of education remained at seven. The majority of them were working people (52 per cent), and a vast majority (over 70 per cent) had no affiliation with any political party or civil society

organization. In line with this data, most analysts interpreted the uprising as predominantly a movement of university-educated youth and middle-class professionals (Keyder 2013; Tugal 2013). However, researchers, later on, showed that the largest single group of protesters was manual workers in the formal sector (36 per cent). Non-manual workers and white-collar employees (20 per cent), informal-sector workers (18 per cent), petty bourgeoisie (11 per cent), professionals (6 per cent), executives (5 per cent), and capitalists (4 per cent) followed them (Yörük and Yüksel 2014).

The government criminalized and violently repressed the protesters with tear gas, water cannons, police raids, and detentions. More than ten people, most under 30,[8] died as a result of direct police attack or health causes due to high exposure to tear gas. Over 8,000 people were injured, while many had life-long disability injuries. More than 5,000 people were detained by the police. The government intensified the routinized policy of police blockades in neighbourhoods such as Okmeydanı, populated by low-income Alevis. Alevi youth were particularly targeted by the security forces, which killed eight during the uprising. This was partially due to Alevi youth's high level participation in the protests because the AKP particularly disadvantaged Alevi youth by increasing privatization in education, discriminatory recruitment policies in the public sector, and the policy of Sunni-Islamization. This disproportionate targeting of Alevi youth also raised the question of whether these killings were connected to a deliberate attempt of the government to make Gezi largely an Alevi revolt, and hence to further estrange conservative Sunni sections of the society from the protests (Karakaya-Stump 2014).

The days of intense street protests gave away to more dispersed demonstrations and a relatively calmer discussion about what needs to be done to defend cities and citizens against ongoing environmental destruction, urban transformation, economic injustice, and political repression. In nightly forums organized in public parks in Istanbul, Ankara, and other cities, people discussed ways to influence central and local governments, the possibility of transforming the movement into a political party, ways of strengthening opposition, the fight against government censorship of the media, and methods of bettering their lives through mutual understanding and solidarity. What remains from these forums at this point in time is probably limited to the memory that they took place and the social interactions they facilitated.

In the days of the uprising, protesters got to know each other, saw their commonalities, and witnessed forms of support and solidarity that they yearn for in everyday life, and finally practised their collective power to act. The 2013 protests catalysed sympathy among different social and political groups. The police brutality, the silence of the mainstream media, and the government's discourse that identified protesters as terrorists led many young, urban, middle-class, and educated Turks to question what had been told to them about the Kurds by the state over decades (Genç 2016). The empathy facilitated by the Gezi moment was evident in Istanbul and Ankara, when many people stood in solidarity with Kurdish protesters who were fired upon by soldiers in the Kurdish town of Lice on 29 June 2013. Also, the Pride march on 30 June of the same year was the largest of the decade, heralding the increasing support for the LGBTQ groups. What Turkey went through in June 2013 was not a revolution in the classical sense of toppling the government. Still, it was sort of a revolution in consciousness; it brought together people with different political affiliations, class backgrounds, religious creeds, and ethnic identities, and showed them their power when there is collective action and solidarity. It also played an essential role in shaping the government's policies by increasing the insecurity of the government, bolstering the urgency to control the opposition and dissidence, and eventually leading to a period of an unprecedented level of repression in the country.

Episode 3: The AKP's youth politics[9]

The AKP's third electoral victory in 2011 marked a significant break in the party's youth politics (Lüküslü 2016: 637). As the party was consolidating and expanding its power against the secular military and bureaucratic elite, the role of religion became more pronounced in its policies. Similar to the years following the 1980 coup, the government turned to religion to control and discipline youth. But this time, the emphasis in the Turkish–Islamic synthesis shifted from Turkishness to Islam, and in particular Sunni Islam. Moreover, religious inflexion has partisan ambition. In a series of speeches in 2012, then-prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan declared that the goal of his government was to bring up religious generations.[10] The idea of raising religious youth has long been central to the political right and Islamist political ideologies in Turkey. Despite the Islamist political backgrounds of its founding cadres, the AKP had avoided identifying itself with a religious agenda in its early years in power and instead insisted on identifying as "conservative democrat." Erdoğan's utterance to "religious youth" was perhaps first and foremost an indication of the party's changing discourse, intensifying concern for youth, and increasing authoritarianism.

While the government was consolidating its power domestically, the wave of uprisings in the Middle East and the ensuing developments, such as the electoral victory of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, on the one hand, created new opportunities for the AKP. For one, they bolstered the Erdoğan government's urge to exert influence in the region. On the other hand, the uprisings that toppled long-time authoritarian and rulers in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen fortified the AKP's insecurities about staying in power, showing a willingness to use force against dissent, and controlling and containing youth.

The youth were a challenge for achieving hegemony. Despite its electoral majority in national elections, the AKP has been significantly less successful in attracting youth vote (Ayata 2017; Öztürk 2018). For instance, in the November 2015 general election, only 25 per cent of those 18–25 voted for the AKP despite the party receiving around 40 per cent of the vote from the general public. The youth support for the pro-Kurdish and leftist Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) and the ultranationalist Nationalist Action Party (MHP), around 5 to 10 per cent above their national vote, puts the AKP's youth challenge in perspective.

In addition to political alienation and overt dissent, the youth also embody a cultural and moral challenge for the government's conservative and religious agenda. A plethora of public proclamations, research reports, and organizational activity spearhead by the AKP have illustrated this challenge well. For instance, in a 2016 report, the pro-government Social, Cultural and Economic Research Center warned the public about the level of alcohol consumption, drug use, and sexual activity among youth (SEKAM 2016). The report also noted that religious morality and social trust are in decline, and that many young people would like to emigrate. A wave of testimonies by scholars, media reports, anonymous confessions, and survey data indicated the growing distance of youth to organized religion, in particular, the orthodox Sunni Islam promoted by the Presidency of Religious Affairs and religious schools. Finally, the young generation also carried a risk for the family institution, which, according to the conservative AKP ideology, constituted the core of the society. In particular, young people's deferred marriage age, decreasing marriage rate, soaring divorce rate, and growing preference for extramarital relationships ring alarm bells for the reproduction of the family institution. For example, in the last 15 years, the divorce rate has risen from under 15 per cent of marriages to nearly a quarter of them. Just between 2017 and 2018, the number of divorces increased by 10.9 per cent to 142,488, while the number of couples who got married fell by 2.9 per cent to 553,202.[11] These changes are indicative of the broader social and normative transformations. In a recent speech,

the president called everyone to action, to fight the media messages that legitimize extramarital relationships among youth and to promote marriage.

Youth threatens two bastions of the AKP: the electoral majority and the conservative society. The youth population is too large to ignore. Half of the country's 80 million people are under 30 years old, and every year over one million young people become first-time voters. To minimize the potential and real challenge posed by the youth, the AKP has developed several tactics. First of all, we have seen an exponential increase in the persecution of youth on terrorism charges since 2013; as of 2018, there were thousands of students either in jail or facing a trial.[12]

Another move was to expand the weight of religious education and particularly the government-funded İmam-Hatip schools in the education system. İmam-Hatip schools initially opened in the 1920s to train prayer leaders and preachers who would disseminate state-sanctioned religion to support the new Republican regime. While their status remained as vocational schools, religious and conservative families preferred İmam-Hatips to regular high schools for providing intense instruction in religion, allowing girls to wear headscarves, and offering single-sex education in classrooms (Özgür 2012). The 1997 memorandum by Turkey's military forced the pro-Islamist Welfare Party-led coalition government to strengthen secularism and stop the expansion of religious education in Turkey by introducing eight years of continuous primary education and closign the middle sections of high schools, including those of İmam-Hatips. The reform aimed to keep students longer in secular schools, making them less vulnerable to religious inculcation. Further regulatory measures made it difficult for İmam-Hatip graduates to attend four-year colleges other than divinity schools, therefore preventing them from pursuing careers in engineering, medicine, or law. Both measures led to a significant decline in the number of İmam Hatip students: from 511,502 in 1997 to just 77,392 in 2002 (Özgür 2012: 53). However, since coming to power in 2002, the AKP governments have rescinded regulations limiting İmam-Hatip schools and provided them with unprecedented levels of resources. Between 2002 and 2017, the number of Imam Hatip high schools in the country increased from 450 to 1,485, while the student number increased in the same period from 84,000 students to over 600,000.[13] A large part of this extraordinary growth took place after 2012 and came about through the transformation of many regular middle and high schools into religious schools. In 2018, İmam-Hatip high schools received 23 per cent of funding, while only educating 11 per cent of students, spending twice as much per pupil as regular schools. The Ministry of National Education (MEB) has justified this policy as a response to what they claim "the parents' demand" but recent reports reveal that these schools draw about 50–60 per cent fewer students than their capacity each year.[14]

İmam-Hatips provide human and social capital for the state bureaucracy. The AKP's two-decade-rule significantly expanded the job opportunities for Imam-Hatip graduates. For instance, much of the remarkable growth in the share of the Presidency of Religious Affairs' in the governmen's budget, from 0.55 per cent in 2002 to over 10 per cent in 2019, surpassing even the growth in the Ministry of Education budget in the same years, is allocated for personnel growth and created further job opportunities for Imam-Hatip graduates. Many AKP politicians, including President Erdoğan and his key party cadres and bureaucrats, are proud alumni.

İmam-Hatip schools also work as a stage for youth political mobilization. In these schools, teachers, students, and parents form a tight-knit community connected to the party and the government institutions through a network of schools and civil society organizations (Özgür 2012). This network is a key vehicle of the AKP's clientelistic distribution of government contracts and jobs to the schools' affiliates. The party organization has been a significant path

for empowerment and upward mobility, especially for disadvantaged youth (Doğan 2017). The network also cultivates hearts and minds by providing a collective identity, which meshes piety with a sense of moral superiority and resentment found in the experience of marginalization by secular institutions. This sense of dissatisfaction and moral superiority ties the community together by estranging it from the rest of the society while informing the social bases of the political polarization in Erdoğan's Turkey (Çelik 2017).

Conservative İmam-Hatip connected civil society organizations, such as ENSAR, İlim Yayma, and ÖNDER have also gained a prominent role in the general provision and governance of education under the AKP governments. It had already been a practice before the AKP that these organizations built and transferred İmam-Hatip schools to the MEB on the condition that they are used solely for religious education (Özgür 2012: 161–162). Under the AKP, the MEB also started to sign cooperation protocols with them. These protocols granted these organizations access to schools other than İmam-Hatips. For instance, the Ministry undersigned protocols with the ENSAR Foundation and Turkey Service to Youth and Education Foundation (TÜRGEV), giving them a mandate to organize training seminars, social and sports activities, and vocational and technical courses for teachers and students. Moreover, with the right to use the electronic data system, the Foundation was given access to the personal information of all registered students and parents. The extended mandate given to the conservative and religious foundations caused widespread concern among educators, students, and their families not only about the safety of their information but also the risk of religious indoctrination of students.

Expansion of religious education is a part of a more systematic strategy undertaken by the AKP to consolidate its hegemony. Government-organized civil society organizations (GONGOs) play a critical intermediary role in connecting the party to youth. In particular, they are instrumental in helping the party's efforts to instil a political identity and generate a collectivity out of disparate youth. Since 2012, Erdoğan's family and friends have funded and managed numerous youth- oriented NGOs. TÜRGEV and The Turkey Youth Foundation (TÜGVA) are the most prominent and fast-growing of all. The TÜRGEV, which runs dormitories for female students, grew its network between 2013 and 2018, from 8 hostels in four cities to 68 in across Turkey, and 5 in London, Boston, New York, Chicago, and Washington DC. This growth was made possible with large donations from unidentified domestic and international sources. The opposition parties made many futile inquiries asking the government to reveal the financial source behind this exponential growth. A recent report by the Istanbul Municipality showed that charitable foundations close to President Erdoğan received about 847 million Turkish lira (about $145 million) from the municipality in the two years before the local election in 2019. The largest share of 74.3 million lira, or $14 million, went to the TUGVA, followed by the TÜRGEV.[15]

Youth governance is an essential item on the AKP's agenda. We see this not only in the president's frequent speeches that address youth or youth issues but also concerted efforts of government institutions and pro-government NGOs to control youth cultural development, in particular to remedy the secularization trend. For instance, in a 2018 NGO-organized workshop organized in Konya – a city known for its conservative and religious leanings – 50 teachers of religion declared the need to refashion the teaching of religion in ways that emphasizes its liberatory aspects, which do not contradict science and individual choice. Another study group formed by the AKP-run Başakşehir Municipality in Istanbul, a region known for upwardly mobile conservative groups, stated that young people's decoupling of religion and morality and distancing from religion stands firmly against the AKP's realization of youth vision. Both of these declarations show that even in the most conservative environments, disenchantment with religion is rampant among youth.[16]

The president and his advisers are directing a lot of attention, funding, and effort towards developing strategies to cultivate loyalty among youth. However, this attention does not adequately address young people's problems, such as access to quality education, secure and rewarding employment, and freedom of expression. Access to education, and more significantly higher education, grew exponentially, in line with President Erdoğan's motto of "one university to each city" with a concomitant increase in the number of private schools during the 17 years of the AKP rule. However, as the president himself has accepted, this vast expansion has failed to deliver the desired quality. A recent study with a representative sample of 2,524 youth indicated that young people are discontented with the Turkish education system. In their responses, on a scale of one to ten (one is least satisfied, and ten is very satisfied), almost all elements of the education system score below five.[17] The poll indicates that about half of the youth population would like to go to Western countries to get a good education. Young people also see a significant disconnect between school success and job outcomes. Based on their experience in the job market, 56 per cent think that acquaintances are more important than school success to get a job.

Steadily high unemployment rates do not make the transition from education to work easy. According to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TSI), unemployment among young people aged 15–24 reached 27.1 per cent in late 2019, with a 7.2 per cent increase from the previous year. An additional 29.4 per cent of youth in the same age bracket are neither in education nor in employment. While youth unemployment is a global problem, the problem is aggravated in Turkey by the widespread partisanship and favouritism in access to jobs, further harming the sense of fairness and security. Research shows that insecurity is a dominant feeling among youth, and more than half of the youth population would like to migrate abroad (Istanpol 2020).[18]

The AKP's youth policy is failing in other ways. The party is unable to garner the level of support from youth to safeguard its future electoral success. According to a 2020 poll, a vast majority of youth between 18 and 24 years of age do not trust the existing politicians and political parties.[19] Furthermore, the strategy to strengthen Islamic schools and organizations to generate pious generations seems to elicit the opposite reaction. In the decade between 2008 and 2018, the rate of young people who define themselves as "traditional conservatives" has decreased from 45 to 43 per cent; those who identify as "religious conservative" has reduced from 25 to 15 per cent" and those who identify as "modern" has increased from 29 to 42 per cent.[20] These indicators demonstrate that the governing elite in today's Turkey is not able to grasp the reality of youth nor is willing to create the conditions that facilitate young people's economic and political participation. Today, similar to the mid-2000s, young people across social classes have little trust in the current political parties and politicians. Nevertheless, they also believe that it would ultimately be through politics that change would come in Turkey (Istanpol 2020).

Conclusion

This chapter examined three episodes of youth politics in the last two decades in Turkey. The first episode focuses on the mid-2000s and portrays the dominant ways in which young people talk about politics. In contrast to the prevailing view that young people were apathetic, it laid out the narratives that young people employ to make sense of power relations in society and political participation. It showed that nationalism and cynicism were the two dominant narratives that young people use to avoid questions about politics. Both narratives, in different ways, however, indicate one's sense of power and powerlessness in social, political, and global

hierarchies. Therefore, these narratives should be taken seriously as shared accounts of political critique given that ultimately democratic struggles have to root in common meanings that organize people's sense of identity and sense of place in the world.

The second episode, the Gezi uprising of 2013, dislocated the prevalent cynicism among youth, albeit briefly. During Gezi, many young people, for the first time in their lives, witnessed and became part of a popular collective action other than voting. For the first time, they saw the power and excitement of political solidarity of different groups as well as the brutality of the government in response. Although, the protests did not necessarily emerge or aim to topple the government, it fuelled a new source of insecurity – that of the people's revolution – leading the AKP to strengthen its repressive policies against dissent.

Youth poses a significant challenge for the AKP. The third episode focused on the AKP's efforts to control, co-opt and punish youth. In the 2010s, we saw proliferating efforts by the party via local governments and pro-government or government-organized civil society organizations (GONGOs) to reach out to young people and connect them to the party circles. A massive expansion of İmam-Hatip schools, the remarkable growth in youth GONGO's, as well as youth-focused cultural activities such as essay competitions, camps, and training courses indicate the scope of the AKP's systematic efforts to shape and control youth through amicable means. The long-term effects of these efforts will be seen. However, so far, the AKP's "religious youth" project falls short of achieving the desired outcome. We can expect Turkey's slowing economy and the AKP's loss of major municipalities in 2019 elections will undermine the party's already meagre ability to appeal to youth. As five million new voters will become first-time voters in 2023, the AKP's continuing efforts to address youth should be carefully traced by researchers. The future possibilities that politics bears in Turkey are embedded in the meanings, practices, and demands of young people.

Notes

1 While 48.3 per cent of the Turkish population is under age 30, 24.4 per cent is between the ages of 15 and 29. https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/overview-turkey# (retrieved 17 April 2020)
2 Konrad Adenauer Association's *Youth Research Report* (retrieved 17 April 2020).
3 For an earlier version, see Alemdaroğlu (2013).
4 https://t24.com.tr/haber/gezide-kac-eylem-gerceklesti-kac-kisi-goz-altina-alindi,244706 (retrieved 17 April 2020)
5 https://konda.com.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/KONDA_Gezi_Report.pdf (retrieved 17 April 2020)
6 https://humanrightsturkey.org/2012/12/21/on-metu-protests-amnesty-demands-an-investigation/ (retrieved 17 April 2020)
7 www.reuters.com/article/us-turkey-kurds-youth/a-new-generation-of-kurdish-militants-takes-fight-to-turkeys-cities-idUSKCN0RR0DS20150927 (retrieved 17 April 2020)
8 www.amnestyusa.org/files/eur440222013en.pdf (retrieved 17 April 2020)
9 For an earlier version, see Alemdaroğlu (2018).
10 www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/dindar-bir-genclik-yetistirmek-istiyoruz-19819295 (retrieved 17 April 2020)
11 www.turkstat.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=30698 (retrieved 17 April 2020)
12 https://stockholmcf.org/report-turkish-government-keeps-more-than-70000-students-in-prisons/ (retrieved 17 April 2020)
13 http://egitimsen.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/E%C4%9Fitimin-Durumu-Raporu-8-Haziran-2017.pdf
14 www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/imam-hatipler-neden-bos-kaldi-87862.html (retrieved 17 April 2020)
15 https://ipa.news/2019/04/20/erdogan-family-linked-foundations-get-145million-from-istanbul-report/ (retrieved 17 April 2020)

16 https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-43832877
17 www.britishcouncil.org.tr/en/nextgeneration/turkey(retrieved 17 April 2020)
18 data.oecd.org/unemp/youth-unemployment-rate.htm(retrieved 17 April 2020)
19 https://artigercek.com/haberler/konda-genclerin-cogunlugu-bu-siyasetciler-ve-partilerle-olmaz-diyor (retrieved 21 March 2021)
20 https://interaktif.konda.com.tr/tr/Gencler2018/#secondPage/4 (retrieved 17 April 2020)

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18

TRACING THE REVERSE HISTORY OF HOMOSEXUALITY FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

From tolerance to discrimination

Ceylan Engin and Zeynep Özbarlas

Introduction

The interpretation of homosexuality greatly differs across cultures and time periods.

The term "homosexuality" itself is a Western construct coined in the nineteenth century, and it was through the creation of the category of "homosexual" that the category of "heterosexual" originated (Sedgewick 1990). Heterosexuality thus was conceptualized in opposition to homosexuality, emphasizing those who do not have the traits of a homosexual. Kristeva's (1982) notion of the *abject* explains this phenomenon: one is part of the whole while being excluded from it. In other words, one is considered a heterosexual because he or she is not a homosexual. This was the emergence of homosexuality as a subordinate identity and a "distinct species," which contributed to the consideration of homosexuality as a disease, or a disorder that needed to be suppressed and regulated (Foucault 1976).

Even though the term homosexuality is a nineteenth-century Western construct, same-sex desires and relationships were present before their social definitions (Bilancetti 2011). Therefore, the concept of homosexuality in the Western sense is not fully representative of the historic conceptualization and practice of same-sex desire and sexuality in non-Western cultures (Jamal 2001). For instance, there is not a term equivalent to modern "sexuality" and "homosexual" in Ottoman Turkish. The word *cinsellik* (sexuality) itself is a twentieth-century innovation in the Turkish language. The Ottomans had categories, such as *gulampare* (male lover), *zenpare* (woman lover), *köçek* (male dancer), *mukhare* (passive), *guzeshte* (young man with beard), *and emred* (beardless youth), yet none of them can be seen as analogous to "the homosexual" (Arvas 2014). The terminology of homoeroticism or same-sex love is more applicable to the Ottoman understating of homosexuality.

Same-sex relationships (in the form of homoeroticism, sodomy, and same-sex love) were evident practices and accepted both in medieval Islamic societies and among the Turkic people

(Daniyal 2016). A historical review of same-sex love in the Islamic world shows that during the Islamic Golden Age (between the mid-eighth century and the thirteenth century), homosexual desires and relations were commonplace and tolerated in many Muslim societies. For instance, Abu Nuwas (756–816), a well-known Arab poet, wrote publicly about same-sex desire and relations. Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni (971–1030) was also known for openly speaking about his love for another man (Daniyal 2016). In fact, the punishment of homosexual relationships in medieval Muslim societies was rather rare compared to the situation in medieval Europe (Daniyal 2016).

Same-sex love and desire were also present in the Ottoman culture. The Ottoman Empire was established in the late thirteenth century and lasted until it was replaced by the secular Turkish Republic in 1923. Possessing a unique multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural structure, the Ottomans ruled the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Europe under one sultan. Homoerotic relationships in the Ottoman Empire present an illuminating picture for understanding the presence of same-sex relationships in the Muslim world and later in Turkish society.

In order to trace the changing levels of tolerance toward homosexuality, we examine a range of sources. Our section on homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire mainly analyzes different forms of artworks, especially literature and miniatures as well as the nonfiction written genres of the time. The written genres had a major impact on society and culture and, therefore, reflected public opinion more accurately during this time. We shift our focus from written genres to surveys when we examine the contemporary situation in Turkey. With the rise of modern forms of media, the literary examples have lost their earlier significance and influence on the masses. On the other hand, surveys have become an effective tool to analyze public opinion, which allows us to present the contemporary situation on homosexuality in Turkey. In the next section, we turn to records (such as Arvas 2014; Bardakçi 1992; Lybyer 1913; Busbecq 1927; Ricaut 1665;Murray 2007; Ze'evi 2006) that indicate the prevalence of homosexual relationships in the Ottoman culture and literature.

Homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire: tolerance

Examining the Ottoman literature, it is evident that sexuality was not a taboo, unlike it has been since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Popular literary figures such as Nasreddin *Hoca* and *Gazali* were overtly addressing sexuality in their narrative from the twelfth century and onward. Originating in the sixteenth century, the literary genre named *bahname*[1] remained popular until the nineteenth century among people from all strata, including Ottoman elites and statesmen. These books commonly presented physiological information about sexual intercourse, techniques to increase sexual pleasure, and remedies for sexual performance (Bardakçı 1992). Not only was sexuality an overt subject, but also same-sex relations between men were part of the *Divan,*[2] which was the mainstream literary genre of the Ottoman Empire. Alongside the *bahnames*, erotic desire between men was largely present from fifteenth to the eighteenth century in "various genres from *gazel* (lyric poetry) to *mesnevi* (narrative poems) and shadow theatre, from *şehrengiz* (catalogue of beautiful men) to *tezkire* (biography)" (Arvas 2014, p.145). However, as Arvas (2014) notes, the queer paradigm of the literature gave up its place to a heteronormative discourse as a result of the effects of westernization during the nineteenth century. Men who were portrayed as beloved since the nineteenth century became perverts in the literary discourse (Arvas 2014).

In addition to the visibility of same-sex sexuality in the Ottoman literature, Murray (2007) notes that same-sex behavior was also widespread, particularly in the form of pederasty. Young

boys were exclusively occupied in sodomy, beginning from the early fourteenth century. During that time, it was common for parents to groom their sons for sexual service for the rulers. It has been widely believed that boys lost their attractiveness once they grew body and facial hair. However, after examining Ottoman literature, poetry, and art, we can conclude that homoerotic relationships were common even after the conventional age line (Murray 2007). Arvas (2014) directs our attention to scholars who have characterized homoerotic desire among Ottomans as frustrated sexuality. This characterization was due to the fact that the object of sexual love was predominantly a young, beardless boy in literary discourse. Even if this was the case for *gazels*, there were also well-known poets such as Nedim who pictured the beloved as an adult man with a beard. Homoerotic relations thus were not only portrayed between a "real" man and a "feminine" boy (Arvas 2014).

The first coffeehouses opened in the early sixteenth century and became a common location for homoerotic relationships (Murray 2007). Furthermore, Western historians and scholars also acknowledge that when young male servants were engaged in training to become public officials, sexual relationships often took place between them and their masters (Lybyer 1913; Busbecq 1927; Ricaut 1665). We find homosexual love and practice even among well-known Ottoman rulers, such as Murad II, Fatih Sultan Mehmet, and Beyazid II (Bardakçı 1992; Zelyut 2016). The hedonist sultan Murad II, known for his lavish lifestyle, wrote about watching *köçeks* (male dancers) while drinking. His son Fatih Sultan Mehmet often mentioned his love and affection for other men in his poetry, in addition to Sultan Beyazid II, who is acknowledged for having Koca Mustafa Paşa as his lover (Bardakçı 1992; Zelyut 2016).

Homoerotic desire between men during the sixteenth century was not only a central theme in literary genres but in other forms of the arts as well. In the famous miniatures (the predominant form of painting of the era), men were portrayed during sexual intercourse or gathering in public places such as coffee shops in a flirtatious manner. Despite the criticisms raising against homosexuality, especially by the anti-Sufi movement, homoeroticism in poetry and same-sex desire continued to be visible in the literature of the eighteenth century. For instance, a well-known writer from the eighteenth century, Fazıl Enderuni, wrote *Hubanname* (The book of the beautiful the men), in which he presents characteristics of beautiful men from across the world (Aras 2014).

We should note that the evidence cited here solely focuses on male same-sex desire and relationships. Some report that female homosexuality was common in the Ottoman *harem* and in *Turkish baths*; however, these reports are from personal commentaries and are scarce (Murray 2007). According to Habib (2007), female homosexuality is scarcely mentioned in the literature but has been more tolerated than male homosexuality. This is likely because Islamist jurists do not categorize sexual acts between two women as actual sex acts since they do not involve penile penetration. However, this does not mean that there is not any representation of homoerotic desire between women. For instance, Gazali mentions women who offer sexual services and satisfaction to wealthy women in big cities. There were also women poets such as Zeynep *Hatun* (woman), Tuti *Hanım* (lady), and *Mihri Hatun*, who hinted at sexual desire between women through "blur[ring] the gender of the addressee" (Arvas 2014, p.153). However, these representations were rare, and the fact that literature was a male-dominated sphere could have played a role in the underrepresentation of female homosexuality.

As the research cited above indicates, same-sex relations in the Ottoman culture were not considered taboo, unlike in Western Europe. While the era before the seventeenth century in Europe was one in which people openly and transparently discussed erotic acts and desires in public spaces without the shaming of bodies, this type of European attitude on sexuality shifted after the seventeenth century (Foucault 1976). In an attempt to construct and regulate sexuality,

sexual relations were confined, and certain norms were enforced to keep sexuality private and restricted to the conjugal family. In contrast to the situation in the Ottoman Empire, sexual behavior outside the conjugal family in Western Europe became labeled as abnormal or deviant, while sexual discourse was nonexistent. Along with the rise of industrialization and capitalism in the West, same-sex relationships were particularly demonized because of their non-reproductive nature (Foucault 1976). The homophobic Western attitudes of that time period influenced both the Ottoman literature and culture, and these attitudes remain present today in Turkish society.

Reversal of trends: intolerance

With the turn of nineteenth century, sexuality as well as same-sex relations gradually began to be a taboo in public as well as in the literary sphere (Kuru 2010). This may be closely related to the process of modernization and the adoption of Western literary genres. Ottoman officials and intellectuals began to discuss the need to adopt a modern European legal system to prevent the ongoing military decline of the Ottoman Empire (Hanıoğlu, 2008). A more decisive step was taken by the *Tanzimat Fermanı* (declaration of reforms) in 1839, which encapsulated a series of regulations. These reforms may seem like the initial steps toward the creation of a modern state; however, a state-based law system was only to supplement the authority of the Divine God that found a place in the figure of the sultan and not to undermine him as the ultimate source of government and power.

The founders of the Tanzimat, which was composed of the religious Muslim elite,[3] only half-heartedly supported the reforms. They saw the need for adopting Western reforms for the modern state and its institutions in order to tighten the loosening authority of the Ottoman Empire (Mardin 2015). However, the grounding principles behind the Western modern institutions, namely faith in science and human rationality independent of religion, contradicted the main element of the Ottoman state: Islam. Aware of this contradiction and the possible tension, the intellectuals of the Tanzimat period began to discuss the relationships between Islam, modernism, and Turkish identity (Mardin 2015). The authors, who called themselves Tanzimat writers, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century sought to secure Islam's place as the basis of the Ottoman identity.

Feeling the urge to warn people against the possible negative influences of modernization, the Tanzimat writers left the traditional *Divan* literature behind and adopted the Western novel as their new form of writing. The Tanzimat writers were part of the Ottoman elite and had mastered the *Divan* literature, which was an art form for an elite audience. However, they thought the *Divan* literature was not the right form of literature to reach the masses. Written in verse, Divan did not center much on content but more on the aesthetic perfection of the rhyme. The writers of Divan achieved aesthetic perfection with the use of abstract metaphors and a complicated language, which made their poems not intelligible for the large section of society. The traditional forms of folktales and legends were also not adequate as they centered on the mythical past of Ottoman heroes and not on the real problems of the present. Consequently, the Tanzimat writers first began to translate French romantics[4] such as Victor Hugo, and then attempted writing similar novels themselves. However, the nineteenth-century Turkish novels were not as fully developed as those of their Western counterparts. According to Bakhtin (1981), the novel portrays the protagonists and their lives and inner worlds in a sophisticated way that is congruent with a realistic objectivity. The structure of the novel unfolds in a context that is easily relatable to the reader. In contrast, the epic is unfamiliar to the reality that the

reader experiences since it deals with a mythical and distant past that is enchanted by supernatural figures.

The typical Tanzimat novel amalgamates the context that is in accordance with real-life experiences with stereotypical characters in order to convey a specific moral message. For instance, a common plot of a Tanzimat novel was based on a specific kind of "seductive" woman who embodies passionate and sexual love that is destructive to whomever she has any kind of relationship with. A male character in these novels would fall in love with this woman, who is portrayed as the bearer of "excessive" emotion and, consequently, with excessive ways of conduct. The male protagonist would lose either his life or his dignity as a result of intimate and sexual contact with her (Parla 1990).

The moral message the authors conveyed would stress the possible dangers of sexuality and passionate love. Instead of following their sexual desire, they would call men to find "proper" wives according to the compatibility of their social class. Parla (1990) draws our attention to how the nature and bodily sensations in Ottoman literature must have been thought about in opposition to men's dignity and Islamic values. Furthermore, sexuality was not a topic that the authors delved into as it was in the *bahannames*. When it was included, it was only to be condemned and to support a moral message. Furthermore, in contrast to writers of the Divan literature, the authors of the Tanzimat era did not include same-sex relations in their novels (Kuru 2010).

Despite the erasure of sexuality from the Tanzimat literature and art, the punishment of homosexuality in the Ottoman Empire was rare. There are no specific laws that banned homosexual acts under Islamic law, Shariat. Instead, they were punished under the larger fabric of *zina* (adultery)[5] (Ze'evi 2006). Nevertheless, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, homoerotic relations were silenced, and heteronormativity was reinforced as Turks and Arabs were blamed for pederasty, homosexuality, and for being feminine by Europeans (Murray 2007). Thus, the condemnation of same-sex sexuality was largely owed to the Ottomans' growing close relationship with the West.

The reversal in attitude toward homosexuality can be further understood with other societal changes that took place beginning with the modernization process as *Westernism* in the late Ottoman Empire acquired a new foothold with the turn of the twentieth century[6] (Mardin 2015). Just before and during the formation of the Turkish Republic, the cultural influence of the West escalated. As a result, the modern individual of the new regime was instructed to detach from previous dependencies, traditions, and religious or family ties that were considered backward (Sirman 2005).

First of all, the secularization of the state and the public sphere were crucial for the radical societal change that occurred with the foundation of the Republic. The national elites attempted a complete break from the Ottoman Empire and differentiated themselves as modern, educated, proper citizens from their "traditional and backward" countrymen through associating religion with the latter category (Sirman 2005). They attempted to control the public sphere according to what they thought of as modern and secular. With the law of hats that went into effect in 1925, the fez and the *burma* (religious attire) were banned for men. Men were expected to wear European hats as an indicator of being modern. Similarly, women were encouraged to wear European clothes and take off their veils. However, it is important to note that secularism in Turkey was not a total break from religiosity but the "formation of a secular Muslim" identity (Göle 2004, p. 256). Not being Muslim or not affirming God's existence was not an option for the social imagination of a country with a long history, in which Islam had played a key role. Thus, the new regime attempted to create modern citizens of the Turkish Republic with

a social revolution that took place through the appropriation of the Western nuclear family instead of the kinship-based traditional family (Sirman 2005). This was a revolution in the social sphere, since the people of the Ottoman Empire defined their social positions as well as what was considered appropriate conduct for them based on the hierarchy of the kinship-based traditional family (Kandiyoti 1991).

The nuclear family, seemingly devoid of any political function, was responsible for both creating and regulating the "private" sphere at the same time, binding it to the state. The newly founded nation-state consisted of the nuclear family, in which the male head represented the family and its values in the public sphere while the modern Turkish woman was charged with the construction and maintenance of the family (Sirman 2005). Specific ways of relating and the emotions that the nuclear family contained were at the heart of the way the new regime governed its citizens: "The invention of new forms of intimate relationships, that is, the patriarchal 'nuclear' family, produced a new regulation of desire, constituting sovereignty, national community and the modern individual all at once" (Sirman 2005, p. 149).

In order to leave behind the traditional order of the Ottoman Empire, love was introduced as the main bond between the members of a family and also their relation to the nation (Sirman 2005). The cultivation of the appropriate love for both the family and the nation was fostered in the cultural sphere: newspapers, books, and magazines. This ultimate version of love was limited through reason and devoid of any sexual or passionate connotations. It was characterized by *muhabbet* (fondness), defined as mutual understanding and respect between spouses. The excesses and limits of this ideal love were defined through women. However, the national family did not emerge as an exact copy of the modern family. While taking their European counterparts as examples, the Turkish family also aimed to preserve the national values as the basis of Turkish culture (Kandiyoti 1991). The citizens of the new regime had to situate themselves within the "ideal" place between what was "too" modern and "too" traditional.[7]

Despite the major social, political, and economic transformations the country was experiencing at the time, same-sex relations were not part of this economy. The reverse attitude toward homosexuality thus can also be explained with the emergence of the nuclear family as the governmental unit with the foundation of Turkish Republic.

Contemporary attitudes: continued intolerance

As stated in our earlier discussion, the social tolerance of sexual minorities in the West is a recent phenomenon, and in some countries, homophobia is still observed. Nevertheless, the safeguarding of the rights of sexual minorities has achieved significant improvement in North America and Western Europe in the last decade (Dalacoura 2014). Compared to Western societies, inequality, discrimination, and violence against LGBT individuals in non-Western societies are more widespread (Dalacoura 2014). According to the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and Intersex Association's (ILGA) *State-Sponsored Homophobia* report, there are currently 70 UN member states that criminalize same-sex sexual activity with possible punishment ranging from the death penalty to life imprisonment. Among the countries that criminalize homosexuality, 50 are located in the Middle East and Africa region (Mendos 2019).

In contemporary Turkey, same-sex relationships are not explicitly criminalized; however, there are still no anti-discrimination laws that protect the rights and the well-being of sexual minorities. As a result, sexual minorities continue to be exposed to hate crimes and suffer from discrimination in social institutions, such as in education, employment, housing, and healthcare (Bakacak and Oktem 2013, Başaran 2015; Çırakoğlu 2006; Gelbal and Duyan 2006;

Engin 2015). According to the ILGA-Europe Rainbow Index (2019), Turkey was ranked 48th out of the 49 mostly European counties with respect to the national legal and policy human rights of LGBTI individuals. The only country with scores lower than Turkey's was Azerbaijan (ILGA 2019).

The lack of legal and political rights of sexual minorities is also reflected in the Turkish political sphere. In 2013, the Turkish opposition made its first attempt to pass a gender and sexuality equality bill that would prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). However, this bill failed to secure enough votes to be implemented. In fact, some government representatives justified their position by claiming homosexuality is an abnormal behavior and a threat to the institution of the family (Engin 2015).

Relatedly, one of the most controversial practices against gay men is observed in the country's military institution. Military service in Turkey is mandatory for every man who is older than 18. Men can apply for exemption in the case that they have a serious physical or mental health condition. However, this exemption from military service is considered degrading since individuals receive what is called a *çürük raporu*—a rotten report. The military being closely tied to national pride, the rotten report implies that those who cannot perform military service are disparaged and not considered as "real" men.

Homosexual men can also apply for an exemption at a cost of undergoing examinations that the military performs in the form of physical and psychological testing.[8] In some extreme cases, gay men may be asked for pictures of themselves partaking in homosexual acts in order to prove their "gayness" (Azizlerli 2012). Gay men are expected to occupy the role of insertee, and "real" men are those who take the role of inserter (Zengin 2016). If they convince the military personnel, they are labeled as having a psychosexual disorder and thus are eligible to obtain a *pembe tezkere*[9] (pink compass)—the colloquial name for gay men obtaining *çürük raporu*. Homosexual men often apply for the *pembe tezkere* despite the humiliating process because they fear experiencing violence during their military service due their sexual orientation (Atuk 2019; Azizlerli 2012; Başaran 2015).

We should note that military medical doctors have a specific understanding of gay identity. What is considered a threat to the institution of the military is not the gay identity per se but effeminacy, which can be manifested through feminine behavior, clothing, and passive sexual roles (Atuk 2019). Romantic and sexual intimacy among men as part of the gay identity is excluded from this understanding, and only the passive party is labeled as effeminate among those who engage in same-sex sexual behavior.

A similar process is found when military doctors grant military exemptions to those who have gender-affirmation surgery. The state continues to intervene with individuals' bodies through intimate touch in the case of a possible gender and sexuality transgression (Zengin 2016). For instance, after a male to female (MTF) gender-affirmation surgery, the person's new genitalia must qualify at a certain depth that is approved by the doctors in order for them to officially recognize the sex change (Zengin 2016). As seen in gay men's exemption, these procedures concerning gender reaffirmation also confirm the Turkish state's attempts to secure the male/female dichotomy.

Low political and institutional tolerance also goes hand in hand with the low acceptance of homosexuality among Turkish citizens. For instance, in 8 of the 39 countries that were surveyed by Pew Research Center in 2013, the acceptance of homosexuality in Turkey was a mere 9 percent. The survey also found older cohorts (50 years and older) of Turkish citizens to be more tolerant than the younger generation. This is an interesting finding considering in most countries the older generation tends to be less tolerant than the younger generation.

Research conducted by Engin (2018) analyzing the 1990 and 2011 Waves of the World Values Survey (WVS) record that there has been some increased tolerance toward homosexuality. For instance, when respondents were asked whether they would like to have homosexuals as neighbors in 1990, around 93 percent claimed that they would not. In 2011, those not wishing to have homosexuals as neighbors significantly decreased to 83 percent. Measuring respondents' justification of homosexuality, around 85 percent of respondents said homosexuality was never justifiable in 1990 compared to 77 percent in 2011. Despite the increased tolerance that has been observed toward homosexuality in Turkey since 1990, attitudes toward homosexuality are still very intolerant compared to other European countries. In a study measuring attitudes toward homosexuality among 27 European countries, it is found that most European citizens do not support discriminatory practices against sexual minorities (Gerharts 2010).

Examining predictors of intolerance of homosexuality, research finds modernization and religiosity to be key indicators. While modernization increases tolerance toward homosexuality, church attendance and being Muslim, Protestant, or Orthodox decreases such tolerance (Gerhart 2010). Other studies (Adamzyle and Pitt 2009; Schulte and Battle 2004; Guittar and Pals 2014) also confirm religion's negative impact on tolerance toward gays and lesbians. Same significant and positive relationship between politico-religiosity and intolerance toward homosexuality is also found regarding Turkey. Both in 1990 and 2011, as Turkish individuals' politico-religious values increased, they tended to become less tolerant of homosexual neighbors, and they werere less likely to think that homosexuality is justifiable (Engin 2018).

Politico-religious values can be seen as a key indicator, blocking Turkish culture's contemporary progress regarding the acceptance of homosexuality. Even if a radical secular turn occurred with the foundation of the Turkish Republic, as we have explored in depth in the earlier part of the chapter, secularism in Turkey also took a different path, particularly with the rise of political Islam over the last decade. This finding, however, should not be misinterpreted as Islam being the root cause of intolerance of homosexuality. In fact, when we analyze the Qur'an, or the Shariat, we find neither a clear position on homosexual desire nor a condemnation of homosexuality per se. As we discussed in great detail earlier in the chapter, homoerotic relationships were commonplace in Ottoman culture and literature until the nineteenth century.

Conclusion

Tracing the prevalence of and attitudes toward homosexuality, our chapter demonstrates that sexual behavior in general and same-sex relations in particular were a common part of Ottoman culture until the early nineteenth century. Ottomans gave particular importance to sexuality and sexual satisfaction and wrote *Bahnames* that specifically focused on sexual health, pleasure, and remedies. The depiction of same-sex sexuality was also at the center of the popular Ottoman literary genres of the time, such as the *Divan*, *gazel*, *mesnevi*, *and tezkire* as well as in well-known Islamic art *miniatures* and theater *şehrengiz* (Arvas 2014). Homosexual love and behavior were also commonly observed in Ottoman rulers and masters (Bardakçı 1992). At the time, it was common for families to groom their sons for sexual services for the high court (Murray 2007). Relatedly, the punishment of homosexuality itself did not exist. Instead, these individuals were punished under the broad law of adultery if their actions qualified (Ze'evi 2006).

Records indicate that a reverse attitude toward homosexuality took place with the beginning of the Tanzimat era, particularly under the influence of Western modernization. This shift in attitude is well observed both among the Tanzimat writers and in the general public discourse. Sexuality and same-sex love were no longer an overt topic from the beginning of

the nineteenth century. The erasure of sexuality from public discourse and the marginalization of same-sex behavior were largely owed to the increasingly close relationship with Western powers.

With the secular turn of Turkey, homosexuality became less tolerated compared to the way it was treated before the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire. The emergence of the nuclear family as a governmental unit was a highly influential factor in the observed intolerance. Within this framework, women were encouraged to be responsible for the creation of the modern nuclear family as mothers and wives taking care of the house, children, and husbands. Relations that fell outside of this vision of the family were demonized both because of their nonproductive nature and their potential threat to the institution of family. While homosexuality is considered to be legal in Turkey, the subjugation of sexual minorities by state institutions is still well documented (Özbay 2015). In order to secure the ideal family image, traditional gender norms are reinforced, and any transgression of stereotypical gender roles continues to be discriminated against and even punished, as we have discovered through cases of gay men's exemption from the military.

We should note there is a counter LGBT movement as well as the emergence of Turkish queer icons and an increase in queer artistic productions and novels, which contribute to the increasing visibility and representation of the LGBT population (Özbay 2015). Some visible gender transgressors, such as Zeki Müren and Bülent Ersoy, have been widely accepted by the Turkish public. Yet, both the mobilization of queer activism and the increasing visibility of sexual subcultures do not mean that Turkish society accepts non-normative gender and sexual identities.

As we have seen through the surveys measuring public attitudes toward homosexuality, the Turkish people's tolerance toward homosexuality has been stagnant compared to that of other European societies. The low tolerance also observed in the country's economic, political, and social institutions can have dire ramifications such as violence and discrimination as well as depression and suicide for sexual minorities. We stress that the institution of the family and politico-religiosity are among key elements that block tolerance of homosexuality. However, we do so with caution since condemnation of homosexuality is cultural and differs greatly from society to society and by time period.

Notes

1 The exact translation of the *bahname* is "book of sexuality," as *bah* means sexual love, lust, and *name* means book (Bardakçı 1992).

2 Divan literature is the classical form of literature in the Ottoman Empire. Divan is the name for the Ottoman parliament. The name of this form of literature indicates that Divan literature belongs to the elite class of society.

3 In the context of the nineteenth century, all Ottoman elites defined themselves as religious Muslims since not believing in God was not part of the imaginary in the nineteenth century during the Ottoman Empire.

4 Parla speculates that Tanzimat writers must have found the sublimation of emotions in French romanticism closer to the way Tanzimat writers created ideal characters in order to support the moral lesson they wanted to convey. The realists from the second half of the nineteenth century were not considered as possible examples to follow, as they were thought to be emphasizing sensory experiences.

5 Under Islamic law, men who commit *zina* with other men can receive the death penalty. On the other hand, women who commit *zina* with other women are not punished because these acts do not involve insertion of a penis (Ze'evi 2006).

6 Mardin (2015) explains this term, *batıcılık,* in his book *Türk Modernleşmesi* as the approach according to which the social and intellectual compound of the West was treated as an objective to reach.

7 The words "modern" and "traditional" do not refer to predefined abstract categories. They, instead, refer to what is imagined to be modern and traditional in the collective imagination in Turkey.
8 The testing that is used by the military to determine whether the individual has a psychosexual disorder is called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality (MMPI). Even though this inventory is still widely used by psychologists, the label of *psychosexual disorder* was removed from the categories of the MMPI since being gay is no longer considered a sickness in Western countries.
9 Men who finish their military service receive a completion compass. The term "pink compass" reflects the homophobic attitude of the military that aims to humiliate and ridicule gay men who, in the eyes of the military, are escaping their national duty.

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19

MAD PATRIOTS

Militarized masculinities and nation-building in contemporary Turkish novels

Çimen Günay-Erkol

Introduction

Nationalist discourse in Turkey is replete with metaphors of militarism, and is built on hierarchies of ethnicity, class, and, of course, gender. The nationalist narratives and myths of the country were produced overwhelmingly by forces with a Kemalist mindset in the early Republican period from 1923 to 1950 (following the expulsion of the monarch from the country in 1922) on top of the residue of the "intellectual context of the Balkan Wars and World War 1" (Turnaoğlu 2017, 243). This was a period informed by the two World Wars and kept the defense of a militarized masculinity as the core of the nation-building process. After World War I, the Turkish War of Liberation (1919–1922) caused hundreds and thousands of men to be immediately drafted again, drafted again and send back to the front. The Republican reformist (nation-building) rhetoric was built in the postwar context of poverty and exhaustion, and condensed around the phenomenon of militarized masculinities, which also helped centralize the new rulers, many of whom had military backgrounds. Most of the names in the first government, such as İsmet İnönü, Fevzi Çakmak, Ahmet Ferit Tek, Kâzım Özalp, and so on, under the presidency of the first president, Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), were graduates of military schools and some were active combatants. Hence, the Republican discourses of nation-building were interwoven with conceptualizations of combatant masculinity.

In the Republican period, men were at the front lines of the popular historical, political and literary texts. Their combat wounds and sacrifices at war were praised, but the vulnerability of men was hardly a formal center of analysis. Linking men's bodies to national collective thought from a biopolitical perspective, earlier works of the Republican era became accepted as school material in order to galvanize military activism and patriotism among the youth. In contrast to these earlier works, new literary works arrived with a critical perspective on Republican principles, which also dared to talk about the war trauma of men in some depth.

As recent trends among memory studies, such as the collection of oral histories, work on narratives of self, memoirs, diaries, letters, and other autobiographical texts, gain more and more followers among historians and political scientists of war in Turkey, a critical

perspective on wounded masculinity and war trauma surfaces more and more visibly. The question how men gained acceptance as citizens by virtue of their consent to engage in active combat requires a critical analysis of nationalism's preoccupation with manliness. For literary scholars of Turkey, the link between trauma and masculinity is also a relatively new research field that opens new avenues theoretically, as trauma provides us with a key site provides us wih a key site to understand the sociocultural history of wars and the establishment of modern nation-states, from below.

In this chapter on Turkish literature, I intend to follow Avery Gordon's footsteps and analyze ghosts of war trauma in literature. Ghosts of the Turkish nation-building process are militarized men who are wounded by this very militarization, and I will refer to them as "mad patriots" since I am not only interested in their physical wounds but also the psychological dimensions of their estrangement.

In her 1997 book *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*, Gordon refers to ideas, ideologies, and societal problems that keep on haunting today's world but get little or no explicit recognition, as ghosts. We live with them, yet we fail to examine them as part of our memory of the past and the present. Gordon draws on Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno's "On the Theory of Ghosts," which was written as a postscript to *The Dialectic of the Enlightenment* and argues that there is ethical urgency in engagement with the past and the present in a critical way, and that we need to start to talk to the ghosts. Gordon says:

> the ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure, and investigating it can lead to that dense site where history and subjectivity make social life. The ghost or the apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us, in its own way, of course. The way of the ghost is haunting, and haunting is a very particular way of knowing what has happened or is happening. Being haunted draws us affectively, sometimes against our will and always a bit magically, into the structure of feeling of a reality we come to experience, not as cold knowledge, but as a transformative recognition.
>
> *(8)*

This chapter is an attempt to link Gordon's work on being haunted with critical masculinity studies, to examine literary representations of men as militarized agents of war, with wounds they are not supposed to talk about. The protagonists of the novels at the center of this chapter allow one to discuss combat trauma and war malingering, both of which revolve around anxieties regarding the loss of masculinity. I will advance my analysis with Gordon's theorization of ghosts, as I intend to make clear the ghostly presence of wounded men in the narratives of the Kemalist *Bildung* and to discuss how this legacy lives in imaginations and cultural texts of contemporary Turkish literature.

In *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon underlines the important role of literary fiction in dealing with ghosts. In her words, "in the twentieth century, literature has not been restrained by the norms of a professionalized social science, and thus it often teaches us, through imaginative design, what we need to know but cannot quite get access to, with our given rules of method and modes of apprehension" (25). It is important to analyze how men victimized by the brutality of war are given space but silenced in literary narratives during the prolonged nation-building process of Turkey, to be able to evaluate the literary responses to militarization. To understand the subjugation of some men to dominant men is necessary in this context, because this system

forms the founding principles of the modern nation-state, as markedly as the exclusion of women and children from territories of militarized power.

George Mosse (1996) sees nation-state formations, the development of nationalism and militarism in a striking parallel to the birth of the modern man. Normative man, following Mosse's line of thought, is defined as a warrior, the healthy and strong male. Physicality is the founding principle of normative masculinity. The body-politics of the young Turkish Republic was also built on the discourses of power, modeled on the valor of men as officers and soldiers. Values such as discipline, hard work and hard work and sacrifice for the nation for the nation served as a sense of mission for the young generations of the Republic. War trauma, however, does not simply disappear through resilience. Historians Mark Micale and Paul Lener (2001) underline in their edited collection, *Traumatic Pasts—History, Psychiatry and Trauma in the Modern Age, 1870–1930*, that trauma is never limited to the event but is rather surrounded by acts of remembering with ideological interests. I intend to show to show how traumatized masculinity stands as a metaphor for the persistence of the past in present settings.

Halide Edip Adıvar's *Ateşten Gömlek* (1922; *Shirt of Flame*, 1924) and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban* (1932; *Stepmother Earth*, 2019), two popular narratives of the Turkish War of Liberation based on ethnographical data, will be my initial stop. Both of these novels are canonical texts of the Kemalist era, which were used to articulate the sacredness of military experience to a predominantly traditional public that has already been socialized into the authoritarian decision-making process (which is ontologically militaristic), but traumatized by the prolonged depressions of the consecutive wars. Republican policymakers turned to Anatolia not only to record the damage by war, but also to extol veteran peasants veteran peasants, who were much neglected during the Ottoman Empire, as the pillars of the new nation. The postwar atmosphere, as seen in *Ateşten Gömlek* and *Yaban*, makes visible that the legacy of the wars continued to haunt the early Republican generations in different ways. The idealization of the patriotic-heroic-manly citizen as a model is central in both narrations, and men's attempts to hide their pain invite Gordon's concept of haunting.

I will then divert my focus to post–World War II novels, which are rather more critical of top-to-bottom modernization and the militarist decision-making mentality (but are still part of the Kemalist *Bildung*), such as Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *Huzur* (1949; *A Mind at Peace*, 2008) and Oğuz Atay's *Tehlikeli Oyunlar* (Dangerous games, 1973; not yet translated into English). Both of these novels have men stuck between their *manly* duties (such as becoming an active soldier in war or keeping up with the militaristic hierarchies and rationale in decision-making) and their bohemian desires as protagonists. In such a contradiction, free will and authoritarian top-to-bottom decision-making are pulled into a gendered discussion of individuality and modernization. In a similar fashion to Tanpınar, but more noticeably than him, Atay underlines the pitfalls of Turkish modernization around the founding myth of the soldier–citizen, the central image of the nation-building process.

Since Turkey is among the few countries in Europe that still has mandatory military service for men, the naturalization of the link between citizenship and militarized masculinity is an ongoing debate, and the debate gains new dimensions as the foreign policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) require adjustment to shifting priorities and new operations abroad. The United States decided to end conscription in 1973, Spain in 2001 and France in 2002. In Turkey, a recent bill signed in 2019 by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan cut the mandatory military service period in half, reducing it from 12 months to 6 months, and made paid military service a permanent alternative. However, Turkey's military presence outside its borders is growing and military-style rules and routines are still common in the culture.

The parliament passed bills to send troops to Iraq and Syria in 2018. In early January 2020, the Turkish parliament decided to send troops to Libya to support the Tripoli government in the escalating civil war. Militarism in Turkey is very visible in daily discourses, and it produces a nationalism suffused with the religious. Finally, in my conclusion, I allude to the future possibilities for a critical analysis of religious nationalism and the treatment of wounded men as what they are in literature, instead of ghosts.

Every Turk is born as a soldier!

In her work on Syria and Lebanon, Elizabeth Thompson describes a "crisis of paternity" following World War I (2000, 19). Likewise, in Turkey, the cultural trauma of the disintegration of the Empire led to an identity struggle, a struggle with gendered dimensions that can be discussed using the paternalistic family as a metaphor. War historian Mehmet Beşikçi notes that in the Great War "a huge proportion [of men] became soldiers: about 80 percent in France and Germany, 75 percent in Austria-Hungary, between 50 and 60 percent in Britain, Serbia, and the Ottoman Empire, and 40 percent in Russia" (2012, 4), and states that "the Great War experience was treated as a disastrous period followed by a 'real' struggle of the people, in which the Turkish nation was entirely reborn" (2012, 11). Turkey was never formally colonized. The idea of the West as a symbol of progress operated in a harsh dissonance with the idea of the West as the enemy at the other side of the trenches during the National Struggle (1919–1922), and this oscillation served as the ground for the formative era of Turkish nationalism. With the new father image of Mustafa Kemal "Atatürk"—the father of the Turks—the father of Turks-the remnants of the dissolving Empire in mainland Anatolia and Thrace, moved from mainland Anatolia and Thrace, moved from being a constitutional monarchy to a Republic.

Republican Turkish Nationalism flourished in an atmosphere of resentment. Having symbolically killed the Oedipal father—the Ottoman sultan—the society was now lacking in paternal care. Recapitulating the national liberation war, (a politically and historically motivated) literature filled the gap in with nationalistic propaganda and contributed to the image of Mustafa Kemal as the leader (the new patriarch) to shape the new Republic. Several writers attempted to increase the public visibility of wounded men, veterans of war, as instruments in raising a nationalistic consciousness. Those wounded man were ghosts speaking the words of the writers; their agony was made visible, but only when eclipsed by their sacrifices for the nation.

Erdağ Göknar (2013) rightfully identifies *Ateşten Gömlek* as a starting point. He says, "the historical trauma of military occupation becomes a literary trope for the first time [after *Ateşten Gömlek*]," and that this trope is "appropriated by the new Turkish state and re-articulated throughout the Republican era in literature and historiography" (39). Halide Edip [Adıvar] (1884–1964) was among the members of the Milli Edebiyat (National Literature) period (1911–1923), who came from upper-class settings with personal servants and teachers, got transferred to the front, and joined the National Liberation Movement. Adıvar's father was working as the personal secretary of finance to the sultanate (Ceyb-i Hümâyun Dairesi), and Adıvar became the first Muslim graduate of the prestigious American College for Girls (Amerikan Kız Koleji) in İstanbul. Her Turkish nationalist sentiment is reflected dramatically in her memoir-novel *Ateşten Gömlek*, which is set during the occupation of İzmir. Halide Edip gave a dramatic speech to the masses gathered at İstanbul, in Sultanahmet Square, after the Greek invasion of İzmir and stirred nationalistic feelings, but she later found herself at political odds with Kemalism.

A similarly stormy path is followed, in terms of lining up with Kemalism, by Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu] (1889–1974), a cosmopolitan Ottoman born in Cairo to a powerful family, and educated in Manisa and İzmir before moving to İstanbul, who later experienced political friction within Kemalist circles in the single-party era (1923–1950). Karaosmanoğlu was influenced by the Turkist circles, but he was also a part of the Neo-Hellenistic (Nev-Yunani) approaches in Turkish literature that advocated a return to the Roman and Greek heritage of Turkey. In 1932, he was a member of the Kadro (Cadre) movement that advocated for a nationalism with socialist overtones. Both in Adıvar's novel and later in Karaosmanoğlu's *Yaban*, the firsthand witnessing of atrocities by Greek soldiers serves as the vantage point where the trauma of war is brought into a discussion with nationalism. İsmet İnönü ordered an investigation of Greek atrocities in 1921, and together with Yusuf Akçura and Halide Edip, Yakup Kadri traveled from Bursa and İzmir to collect impressions of traumatized people, which later formed the historical basis of his and Adıvar's literary narratives.

Ateşten Gömlek deals with a traumatic past via the flawed memories of its protagonist as reflected in his diary, and *Yaban* is designed as a memoir found in the remains of city ravaged by Greek soldiers. At the explicit center of both novels is a wounded veteran, who feels bitter and alienated. Peyami, the protagonist of *Ateşten Gömlek*, is an amputee without legs, has a bullet stuck in his head and is approaching death because of his wounds from war. He describes himself as "a [helpless] child" in his diary (Adıvar 2008, 24). The overall plot of the novel traces the transformation of Peyami from an Ottoman gentleman from upper middle class Şişli and indifferent to the national cause, to a dedicated Turkish nationalist. Romantically attracted to Ayşe, who lost her husband and child in the attacks by the Greek army in her hometown of İzmir and fled to İstanbul, Peyami finds himself in an emotional whirlpool of his national responsibilities and feelings. Ayşe's magnetism is very hard to resist; Peyami says to himself that "female gaze connects people to the most fearful, most embracing routines, to hearths and corners, and it sometimes takes one to hell" (55).

The bullet in his head causes Peyami to have delusions. He reflects on his dialogues with his friends Cemal and İhsan, and in a moment of epiphany remembers that they are dead. Memories of his unwounded body strike him on and off, and the diary keeps track of his precipitously falling in love with Ayşe, in a manner complicating his position as a comrade and her friend. The trio Peyami, Ayşe and İhsan eventually leave İstanbul, and on the road to İzmir, they witness the sufferings of the paramilitary forces of the Turkish War of Liberation. In addition to the tragedies of war, Peyami is also a witness to the mutual attraction between İhsan and Ayşe, and their futile attempts to control their feelings. "Is this an emotional duel? Or a war of two hearts?" (86–87), Peyami asks himself. The episode in Anatolia becomes a rite of passage [to militarized adult masculinity] for Peyami, in which he hopes to prove himself masculine to Ayşe, to win her heart. In a similar but hierarchically upward position of masculinity as a soldier, İhsan makes plans to liberate İzmir with his brigade.

Ateşten Gömlek illustrates the tragedy of men finding themselves in competition with one another, on the grounds of wit and strength, in a dramatic saga of brotherhood in arms. Peyami is in a self-appointed position to protect Ayşe, but he is fearful of his image in her eyes and also those of İhsan (91). Peyami eventually decides to hide his love for Ayşe and channels his enthusiasm for her into love for the homeland. İhsan, on the other hand, senses that liberating İzmir will be nothing but a temporary solution: he says to Peyami that "we, just like our enemies, should *own* our country. We should be blending with the folk, which—up to now—was as separate as water and oil" (112; my italics and translation). Ayşe and İhsan, unable to unite as lovers, walk to their death in a silent mutual agreement under enemy fire, and the diary of Peyami ends with hallucinations of his witnessing their romantic kiss as a finale.

In *Yaban*, which was published ten years later, the problem of "getting united as a nation" resurfaces more powerfully. Ahmet Celâl, the veteran soldier who returns to his village having lost his right arm in Gallipoli, settles in his room in the soldier Mehmet Ali's house. In his diary, he notes that he is condemned to "wither away like a dying tree" (Karaosmanoğlu, 2019, 1), and that Mehmet Ali "gave up everything soldierly and reverted wholly to his previous ways" upon their arrival in the village (10). He recognizes in pain that the nationalist cause was hardly engaged with the Anatolian peasants at large, and that every war requires the reinvention of the soldier–citizen from the beginning. Ahmet Celâl finds himself surrounded by filthy peasants who are indifferent to his national sacrifices and unaware of daily health routines. He likens them to animals. Mehmet Ali, a critic of his everyday routines of shaving, brushing his teeth, combing his hair, reading books and so on (5), tries to familiarize Ahmet Celâl with the village.

Witnessing the poor conditions of the peasants, he elaborates on the failure of reformist Kemalist intellectuals, including himself. The major problem in the novel is the social engineering aimed by Kemalists for the peasants, and its failure becomes more and more visible as Ahmet Celâl finds himself an eccentric figure singled out in the village by the peasants. The neglect of his sacrifices and nationalist ideals by the peasants drives him crazy. He feels dependent on people who do not understand him. Even his close companion Mehmet Ali seems like a distant person to him, because Mehmet Ali feels terrified of being sent to the front again and tries to keep himself away from actual war. Ahmet Celâl reminds Mehmet Ali that he is a veteran, a trained soldier, and tells him that if he refuses to go to the front, nobody else will show the courage to go there. The enemy, Ahmet Celâl reminds him, can triumph if Mehmet Ali "run[s] off and hide[s] like a woman" (Karaosmanoğlu 2019, 27).

Meanwhile, Ahmet Celâl meets Emine, a girl from a village nearby, who turns his life upside down. "This warm, gentle, spirited heart of mine," he anxiously writes in his notebook, used to be "well-versed in the art of being cold and distant" when it comes to women (30). His emotional attachment to Emine deepens his alienation because now he feels inadequate not only to return to the war as a soldier but also to start his life again as a man. He negotiates his possible role in war with a single arm, while at the same time measuring himself against younger men in the village as his rivals for Emine, one of whom is İsmail, to whom he refers negatively as a "puckered freak of nature" and "dwarf" (67). Toward the end of the novel, when Greek troops finally arrive at the village and Ahmet Celâl faces their commander, the commander says he finds him "a more passionate patriot than [they] had supposed," but with sarcasm adds the question: "in that case, why aren't you on the other side of the battle lines?" (171). This emasculation marks Ahmet Celâl's wounded masculinity irreversibly, and as he and Emine finally get injured by enemy fire while trying to leave the village, Ahmet Celâl hides his diary next to the wounded body of Emine and disappears.

The "mad patriots" Peyami and Ahmet Celâl are ghosts of the official ideology that attempts to unify its citizens under the umbrella of healthy and mentally stable soldier–citizens. The physical and mental dissolution of men, their feelings of isolation and helplessness are noted in the narrations, but nonetheless, these are associated with "temporary" traumatic phases of war or as "collateral damage" for the sake of the nation, so that the greater problem of "saving the nation" stays abiding and powerful. The epistemology of haunting described by Gordon illuminates how these men are placed at the frontlines of the narratives rather obscurely; "men in pain" are there, and they speak of their experiences at war, but finally they find all the dramatic aspects of their pain rational, indispensable and utterly nationalistic. The psychological state of being wounded is obscured in the novels by

jingoism. Both Peyami and Ahmet Celâl speak extensively of their wounds and sacrifices, and they seem to have a critical perspective on the much-used fearless image of men at war. However, they finally end up praising men's suffering as a national sacrifice instead of examining them thoroughly.

Peyami and Ahmet Celâl discredit themselves as wounded veterans for not being manly enough, not being fit enough to defend the national cause in the war anymore. The dramatic lack of power speaks through their wounds and crippled bodies. However, as men who are eager to become combatants, they are still hierarchically more powerful than women. Women in both novels are looked down upon by male protagonists in a sexist manner, as secondary forces in war, unable to adapt to combat and the enormous physical and mental force it requires. Both novels remind readers that men are expected to deal with the psychologically exhausting and damaging conditions of war and to maintain their morale, and that we as witnesses to their experiences should be willing to approve the physically capable masculinity as the norm for the soldier–citizen, to contribute to the survival strategy.

In her foreword to Gordon's book, Janice Radway says that Gordon treats writers she analyzes (Luisa Valenzuela and Toni Morrison) "as social theorists, which is to say, as intellectuals who use imaginative fiction both to diagnose the political *dis*-ease of our historical moment and to envision just what it will take to put things right" (xi; italics in original). Adıvar and Karaosmanoğlu are partly at odds with such a vision; they know what war trauma means as first-hand witnesses to it, and they take literature seriously as a means to further our understanding of the human experience of war, but as a matter of choice, they do not persistently follow the distressed mind of wounded men. What appears to be invisible in their works, is men dealing critically with their pain. The critical accent in the novels insistently brings the social conditions that surround the protagonists to the center. This is because both writers, as Kemalists, see Western interventionism as a grave danger, and they find men's (mental and physical) strength at the core of the moral and material qualities of the new Republic, which is supposed to resist Western interventionism.

Not every Turk is born as a soldier!

Foundational texts of Republican literature promoted men's sacrifice of their lives for the homeland. Female protagonists tended to choose the "heroic man" with powerful nationalist tendencies over other alternatives as the love of their lives. It was not until World War II when Turkey chose not to take sides in the war that novels explored psychological states that veered away from those of the normative soldier-citizen type with positive inflections. As opting out became the mainstream political alternative, it became easier to speak of the horrors of war. Turkey avoided going directly into combat in World War II and declared neutrality until 1944, when it suspended commodity exports to Germany. Turkey finally severed all diplomatic relations and declared war on Germany in 1945.

Turkish neutrality in World War II, Stanford Shaw (1993) argues, "did make it possible for its diplomatic agents in Nazi-occupied Europe to significantly assist in saving thousands of Jews from persecution and death" (305). In the1930s, Turkey also sheltered Jewish scholars dismissed from their positions by Nazis hoping to transform its higher education system. Émigré scholars were from a wide variety of fields that ranged from economics to philology, law to theater and arts, and architecture to urban planning (Shaw 1993, 5–9). The university reform in 1933 was overwhelmingly a product of their efforts, but public opinion about the émigrés was very unstable. While innovative Kemalists were in favor of their presence and praised the reforms at

the universities, local professors and some members of nationalist circles were critical of immigrant labor in higher education.

A more poignant Turkism became visible in the second half of the 1930s in Turkey. Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör (2013) state in the introduction to their edited collection, *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture*, that "Turkey witnessed the rise of a pro-German, pan Turkist group composed mostly of Turkish men of letters and émigré intellectuals from the Turkic parts of the Soviet Union" toward the end of the 1930s, causing a deterioration of the Turkish–Soviet relationships (5). Anti-communist propaganda reigned in those years and the police explicitly targeted some of the popular names of the Turkish left. As war crimes of Nazis were revealed toward the end of the war, Turkism lost its popularity; "Turkist-Turanists channeled their efforts into a nationalism that was not hostile to Islam and formed an anti-Soviet front together with Islamists" (Günay-Erkol 2013, 116)

The politically polarized atmosphere around the power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union retained its powerful influence in Turkey in the 1950s and onward, stirring debate between Turkish communists and anti-communists. The post–World War II years in Turkey witnessed the political transition to a multiparty democracy, which brought even greater complexities to the ideological battles. Still, at the heights of political propaganda of the rival political parties, US cultural interference and the development of Turkish communism, some of the following generation of writers of contemporary Turkish literature in the post–World War II era used their male protagonists to examine the official ideology of nationalism more critically instead of promoting military aggression and heroic sacrifices for the nation. In the second part of this chapter, I will elaborate on works by Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar (1901–1962) and Oğuz Atay (1934–1977), two cult writers of contemporary Turkish literature who give voice to men filled with fear or contempt under the pressures of the predominantly militarized culture in Turkey.

Tanpınar was born in İstanbul and spent his childhood in Kerkuk and Mosul in today's Iraq due to his father's official duties. He came back to İstanbul for graduate study. He was a young graduate of İstanbul University when the Turkish Republic was established in 1923. Tanpınar worked as a teacher in Anatolian cities such as Erzurum, Konya and Ankara after his graduation, and he finally became a member of the Faculty of Letters of the University of İstanbul in 1939. He served as a member of parliament for Atatürk's party, the People's Republican Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi) during 1942–1946, as a representative of the province of Maraş. After he left parliamentary politics, Tanpınar worked as an inspector for the Ministry of Education until 1950. Tanpınar's 1949 novel, *Huzur* (Peace of Mind), traces the complexity of nationalist feeling, using a young man's instability between societal norms and his desires. The novel discusses how the country's militaristic top-to-bottom modernization interferes with people's lives, and with the young man's fight with the pressures of his duties and his dreamy romanticism as its explicit focus, tries to answer why it should be approached critically.

Atay, in his *Tehlikeli Oyunlar* (Dangerous games, 1973), returned to the theme of men's forced self-control in romanticism some two and a half decades later, dealing both with romanticism and a militaristic rationale with an equally intense sarcasm. Atay's father was a judge, who just like Tanpınar, served as a member of parliament before 1946. Atay grew up in Ankara, and under pressure from his father enrolled in an engineering school. The dissonance between personal preference and familial/societal expectations became a formative theme for Atay, who in solitude kept reading and writing, and finally in the 1970s started to seek publishers. Atay traverses in his works the underlying problems of Turkish modernization; Ayşe Özge Koçak

Hemmat reads his first novel, *Tutunamayanlar* (The Disconnected, 1971), for example, "as a crisis of the dogmatic and closed nature of institutional or instrumental rationality" (2019, 147). Considering the top-to-bottom hierarchy hidden in the institutionalized rationality, it is obvious that the criticism by Atay targets the ontology of militarism as well. Not only in this first novel, but also in *Tehlikeli Oyunlar*, the sequel to it, Atay's quest for self insists on resistance to pressures from the top and discusses the post-Oedipal scenario.

Tanpınar's *Huzur* takes Mümtaz, a young orphan of the Turkish War of Liberation, as its explicit focus. Mümtaz comes to İstanbul to live with İhsan and Macide and he grows into manhood under their protection, surrounded by a complicated love affair he experiences with Nuran. Tanpınar elaborates on how the postwar life in Turkey oscillates between a melancholy for the past (for the golden ages of the Ottoman Empire) and the urge to start from scratch. Literary critics of *Huzur* often claimed that Mümtaz is a man of dilemmas (a projection of Tanpınar), and that while elaborating on the sociocultural problems of Turkey, he struggles to choose between the Empire and the Republic, the traditional and the modern, and revolution or evolution as a good strategy for the future. The roles assigned to men in the postwar society are negotiated in the novel and the duties of the intellectual are discussed, at lenght, with Mümtaz's indecision at the center.

Forming a stable soldier–citizen type of normative masculinity is also a part of *Huzur*'s problem. In a previous article (2009), I argued that Tanpınar uses philosophical ambivalence and the complexity of political circumstances as a cover for the real trope of the novel: Mümtaz's central indecision regarding masculinity (Günay-Erkol 89). Quoting Gordon (1997) once again, here for *Huzur*, Tanpınar "retells one story and in this way summons another" (146). Mümtaz talks about his insecurities a lot, but almost always projects them to problems outside himself. Tanpınar travels through rather difficult themes and topics of Turkish modernization such as secularization, economic productivity, individualization, intellectuals' responsibilities and so on, and brings the novel to a close on the day World War II breaks out. The message is quite clear if one is ready to see the ghosts: Mümtaz's delirium at the end of the novel is triggered by the panic he experiences when he realizes that he, together with his friends who received official letters from the military, is expected to report to the authorities for conscription. "Despite being opposed to war, I am not afraid of it and I am waiting" says Mümtaz when his friends mention the letters of conscription they had received (Tanpınar, 404). He then eerily faces the ghost of Suad, his rival in his romantic "war" for Nuran who later committed suicide, leaving a note for her, and Suad blames him for his speculatively feminine "spectatorship" position in life. Mümtaz's emotional paralysis in the end reveals the fear of being forced into armed conflict, and the psychological chaos of lacking any alternative to militaristic solutions.

While Tanpınar wrestles with Mümtaz's paradoxes throughout the novel and unearths the gendered dimensions of his emotional paralysis only in the end, Atay takes the paralysis as a beginning. In the revolutionary and critical atmosphere of the late 1960s, it was probably easier for Atay to target more explicitly the intellectual responsibility of serving the nation in arms with a gender-literate lens. Atay delves into the emotional paralysis of his protagonist from the very beginning of his novel *Tehlikeli Oyunlar*, in which he playfully argues that the militaristic top-to-bottom rationale of Turkish modernization is destined to fail because it depends on inventing temporary solutions to complex problems rather than critically examining the root conditions that create the problem in the first place. "Liberating İzmir" was seen as a temporary solution by İhsan in *Ateşten Gömlek* who noted the hard task of uniting remnants of an Empire as a new nation; in *Tehlikeli Oyunlar*, existentialist sarcasm targets the modernistic task of bringing individuals together as well.

The protagonist of *Tehlikeli Oyunlar* is Hikmet Benol, who considers himself "retired from humanity" (Atay 2008, 119) due to his unsuccessful marriage and broken relationships with the people surrounding him. With his old neighbor, the retired colonel Hüsamettin Tambay, Hikmet reflects on the daily struggles of his life. The dialogues between the two form a slapstick comedy that includes an ironic criticism of male socialization and solidarity, a discussion of militarism as a practice forced on the citizens, and a mocking consideration of the undeveloped democracy of Turkey, which is traumatized by military interventions since 1960. Using men incapable of forming a coherent whole, as men, citizens, soldiers and so on, Atay reveals that at the core of the problem of "mad patriots" is the notion of "hegemonic masculinity," which relates to the war for hegemony among men.

Atay hits the nerve that connects militarism and masculinity from inside; he traverses settings of male socialization such as coffehouses, bars, etc. to mock the duo, to mock the duo. While mentioning his fellows in the coffeehouse, Hikmet says he can silence them all by placing "according to my colonel" (123) at the beginning of his sentences in the absence of Hüsamettin Tambay. Civil–military relations are mocked with such details from everyday life and also further with their apprehensions of art and literature. When the retired colonel and Hikmet sit to write "a play on war" out of boredom, they fail to coauthor each other as Hüsamettin Tanbay insistently objects to the tirades of soldiers, saying that they are not "realistic" (263). The discussion of how men should behave, and what can be said and cannot be said as a soldier serves as the dramatic axis on which Atay historicizes Turkish modernism. The militaristic rationale, he shows, is like the air we breathe: normalized and just there. His text is a perfect defilement of Turkish modernism built on such a rationale, as it shows how discourses of success in modernism, such as being an integral part of a society, having obligations to adopt certain norms, obeying the expectations of the culture and so on are haunted by men's fear of being themselves and speaking out.

Toward the end of the novel, when Hikmet says that he began to realize that he carries "colonels and widows" in him (325), the realistic dimensions of the novel collapse and the delirium of Hikmet Benol finally becomes apparent. With this postmodernistic twist, *Tehlikeli Oyunlar* shows that Hikmet Benol is actually *made of* the ghosts he is expected to face. When all of the characters come together for a dinner, Hikmet refers to them as an "army", which makes his alienation more noticeable (426). An already militarized society, Atay intends to show, can only give us a superficial criticism of "nationalism," an abstract and unsuccessful ideal to hold people together. The crowd enjoys the festive dinner and establishes "true democracy" by night, which Hikmet wholeheartedly criticizes. "That is what I see as true democracy," says Hikmet, "everybody takes his/her Republic and withdraws to a corner" (436). The dinner ends as Hikmet blames the people around him for hypocrisy (443), which makes the crowd start to collect dirty plates and ashtrays, wash the dishes, clean the floor happily in an excellent division of labor, and depart from the house in an ironic harmony (a harmony that only an army could have), leaving Hikmet in a mood of anger, shouting at them that "[they] are running away from facts!" (446).

Hikmet Benol is a critic of the hypocritical happiness of the masses that are poisoned by the images and discourses produced by militarized power. He shows, as a man in alienation, a "mad patriot," that he is unable to produce demilitarized alternatives to the powerful images and discourses that have accumulated in the collective unconscious of the society since the establishment of the Turkish Republic, following the wars. He might be a victim traumatized by the pressures of the normativity forced upon him as a man and a citizen, but nevertheless, Atay makes him audible, and causes him to recognize that he has the option to hack, to deconstruct military power in a playful mood, by reflecting on the inadequacy of militarized masculinities

and the nation-building scenarios, and hence making the stability of militarized images and discourses questionable.

Tanpınar and Atay criticize the militaristic foundations of nationalist thinking and remind us, "not every Turk must be born as a soldier." This reminder opens the door to the ghosts. Their criticism does not mean, however, that their fictional personas are devoid of national consciousness. As Banu Helvacıoğlu rightfully states, recalling Franz Fanon's (1968) distinction between the official ideology of nationalism and nationalist consciousness, nationalist conscience in Turkey too often "opposes and overlaps with the state-centered Kemalist ideology" (2006, 47) and hence can be found as a spiritual ingredient in other ideological movements that do not prefer to promote themselves as openly militaristic. The "mad patriots" of Tanpınar and Atay, therefore, both resist and (under totalitarian societal pressures) eventually find themselves forced to reproduce the normative soldier–citizen role. Literary critic Nurdan Gürbilek aptly refers to Oğuz Atay as the "mad man" of Kemalism, who in his playful mood still "feels indebted to Kemalism" (1990, 12). Despite the increased tone of awareness about the ways nationalism is forced on people, however, traumatized masculinity is still a ghostly identity issue in the novels, which the writers approach but cannot fully embrace. Women in the worlds of Mümtaz and Hikmet Benol are romanticized beauties with whom the protagonists are not able to establish healthy, adult relationships. This is a dramatic continuity that adds Tanpınar's and Atay's novels to the line of novels of Adıvar and Karaosmanoğlu from the early Republican period. Hence, the ghosts are finally getting invited to dinner, but they are neglected at the table.

Criticizing militarized masculinities in the post-Kemalist *Bildung*

Justifying itself with the guardian role, the military in Turkey has acted as the basis of political power since the establishment of the Republic by military cadres in 1923. Although there have been challenges to this guardianship, the rigidly militarized role of masculinity was appealing to "the opposing side" as well: those who resisted the militaristic problem-solving mentality also leaned on "tough" figures of masculine power, requiring a consolidation of combatants equipped with militarized forms of power at their side. Literature was instrumental in the early Republican period to recruit citizens as soldiers, in arms or intellectually, for nationalistic causes. Some more contemporary works moved a step further in acting as critics of the authoritarianism hidden in the national cause, rather than serving as instruments to disseminate it to the public. They critically reflected upon how top-to-bottom hierarchies produced by militarized thinking were normalized in the Turkish cultural psyche and became defining factors. This psyche, literature shows us, has been facing a tormenting uncertainty in shaping the feelings for the ghosts it is expected to face.

When will we start talking with the ghosts? In agony, the male protagonists of all of the novels examined in this chapter elaborate on their helplessness and lack of power but the "visible invisibility" of men dealing with their fears and pain critically, is telling (Gordon 16). The "mad patriots" of the Turkish War of Liberation, Peyami and Ahmet Celâl, show how men "heroically" cope with war trauma. The "mad patriots" of World War II, Mümtaz and Hikmet Benol, show that even in interim periods of peace, or in the postwar conditions, men are still expected to cope with the war mentality, as a constructive part of their masculine identities. From the first cohort to the second, the blindness to men's fear in their militarized selves is gradually replaced with an awareness of masculinity as a social construct that should be examined. The idea of an ahistorical and depoliticized masculinity is criticized as a naive idea.

Still, the clash with masculinity in the Kemalist *Bildung* is intentionally eclipsed with societal "greater problems" in the novels, and self-criticism is limited to or hidden behind a criticism of ideological moods such as statism, authoritarianism, nationalism and so on, which tend to stereotype and unify men as soldier–citizens.

Nevertheless, these novels remind us that, at the basis of their particular features (such as their discussion of the nation as a convoluted whole, the esotericism of war, the strained relationships between men and women under militarism), is the trauma of a particular type of masculinity, an end product of militaristic thinking. This can be seen in the continuity in the novels of the passive role assigned to women, and the lack of the protagonists being able to connect with them, without pushing women into roles of wisdom, romanticism or fatality. While some of the problematic aspects of masculinities in the nation-building process are noted, they are not genuinely examined.

The expansive project to deal with pathologies of militarized masculinities in Turkey is waiting to be taken up by the younger generations. Critical studies on men and masculinities are developing in a wide range of different areas from psychology and history, to sociology and literature in Turkey, and they are changing the ways masculinity is negotiated in its militarized forms. It is with interdisciplinary approaches in these studies that a critical new understanding of the Turkish nation-building process, and its literary representations will be realized. New wars will ostensibly bring new tensions to Turkey, but the vibrant new generations will hopefully have the urge and the energy to have a real talk with the ghosts, in times when non-normative identities achieve their space in more cosmopolitan discursive spheres. Once ghosts speak back, and we do listen, it will be possible to treat men as men, instead of ghosts, in literature.

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20

CONTEMPORARY CINEMA OF TURKEY

Being and becoming

Gönül Dönmez-Colin

Introduction

Cinema of Turkey possesses a history almost as old as the history of cinema itself, although international recognition was not fully accomplished until the end of the 1990s and with the emergence of a new generation of film-makers primed in the new technologies, familiar with transnational perspectives and willing to expand their horizons beyond the national borders. Their films have brought home prestigious awards including the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival (*Bal / Honey*, Semih Kaplanoğlu, 2010) and the Golden Palm at the Cannes Film Festival (*Kış Uykusu / Winter Sleep*, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, 2014).

The beginning

Cinema arrived in Ottoman Turkey in a period of movement towards modernity and westernisation, socially and politically. A year after the first screening in Paris in 1895, Alexandre Promio, the cinematographer of Auguste and Louis Lumière visited Istanbul to shoot documentaries with the permission of Sultan Abdulhamit II. The following year, another Frenchman, Bertrand, organised a private show inside the Yıldız Palace in Istanbul at the court of the sultan, followed by public screenings by Sigmund Weinberg at the stylish Sponeck Restaurant in Pera, the cosmopolitan part of Istanbul, known today as Beyoğlu. American, French, Danish or German films that displayed utopic images of the West began to be screened by the monopolising Western powers in theatres with French names – Théatre Pathé Fréres, Ciné Oriental, Ciné Central, Ciné Magic. The first Turks to screen films, Cevat Boyer and Murat Bey (1908), followed by Şakir and Kemal Seden, Ali Efendi and Fuat Uzkınay (1914), also privileged foreign films, disregarding their depiction of the Ottoman Empire as a nest of intrigue ruled by despotic sultans and harem-owner pashas. Such Orientalist images that justify cultural, political, military and economic dominance by stigmatising the Orient as fundamentally different from the Occident and ultimately inferior (Said 1978: 2–3) continued through the War of Independence and the establishment of the Turkish Republic (1923), escalating during World War II and the Cold War of the 1950s.

Aya Stefanos'taki Rus Abidesinin Yıkılışı / The Demolition of the Russian Monument at St. Stephan (1914), attributed to Fuat Uzkınay, an army officer, is considered the first national film despite evidence of its existence and the claims of historians that other films were made earlier within the Ottoman Empire borders such as the two-minute *Türklerin Hürriyet Üzerine Konuşmaları / Turkish Dialogues on Freedom* (1908) by the Macedonian Yanaki and Milton Manaki brothers. Uzkınay was involved with the Merkez Ordu Sinema Dairesi / MOSD (Central Army Office of Cinema) established in 1915 to exploit cinema as a propaganda tool according to the German model admired by Enver Pasha, a prominent *jeune turc* (Young Turk) and the main leader of the Empire in both the Balkan Wars and World War I. The attempt of the Office to create fiction, *Himmet Ağanın İzdivacı / The Marriage of Himmet Agha* (1916), was thwarted when most actors were recruited to the War of Dardanelles and its director Weinberg, a Romanian citizen, was deported when war broke with Romania. Uzkınay completed the film in 1918 (Özön 1970: 14–16).[1] The Müdâfaa-i Milliye Cemiyeti (National Defence Organisation), established in 1913, began to produce fiction films for profit with Sedat Simavi's *Pençe / The Claw* and *Casus / The Spy* (1917), considered as the first complete fiction films. At the end of the war and with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, the equipment from these two organisations was transferred to the Malûlïn-i Guzât Muâvenet Heyeti (War Veteran's Association), which produced *Mürebbiye / The Governess* (1919) and *Binnaz* (1919) by Ahmet Fehim, and continued the Chaplinesque short comedies (*Bican Efendi* series) started by the National Defence Organisation. The military roots of national cinema would experience repercussions over its subsequent evolvement in terms of overt or covert control from the number of films made glorifying the army to the untouchable status of the military. The Censorship Board, created in 1939 and officially abolished in 1998, included military representatives sensitive to any criticism of the army (Özön 1995: 249–57). The first censorship in the history of the national cinema, however, was executed by the commandant of the French forces, who banned the distribution of *The Governess* in Anatolia for degrading the French woman by presenting her as a shameless seductress (Özön 1962: 48) despite protest from Fehim that his work was a peaceful protest against the occupation.

During the early years of the Turkish Republic, similar to the one-party system, cinema was dominated by one man, Muhsin Ertuğrul. An internationally formed man of theatre, Ertuğrul continued the local traditions of vaudeville, the music hall and *Karagöz and Hacivat* (the shadow play) in his cinematic work, leading historians to define this period as the *Period of Theatre Men* (1923–45), although he was criticised for imitating the West rather than contributing to the emergence of a national cinema. His stand was commensurate with the cultural policy of rebuilding the state on the foundations of Western civilisation. Atatürk declared, 'If our borders are in the East, our mentality is oriented towards the West'. Ertuğrul's *Ateşten Gömlek / The Shirt of Fire* aka *The Ordeal* aka *The Shirt of Flame*, screened on 23 April 1923, on the third anniversary of the founding of the Grand National Assembly in an Istanbul under occupation, is considered the first national film of the Republic of Turkey. It is also the first to cast Muslim Turkish women (Bedia Muvahhit and Neyyire Neyir).

Emulating the West rather than searching for a new language to create a new identity continued into what is referred as the *Transition Period* (1945–50), which was also a period of transition for Turkish politics. Struggling to establish a national identity under pressure from the conflicting agendas of traditionalism and Western modernity, the regime succeeded in implementing radical reforms in education, law, religion and culture; establishing fine arts academies, conservatories and film studios; and forming cinema organisations and holding the first film festival. However, these achievements to establish modernity were challenged by the populist Democrat Party (DP) (1950–60) that embraced the United States as a model. Turkey

joined NATO in 1952. One billion dollars of US aid was received between 1948 and 1952. The farmers were given easy loans and the prices of crops were inflated. Imported tractors were sold on credit. Such agricultural modernisation policies did not benefit the landless peasants, who searched for a better life in the industrialised metropolises that were to become a dystopia for many, as the rate of migration was higher than the rate of industrialisation, resulting in unemployment and housing shortages.

The birth of a populist cinema

Yeşilçam, the cinematic style popular from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s, was born during the political populism of the DP and the establishment of the rural Anatolian capital and culture, which had repercussions on Western cultural activities – theatre, ballet, opera and cinema. Yeşilçam, with anonymous characteristics and a closed system of hierarchy, supported the rural culture and the oral traditions. The new spectator (caricatured in Yeşilçam movies as snoring at the opera) desired the values of the familiar folk culture to be preserved, expecting common heroes and common values that could apply to everyone all the time. Diverse opinions or expressions were rejected. The social class representing the West (usually the Istanbulite) was shown as corrupt although their lifestyles were the ultimate object of desire.

The producers adjusted the output to the tastes of the new audience, profiting both from the Anatolian market and the market created by the intense internal migration. The laws created during the Cold War period to curb 'subversive' expressions or tendencies were not interrogated. Abstracted from the realities of daily life, Yeşilçam found a safe haven in 'space-less' and 'time-less' narratives (Ayça 2000: 6–8). Exceptional film-makers, Lütfi Ö. Akad, Atıf Yılmaz (Batıbeki), Metin Erksan and Memduh Ün, entered the industry during this period of restrictive circumstances and anti-intellectual government policies, opening a new era, which came to be identified as the *Period of Cinema Men*.

The 1960s were the golden years for national cinema. In 1966, Turkey was fourth in feature film production worldwide with 241 films. The relatively relaxed atmosphere following the 27 May 1960 coup d'état that ousted the DP, and the subsequent establishment of a progressive constitution nourished the arts. Under the domination of commercial cinema, engaged film-makers succeeded in creating remarkable examples of social realism, such as *Karanlıkta Uyananlar / Those Awakening in the Dark* (Ertem Göreç, 1964); *Yılanların Öcü / The Revenge of the Serpents* (1962) and *Susuz Yaz / A Dry Summer* (1963) (Golden Bear, Berlin Film Festival, 1964), by Erksan; *At, Avrat, Silah / Horse, Woman, Gun* (Yılmaz Güney, 1966) and *Hudutların Kanunu / The Law of the Borders* (Akad, 1966). Migration stories interrogated the reasons for migration, the trauma of displacement, the anxiety concerning the loss of identity and the conflicts between rural migrants and urban dwellers: *Gurbet Kuşları / The Birds of Nostalgia* aka *Migrating Birds* aka *Birds of Exile* (Halit Refiğ, 1964), *Bitmeyen Yol / The Unending Road* (Duygu Sağıroğlu, 1966) and the *Migration Trilogy* of Akad – *Gelin / The Bride* (1973), *Düğün / The Wedding* (1973) and *Diyet / The Blood Money* (1974) are outstanding examples.

Intense migration also produced its own voice, Arabesk (arabesque), an extension of the traditional folk culture, appeared in the 1960s as a music genre with Indian, Arabic and Anatolian flavour, sung mostly by men. In 1968, Orhan Gencebay initiated the arabesque film furore relying on his success in music. With a masculinist standpoint, arabesque targeted the alienated Anatolian migrant workers in modern metropolises. Rural roots were romanticised through fatalistic stories of unattainable love and the impossibility of return, proposing the imposition of rural culture on modern urban life as an alternative. Despite resistance from both the Islamist

and the secular, particularly the intelligentsia (Güney denounced the ideology as a trap to distract people from daily sufferings), arabesque enjoyed unprecedented success and continued until the 1980s, which could be attributed to its ability to provide temporary relief for cultures in transition (Dönmez-Colin 2014).

Hopes for a censor-free cinema were shattered when the Constitutional Court revived the censorship regulations of 1939. Nonetheless, a classic like *Umut / The Hope* (Güney, 1970) was made. *Sürü / The Herd* (Zeki Ökten, 1978), about the tragedy of the disintegration of a Kurdish nomad family, scripted by Güney while in prison, became one of the landmarks, followed by *Yol / The Way* (Şerif Gören, 1982), also scripted by Güney. The latter shared the Golden Palm with *Missing* (Costa Gavras) at the Cannes Film Festival, 1983.

Islamist agenda

Behind a secular and modernist facade, Yeşilçam followed the principles of the religious culture to retain the conservative Anatolian audience. An Islamist agenda rose under several banners, systematically over the woman's body. *Milli sinema* (an Ottoman term, literally 'national cinema'), promoting Islamic identity and religious morals, gained popularity between the 1960s and 1970s using the woman's body as metonymy for the nation to be rescued from the bad elements of modernity exemplified by sex, poker, alcohol, mixed parties, miniskirts, heavy make-up and bouffant hairstyles and immodest body language juxtaposed with the headscarf, modest attire and body language (*Kızım Ayşe / My Daughter, Ayşe*, Yücel Çakmaklı, 1974). The movement resurfaced in the 1990s as *beyaz sinema* (white cinema), arguing cinema had served negative aims since the foundation of the Turkish Republic instead of directing the youth towards positive channels (Dönmez-Colin 1993, 2004). At the height of the polemic on the prohibition of the headscarf in public institutions, Mesut Uçakan's *Yalnız Değilsiniz / You Are Not Alone* (1990) on the ordeals of one defiant student who persists in Islamic covering, appealed to young women trapped between modernity and tradition. However, its sequels did not receive the same enthusiasm, as white cinema depicted women as binary opposites or stereotypes rather than seeking solutions to problems (Ibid.).

Decline and rebirth

Following the 12 September 1980 coup d'état, parties and unions (including the union of cinema workers, Sine-Sen, founded in 1978, and the cinematheque, founded in 1965) were closed; books and films were burned; politics banned and film-makers imprisoned and tortured. In the adverse social and political atmosphere, the commercial film industry, supported by the audience but lacking proper infrastructure, technology and funding, began to decline. The arrival of television in 1968, the gradual multiplication of channels, the video furore, the political climate, the dilapidated condition of the cinema halls, state censorship and short-sighted government policies that have allowed the US majors to monopolise distribution were detrimental to the industry.

As the national production dwindled to less than ten films annually, *Eşkıya / The Bandit* (Yavuz Turgul, 1996) appeared as a ray of hope for the return of the audience. Exposing the wild capitalism encouraged by the 'a millionaire in every neighbourhood' policy of Turgut Özal (prime minister and president between 1983 and 1993), high inflation and deep corruption, the film attracted over 2.5 million viewers, surpassing the most popular Hollywood films. International accolades and foreign commercial release followed. An entirely Western-style

marketing campaign contributed to the film's success, but the main factor was that regardless of the ideological polarisation, people saw themselves in it. Hardly anyone questioned why a film with protagonists bearing Kurdish names (Baran, Berfo and Keje) and referring to a village under water (the building of the dam that has caused the relocation of many Kurdish villages), never mentioned the word 'Kurd'. Following the Yeşilçam tradition, the bandit wore black *shalvar* (loose pants) and supported a *poshu* (the traditional scarf), but his Kurdish identity seemed irrelevant to the narrative (Dönmez-Colin 2008; 2014).

Gendered images

From its arrival, cinema has flourished in derogatory images of women as femme fatales, vamps, prostitutes or naive maidens. Women have been 'trouble for men' from the early sex comedies (*The Governess* mentioned above) to Yeşilçam melodramas to postmodern works. In Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Bir Zamanlar Anadolu'da / Once Upon a Time in Anatolia* (Turkey 2011), the commissar character declares, 'Whenever there is trouble, there is a woman behind it'.

The first film by a woman, *Fedakâr Ana / The Devoted Mother* (1949), was accomplished by Cahide Sonku, co-directed with Seyfi Havaeri according to some sources, although other sources credit her as producer. From the beginning until 1980, out of 4,390 films, 52 were directed by women, and 25 of those were by the same woman, Bilge Olgaç (Özgüç 2003 as quoted by Öztürk 2003: 34). The number of women working in the industry in the early 2020s is in adverse proportion to men, despite a large number of exceptional women film-makers acknowledged internationally. The identity of the first woman documentarian is unknown. The first camerawoman (also ecologist activist documentarian), Şehbal Şenyurt Arınlı, who began shooting in 1986 around Diyarbakır for foreign news agencies, was acknowledged as such by the media only after her arrest following the 7 June 2017 elections, in which she participated as a candidate from the pro-Kurdish Halkların Demokratik Partisi / HDP (Peoples' Democratic Party). Film criticism and scholarship have been under the monopoly of men. Few women are in powerful positions to challenge the male hierarchy or to confront the sexist status quo entrenched in the cinematic tradition, the structures of language and the artistic and social conventions.

The visibility of LGBTI identities and queer cinema is new for Turkey, where the official policy of the state, One Nation–One Language–One Religion, applies to sexual identity as well, cinema endorsing heterosexuality and assigning the family as the ideal medium to practise it. Cross-dressing in the movies, 'a manner of mocking and domesticating transvestism that might otherwise be threatening' (Philips 2006: 81), goes back to the first year of the Republic, the first version of *Leblebici Horhor Ağa / Horhor Agha, the Chickpea Seller* (Ertuğrul 1923), depicting a father dressed like a woman to protect her daughter from harassment. Güney cross-dressed in *Kibar Haydut* aka *Yalnız Adam / Gentile Bandit* aka Lonely *Man* (Yılmaz Atadeniz 1966) as an old lady with a headscarf and optic glasses (Özgüç 2000), and the King of Comedy, Kemal Sunal followed suit with *Şabaniye* (female derivative of his popular Şaban character) (Tibet 1984) endorsing masculinity by caricaturising the 'weaker sex'.

Tough women characters mimicking macho muscle power, vulgar jests, mimicry, foul language and the dress code of the male subculture became popular with Neriman Köksal in *Fosforlu Cevriye / The Fluorescent Cevriye* (Arakon 1959) and reached a peak with *Şöför Nebahat / Nebahat, The Driver* (Erksan, 1959–60). The gender bender 'lumpen woman' did not challenge the moral judgements of a Muslim society because she was expected to fight like men but act like the dutiful wife at home – cooking, cleaning, having sex with the husband and producing

children. Such distortion of women's issues by creating schizophrenic characters was not scrutinised. The popularity of the subgenre also proved that women could be heroes only when they acted like men (Dönmez-Colin 2004).

Woman-to-woman relations, mostly the product of male imaginaries, have been exploited for voyeuristic purposes rather than to create an awareness of identity in women. Critic/archivist Agah Özgüç cites *Ver Elini Istanbul / Istanbul Give Me Your Hand* (1962) by Aydın Arakon, as the first attempt at lesbian relations. Atıf Yılmaz, with one eye on artistic concerns and the other on the box office, was a pioneer with *İki Gemi Yanyana / Two Ships Side by Side* (1963) by showing two women kissing on the lips. A period film, *Halit Refiğ's Haremde Dört Kadın / Four Women in the Harem* (1965), insinuated lesbian relationships between the concubines of a pasha and was criticised severely. From 1974 to 1980, lesbianism was exploited in 'sex comedies'. In the 1980s atmosphere of the post-coup, when the apoliticisation of the society was the priority and social movements, especially movements by women, were not considered a strong threat to hegemonic masculinities, the belatedly arrived feminism encouraged some male film-makers to delve into women's stories with lesbianism added for commercial value. Atıf Yılmaz's *Dul Bir Kadın / A Widow* (1985), showing the erotic fantasies of two women, was the most discussed film of the year. His *Düş Gezginleri / Walking after Midnight* (1992), considered the first realistic lesbian film, showed two women making love. Yılmaz claimed that his focus was the distribution of power in society and not the lesbian relationship, which drew criticism from feminist groups on the premise that he was reducing woman-to-woman relations to an exercise of power (Dönmez-Colin 2008, 2014, 2019).

Homosexuality is not illegal in Turkey, but the LGBTI population has faced serious homophobia and transphobia since the 1980s when sexualities began to be discussed more openly (Yüzgün 1993). LGBTI narratives are confined mostly to film festivals, although Hollywood films with gay themes are commercially released with an 18+ classification and LGBTI-themed DVDs are sold legally. Pembe Hayat KuirFest (Pink Life QueerFest) was originally held in Ankara for the first time in 2011 and within four years began to extend to other cities. However, a ban in November 2017 by the governor of Ankara on all LGBTI-related events, including film screenings, theatre/dance performances, panels and exhibitions under the pretext that they could threaten public health and morality by 'inflaming social sensitivities', ended gay activities nationwide. The festival took place in 2019 between January 24 and 27 in Istanbul with screenings, panels and workshops.

Despite several examples of films with gay innuendo, or what B. Ruby Rich calls the 'subtle wink' (2013), feature films with unbiased depictions of the LGBTI individuals are limited. Popular arabesque singer Mahsun Kırmızıgül's box office hit *Güneşi Gördüm / I Saw the Sun* (2009) includes homophobia and the honour killing of an LGBTI family member amongst other current issues (the expulsion of Kurds from south-eastern Anatolia, human trafficking and child marriage), all within the frame of the official narrative. The award-winning *Zenne / Zenne Dancer* (Mehmet Binay and Caner Alper 2011) is probably the first bona fide queer film. Based on the true story of a young man, murdered by his father when he came out, the film deals with cultural and legal issues affecting gay men through the story of three characters: a flamboyant dancer, a gay provincial man and a German photojournalist. *Teslimiyet / Other Angels* (Emre Yalgın 2010) is a realistic depiction of the transgender community in Istanbul. More engaged approaches are found in documentaries such as *Benim Çocuğum / My Child* (Can Candan, 2012) on the parents of LGBTI individuals, from discovery to shock to acceptance and support. As with tackling political issues, self-censorship, often for economic reasons, is a menace to creativity in queer cinema as well.

'The literature of the other'

Localised formations of Orientalist discourses within nation states operate internally, and objectify and stigmatise a particular geography, ethnicity and culture in sociopolitical life and its mirror, the arts and cinema (Zeydanlıoğlu 2008). Ethnic and religious minorities, the 'fictive ethnicity', is the community instituted by the nation state, othered as 'constitutive outsiders' (Balibar 1991: 96). During the nation-building process, the westernised elite exalted homogenous nation-statehood as the criterion for 'Western-ness', and cinema, reluctant to move beyond 'national identity' to embrace 'cultural identity' (Dissanayake 1988), followed the general policy. The Kurds were the ignorant dark men from the mountains, submissive servants, guerrillas or smugglers. The oppressive conditions of their lives were attributed to feudalism, but not the lack of efficient government policies. Their culture and the geography of their homeland were exploited without identifying it with its proper name, but rather with an Orientalising gaze.[2]

Humanist masterpieces such as *Ağıt / Elegy* (Güney, 1971) have attempted to revert the dominant gaze through poetic realism. Yet, the tradition of the West of the country looking at its East from an Orientalising point of view has persevered. Three films about honour killings, all made in 2007, *Mutluluk / Bliss* by Abdullah Oğuz; *Saklı Yüzler / Hidden Faces* by Handan Ipekci; and *Jan Jan* by Aydın Sayman, indict Kurdish customs for the horrifying crime.

Yeşim Ustaoğlu, one of the pioneers of the New Cinema of Turkey that I discuss further below, presented the Kurds in their Kurdish identity and as positive characters in her second feature, *Güneşe Yolculuk / Journey to the Sun* (1999), which charts a reverse journey to the East, underscoring the fluidity of identity. The cast and crew are mostly Kurdish, including Kazım Öz, an established film-maker of today, as her assistant. Another reverse journey of self-discovery for a Turk is *Gitmek / My Marlon and Brando* (Hüseyin Karabey, 2008), which sends the protagonist to lands she never knew existed, through hardships of customs and language to experience what the Kurds experience in the West.

While racist television dramas continue the Yeşilçam tradition of denying the Kurds their identity and presenting them in derogatory images – mostly as terrorists – İpekçi has attempted to approach the Kurdish conflict from an unbiased point of view with *Büyük Adam, Küçük Aşk, aka Hejar / Big Man, Small Love* aka *Hejar* (2001), albeit with an ambivalent message. The story of an unusual friendship between a retired Kemalist judge and a five-year-old Kurdish orphan, the two metonymies (state versus the rebel PKK) and the assimilated Kurdish maid as the intermediary, the film shows little Hejar, the savage mountaineer (the colonial subaltern), swearing in the non-official language, 'tamed' by the judge of the state (the civilised man, the colonialist) into a proper bourgeois girl of the Kemalist ideology of Westernism parading in Benetton outfits. The noblesse oblige of racism 'the "moral responsibility" that psychologically authorises the colonial Self to unilaterally assume a civilising mission to educate, convert, and culturally assimilate the other into the Empire' (Rieder 2008: 76–7) has been accomplished. All it takes is to speak the Other's language, a dangerous simplification of the complexities of the Kurdish issue (Dönmez-Colin 2019: 58).

A popular Yeşilçam narrative revisited in the 2010s is the relationship between a Kurdish woman guerrilla (metonymy for the Kurdish nation) and a Turkish soldier (representing the state). *Dağları Bekleyen Kız / The Girl Guarding the Mountains* (Atıf Yılmaz 1955), a love story between Zeynep the guerrilla and Adnan, the lieutenant, was so popular that it was remade in 1968 by Süreyya Duru. Zeynep shoots at Turkish planes and kills Adnan's friend, but when the two fall in love, she surrenders her gun and her body to Adnan, denouncing her friends. Reha Erdem's *Jîn* (2013) circumvents the clichéd narrative to deliver a message of peace and

harmony for all creatures of the universe, but the guerrilla must die in the finale (Dönmez-Colin 2014).

Öz emphasises that the representation of the Other in cinema, the 'literature of the Other', regards the Other as 'commodity' to embellish the narrative for commercial purposes with colourful exotic images – 'Assyrians and Alevis on one side, Kurds and the Gypsies on the other' (Dönmez-Colin 2008: 93). To the 'commodified Other', one may add the non-Muslim minorities – the Greeks, the Armenians and the Jews – whose portrayals in stereotypified identities display 'inferential' racism (Hall 1990). Minority women are at a double disadvantage. Yeşilçam portrayed the Armenian women as unduly made-up overweight snobs, tutors to young nouveau riche Turkish women, or greedy guest-house operators. Turkish women or cross-dressed men played these roles with hyperbole, imitating the accents of their own imaginary.

The body of the Greek woman was exploited as the locus of Islamically forbidden sexual behaviour (Yaşartürk 2012). She could commit adultery like Despina in Refiğ's classic *The Birds of Nostalgia* aka *Migrating Birds* aka *Birds of Exile* (Dönmez-Colin 2014), or operate a brothel like Marika in his *Kırık Hayatlar / The Broken Lives* (1965). Extramarital relations were tacitly approved for Muslim men, even endorsed, but marriage with a non-Muslim woman was discouraged.

The interest in non-Muslim characters faded with the establishment of the arabesque culture and the focus on the Anatolian migrant narratives, but also the decline of the non-Muslim population, particularly the Greeks (Balcı 2013), although some clichés have remained. With good intentions, but surface political engagement, Tomris Giritlioğlu has made a trilogy addressing the atrocities of recent Turkish history committed against the Greeks. The last segment, *Güz Sancısı / Autumn Pain* (2008) exploits the 6–7 September 1955 pogrom to tell a love story between a Turkish man and a charming Greek woman, Elena, a prostitute (Dönmez-Colin 2019: 61)!

New cinema of Turkey

A new generation of film-makers appeared in the late 1990s pursuing transnational approaches to narrative forms and modes of production. Pioneered by Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Zeki Demirkubuz, Derviş Zaim and Yeşim Ustaoğlu, their cinema has searched for new economic, aesthetic and thematic models in exploring national, global and individual identities in a modern world. Zaim's 'no budget' debut feature *Tabutta Rövaşata / Somersault in a Coffin* (1997) is considered as the initiator of this movement, which came to be identified as the New Cinema of Turkey, which is not a nouvelle vague in the French sense. The conduit of each film-maker is unique despite thematic and artistic merging points – the dominance of the auteur and mise-en-scène, self-reflexive counter-cinema practices, distantiation, subversion of the genres, counterpoint and elliptic editing and a tendency to use non-professional actors. Ceylan's approach has been self-reflexive; Demirkubuz and Zaim have maintained a social and political locus in focusing on the lives of ordinary characters, whereas Ustaoğlu (the only woman) has evolved from an intensely political perspective towards the social and psychological repercussions of the political on the individual, particularly the woman as her work has matured.[3] These pioneers were soon joined by Semih Kaplanoğlu, Tayfun Pirselimoğlu, Barış Pirhasan, Kutluğ Ataman and Reha Erdem, among others.

Nuri Bilge Ceylan is the most celebrated contemporary film-maker of Turkey. At the Cannes Film Festival, he has won the Grand Prix twice (2003 and 2011) as well as the Best Director (2008) and the Golden Palm (2014) awards. Starting with child protagonists, non-professionals and small-budget intimate films, Ceylan has moved to international productions with renowned

actors. He cast his family and friends in *Kasaba / The Small Town* (1997), *Mayıs Sıkıntısı / Clouds of May* (1999) and *Uzak / Distant* (2002), and assumed almost all technical credits. Both *The Small Town* and *Clouds of May* evoke his earlier experiences in provincial towns, in-between spaces that with their conformism, normalcy and family-centred insularity push the young to seek a better life in the city. *Distant* features a disillusioned urban intellectual with provincial roots and *İklimler / Climates* (2006), which can be considered as a prequel to *Distant*, focuses on the disintegration of a relationship affected mostly by the 'distant' personality of the male partner, a man with Western values but an Eastern mentality. I consider these four films a tetralogy that I name 'A Portrait of the Provincial Artist as an Urban Intellectual' (Dönmez-Colin 2014). *Climates* widens the narrative from the individual to the couple (enacted by Ceylan and his wife, Ebru), although the emphasis is still on the male protagonist, whereas *Üç Maymun / Three Monkeys* (2008) centres on a nuclear family. *Once Upon a Time in Anatolia*, widening the screen to cinemascope, expands its scope to involve the country and its historical, social and political landscape through a murder story without suspense. Focusing on a self-absorbed patriarch, *Winter Sleep* explores love, honesty, integrity, pride, class divide, religion and masculinity in crisis through characters trapped in the labyrinth of their circumstances, metaphorically inside the caves of Cappadocia. Male subjectivity in crisis (Silverman 1992) is at the centre of *Ahlat Ağacı / The Old Pear Tree* (2018), which navigates through three generations of unfulfilled men.

Professing an apolitical point of view, Ceylan presents a society at the threshold of modernity suffering from the erosion of traditional cultural values in all his films to date. Unemployment, migration to the metropolises for social and economic advancement, the state-sanctioned erosion of cultural heritage, women's liminal state, men's dilemmas in defence of the traditional masculinity in a progressively suffocating political atmosphere, the perennial urban/rural and intellectual or artist/ordinary citizen dichotomy are the recurring themes in all of his well-constructed and aesthetically superior films.

Resistance builds its own narratives

Dissatisfaction with the urban existence, the absence of a sense of belonging and escape to rural roots are some of the prominent themes of the New Cinema of Turkey. *Yazgı / Fate* (Demirkubuz, 2002) features an indifferent protagonist apoliticised in the aftermath of several military interventions, unable to differentiate between violence on the screen and violence in the corridor. *Araf / Somewhere in Between* (Ustaoğlu, 2012) portrays youth in a dead-end provincial town internalising television shows to the extent that the film ends with a live marriage, albeit inside a prison. The 'Conscience and Death' trilogy of Pirselimoğlu, comprising *Rıza* (2007), *Pus / Haze* (2009) and *Saç / Hair* (2010), and the Hitchcockian *Ben O Değilim / I'm Not Him* (2013) expose a cold and indifferent metropolis where luxurious apartment blocks push the shantytowns to the periphery and desensitised citizens seek survival by entering the lives of others vicariously in front of the television set.

Ustaoğlu interrogates identity formation – the transition from adolescence to adulthood, the breaking of the ties with the father/authority and the attaining of freedom by becoming an individual – in a community-oriented society, where the triangle of state, army and religion moulds the character. While *Journey to the Sun*, mentioned above, and *Bulutları Beklerken / Waiting for the Clouds* (2004) have pioneered a cinematic discourse on ethnic othering, *Pandora'nın Kutusu / Pandora's Box* (2008) has exposed social and economic realities through three generations of a disjointed middle-class family, the Alzheimer's-afflicted mother serving as a metaphor for the amnesia surrounding the traumas of history, also a crucial motif in Ceylan's *Once Upon a Time*

in Anatolia. Tereddüt / Clair-Obscur (2016), while focusing on women's lack of ownership of their bodies, underscores the disappearance of the rural life and the rapid urbanisation that has created degeneration for the migrants trying to build a new life in the outskirts of the metropolises while preserving rural traditions.

The protagonists of Ceylan consider the rural as a nightmare the hero tries to wake up from, while Kaplanoğlu claims such ennui is determined by the exterior gaze when the provincial is regarded from a distance. In his films, the province as a point of departure carries an element of nostalgia and a sense of belonging. Home as a uniting power emerges in various forms, climaxing in the natal home of Yusuf in the Golden Bear–winner *Honey*, the final segment of the *Yusuf* trilogy that also includes *Yumurta / Egg* (2007) and *Süt / Milk* (2008) (Dönmez-Colin 2014:194–5).

The following generation whose films have received prestigious international awards adhere to more direct social and political agendas. Emin Alper, *Tepenin Ardı / Beyond the* Hill (2012) and *Abluka / Frenzy* (2015); Karabey mentioned above; and Özcan Alper, *Sonbahar / Autumn* (2008) and *Gelecek Uzun Sürer / Future Lasts Forever* (2011) have deconstructed the 'Turkish' identity for a larger identity to encompass the ethnic and cultural mosaic of Turkey. (*Autumn* was shot mostly in the Armenian dialect, Hemshin.)

'Cinematic counter-telling' (Shohat 2003: 51) by Kurdish film-makers was already underway in the 1990s with *Mem û Zin / Mem and Zin* (Ümit Elçi, 1991 and *Siabend u Xece / Siyabend and Xece* (Şahin Gök, 1993), but could not flourish under state censorship. Building on the tradition of Güney, Nizammettin Ariç shot *Stranek Ji Bo Beko / Ein Lied für Beko /A Song for Beko* (1993), about the struggles of the Kurdish people against the Turkish state, in Kurdish in Armenia, and İbrahim Selman made *Silent Traveller* (1994) in Greece. *Tirej* (2002), by Halil Uysal, was directed and acted by real-life guerrillas. Iraqi Ravin Asaf, who migrated to Germany in 1986, made *Sarı Günler / Yellow Days* (2002), co-produced with Kadir Sözen (the film was withdrawn from the International Istanbul Film Festival). Similar to Palestinian cinema, Kurdish cinema has been developed largely in exile by transnational film-makers – Züli Aladağ, Zaynê Akyol, Yılmaz Arslan, Kudret Güneş, Ayşe Polat, Nuray Şahin, Yüksel Yavuz, Yusuf Yeşilçay and others.

The 'Kurdish Opening', established by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2009 to promote the cultural rights of the Kurds by establishing Kurdish language departments in universities, the renaming of Kurdish villages in Kurdish and the launching of a state-run Kurdish television channel were criticised by Kurdish political activists as artificial in a period when the government ignored the Kurdish nationalist movement and the pro-Kurdish political party in parliament and arrested several Kurdish politicians and journalists. However, the relaxation of language restrictions and funds from the Ministry of Culture along with the availability of the digital medium encouraged more Kurds to enter the industry.[4] The main concerns of these film-makers have been the search for homeland, the crossing of borders, the preservation of the collective memory and, particularly, the language. Öz drew attention with his short, *Ax / Toprak / Land* (1999), about an elderly Kurd who refuses to leave his village after evacuation by the military, and has continued his focus on absence and loss. He has excelled in exposing the pain of the Kurds without a homeland from his first feature *Fotograf / The Photograph* (2001) to three documentaries on migration: *Dur / Uzak / Far Away* (2005), about the massive exodus of two generations from his natal village to Germany; *Demsala Dawî: Şewaxan / Son Mevsim:Şavaklar / The Last Season: Shawaks* (2009), about a year in the life of nomads; and *He bû tune bû / Bir Varmış, Bir Yokmuş / Once Upon a Time* (2014), about seasonal workers.

May 2013 demonstrations that spiralled from a peaceful protest against the demolition of a public park near the legendary Taksim Square in Istanbul to nationwide calls for the resignation

of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (prime minister then, president now) were the consequence of a prevailing atmosphere of discontent in response to the authoritarian policies of the government and predominantly the 'bulldozer neoliberalism' (Lovering and Türkmen 2011) that has pushed the lower-class urban residents to the periphery, created gated communities and destroyed the historical, social and ecological texture of the city. Around 3.6 million citizens are said to have participated in 5,232 nationwide protests between May and September 2013.[5]

Two pre-Gezi narratives are significant as premonitions of this radical event that has changed the texture of the society irreversibly. Pelin Esmer's first feature, *11'e 10 Kala / 10 to 11* (2009), exposes the evolution/erosion of the city of Istanbul through the eyes of two marginal characters, an elderly urban collector and his rural building superintendent. As their surroundings collapse in the name of progress (to construct a new, so-called earthquake-resistant building), the two men, despite differences in age, status and background and an ensuing mistrust, bond over a common destiny to preserve the collective memory of the city and the archives of their time, each in his own way.

Belmin Söylemez's *Şimdiki Zaman / Present Tense* (2012) exposes the damage to collective history and memory through destruction of the urban space and architecture to be replaced by shopping malls and boutique hotels. Free expression of creativity is stifled and good education and training do not guarantee a good way of living.

Characters dream of escaping to a new life in the future, but they are desperately stuck in the present. Made by women, both films subvert masculine narratives and open the path to a number of post-Gezi films, also by women. *Toz Bezi / Dust Cloth* (Ahu Özturk, 2015) is a realistic rendition of the predicaments of migrant domestic workers from unemployment and racism to alienation in a metropolis transforming itself. Nesrin and Hatun clean the apartments of women from another echelon of society. Being a woman is already a disadvantage, but Kurdish women are doubly disadvantaged. Bondage is a strong element, with ethnic and class bondage overriding female bondage. Reverting to native language at moments of relaxation after a hard day's work is comforting for the women, a reassurance that they are still in charge of their identity albeit only in private space (Hatun tells her employer she is Circassian).

Cinema beyond borders

In the new millennium, political and economic developments around the world have reshaped and challenged the old paradigm of 'national cinema'. The established national identities of the cinematic tradition have begun to dissolve, giving way to alternative criteria for defining identity. Cinema beyond the boundaries of the nation state has responded to the emergence within international cinema of a considerable body of work that involves exchanges across borders and cultures. Fatih Akın or Aslı Özge, with roots in Turkey, are recognised as important names of New German Cinema, but are also acknowledged as part of the New Cinema of Turkey with films that have moved beyond the earlier focus on guest-worker and victim narratives, the 'cinema of the affected' (Burns 2006: 133), or the 'cinema of duty' (Malik 1996: 202–15) to investigate hybrid identities involved in what has become the 'cinema of double occupancy' (Elsaesser 2005: 118). Aware of the dichotomy of living in between cultures and languages, these 'hyphenated nationals' exhibit new concerns that reflect their circumstances and relationships to the space they occupy (Dönmez-Colin 2014: 150–1).

Transnational film-making has opened new horizons to navigate, and funds from Europe, such as EURIMAGE, the Council of Europe Fund (Turkey has been a member since 1990), which requires co-production with European Union countries, have contributed to the improvement of technical quality and opened doors to international visibility, although sceptics

interrogate whether European funds that give priority to certain subjects such as human rights and women's emancipation play a role in the thematic choices of the film-makers.

Conclusion

The film industry in Turkey has been flourishing on the commercial side. The year 2019 ended with a local film, *Mucize* 2, *Aşk* (literal trans. 'Miracle 2, Love'), a sequel by Mahsun Kırmızıgül, as number one at the box office, leaving *Star Wars: The Rise of Starwalker* (J. J. Abrams) behind.[6] Strong commercial cinema and its partner in crime, television, have shaped the tastes of the public, resulting in the closures of independent cinema halls. Following the Gezi unrest and the coup d'état attempt (2016), film-makers with a political orientation and especially those of minority ethnic origin, have been distanced from government support that is now diverted to so-called 'family films' advocating conservative values. Arbitrary cinema laws prevent public screenings of films labelled as 'inappropriate', and committees responsible for such decisions and the funding of films have become increasingly disproportional in number, favouring government representatives. The withholding of funds as a tool for censorship and the use of the +18 certification as a means of creative control have led to self-censorship. The harassment/trial/imprisonment of film-makers and actors, especially those of Kurdish origin, with accusations of their belonging to a terrorist organisation and confiscation of their archives and works have increased, .[7] Distinguished film-maker Kazım Öz has been tried for belonging to a terrorist organisation and he is facing a 15-year prison sentence. The highly competitive festival circuit is the main venue for film-makers with social, political and artistic concerns. However, film festivals, except for the Istanbul International Film Festival, are run by municipalities and maintain partisan policies that may change with elections. They can also be cancelled by the government at its whim.[8] Some international film festivals still expect 'third world' characteristics from what is arbitrarily labelled as the 'south', or the 'emerging economies': 'humanistic' stories that position the narrative outside history and outside time, implying humanity is the same everywhere. Such a stand encourages the production of the type of cinema that reinforces the Orientalist point of view, which assumes the East as the 'other' of the West, reducing cultures to one dimension.

Some of these challenges are not unique to Turkey. The future may be uncertain for quality cinema, although every year new talents enter the industry with the ambition to tell their stories and have their voices heard, and some are able to hand the torch to the next generations to continue the diverse and rich history of the cinema of Turkey to make their predecessors proud.

Notes

1 Other sources show Reşat Rıdvan as the director of *The Marriage of Himmet Agha* and Uzkınay as the cinematographer (Scognamillo 1990: 26).

2 For more on 'Denied Identities', a term I coined, see Dönmez-Colin 2008, Chapter 3.

3 For readings of the individual works of the New Cinema film-makers, see Dönmez- Colin 2008, 2014 and 2019.

4 *İki Dil, Bir Bavul / On the Way to School* (Özgür Doğan & Orhan Eskiköy, 2009); *Min Dit / Ben Gördüm / The Children of Diyarbakır* aka *Before Your Eyes* (Miraz Bezar, 2009); *Dengê Bavê Min / Babamın Sesi / The Voice of My Father* (Orhan Eskiköy & Zeynel Doğan, 2012), *Ana Dilim Nerede? / Where is My Mother Tongue?* (Veli Kahraman, 2012), *Kirasê mirinê Hewîtî / Ölüm Elbisesi: Kumalık / A Fatal Dress: Polygamy* (2009) and *Ben Uçtum, Sen Kaldın / I Flew, You Stayed* (Müjde Arslan, 2012); and *Were Dengê Min Sesime Gel / Come to My Voice* (Karabey, 2013) are some of the other outstanding works that appeared during the 'Opening'. However, despite accolades at international film festivals, the chances of these films reaching their own public have been slim, except in large cities.

5 SAMER Research Centre Survey. Online. Available at www.ssamer.com/Rapor_DetaySeçmenlerin_Toplumsal_Profili_Ve_Siyasal_Eğilimleri_Sınıf,_Toplumsal_Cinsiyet,_Etnisite,_Din,_İdeoloji_Ve_Gezi_Olayları-1017-3.html (accessed 23 June 2018).
6 Online. Available at www.antraktsinema.com/boxoffice-rapor.php (accessed 28 December 2019)
7 *Censorship and Self-Censorship in Turkey: Jan–Nov 2019*. Online. Available at http://susma24.com/wpcontent/uploads/2019/12/susma_censorship_and_self_censorship_in_turkey_2019_en.pdf (accessed 25 January 2020)
8 For a list of film festivals cancelled and film-makers charged/condemned in recent years, see: *Freemuse: Defending Artistic* Freedom, United Nations Human Rights Council, 35th Session of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, January 2020. Online. Available at http://susma24.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/SUSMA-JOINT-UPR-SUBMISSION-TURKEY-2020.pdf (accessed 30 March 2020)

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21

MUSICAL DIVERSITY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITIES

Martin Greve

Introduction

An overview of music in Turkey is impeded by two general problems. On the one hand, Turkey is overwhelmingly rich in terms of musical traditions, styles and hybridisations, reaching from Ottoman–Turkish music and its numerous offspring; many local, urban, rural, ethnic or religious musical traditions; popular music, again in a wide range of styles (*arabesk*, *aranjman*, *fantezi*, pop, hip-hop, heavy metal, lounge and so on) to more or less Western forms of classical music or jazz and international world music. Throughout the entire twentieth century and into the beginning of the twenty-first, almost all musicians in Turkey have made some attempt to develop a kind of synthesis of what they perceived as different musical worlds, that is the horizontal, melodic music of the Middle East and the vertical, polyphonic music of the West. As a result, music in Turkey has become radically individualised and diverse. Today, musical instruments, ensembles and arrangements exist in unprecedented and inextricable diversity. There are no standards of performance practice; rather, almost every concert and every album present a new type of ensemble, performing a new repertoire with new arrangements. The number of available instrument types, their practical use (construction, playing techniques, repertoires) and their combination into ensembles have expanded dramatically, with an accelerating development over the past two decades.

As a second factor, the terminology for music in Turkey is unclear, confusing and often contradictory. In almost all the international standard reference literature on music of the Middle East, the main categories are either nations (i.e., "Turkish music"), or ethnic, sometimes religious groups (e.g. "Kurdish music", "Armenian music"). This general concept was introduced early by European travellers and encyclopaedists, and later adopted by the emerging national states in the region. However, one might doubt if political, linguistic or ethnic categories necessarily meet with musicological categories. All of these basic categories neglect both the plurality of music within social groups as well as the multiple interaction between music in different languages, ethnic or religious groups. In fact, "folk music" between Thracia and the Caucasus includes a great number of musical (sub)styles, sometimes in close contact with the music of neighbouring areas outside of Turkey, for example, the Balkans, Armenia, Iran, and as far away

as Central Asia. International music exchange occurred due to local contacts, which were later fostered by the media, such as, for example, the Kurdish programmes of Radio Yerevan, which was influential in Eastern Anatolia, or Iraqi radio programmes heard around Mardin, and furthermore by numerous migration movements during the twentieth century, within Turkey, between neighbouring countries and to Europe or America.

The differences between "popular", "folk" and "art" music are far from being clear. Music of the Aegean area, and even urban music from Elazığ or Urfa in south-east Anatolia, obviously share strong structural similarities with "Ottoman-Turkish art music". Even more problematic is the terminology for Anatolian folk music. Until at least the mid-twentieth century, no standard terminology existed in the villages, with regional differences combining with a variety of Anatolian languages and dialects to resist standardisation. In many cases the attempts at terminological standardisation of folk music simultaneously implied their Turkification. None of the most well-known dictionaries for Turkish folk music even mention the Kurdish words for the poet-singers, *dengbêj,* or for their songs (*kılam*). To conclude, a generally accepted canon for concepts and terms for music in Turkey does not exist.

The emergence of public music life

A fundamental change in the musical life in Turkey began already in the early nineteenth century. Initially, the introduction of new media in the 1820s, including Hamparsum, Greek and Western staff notations (Olley 2017; Ayangil 2008; 2010), affected only slowly the structure of music transmission. From 1875 on, the printing of notation grew both in quantity and scope, making more and more music available. Around 1900, 78rpm records entered the Turkish market, again at first in Istanbul (Alimdar 2016: 233ff; Ünlü 2004; Greve 1995: 146ff). Numerous international record companies (including Odeon, Favorite, Grammophone Co/ His Master's Voice, Columbia) produced records of Ottoman-Turkish *taksim*, *peşrev*, *gazel* and *şarkı*, but also several more or less hybrid entertainment music styles, including *kanto*, polka or tango (Seeman 2002: 227; Beken 1998: 47). Later, the impact of sound recordings was multiplied by mass media such as radio or television. In 1927, the Company for Radio Telephone (Türk Telsiz Telefon Şirketi) broadcast the first radio programmes in Turkey. In 1939, Ankara Radyosu began its service, with several local radio stations following later, culminating in the nationwide network Türkiye Radyo ve Televisyon Kurumu (TRT), founded in 1964 (Kocabaşoğlu 1980). The first Turkish television programmes were broadcast in 1954 (Istanbul) and 1966 (Ankara) respectively, and a regular programme began in 1969. The introduction of notation for folk music began much later than for Ottoman–Turkish art music, that is, in the early twentieth century, and the transformation to a written music culture is still in progress. However, the enlargement of the available repertoire due to the introduction of media is even more obvious in the case of Anatolian folk music. While before the introduction of notation and sound recordings, musicians could learn songs either from a teacher or from fellow musicians, today, notations of thousands of pieces are available in the archive of TRT, whose copies circulate widely in digital forms.

In the years 1954–55, the record company Grafson Plak introduced the 45rpm technology to Turkey (Seeman 2002: 243). However, it was the introduction of audio cassette technology in the late 1960s which made music available for almost everybody, everywhere in Turkey, even outside of major cities. As a result, Anatolian music became commercially attractive for producers of cassettes. Beginning in the 1970s, also in eastern Anatolia and among its international diaspora, commercial audio cassettes, discs and later CDs were produced and distributed (Hamelink & Kuruoğlu 2017; Şen 2016: 105ff; Reigle 2013). From the early twenty-first

century onwards, the internet further facilitated access to all kinds of music worldwide for everyone.

The formal institutionalisation of music education in Turkey began in the Second Constitutional era in 1908, when a general liberalisation made the foundation of private music associations and schools possible (Alimdar 2016: 422ff, Oransay 1973). In particular, public conservatories then gradually introduced Western models of music education. In 1914, the theatre academy Darü'l Bedâyi was founded with a music department, which in 1917 became Darü'l Elhân, the first conservatory in Turkey with programmes for both Western and Turkish music (Alimdar 2016: 422; Oransay 1973). In the 1930s, a state conservatory was founded in Ankara, which offered study programmes in Western music. In other Turkish cities, music academies or departments for educating music teachers were founded later.

The concept of public concerts reached Turkey together with Western music in the early nineteenth century. During the later nineteenth century, the first public concerts of traditional art music similar to the European model took place in coffeehouses in the Istanbul neighbourhoods of Şehzadebaşı, Vezneciler and Beyazit. Around 1900, only a few concert halls existed in Istanbul (Alimdar 2016: 238ff, 358ff), most of them in Pera (today's Beyoğlu). From 1908, concerts were organised in theatres, where, in contrast to coffeehouses, the audience came solely to listen to music (Alimdar 2016: 377ff; Greve 1995: 71ff). Until the 1960s, concerts (of both Western and Turkish art music) regularly took place in cinemas, in popular *gazinos* (music nightclubs or restaurants, though often with good musicians) or at the state radio station (*radio evi*) (Aytar & Parmaksızoğlu 2010; Beken 1998). Only from the mid-twentieth century did the Turkish state eventually begin to build opera and concert halls.

Music in the Republic of Turkey

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the idea emerged that Anatolian folk music would be the "true" Turkish music, as opposed to Ottoman art music (Balkılıç 2009; Öztürkmen 1998). Following this concept, the new Republic of Turkey in its early years articulated an explicit vision of how its music should sound: "Turkish folk music" arranged in the musical language of the West. Relying mainly on the leading theorist of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), Atatürk saw Ottoman music as non-national (*gayrimillî*), rooted in Byzantine music and influenced by Arabic and Iranian music.[1] Consequently, the early Republic of Turkey perpetuated and enforced the support for Western classical music already granted by the later Ottoman sultans. The government invited German experts such as Paul Hindemith, Ernst Praetorius and Carl Ebert to help establish and nurture a Western music life in Turkey; from the 1930s, institutions for music education including music academies and the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) were founded; scholarships for musical education abroad were granted; state and municipal ensembles, orchestras, chamber music ensembles, soloists, choirs and operas were supported; and, from 1926, Western musical education was introduced in schools. During the early Republic of Turkey, most Western-oriented Turkish composers, in particular the so-called Turkish Five (Türk Beşler),[2] tried to compose music based on Anatolian folk songs. Around the same time, light "Western" music also became popular, including genres such as the foxtrot or tango (Akgün 1993).

To a lesser degree, folk music benefited from Kemalism, even though being laden with a strong Turkish nationalism and under strict political control. The political aim of Kemalist cultural policies was the creation of a homogeneous Turkish culture rather than support for an aesthetically convincing music. As a consequence, research on folk music, in particular the

collection of folk tunes, gained strong official support, with the practical objective of creating a repertoire of national Turkish music (Balkılıç 2009; Şenel 1999). Between the 1930s and the 1950s, musicians and musicologists such as Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1907–1991) and Muzaffer Sarısözen (1899–1963) travelled throughout Anatolia and recorded or transcribed more than 10,000 melodies of different regions and styles. In particular, the tradition of singer–poets (*âşık* or *ozan*) became a model for a homogeneous national Turkish tradition, widely ignoring non-Turkish influences and related traditions. At the same time, however, the Kemalist state discriminated against non-Turkish folk music, attempting to educate non-Turks towards Turkishness.

Further musical restrictions during the first years of the Turkish Republic mainly affected Ottoman–Turkish and religious music, as for example through the closure of the Sufi lodges in 1925 and of the Turkish department of the Conservatory Istanbul one year later. In 1926, the Ministry of Education released a directive to all schools prohibiting *alaturca* music. However, even during this period of the most intense Kemalist efforts, the state never succeeded in gaining control over the entire national music life. The growing public music life mainly remained outside the influence of the state.

The strict Kemalist music policy continued only for fewer than 20 years. From the 1940s and 1950s, Kemalist cultural politics became less consistent, and in particular the efforts to educate the people towards "Turkish culture" decreased. From 1938, the central instrument for the political influence on Turkish music was Radio Ankara. In a radio programme called "Songs of the Homeland" (*Yurttan Sesler*) from 1941 on, a choir directed by the folklorist Muzaffer Sarısözen sang folk songs accompanied by a small *bağlama* ensemble (Bartsch 2012: 131ff; Paçacı 1999: 124). Sarısözen's folk music choir established a new performance tradition, which soon found followers in Istanbul and Izmir. "Folk musician" became a serious profession, and in the following decades the technical level of folk music rose. The development of Radio Ankara and Istanbul, and later TRT created a nationwide standardisation of regional traditions, based on the earlier official folk music collections. The size of the choirs and ensembles grew over time, including a greater number of *bağlama*s (in different sizes), in addition to instruments such as *kaval* (flute), *zurna* and *mey* (both double-reed instruments), bowed *kabak kemane*, frame drums (*def*, *mazhar*), and the large drum (*davul*) or the goblet drum (*darbuka*). In addition, during the 1940s, at Radio Ankara a number of folk singers performed as "local artists" (*mahalli sanatçı*). Later, even most private music schools (*dershane*) which offered folk music adopted *saz orkestra*s and folk music choirs based on the notations of TRT. Anatolian regional music traditions, including those in Turkish, disappeared slowly under the influence of TRT and the growing commercialisation.

Simultaneously, the strong rejection of Ottoman music weakened. Again, the rise of choirs began at Radio Ankara. From 1940 on, Mesut Cemil (1902–1963) performed Ottoman–Turkish songs at Radio Ankara with his "Choir for Historical Turkish Music". Before that time, Ottoman/Turkish art music was mostly performed by small instrumental ensembles of some four to eight musicians, accompanying usually one singer, who at the same time might play a small frame drum (*def*). In 1940, the municipal Istanbul Music Academy revived its ensembles for Ottoman–Turkish music (*icra heyeti*), which then gave regular concerts, some of which were broadcast over the radio. In 1943, the Turkish department of this music academy reopened (Oransay 1973).

Beginning in the 1950s, a general atmosphere of cultural liberalisation further changed official musical politics. *Divan müzik* already comprised 26 per cent of the programming of Radio Ankara, folk music only 9 per cent, Western light music 25 per cent, and Western classical music 14 per cent (Kocabaşıoğlu 1980: 392). In 1953, in Konya the first Mevlevi festival

was held, which until 1991 was the main event for music of the *mevlevi* tradition. Traditional Ottoman–Turkish art music continued throughout the 1960s and 1970s. However, with the further popularisation of *şarkı*s (art songs) from the 1950s, singing techniques changed substantially, as in the case of Zeki Müren (1931–1996) or Bülent Ersoy (b. 1952). Around the same time, that is, starting in the 1950s, a younger generation of Western-oriented Turkish composers including Bülent Arel (1918–1990), İlhan Usmanbaş (b. 1921), or Ertuğrul Oğuz Fırat (b. 1923) gave up the concept of combining Western harmony and folk melodies, and instead approached the international avant-garde of their time.

While during the first decades of the Republic, cultural and musical politics were dominated by the idea of education, from the 1970s the dominant theme was the protection of music. In 1976, the state founded the first state choir for "Classical Turkish Music" as well as the first conservatory for Turkish music, offering study programmes for both Turkish "classical" and folk music. Around the same time, in 1973, the private Foundation of Culture and Arts, for the first time initiated the annual Istanbul Festival.

Traditional music seriously developed during this time. Starting in the 1960s, the *bağlama* shifted from being an instrument to accompany singing to a solo instrument with rapidly developing playing techniques. Beginning in the 1960s, the E-*saz* emerged, following the model of the E-guitar. During the 1960s and 1970s, *bağlama* players such as Ali Ekber Çiçek (1935–2006) and Talip Özkan (1939–2010) developed new playing techniques and experimented with new tunings.

From the 1980s, the group Muhabbet, with Arif Sağ (b. 1945), Musa Eroğlu (b. 1946), Yavuz Top (b. 1950) and Muhlis Akarsu (1948–1994), gained fame with mainly Alevi songs, in particular from the region of Sivas-Erzincan. Since the 1990s, younger players have further enriched the instrument's playing techniques, either adapted from the guitar or from related Anatolian or Central Asian lutes. Today, many professional folk musicians (e.g. Erdal Erzincan, Erol Parlak, Erkan Oğur and Cengiz Özkan, to name just a few of the most well known) think of themselves as artists in an emphatic sense and their concerts tend to follow the model of Western art music recitals.

Urbanisation, migration and popular music

The urbanisation, beginning in the 1950s and, slightly later, the growing international migration, brought Anatolian folk music into Turkish and European cities, and gave a path to the emergence of new forms of hybrid popular music such as Anatolian rock and in particular *arabesk*. On the other hand, both Ottoman–Turkish and Western art music further expanded over Anatolia, with a peak during the 1970s and 1980s, when in several cities new state choirs and conservatories were founded.

From the late 1960s onwards, a regular Turkish life began to develop in Europe and as part of this process of establishment, a Turkish entertainment market also began to emerge in Europe, including music restaurants and *gazinos* (Greve 2003). During the 1980s and 1990s, the most striking peculiarity of the Turkish–European musical life was the overwhelming production of MCs and CDs by Euro-Turks. Many European Turkish amateur musicians invested significantly in producing albums, dreaming of becoming famous in Turkey. By far most of these albums by European-based Turkish musicians contain Anatolian folk music, whereas *arabesk* and later Turkish pop remained the domain of professional producers in Turkey. On the other hand, before the beginning of the rise of religious Islamic music in Turkey in the 1990s, recordings of *ilahi* and *Mevlevi* music were produced almost exclusively in Europe, mainly by international companies.

While in Turkey, public radio and television TRT continued to broadcast folk music with choirs or soloists accompanied by small folk music orchestras, starting in the 1960s, the commercial market of 33rpm discs, MCs and CDs preferred completely different ensembles. Initially, audio cassettes presented local singers and styles as they had continued to be performed locally, while later professional music production increasingly rearranged music. A number of singers became stars in *gazino*s or in the growing nationwide record market, including Müzeyyen Senar (1918–2015), Zeki Müren (1931–1996), Suat Sayın (1932–2008) or Ajda Pekkan (b. 1946). Important for the development of popular music in this time was the competition *altın mikro* (Golden Microphone), conducted by the newspaper *Hürriyet* from 1965 to 1972. Adaptions of international pop songs with Turkish texts became popular as *aranjman* music. As a contrast, during the late 1960s a completely different style of music arose in Turkish cities, that is, the so-called *anadolu rock* (Anatolian rock), folk songs in the style of rock music with musicians such as Cem Karaca (1945–2004), Moğollar (The Mongols, 1967–1976), Erkin Koray (b. 1941) and Barış Manço (1943–1999) (Skoog 2012). Furthermore, politically left-wing music groups arranged folk songs for guitar, while later orchestration and harmonisation gained importance, and instruments like the bass guitar, guitar and drums were used alongside folk instruments (Sarıtaş 2010: 33; Gündoğar 2005: 247).

By far most popular music between the late 1960s and 1990s was *arabesk*, a melange of folk music with Western music and Arabic popular music arrangements (Güngör 1990; Özbek 1991; Stokes 1992; Kücükkaplan 2013). Orhan Gencebay (b. 1944) ("Bir Teselli Ver," "Give Me Consolation," 1968) is considered to be the first singer of *arabesk*, later followed by singers such as Ferdi Tayfur (b. 1945), Ibrahim Tatlises (b. 1952), Bülent Ersoy (b. 1952), Müslüm Gürses (b. 1953), and Sibel Can (b. 1970). The lyrics and, later, the related *arabesk* films dealt with the pain of unhappy love, suffering, the coldness of modern metropoles, the destiny of fate and despair. Popular in particular among migrants from Anatolia both in the growing suburbs of Turkish cities and within the diaspora in Europe, *arabesk* was perceived as an expression of the hopelessness and isolation of migrants, lost in their new urban environment. The most important factor for the spread of *arabesk* were the new cassette tapes that made recorded music affordable even for poor migrant families. The ensembles to accompany the singers, became much larger than in any other popular music style of the time including several violins, *ney*, *ud*, *kanun*, electric bass, synthesizer, *darbuka*, *def*, and *davul* and electro *bağlama* (Stokes 1992: 90). While *arabesk* was banned from state media over more than 20 years, in a later phase the style absorbed almost all popular music styles of the time, including folk music, left-wing protest songs or *taverna*. In 1983, the Anap party of Turgut Özal even used *arabesk* for their election campaigns (Kücükkaplan 2013: 209).

Folk music remained popular in Turkey, both in the suburbs of the cities and even more in rural regions. In the 1980s and 1990s. *bağlama* players and singers such as Neşet Ertaş (1938–2012), Mahzuni Şerif (1940–2002), Arif Sağ (b. 1945) and Musa Eroğlu (b. 1946) became stars, as did female singers including Belkis Akkale (b. 1952) or Sabahhat Akkıraz (b. 1955). During the 1990s, a standard for studio production of folk music developed, which partly endures until today. The main instrument is a *bağlama*, which accompanies the melody in the background of the sung parts, and, much more audibly adds short instrumental passages between the vocal phrases. The background is provided by keyboard, rhythm and bass; introductions are sometimes played on *kaval* or *mey*. Rhythmic accompaniment is provided either by electronic drums or Turkish percussion instruments, such as *asma davul* or *erbane*. Eventually, the emergence of private media such as audio cassettes even opened new avenues for Kurdish music (Hamelink 2016: 27).

As a direct consequence of the military coup in Turkey on 12 September 1980, a number of intellectuals and artists including Selda Bağcan, Fuat Saka, Nizamettin Arıç, Cem Karaca, Şiwan Perwer and Zülfü Livaneli, escaped to Europe, in particular to Germany, Sweden and Switzerland. In Turkey, the coup opened the way for a new wave of neo-capitalism which led to an ongoing rise of commercial popular music. During the 1990s, the new emerging Turkish *pop müzik* replaced *arabesk* as the leading popular music genre. The new main figure became Sezen Aksu (b. 1954, Stokes 2010: 107ff). At the same time, Turkish labels tried to connect themselves with the international market. Internationally the most successful singer was Tarkan.[3] At the same time, some European–Turkish musicians succeeded in the European pop business. In 2000, Mousse T. (Mustafa Gündoğdu), living in Hanover (Germany), wrote the international hit "Sex Bomb" for Tom Jones; and in 2003 Sertap Erener won the Eurovision Song Contest with the song "Everyway That I Can". During the first half of the year 2009, more than 50 million CDs were sold in Turkey, more than in Italy or Spain, which does not include downloads and pirate copies (Yazıcıoğlu 2010: 241). Since then, however, the CD market worldwide has collapsed due to the possibility of downloading and streaming music from the internet. The first Turkish popular music which emerged completely in Europe and was only later exported to Turkey, was Turkish rap. Already in the 1980s hip-hop became popular among European youngsters of migrant background. In 1995, the group Cartel (Nürnberg, Kiel, Berlin) became famous in Turkey. After some years of commercial success, in particular by rapper Ceza, rap music in Turkey again disappeared for about ten years. In 2017, the rapper Ezhel (Ömer Sercan İpekçioğlu, b.1990) again became successful. Recently a number of young rappers combined local identity with social solidarity and the global hip-hop culture. The group Tahribad-ı İsyan, for example, began in the Istanbul Romani district of Sulukule, and later they were produced by the well-known pop singer Kenan Doğulu (Yıldırım, 2017). In 2019, the highly political rap video *Susamam* ("I Won't Stay Silent"), which was produced by 18 Turkish rappers led by Saniser (Sarp Palaur, b. 1987), achieved about 40 million clicks on YouTube.

In the 1980s, state control of music was widely reduced (Yazıcıoğlu 2010: 241), however, with the important exception of an even stricter nationalistic control of folk music (Stokes 1992: 65f). The main targets were politically left-wing lyrics and non-Turkish songs. In particular, Kurdish music had earlier been barred from public media such as radio and later TRT, while Turkish-language Kurdish singers such as Müslüm Gürses, Mahsun Kırmızıgül, Emrah and Ibrahim Tatlises were popular. The constitution of 1982 officially banned the Kurdish language, and many Kurdish musicians were imprisoned. In the following years, the Turkish government tried to assimilate Kurdish culture by force, and many Kurds went so far as to destroy cassettes with recordings of Kurdish music in fear of reprisals by security forces.[4] The strict ban was lifted in 1991.

Some few years after the coup d'état of 1980 abruptly stopped all political activities, political songs again became popular, now under the label *özgün müzik* (original music; Sarıtaş, 2010; Gündoğar, 2005; Hongur, 2014). While some musicians and groups perpetuated the music of the left-wing movements of the 1970s, others became more and more influenced by *arabesk*. The most prominent singer, Ahmet Kaya, for example, became particularly significant for the Kurdish movement. In 1985, the Grup Yorum was founded, until today the most successful politically left-wing music group of Turkey. Similar to other comparable groups, such as Grup Munzur, Kızılırmak and Grup Baran, their songs had explicitly political lyrics rather than giving space to individual feelings and expression.

Today, a number of ensembles for both Ottoman–Turkish music and Turkish folk music are directly attached to (and financed by) the Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Compared to other

European countries, however, the financial resources which the Turkish government allocates to culture are relatively low: In 2010, the budget of the Ministry for Culture was 690 million euros, the equivalent of 10 euros per person. At the same time, Greece (already in a deep financial crisis) spent 32 euros per person; Russia, 30 euros, Germany, 101 euros and France, 197 euros (*Radikal*, 18 April 2011). Over the first decades of being in power, the AKP hardly showed any serious interest in music (except for the foundation of the University for Music and Fine Arts Ankara in 2017), while the growing commercialisation seems to limit the role of music more and more to the accompaniment of television serials.

Musical diversity and the struggle for musical identities

The twenty-first century witnessed a further enrichment of the already wide musical plurality in particular in the "global city" Istanbul (Greve 2017). The late 1990s and early 2000s were dominated by a liberal multicultural discourse, and many ethnic and religious minorities in Turkey formed new or reshaped old identities. Probably the most successful ensemble of this political atmosphere was Kardeş Türküler, founded in 1993. From its inception, Kardeş Tüküler aimed to perform the music of Anatolia, Thrace and Mesopotamia in their original languages. At the same time the group was politically active in the field of human rights and tolerance of all ethnic and religious minorities. In this time, just as elsewhere worldwide (Bithell & Hill 2014), a broad field of music revivals in Turkey emerged, which attempted to reconstruct and revive diverse music traditions, including the Ottoman court and Sufi music, Kurdish music, Alevism, music of the Black Sea coast, of Dersim (Tunceli), Armenian music, Jewish music and even Turkish Tango or Western music of the late Ottoman Empire. Most of these recent revivals attempted to reverse the effects of the strong Turkish nationalism of the early Republic and the ensuing efforts towards a nationwide standardisation of "Turkish music."

Ottoman culture has increasingly attracted the Turkish public interest over the last two decades. In Istanbul's live music scene, the awareness of the historical dimension of music is visible in concerts or other events labelled as "anniversaries" of important Ottoman composers. In 1996, the Istanbul municipality organised a composers' competition to honour of the 150th anniversary of the death of Dede Efendi, and 2012 was declared by UNESCO as the 300th anniversary of the death of Buhurizâde Mustafa Itrî (c. 163?–1712), a musician, composer, calligrapher and poet, although there is no source to prove either the year of his birth or of his death. During the last 20 plus years a growing number of CDs with historical recordings of music on 78rpm discs, either from early commercial recordings or even field recordings, have been released, in particular by the Turkish record company Kalan Müzik (founded in 1991). From the 1990s, reconstruction of Ottoman music became a new field for musicians, often involving international cooperation, and sometimes in hybrid musical interpretations. A central musician in this emerging field was Fikret Karakaya (b. 1955), director of the ensemble Bezmara. On the basis of iconographic sources, and advised by music historians including Walter Feldman and Ersu Pekin, he reconstructed forgotten Ottoman instruments such as the *çenk* (harp), *kopuz* (long necked lute), *şehrud* (short necked lute) and *mıskal* (pan flute).

As Kurdish and Zaza music was forbidden in Turkey at least after the coup d'état in 1980, the diaspora was crucial for Kurdish and Zaza musical revivals (Greve & Şahin, 2018; Hamelink, 2016). Until the early 1990s, the production of music cassettes and CDs in non-Turkish Anatolian languages was done mainly in Europe. Many well-known Kurdish musicians live in Europe, such as Şivan Perwer, Nizamettin Arıç, or Ciwan Haco. The music of Dersim (today Tunceli), a province in eastern Anatolia inhabited mainly by Alevi Zaza, developed mainly as a diaspora culture (e.g. Mikail Aslan, Ahmet Aslan, Metin Kemal Kahraman, Yılmaz Çelik)

(Greve & Şahin 2018). In 1991, the suppression of non-Turkish lyrics officially ended, and the production of Kurdish and Zaza music moved to Istanbul. In the 1990s, the Kurdish scene in Turkey became highly politicised, which also led to a politicisation of traditional Kurdish music (Hamelink 2016; Şen 2016; Aksoy 2006; Hongur 2014). In this atmosphere numerous politically focused Kurdish music groups (*koms*) were founded, musically influenced by the politically left-wing groups of the 1980s, including Agirê Jiyan, Koma Dengê Azadî, Koma Amed, which regarded music as a way to build a collective Kurdish identity (Sarıtaş 2010). The early twenty-first century saw numerous efforts to revitalise traditional Kurdish music in Turkey. The most well-known example of a musical revival in eastern Anatolia is the establishment of Dengbêj Houses (Mala Dengbêjan) in some Kurdish cities (Diyarbakir, Van) after 2007 (Hamelink, 2016). In 2001, the first Diyarbakır Kültür ve Sanat Festivali (Diyarbakır Festival for Culture and Art) took place, and later most pro-Kurdish municipalities organised comparable festivals (Yücel 2009: 10). In 2009, the national television TRT launched its first Kurdish programme, *TRT 6* (since 2015, *TRT Kurdî*). In addition, *Med* TV from Europe and some local programmes (e.g. *Müzik Diyarı*, *Gün TV*) broadcast Kurdish music programmes. As result of transnationalisation and the general increase and spread of the use of media, a number of Kurdish singers are popular nowadays across different regions and countries, including Şivan Perwer (b. 1955, Urfa), Ciwan Haco (b. 1957, Qamishli) or Aynur Doğan (b.1975) (Yüksel 2011).

Another example of the ongoing process of public availability of music is the Alevi renaissance, beginning in the 1980s, which transformed the once-hidden *cem* ceremonies into public, regular services and festivals. Already since 1963 the Turkish administration had allowed the organisation of an annual festival in Hacıbektaş (after the model of the Mevlevi festivals in Konya since 1953), including *cem*s, concerts by Alevi singers and performances of *semah* groups. Since 1994, huge annual Alevi festivals have been held in Europe, to remember the deaths in the massacre in Sivas. Commercially successful religious Alevi songs even came to dominate the Turkish folk music market starting in the 1980s, for example, the cassette series *Muhabbet*. In 2000, the German Federation of Alevi Associations organised the "Saga of the Millennium" in Cologne (director: Necati Şahin; musical conductor: Zafer Gündoğdu), a monumental event with 1246 *bağlama* players from all over Germany. Two years later, the concept was repeated for the first time in Turkey.

Revivals of musical traditions of contemporary urban ethnic-religious minorities gained additional support by Armenian, Greek or Jewish diasporas and nation states. The first Armenian folk dance ensemble, for example, was started in 1971 at the Surp Khach Tibrevank Alumni Association, Istanbul, which learned choreographies and songs from eastern Armenian repertoires (Yıldız 2016: 71ff). From the mid-1990s, after many years of avoiding the open display of Armenian identity within broader Turkish society, the Armenian community began making its voice heard. Non-Armenian musicians in Turkey also became interested in Armenian music, for example, Muammer Ketencoğlu and Kardeş Türküler.

Western music is deeply established in Turkey today and in several Turkish cities opera houses and symphony orchestras exist. School education in music normally focuses – at any grade level – on Western music and music theory. Today, the guitar, perceived as a kind of "modern *bağlama*," has become an "in general important if not principal instrument in the Turkish music scene" (Dawe & Eroğlu 2013: 51; italics in original). Contemporary music in Turkey further includes numerous styles of jazz, free improvisation, electronic music, lounge music (e.g. the group Ah! Cosmos) noise, and body percussion. At present, the most discussed name for the recent nostalgic revival of the vinyl culture with Turkish popular music from the 1970s (including Anatolian rock, *arabesk*, jazz and other styles) is "Turkish Psychedelic Music," with groups such as Altın Gün or Hayvanlar Alemi (Uyar 2019).

"World music" first became known in Turkey during the 1990s. Turkish musicians began to sing music from the Balkans, from Central Asia or Arabic countries, Latin music and other types. The cultural hype surrounding Istanbul around 2010 attracted a growing number of international musicians to Istanbul. Today, tango, flamenco, salsa, African dance and many other international music styles are regularly performed in Turkey. Similarly, the international "world music" market has developed as an attractive forum for Turkish musicians (Değirmenci 2013). Roughly five approaches might be identified: Islamic music as world music; rhythmic music, in particular the asymmetric Anatolian rhythms; cross-cultural encounters (including Indian, flamenco and many other music traditions) including Turkish musicians; early European music in dialogue with Middle Eastern traditions; and contemporary Western music integrating elements of traditional Turkish music. In addition, hybrid music in a field of lounge and world music emerged in the early twenty-first century. Internationally the most successful musician in this field was Mercan Dede (Arkın Ilıcalı, b. 1966).

Conclusion

To conclude, while the idea of musical traditions, such as folk music, Ottoman–Turkish art music, regional Anatolian styles or others, is still imagined as existing by both Turkish and international audiences, in fact, all of these traditions have disintegrated to a large extent. Instead, Turkish musicians today tend to develop individual musical projects, for which they draw upon an unprecedentedly large range of instruments, playing techniques, ensemble types, musical genres and repertoires. Within this stunning musical diversity in Turkey, the ongoing aesthetic dominance of *melodies* compared to other musical elements seems to be the most solid heritage. Only a few Turkish musicians and composers have completely abandoned the composition and performance of monophonic or harmonically accompanied *melodies* in favour of polyphonic music or compositions of timbre. The performance practice of melodies, however, has become enriched and diverse to an almost endless extent. Today pure melodies, performed by one single musician, sound insufficient to most listeners in Turkey. Traditional Turkish music (of any tradition) is often performed monophonically without any substantial melodic, rhythmic or formal change, but played on instruments or by ensembles which were either adopted from non-Turkish (in particular European) traditions, for example, choir, piano, guitar, orchestra, new mixed ensembles; or on improved and adjusted instruments of more or less Ottoman-Turkish tradition. Further adaptations and changes concern playing and singing techniques, in most cases again developed to enrich the timbre. Several Turkish musicians today are trying to adapt traditional Turkish playing techniques for Western instruments or, conversely, make technical changes to enable Western instruments to play Turkish music. Similarly, common for Turkish music today is the use of Western functional harmony, that is, polyphonic accompaniment of traditional melodies – while again (in most cases), genre, musical form and the main melody remain unchanged. The musical language of these added harmonisations is in general basic, hardly progressing to the rich harmonic language of European late Romantic music (not to mention atonality, 12-tone music or other styles beyond traditional tonality), but rather in its harmonic vocabulary reminding listeners of Western popular music. Today in particular, Anatolian folk music targeting Turkish audiences is often performed with basic harmonisation, while international audiences (i.e., the exoticist "world music" scene) tend to prefer either monophonic, unaccompanied – "traditional" – versions or, to a much lesser extent, polyphonic avant-garde interpretations. In particular, since the 1990s, arrangements, music projects, compositions and ensembles blend musical elements of different traditions to such a degree that it becomes impossible to categorise them according to established musical traditions. Musicians

such as Erkan Oğur, Derya Türkan, Murat Aydemir, Uğur Işık (but also a great number of still less famous musicians) repeatedly form new ensembles, new combinations of sounds and repertoire, mostly for one concert or a single CD.

Notes

1 For music policies in Turkey during the Republican period, see Akkaş 2015; Ayas 2014; Balkılıç 2009; Bartsch 2012; O'Connell 1996; 2000; Öztürkmen 1998; Paçacı 1999; Şenel 1999.
2 Cemal Reşit Rey (1904–1985), Ahmet Adnan Saygun (1907–1991), Ulvi Cemal Erkin (1906–1972), Necil Kazım Akses (1908–1999) and Hasan Ferit Alnar (1906–1978).
3 Tarkan: *Tarkan* (Istanbul/Polygram, 1998). In Belgium, Norway, Portugal and the Czech Republic the single topped the charts; in the Netherlands and France it was no.3, and in Switzerland no. 5; in Russia Tarkan became the most-sold foreign musician.
4 Hamlink 2016: 203ff; During this period only some Kurdish recordings circulated (e.g. by Şakiro, Hûseynê Farê, Ayşe Şan, Meryem Xan, Îsa Perwarî), also some locally known *dengbejs* and other singers.

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22

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF TURKEY IN THE LAST TWO CENTURIES

Bora Selçuk and Murat Öztürk

Introduction: Ottoman economic and political structure

In this chapter we discuss Turkey's social structure and economy in the context of the developing capitalist relations in production. Taking a political economy perspective, which is an integrated social science rather than a purely economic discipline (Şenalp, 2017: 191), we consider the development of capitalism in the late Ottoman Empire, the state-led evolution of a national bourgeoisie in the period of the Committee for Union and Progress (Ittihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti, ITC) and its successor, the Republican People' Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi, AP), and the recent development of neoliberalism after the 1980s.

According to Sina Akşin's (2007) *Short History of Turkey*, classical Ottoman society had two classes: rulers, consisting of soldiers and the ulama (religious authorities), and ruled, comprising craftsmen and merchants in the towns and cities, and peasants and nomads in the countryside (Akşin, 2007: 17–19). It should be added that there were also some landowners and small-scale manufacturers. In the nineteenth century, approximately 80% of the Anatolian population was engaged in agriculture, mainly in the form of small-scale (family) farming or sharecropping. The Ottomans started to integrate into the modern economic world in 1838 with a free trade agreement (*Balta Limanı Anlaşması*), followed in subsequent decades by the development of international finance (with foreign borrowing, the granting of railway privileges to foreigners, and foreign capital investments) (Pamuk, 2008: 142). From the 1830s onwards also, industries were established in various areas using imported machines (Pamuk, 2014: 13). The Ottoman Bank was founded in 1856 with British capital; later, the French became a 50% shareholder (Pamuk, 2014: 18). Over time, with population increase and the spread of railways, commodity production in agriculture became widespread, and by the start of World War I, about half of agricultural production was market-oriented prior to the war (Pamuk, 2014: 18–19).

During this period of capital development, external borrowings and foreign investments caused Ottoman finances to come under the control of European capital. According to Donald Quataert (2005: 56), however, the home-based manufacturing industry did not collapse with the integration of the Ottoman economy into the capitalist world system, but adapted itself to the new situation with cost controls, foreign investments, and the supply of goods to available

markets. According to Reşat Kasaba, the Armenian and Greek bourgeoisie of the Empire 'competed successfully with the European capitalists' (Kasaba, 1993, cited in Zürcher, 2005: 89). Thus, as a result of industrial development and integration into the world economy, by the late nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire in Anatolia had started to take the form of a modern state, with modern capitalist class dynamics enabling a transformation of the social formation towards capitalist production relations (Özkazanç, 2012: 1).

According to the 1913 industrial census, there were some 600 industrial enterprises with ten or more employees and employing a total of around 35,000 people in what is today's Turkey. Ottoman Empire foreign trade grew more than tenfold between 1820 and 1914, reaching about 12% of total production before the war. Most of the exports went to Europe, including over 90% of agricultural products, foodstuffs, and raw materials. In the same period, the Empire imported textile products, machinery, and intermediate goods (Pamuk, 2008: 140–141). The dispossession of non-Muslim populations initiated under the rule of the ITC aimed at the creation of a national bourgeoisie (Pamuk, 2014: 24).

With the Industry Encouragement Law of 1913, supports to industry were promoted, but increased military expenditures deepened financial problems and budget deficits in 1914, causing government debt to reach 60% of national income. In 1913, per capita income was one-third that of France and Germany and a quarter of Britain's (Pamuk, 2008: 142–143). Then, World War I lead to the cessation of foreign trade, resulting in a shortage of raw materials for industry and increased import substitution efforts. Agriculture production decreased, causing food shortages. In 1917, farmers were forced to deliver a portion of their grain products to the state, either at a fixed price under market rates or as commodity tax. Thus, the cost of the war was passed to small producers, since large landowners who had with surplus produce could sell at the market price (Pamuk, 2008: 148, 157). In short, the wartime environment supplied an opportunity for capital accumulation.

The population loss in Anatolia from World War I was two million from the pre-war total of 17 million. Additionally, the Armenian population was reduced by forced migration (*tehcir*) from around 1,500,000 to fewer than 100,000 in 1915 (Pamuk, 2008: 164). More broadly, population movements that had started with the Russo–Ottoman War in 1877–1878 in Anatolia and accelerated with the Balkan wars, continued with the destruction of the Armenian and Greek populations and the hardening of life for Christian entrepreneurs. Thus, while the Empire's economy was still agriculture based but open to foreign trade after World War I, it had few major industrial facilities and little basic infrastructure; meanwhile, the rising Muslim bourgeoisie seized the property of the Greeks and Armenians, who had been influential in trade and manufacturing. This section of the populace would become the prime actors in the new period of capitalist development.

While the Anatolian economy became capitalist, its multi-ethnic and multi-religious structure evolved towards the modern nation state. The development of a new, hegemonic relationship of Sunni with Turkishness excluded other ethno-religious groups/identities, including Alevis, Kurd identities, and non-Muslims, in different forms and degrees (Özkazanç, 2012: 1–2). The main concerns, including the economic policies, of the ITC and its 'Young Turks' reflected the priority of the interests of capital as against labour and of the state against the people.

Emergence and development of the Turkish Republic

The new republic was born into sharp economic problems. As determined by the Lausanne Treaty, the 'capitulations' and the privileges of foreigners were abolished, but the Republic was

still required to undertake liability for two-thirds of Ottoman debts. In order for the Republic to grow out of this debt and as a new nation, agricultural production and trade was regarded as offering the greatest capital accumulation potential. Thus, a rapid recovery in agriculture occurred after 1923. Also, existing Ottoman factories were transferred to the new state via the Industry and Mines Bank, founded in 1925. Later, this bank transformed into separate joint stock companies whose shares were sold to private individuals linked to the factories. Through such developments, the emerging Muslim bourgeoisie was able to consolidate its position.

The first governments of the Republic followed liberal foreign trade policies, according to the Lausanne Treaty, until 1929. After that, protectionist policies were introduced, and foreign trade declined. This afforded an opportunity for import substitution by home industries. Due to the planned economy success in the USSR, international conditions, and the still limited accumulation of capital in the country, the CHP turned to state-led industrialisation in 1932. Supported by the policies of 'statism' in the 1930s, increasing agricultural production and low prices caused food products to remain cheap, thus keeping wages low and providing a suitable environment for capital accumulation. While per capita national income increased annually by an average of 8.4% between 1923 and 1929, it increased by just 3.5% between 1929 and 1939 (İnalcık, 2016: 171). Although the fall of world wheat prices in the Great Depression adversely affected the domestic producer in Turkey, agricultural production, however, increased by 50–70% in the 1930s with the increase in population (market) and new products and techniques (Pamuk, 2014: 28).

In 1934, a Five-Year Industrial Plan was applied. The government made investments through state banks and other institutions in the fields of iron, steel, textiles, sugar, glass, cement, and mining. In addition to contributing to production, public enterprises also served to train technicians, engineers, and managers, and a significant portion of these individuals become the entrepreneurs and managers of the following years (Öztürk, 1997). By 1939, there were around 20 public enterprises, in addition to expropriated foreign capital investments, such as in railways, ports, electricity, and water enterprises. The success of the first Five-Year Industrial Plan brought with it the preparation for a second, but this was not fully applied due to World War II.

Land reform is an important issue in the history of the political economy of Turkey, primarily in relation to agriculture. Broadly, land reform was enacted and partly effected, but could never quite be realized. Under CHP rule, the Law Providing for Land Distribution and Establishing Farmers' Homesteads was passed in 1945, but only partially enforced. After World War II, farming production and income increases would be realized using tractors and favourable prices. Tractors enabled a 60% expansion of cultivated lands by the late 1960s, while the increase in agricultural incomes in the 1950s provided financing for rural-to-urban migration and raised demand for industrial products. With industrialisation, labour productivity in manufacturing became higher than in agriculture and the labour force demand increased, which made domestic migration to urban centres attractive.

The *Turkey Report* prepared by the World Bank in 1950 recommended the intensification of agricultural investment, which became the policy adopted by the new government of the Democrat Party (DP). Agricultural production rose 12% during 1950–1953. Foreign currency revenues from agricultural products exports enabled increased imports. Private sector and state banks supported industry and trade with loans, and the inflation thus created provided a source for capital investment. After 1954, internal and external economic conditions declined, economic growth stumbled, and the annual rate of growth in agriculture decreased to 2%. The industrialisation effort caused a technology dependency and foreign exchange shortage. On the demand side, however, industry did not have a major problem until the 1980s.

As indicated, one of the important social changes beginning in the 1950s was the migration from rural areas and the acceleration of urbanisation. Internal migrants were predominantly the rural poor and smallholder peasants in a population flow that gradually increased over the years. Immigrants to the cities would bring resources from the countryside and with solidarity to establish themselves, building homes on unused, mostly state-owned lands, and where they would thus acquire property in a relatively short time. In this way, a low-cost solution to the housing problem of the poor and the workers in the cities was created.

In the 1960s and 1970s, relatively large-scale companies started to be formed in big cities and more emphasis was laid on foreign trade. This development also increased attention on Turkey's application for full membership in the European Economic Community (EEC, then EC; now European Union, EU). The foreign currency crisis of the 1970s revealed the need for industry to earn foreign currency. This was a time for exports and access to large markets to make foreign currency gains, which would make larger-scale production affordable and finance imports of raw materials, machinery, and technology. In the 1960s, state salaries and workers' wages increased, while subsidies on agricultural prices boosted the income of small- and medium-sized farmers. In turn, the increase in incomes increased demand in the domestic market. The increase in average income continued until 1977, due to the growth in the industry and strengthening of the unions (except between 1972–1974) in the 1960s. The highest growth rate in the history of Turkey was achieved during the period 1960–1980, with workers taking their share of the economic growth. In this period, the wages increased approximately as much as the average per capita income. This ratio began to fluctuate in the late 1970s, and eventually population growth would eliminate the shortage of labour, thereby limiting the increase in wages.

After 1980

The late 1970s were generally considered crisis years, with an import substitution accumulation strategy followed in Turkey. However, considering the increase in exports after 1980, realized by the industry that developed in the import substitution period, this view may be approached with suspicion. From the perspective of the radical leftist movements and workers' organisations that spread in the 1970s, the crisis of 1979 lay in the working-class resistance to the domination of capital, and, beyond the wage struggle, the development of political activities, such as solidarity strikes. As it became difficult for employers to manage workers, neoliberal policies came to the fore, implemented with the direction and support of international capital and the coercive power of the state. The 1980 (January 24th) 'decisions made in response were thus not so much industrialisation or development plans as a neoliberal pushback, aimed at integration to international markets, fixing balance of payments problems and providing financial resources, with the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) performing together for the first time in Turkey in a "binary package of structural adjustment and stabilization"' (Halifeoğlu, 2019: 131).

In order to improve the balance of payments and reduce inflation, a market- and export-oriented economic structure was determined upon, along with the suppression of wages and agricultural incomes to ensure competitiveness in international markets. The announcement of the decisions met with the resistance of the workers' organisations and were only implemented through a military coup. The coup management coerced and restricted workers' organisations, lowering wages, restricting agricultural subsidies, and lowering the prices of agricultural products. Between 1977 and 1987, real wages fell by 34%, and the prices of agricultural products as compared to non-agricultural sectors fell by more than 40%. Eventually, in 1989,

workers' actions forced raises in the incomes of public sector workers and civil servants, while farming incomes benefited from agricultural support policies.

The January 24 decisions also caused the value of the Turkish lira to be devalued by 49% against the US dollar; domestic demand fell, and exports aimed to increase. The fixed exchange rate system was abandoned, and the daily adjusted flexible exchange rate system was adopted. With the support of the IMF and WB, foreign debt was restructured and new foreign debt found.

However, the money issue continued to meet the persistent budget deficits. Although annual inflation was reduced from 90% in 1980 to 30% in 1983, it exceeded 100% in 1994 and never fell below 40% in the quarter century 1987–2002. From 1985, the Treasury started to borrow from banks and private individuals through tenders. Private banks, which also lend to the state, were given the opportunity to find foreign loans. The rise in real interest rates made public balances worse. While the ratio of total public debt to GDP was 40% in 1990, it increased to 90% in 2001. Thus, the 1990s passed with a high inflation and devaluation spiral due to budget deficit. This increased the dollarization of the economy (use of the dollar as a 'good' currency). Working-class families dependent on low incomes, such as small-scale farmers, factory labourers, office cleaners, and shopkeepers/workers, who were unorganized and politically weak, bore a relatively high share of the price of high inflation.

During his 1989–1993 presidency, Turgut Özal had tried to transform the economy with the introduction of neoliberal measures. Despite the existing statist structures in some key institutions, 'in cooperation with existing layers of bureaucracy', he was able to administer some conversions (Öniş, 2007: 3–4). Decision No. 32, taken in 1989 on the Protection of Turkish Currency, which aimed at financial liberation, was an example of these transformations. Starting in the mid-1990s, however, Turkey lost a large part of its independence in economic policy. As in almost every country, the liberalisation of capital movements meant that it became impossible to balance interest rates, prices, and exchange rates at the same time (the 'impossible trilemma').

Exports had increased in the 1980s through utilisation of the production capacity created since the 1930s. Export demand increased during the Iran–Iraq war, with Middle Eastern countries taking a large share of Turkish exports during 1982–1985 (in the following years, the European countries again became the largest export market). In 1987, in order to increase exports, the Türk Eximbank was established, with financing support provided from other funds as well as export credits. Since 1990, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Turkey has increased its share in trade and economic areas in Russia and new Turkic Republics. Turkey's share of world trade eventually rose from 0.15% in 1980 to 0.52% in 1998. The amount of export, which was 2.9 billion USD in 1980, exceeded 27.7 billion USD in 2000 (TURKSTAT, 2014: 438). The export increase caused an improvement in the balance of payments and increases in production. Foreign trade and production activities started to spread to the provinces and a new subclass of Anatolian businessmen emerged. However, the underlying instability of the impossible trilemma persisted, which combined with various political issues to increase the economic dangers.

Generally during this period, electoral considerations, especially in the light of the workers' actions in 1989, forced the Motherland Party (ANAP) and then the coalition governments after 1991 to increase wages and the prices of agricultural products, expand the state support purchases, and give low-interest loans to tradesmen and farmers (mostly through public banks). The prices of the goods of the state economic organisations (SEE) were kept behind inflation, causing losses in the SEEs and public banks, and contributing to the ongoing budgetary deficit. The conflict with the leftist Kurdish separatist organisation, the PKK, which started in 1984 and developed into a full-scale insurgency in the 1990s, also brought huge, ongoing burdens to

the state budget. Throughout this period, the escalation of financial and political problems and the inability of weak, barely established coalition governments to provide solutions increased tensions within the ruling bloc of the Republic's established economic and military institutions and their controlling elites (army leaders, wealthy families, and so on). There was also increasing corruption facilitated through the cooperation of politicians/bureaucrats with business/financial interests and a tendency of the newly developed capital groups in Anatolia (outside of the cosmopolitan metropolis) to take a share from the public resources used by the big companies.

At the end of the 1980s, the economy lacked advanced technology products that could stand out in international competition and was beginning to increase exports with a cheap lira. Low wages and agricultural prices increased poverty, while export subsidies created a burden on public finances and were subject to abuse. The export-oriented strategy of accumulation with industrialisation reached its limit. The workers' actions against Decision 32 after a recession in 1987–1988 were the result of these developments.

With the liberalisation of capital movements, the financial sector in Turkey opened rapidly. Foreign capital entered the country through banks borrowing from abroad and portfolio investments. However, this did not show a significant increase in foreign direct investments; foreign capital mostly turned to the financial sector. Banks lent a significant portion of the funds borrowed from abroad to the state in return for high returns. A rentier class developed that earned easy money with short-term, high-interest investments. Foreign capital inflows stimulated economic growth by increasing consumption expenditures, but budget deficits, public debt, and current account deficits also grew. Higher interest rates were paid as the overall public debt became more difficult to roll over.

Turkey's economy during 1987–2001 saw four great crises followed by stabilisation measures. The first came in 1990–1991, when the (first) gulf war caused a large amount of hot money to leave the country. The Turkish lira lost value, interest rates rose, and the economy went into recession. In 1993, the current account deficit stood at 6.4 billion US$ and the net capital outflow was 8.5 billion US$, while the total public borrowing stock rose 124% from 1993 to 1994 (TRCB, 2020).Thus, in 1994, an attempt to lower the interest rates was made, despite the high debt service and borrowing need, which triggered the second crisis with a sudden outflow of foreign capital. Although the situation eased a little with the reduction of domestic demand in line with the demands of the IMF, foreign capital started to exit the country again because of the East Asian and Russian crises (Yeldan, 2001: 54). In 1997, there was significant capital flight from Turkey, the financial system contracted, interest rates increased, and the real sector was negatively affected. The economic basics in Turkey remained dire, even after stabilisation measures to resolve the third crisis, and the precarious situation was exacerbated by one of the most important economic developments of the 1990s, the EU–Customs Union agreement, which entered into force in 1996, causing an increase in imports from the EU.

In 1999, the economic situation worsened further. National income decreased by 6%, and support from the IMF was applied for on the promise of policies to reduce public expenditures and reform budget expenditures and the social security system, together with a programme of privatisation (Yeldan, 2001: 160–161). The letter of intent submitted to the IMF setting out the neoliberal strategy of accumulation and growth (and distribution) for the early 2000s failed to forestall the fourth crisis, however, which took place in two stages, during November 2000 and February 2001, when the lira crashed and emergency measures were undertaken, requiring IMF loans and making deeper changes inevitable. The 2001 crisis would mark the beginning of a new era that saw neoliberal policies more fully extended and an upheaval in political and class relations.

After 2001

As in the examples of Russia, Argentina and Venezuela, it was observed that the power was changed as a result of the economic-political turmoil both at home and abroad. After the historic election in 2002, we saw that the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power similarly. Conservative–Islamist and with a power base outside the traditional elites, the first AKP administration was also a 'post-traumatic government' (Savran, 2013: 93–94). Neoliberal policies blocked in 2001 were reformulated and then overseen by Kemal Derviş, who returned to Ankara from the World Bank. The letter of intent given to the IMF on 4 May 2003, promised a tight fiscal and monetary policy aimed at closing the public deficit, increasing the administrative capacity of the state and fighting corruption, and also preventing the uninterrupted flow of capital causing the financial crisis (Bedirhanoğlu, 2007: 1246). These policies were implemented by the AKP under the auspices of the IMF until 2008.

At the same time, the AKP endeavoured to carry out the reforms required for membership in what was now the EU. In line with the interests of finance capital. restructuring was followed in compliance with international standards (BSB, 2006: 12, 15). Regular payments of government debts were made, and SEEs and their privileges were transferred to the market for national and international capital, under the supervision of regulatory and supervisory institutions created as a bridging measure to liquidate the public monopolies.

Through various means, the AKP government transferred resources to a 'pro-capital' segment, particularly Anatolian businessmen, and secured their support. Enrichment through public privatisation, creating established profit-making opportunities and distributing these to supportive social segments, ensured the continuity of the AKP government in power. In order to achieve this, the public procurement law was changed 186 times in 187 months (Birgün, 2018). In other words, the AKP distributed rent by law (Gürakar, 2018: 14). When the unity of interests between the different sections of the bourgeoisie was achieved, conflicts between them were expressed as a political difference based on the secular–religious divide. Society was forced to think in terms of the dichotomy of 'coup or sharia', with a polarisation between the putschist tradition, on the one hand, and majoritarian authoritarianism, on the other. The AKP maintained electoral power against the 'coup' rhetoric, gaining political support at home and abroad by holding on to a victim identity. This situation served the main opposition also, with the ideological binary enabling both opposing camps to hold their bases together, the old, culturally liberal 'Kemalists' as well as the newly empowered cultural traditionalists.

The AKP enlisted the support of the EU, the US, and global capital in order to maintain its power; communicated with the capital groups; negotiated with the military; increased its effectiveness in the media; created partial support from the intelligentsia; and, most importantly, strengthened voter support. New tactics and strategies followed while managing this process (Özkazanç, 2012:17). Concomitantly, opposition from journalists, academicians, and civic organisations was suppressed. The civic activities of these and other groups, especially on the left, had been restricted before in Turkish history, but never so greatly as now, in the AKP period.

Capital groups supported the AKP's tight budget policy, its efforts to integrate with the EU, and its export-oriented industrialisation approach. In its first five years in power, the AKP pursued pro-private sector policies as never before. The Turkish lira appreciated with the foreign capital inflow provided, and inflation fell to 10%. Although the decline in inflation was considered a success of the programme and the AKP, the most important reason was the accumulated debt stock, whose value had increased through inflation, making it difficult to find new debt. Inflation had to be lowered, as lenders would not lend even though their assets

were diminishing. Otherwise, the policies implemented were not different from the previous policies for neoliberal inflation prevention as put forward in the IMF recommendations. The cost of these prescriptions would be covered by the working people, especially in the 2000s. Importantly, however, the AKP did not forget to maintain its power base among the poor by co-opting the state and using the resources at its control.

As private companies undertook foreign borrowing, private sector external borrowing passed that of the public sector. A direct income support system was implemented in agriculture to replace the previous state help (with guaranteed-price food-product purchases and so on), and supports were then generally reduced. Overall, the release of prices in agriculture to the market decreased farmer incomes. Most of these measures were first implemented in 2000–2002, before the AKP rule. Therefore, the AKP was the sustainer and developer of the neoliberal agricultural reforms rather than their architect.

Between 2002 and 2013 (except in 2009), the economy remained buoyant, financed by foreign capital inflows, construction activities, social assistance to the poor, and middle-income household borrowing. In addition to an expansion of public and private housing programmes, office-block, shopping-mall and hotel constructions also increased, along with expansion of infrastructure, irrigation, and transportation systems. In short, the construction sector became the engine of economic growth. The high profitability of the construction sector directed industrial companies to the real estate market.

When the AKP won the 2007 election, it received the backing of a significant amount of large capital from the secular bourgeoisie, which generally tried to maintain good working relations with the AKP, especially since those that resisted might receive tax fines and the forced sale of assets at well below the market value. The Doğan group, for example, was strong-armed into selling all its media companies, which was close to the government (New York Times, 2018), like the Koç group, allegedly supporting resistance to the growing authoritarianism, which had suffered from tax audits (Hürriyet, 2013). Such moves stifled dissent and forced the Istanbul bourgeoisie to compromise with the new political reality in order to protect their wealth.

Meanwhile, taking advantage of their relations within the AKP, new capital groups emerged, dubbed the 'Anatolian tigers'. These were mainly in the media, health, and construction sectors, such as Demirören Holding (media and construction), which was the beneficiary of the Doğan group sale, and Cengiz Holding (construction). Their share of the national capital stock rose alongside a limited number of elite AKP politicians to form a major capital bloc, and a system of crony capitalism developed. One of the successes of the AKP governance was its ability to manage both these capital groups (the old Republican and new Islamist). At the same time, the AKP continued to present itself as representative of the nation, based on the results it achieved in the elections. Thus, practices in the interest of capital were defended as the will of the people (Akça, Bekmen & Özden, 2018: 14).

This neoliberal populism in Turkey and compensation for discontent with financial and social mechanisms continued with the continued depletion of oppositional forces. This involved a weakening of class politics that increased the struggle between elites wanting to access power. Compensation mechanisms became complementary elements of the labour regime, with the inclusion of the lowest poor in the health and insurance system through various practices such as green cards and supports. Such mechanisms had the effect of reducing the economic and political power of labour and eroding the dynamics of organised struggle. Financial inclusion through borrowing enabled consumption to rise even though incomes did not, while the increase in debt continued to demand economic and political continuity and thus support the existing government (Akçay, 2018).

The period following the 2008–2009 global financial crisis was one of a construction-based accumulation strategy, in which a new monopoly bourgeois faction transformed into a dominant faction, though still somewhat 'outsider' and not hegemonic, with the dynamics of capital accumulation being shaped by the public sector's large investment tenders. Authoritarian statism and neoliberalism would deepen in these phases and come to acquire a character marked by the unlimited expansion dynamics of the market, the widespread crisis of capital, an increasingly narrowing power bloc, and the concentration of exceptional elements (Halifeoğlu, 2019: 145). Although the banking sector had been reformed as a result of the earlier (2001) crisis in Turkey, the global (2008–2009) crisis still caused its economy to shrink by 5.7%. Thereafter, AKP policies to reduce the negative effects of the crisis, the decline in international interest rates and capital flows to Turkey, afforded a short period of rapid growth. However, after 2015, exports declined and the rise in international interest rates caused capital to flow out again, leading to depreciation of the lira and an increase in import prices.

Politically, two major adjustments were made during the 2010s as, with sufficient mass support and the reconciliation of large capital segments with the military bureaucracy, there was no need for the AKP to share power and economic resources. One was in respect of the Kurds, who had originally been embraced by the AKP with democratic overtures towards a 'peace process'. They were sharply dropped for a pivot towards a hard-Turkish nationalism when the Kurdish party thwarted the dominance of the AKP and the bid of its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, to ascend to a powerful presidency in the June 2015 election. Erdoğan and his party, as it now was, were just able to finesse this, using various methods to first force a narrow victory in a snap election in November designed to reverse the June result, and then win a national plebiscite that largely transferred power to the newly constructed, 1,150-room presidential palace.

Somewhat similarly, the supporters of the sect leader Fethullah Gülen, who had been a crucial ally to the AKP with their educated cadre, filling positions in the judiciary and police, found themselves in opposition in a very public falling-out as the two camps struggled for ascendency, essentially using the state power they had gained to claim the state. After an attempt by the Gülenists to overthrow the government using corruption and bribery investigations was rebuffed (on 17–27 December 2013), Gülenists who had infiltrated the military attempted a coup, which was prevented (on 15 July 2016). Although the coup was suppressed, it created economic problems, especially in terms of exchange rates and other economic indicators, eventually paving the way for another financial crisis, in 2018.

A successful and comprehensive crisis management plan was not found to deal with the 2018 crisis, as attempts to control the market with police interventions in response failed and the lira plummeted. A brief review of recent developments in the economy indicates some of the reasons for this.

First, the growth rate in the AKP 'golden period' between 2002 and 2007, although generally regarded as high, was exaggerated by the government and overvalued. In fact, it was close to that of 1980–1999 and behind that of 1962–1979. Turkey's economy grew by 6.8% annually in the 2002–2007 period, which was actually under the average at that time for low- and middle-income developing countries, which was 7.3% (Güven, 2016: 7). Taking a longer period prior to the beginnings of the recent problems, from 2002 to 2014 the average growth rate (of 4.7%) was comparable to the long-term average growth rate (4.5%) (BSB, 2015: 28). Turkey also lagged among developing countries between 2002 and 2014 with its average investment rate of only around 20%.

Second, the balance of payments and current account and thus ongoing debt remained problematic. The drive for exports was not unsuccessful, with the total value of exports increasing from 28 billion dollars in 2000, to 140 billion in 2010, and to 180 billion dollars in 2019, and

the share of industrial products rising from 35% in 1980 to over 95% in 2010. Yet, with the exports increases, imports also increased, and the economy continued to show large current account deficits.

Third, the national economy became more dependent on international capital inputs and thus vulnerable to withdrawals. Foreign capital contains important clues showing the long-term relationship between Turkish geography and global capital. Foreign companies, such as Nestle, operated in the territory in Ottoman times (Barchard, 1985: 82). During the period 1980–2004, 20 billion dollars was injected into the country from abroad (Türkan, 2005: 4). Since 2005, direct foreign capital investments have increased to 10–15 billion dollars per year. On the other hand, the foreign debt stock of companies operating in non-financial fields increased rapidly (BSB, 2015: 24). According to the International Investors' Association (YASED), 'new investment from foreign direct investment from 2004 to 2013 contributed $84 billion to Turkey's GDP', such that in 2013, 'industrial companies with foreign capital […] realized approximately 42% of the total added value' (YASED, 2019:11).

Turkey's foreign debt stock totalled almost 130 billion dollars in 2003, 285 billion dollars in 2008, and 470 billion dollars in 2018. Following the 2018 crisis, this dropped back to 431 billion dollars (in 2020). The vulnerability to international capital flows is indicated also in the ratio of foreign debt to GDP. This figure stood at 47% in 2013, but the crisis caused it to increase until it reached the highest rate in its history, at 61% in the second quarter of 2019 (TRCB, 2020).

Thus, while Turkey ascended to the new category of a newly industrialised country (NIC), its basic economic numbers during this period were never special and always potentially precarious. Similarly, the economy was not a great success from the sociopolitical perspectives of equality and employment.

Regarding the former, the introduction of neoliberal policies in Turkey from the 1980s increased inequality in the distribution of income, and poverty became more widespread. Inequality and poverty reached their peak with the 2001 crisis. During the AKP years, the income distribution tended to improve, albeit a little, but then it started to deteriorate again and returned to its previous levels. In fact, the uneven distribution of wealth is greater than the iniquitous income distribution in Turkey. In the Credit Suisse *2014 Global Wealth Report*, the richest 10% had the 66.7% of the country's wealth in 2000, which rose to 70.2% in 2007, and by 2014, Turkey was second after Russia in the world rankings for wealth inequality. In the *New World Wealth Report 2018*, Turkey was in the top five in the list of the most unequal countries (Öniş & Özçelik, 2019: 269–270). In terms of income distribution during the AKP rule, the poor did make relative gains, but so did the wealthy, and the relative position of the poor worsened again; thus, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Meanwhile, the middle class, the political economic drivers of the modern state, have been adversely affected, again indicating a deep-seated weakness of the recent period of economic development.

Regarding employment, the rate of those without work was already approaching 10% on average between 2002 and 2014 (BSB, 2015: 29), while the rate of permanent unemployed in the workforce increased to 25% after 2015 (Bahçe & Köse, 2019: 413). Despite the increase in employment under the AKP rule, population increase and the entry of women into the workforce meant that the number of unemployed and the unemployment rate also increased. The AKP's labour policies operate generally in the interest of the system of crony capitalism that it has nurtured. These traditional as opposed to progressive policies are couched as Islamist in Turkey. Thus, the neoliberal labour policy is carried out with a political orientation (Coşar & Özdemir: 2014: 73)

With the 2003 labour law amendment, flexible working arrangements and subcontracting became common; thus, secure and unionised work was now the exception. Thus, in the 2000s, labour conditions worsened, and commodification increased. Increased job insecurity and insecure employment types led to widespread social and income insecurity (Coşar & Özdemir, 2014: 73). The openness of education, health, and pension systems to market forces also made difficulties for the reproduction conditions of labour. Unionisation levels decreased from 29% to 6% between 2001 and 2015. In 2014, the proportion of workers benefiting from collective contract rates was in the range of 5%–6% in Turkey, as opposed to an EU median of 66% (BSB, 2015: 46). Although strikes were still allowed by law, the postponement of decisions by the Council of Ministers made it impossible to use them. Today the working class in Turkey is under an ideological hegemony, detached from the base of labour organisations, and falls instead under the ideological hegemony that shapes the demands of the dominant discourse.

Finally, a note should be made on the prevalence of unregistered activities. Although, by definition, their dimensions are not known exactly, they can be inferred indirectly (through balance-sheet accounts, social security statistics, national income accounts, and so on) to have reached significant sizes. The clearest example is the level of unregistered employment, at around 30% of workers. Others are more difficult to calculate, especially income gained through the smuggling and illicit trade in drugs and arms, but their importance to the real national economy is not a secret. Turkish criminal organisations operate in the drug market on a global scale, for example. Although the operations of the Turkish police against these structures are reflected in the press from time to time, the names of criminal organisations are also mentioned together with politics, indicating that the old problems of collusion in illegal activities for economic gain by state forces remain.

Conclusion

Upon its establishment in the early twentieth century, the Republic of Turkey aimed at strengthening the capitalist system which had begun to be developed previously in the Ottoman Empire. However, its national resources were limited, and its population was tired and included sections that that pushed for autonomy. Within this condition, the dominant character of the state, politically and ideologically, was centralisation and the use of force where necessary. The Republic sought acceptance in the international arena through earlier agreements made with the USSR, France, and the UK, and later through international organisations, such as the EEC. Thus, the basic relations with foreign capital in the Ottoman period were maintained. The governments of the Republic have always been a party to the arrival of foreign capital investments in the country. Today, foreign capital has significant investments in the industry, finance, energy, and services sectors, and a significant share in production and foreign trade. This process has brought dependence on foreign capital in many different aspects, such as technology development and market access. This unequal situation, both in international politics and in relations with foreign capital, continues to have an impact on the economy and politics today.

If the co-development of the nation state and the capitalist economic system is accepted as a historical phenomenon, it can be said that the narrative is essentially the same in the case of Turkey. The characteristics of the capitalist structure and the nation-state's control over the economic level of society caused the developing capitalist system to be evaluated as state capitalism or state-led capitalization. However, the development of Western-type democracy is relatively weak in Turkey. The system in the Republic, its institutions, organisation, and legitimacy, has not developed the robust strength necessary to contain the different dynamics to permit a fully

democratic participation in political life and tackle social problems related to class dynamics, minority rights, and civic freedoms and justice. Thus, it ignores some of them, suppresses others, and eventually becomes politically blocked.

Two historical problems that have featured strongly in the recent history of AKP-Erdoğan dominance are the Kurdish issue and Islam. The Kurdish issue is continuing as an arm fighting between the state powers and the PKK. Regarding the former, over than 40,000 people have died in last 36 years of conflict. Experts and politicians alike assess the cost of this war to the national economy in the realm of hundreds of billions of dollars. Regarding the latter, Islam was a unifying ideological element in the War of Independence, after which the secular faction emphasised Turkish nationalism and applied restrictions to the public culture of its Sunni and Alevi peoples. The policy, applied against Alevis, is a state policy that discriminated against and ignored Alevis, which was implemented by other right-wing governments throughout the twentieth century, and nowadays, the AKP still uses this as propaganda for its pro-Sunni politics.

The current ruling bloc's ideological structure may be stylised as 'Turkish-Islamic-Anatolia' as opposed to the 'Secular-Western-Rumelia' of the Ottoman Empire. The AKP today may be considered in terms of 'political Islam' or as the continuation of the old tradition with an Islamic tone. Certainly, it is not currently possible to talk about any significant opposition to capitalism, while the Western model of democracy that goes with the liberalism of capital appears as far as ever from realisation. The authoritarian tendency of the Republic is rooted in centuries of centralisation. The melange of conflicting beliefs, divided minorities, and an imperial history may be cited as major causes of the failure to secure a more genuinely democratic political system in Turkey. These have been compounded by governments reproducing a structural dependence

> based on imports and a low wage and income policy aimed at making this production relatively profitable, expropriating all kinds of costs above capital and exempting capital from all social and financial obligations […] a structure based on borrowing to close the income gap and more debt to repay the debt [,]
>
> *(Bahce & Kose: 2019, p.268)*

as a result of which it is not extraordinary situations that build to crises; rather, 'Turkey's capitalism is a structured crisis'.

Nowadays, the economic and political structural crisis in Turkey is a stage of Turkey's own structural crisis of capitalism. This structural crisis is not a process that can only be explained by public budget deficits, foreign trade deficits, exchange rate volatility, or external shocks. These are part of an ongoing historical and structural story. In fact, the squeezing of profits and wage suppression in the ongoing stagnation also reveals that there is a real capital accumulation crisis ongoing (Bahçe & Köse, 2019: 415). The financial and economic collapse that started in 2018 is currently set to reach another superficially originating from the disruption that started in 2013, but which is actually much more deeply rooted.

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23

THE KURDISH QUESTION IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

A political economy perspective

Veli Yadirgi

Introduction

This chapter deals with a relatively understudied question: how has Turkey's exposure to the forces and features of neoliberal capitalism influenced the Turkish state's preoccupation with the Kurdish question and the issue of socio-economic development in eastern and south-eastern Anatolia (ESA)? In doing so, the locus of analysis will be the first quarter of the twenty-first century, or the halcyon years of neoliberalism in Turkey, wherein the concurrence of the following three factors led to the widespread belief that Turkey had entered into a historic and opportune era for the resolution of the Kurdish question since the outbreak of the armed conflict between the Turkish state and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The first is the relative détente in Turkish–Kurdish relations commencing with the European Council (EC) declaring Turkey a candidate for membership in the European Union (EU) and resultantly spurring Turkey to implement immediate reforms in the field of minority rights in accordance with the EU's Copenhagen political criteria. The second is the remarkable economic growth recorded by the Turkish economy post-2001 crisis, equipping the Turkish state with the economic resources to overcome the long-simmering regional disparities between ESA and the other regions of Turkey. And, finally, the third is the existence of a single-party majority government led by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) that freed the Turkish economy and polity from the fragile coalition governments of the '90s, which were seen as the core cause of the instabilities in the country during the antecedent decade.

The study will utilise concepts, debates and data that stem in large measure from the nature of the subject and the motivation to examine Turkey's Kurdish question in the context of economic development, or lack thereof, and political continuity and change in modern-day Turkey. Relatedly, in this study, development denotes a qualitative process of widespread structural transformation at all levels of society: economic, social, cultural and political. Development, therefore, necessitates augmenting the productive performance of the economy to meet essential human needs just as much as it requires enhancing political liberties and the range of human choices via the abolition of suppression and dependence.

Correspondingly, the chapter emphasises the multidimensional context of the Kurdish question. This issue is examined as a corollary of rather complex interactions, including

concurrent and sequential operations of a diverse array of interacting social, economic, cultural and political factors. The socio-economic disparities between the ESA regions and the rest of Turkey, the negation of the collective rights of the Kurds in Turkey, the popular mobilisation of the Kurds against the imposed Turkish identity and authoritarian political system with the desire for political pluralism and/or autonomy, and the Kurdish insurgency post-1984 are all constitutive aspects of the Kurdish question in Turkey. Nonetheless, owing to the lack of scholarly research and study on the implications of economic issues for sociopolitical manifestations and alterations in ESA, development (as measured by the degree of structural change) will be analysed largely through an economic lens.

The vantage point of this chapter is that the question of development in ESA and the Kurdish question of Turkey are inseparable and can be aptly comprehended only in relation to the political, social and economic history of the polities of which it has formed a part, namely, the Turkish Republic. Hence, it will examine the economic, political and social features of these predominantly Kurdish regions in Turkey within the context of the larger geographical area and political entity it has comprised. In so doing, it has relied heavily on a structural and political-economic approach.

As universally agreed in the development literature on ESA,[1] there has been relatively late, little and uneven contact with capitalist development in these predominantly Kurdish regions, compared to other regions of Turkey. This chapter will argue that this is on account of the *de-development process* initiated by the dominant forces in these regions in order to prevent the formation of an economic base for the autonomous existence of the non-Turkish autochthonic societies in ESA that could jeopardise the political-national imperative of maintaining Turkey's national unity and territorial integrity.

De-development, as Sara Roy outlines, is an economic process generated and designed by a hegemonic power 'to ensure that there will be no economic base, even one that is malformed, to support an independent indigenous existence' (Roy, 1995: 4). This process consists of policies that not only hinder but also 'deliberately block internal economic development and the structural reform upon which it is based' (ibid.: 6). It is qualitatively different from the universally agreed heuristic device or postulate in the development literature on ESA: underdevelopment, which allows for some, albeit distorted, indigenous development, and thereby does not rescind the prospect of autonomous indigenous existence.

De-development in ESA commenced as a product of the state policies implemented in these regions after the seizure of power by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in the 1913 coup d'état that differed greatly from those of the previous regimes. The CUP rulers, and their political and ideological heirs, the Kemalists, pursued ideological, political and economic programmes – that is, the construction and preservation of a Turkish national economy and state as well as the pursuit of population homogeneity based on Turkist ideals. These objectives spurred policies of mass murder, deportations, expropriation and dispossession of economic resources, and the suppression of all forms of non-Turkish identities and cultures in the ethnically heterogeneous provinces in ESA. In addition to laying the foundations for the Kurdish question of Turkey, these unusual features of state policy have engendered de-development in these lands by not only distorting but also forestalling economic development, which deprived the ESA economy of its capacity and potential for structural transformation.

Underlying ESA's de-development as well as the Kurdish question of Turkey is the incessant political–national objective of constructing a strong Turkish nation state and maintaining Turkey's national unity and territorial integrity. Turkish governments throughout the history of the Turkish Republic have incessantly adopted these objectives. As a result, the identity and the collective rights of the Kurds have been negated. In order to foil the capacity of autonomous

existence of the Kurds, de-development policies – albeit with varying methods – have been pursued by successive Turkish administrations in the years following the transition to multiparty politics in Turkey and continue to be pursued in the era of neoliberal capitalism.

Neoliberal Turkey

In the late 1970s, Turkey found itself in one of the gravest political and economic crises since the establishment of the Republic, prompting a military coup and the authoritarian implementation of a structural adjustment programme as well as a shift to export-led growth from 1980 on. In other words, in the wake of the economic crisis and political turmoil of the late 1970s, Turkey adopted a neoliberal strategy focused on the long-term objectives of export-oriented trade, a development strategy based on the neoclassical principle of comparative advantage and a more market-directed system of resource allocation. Neoliberal policies implemented since 1980 have not been able to overcome the persistent and large regional inequalities between these two regions and the rest of the country, even in the halcyon years of neoliberalism in Turkey, namely, the first quarter of the twenty-first century, wherein was Turkey was designated as the 'Emerging Euro Tiger'.

Following the 2001 crisis, Turkey enjoyed a period of rapid economic growth and increasing financial profits amidst the global upswing, which led World Bank Country Director Andrew Vorking in 2005 to euphemistically declare the country as an 'emerging Euro Tiger'. Turkey's rise to 'emerging Euro Tiger' status has not narrowed the persistent regional inequalities in the country, however. In 2005, as in 1995, out of the 35 Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) member countries, Turkey had the highest Gini index of GDP per capita or, put differently, it displayed the greatest regional disparities in GDP per capita (OECD, 2009: 91).

After falling by 9.5 per cent in 2001, Turkey's GDP increased by about 35 per cent during the next four years. By the end of 2005, annual inflation fell to less than 8 per cent, a level not seen since the 1960s (Pamuk, 2008: 291). Thus, the recovery that began under the fragile coalition government was continued by the single-party majority government of the AKP from late 2002 onwards, as can be deduced when the figures tabulated for the compound annual average growth rate of GDP in the years 2002–11 (5 per cent) are compared to those of the years 1989–95 (4 per cent) and 1996–2001 (1 per cent) (see Figure 23.1). Needless to say, the generally favourable international economic environment, with low interest rates for developing countries, also helped.

Turkey's public-sector debt decreased from 74 per cent of GDP in 2001 to 38 per cent of GDP in 2010 (Yadirgi, 2017: 235). While the Turkish economy has been growing steadily, private debt and living standards have increased significantly: private-sector debt increased from 15.1 per cent of GDP in 2001 to 47.1 per cent of GDP in 2010 (World Bank, World Development Indicators: 2014b). The GDP per capita increased from the level of US$ 5,952 in 2002 to US$ 7,834 in 2010 (see Figure 23.2).

Turkey's economic performance during the AKP period, however, does not constitute a monolithic bloc. Commencing from 2012, lower growth rates became the new normal for Turkey's economy. The Turkish economy recorded measly growth rates during 2012–14 with 2.1, 4.1 and 2.9 per cent real growth rates, respectively.

Turkey's noteworthy economic performance in the 2000s was accompanied by a continuously mounting current account deficit. As commented on by the OECD, Turkey's account deficit in this period reached 'unprecedented levels': in 2010, the country's deficit widened to just under 10 per cent of GDP (9.8 per cent), nearly 70 per cent more than what it had been in the 1990s (on average 3.10 per cent of GDP) (OECD, 2012). By 2012, Turkey had the world's third-largest current account deficit. Accordingly, the stupendous growth performance

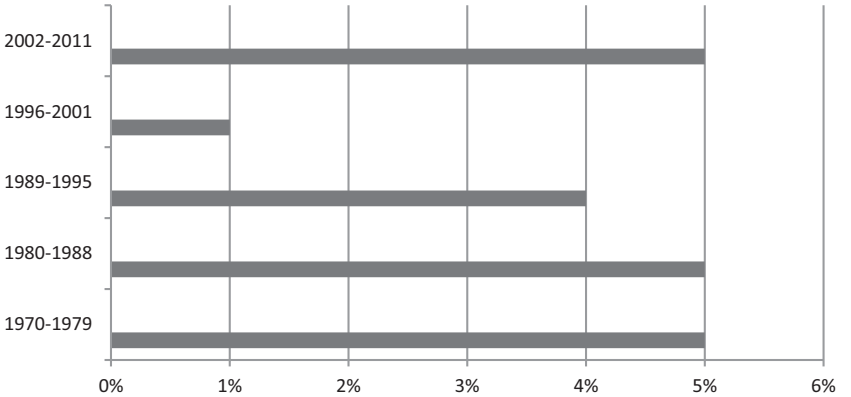

Figure 23.1 [a]Compound annual average growth rate of GDP (%), 1970–2011

[a]In Figure 23.1, the chapter employed compound annual average growth rate of GDP for the years 1970–2011 in order to enable a comparative understanding of annual average growth rates before and during the neoliberal era in Turkey. Moreover, the longitudinal data provided in this graph was preferred because it facilitates an understanding of the growth performance of the Turkish economy at economic turning points such as the structural adjustment programme 1980, the liberalisation of capital accounts in 1989 and the post-2001 crisis restructuring.

Source: Calculated from World Bank, World Development Indicators: 2014a.

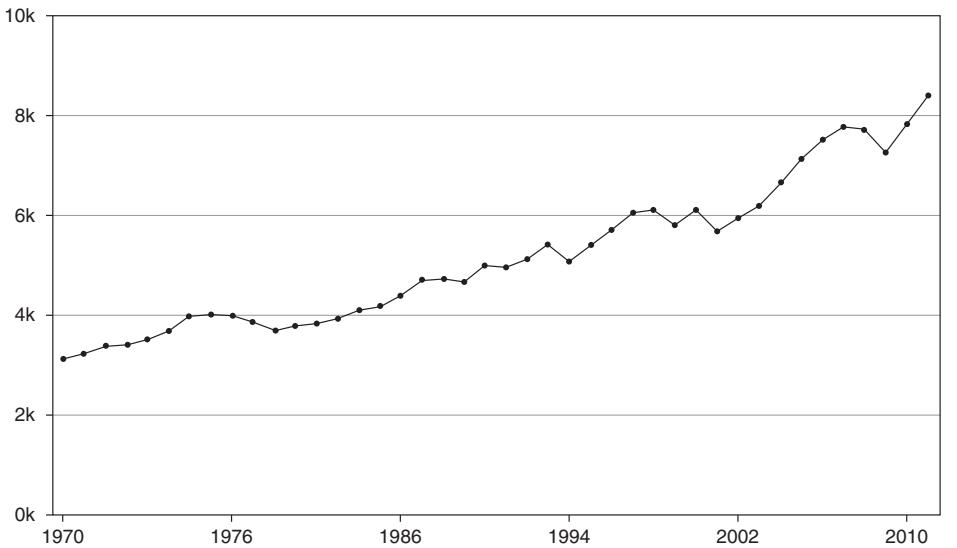

Figure 23.2 Turkey's GDP per capita (Constant 2005 US$), 1970–2011

Source: Calculated from World Bank, World Development Indicators: 2014b.

of the Turkish economy at the turn of the twenty-first century did not entail that Turkey overcome its perennial Achilles heel: current account deficit. This weakness has been the integral aspect of Turkey's economic problem and has played a role in all the economic crises that it has experienced during the past half-century.

Before considering other features of the Turkish economy, owing to the fact that energy imports constitute the greater part of the current account deficit of Turkey, it is apt to elaborate on Turkey's energy woes. Energy-related issues have come to occupy increasingly the agenda of the Turkish Republic in the neoliberal phase of Turkish capitalism with the adoption of the export-oriented industrialisation strategy and the resultant ever-growing energy demands of Turkey.[2] ESA, alongside hosting vital international and national oil and natural gas pipelines, constitutes the most hydrocarbon-rich area of Turkey. As a result, its domains have unceasingly met the bulk of the energy demands of Turkey, particularly during the neoliberal era wherein persistent industrial development – almost all of which has occurred outside ESA – has engendered an ever-growing requirement for energy. The state-owned Turkish Petroleum Corporation (Türkiye Petrolleri Anonim Ortaklığı, TPAO), which regularly realises more than 70 per cent of the oil production in the country, relays the following illuminating datum pertinent to this phenomenon: '72% of our [TPAO] total oil production is from Batman Region, 27% is from Adıyaman Region and 1% is from Thrace Region' (2014). In other words, ESA accounts for 99 per cent of crude extracted in Turkey. Concurrent to this extraction, the gargantuan twin Kirkuk–Ceyhan pipeline from Iraq to the Mediterranean snakes its way through the Kurdish mountains, transporting 1.6 million barrels of oil every day. Moreover, in late 2012,

> Royal Dutch Shell Plc and TPAO started exploring for shale gas in Diyarbakir's Saribugday-1 field […] [t]here may be 13 trillion cubic meters of shale gas reserves [in Turkey], 1.8 trillion cubic meters of which is recoverable, Ismail Bahtiyar, chairman of the Turkish Association of Petroleum Geologists.
>
> *(Ersoy, 2012)*

As well as the current account deficit, unemployment remained high throughout the 2000s (Yeldan, 2006: 146–56). Unemployment in the country hailed as the 'emerging Euro Tiger' rose from 6.5 per cent in 2000 to 10.7 per cent by the end of 2010 (Eurostat, 2014). In 2010, Turkey's employment rate was 46.3 per cent, much lower than the crises-ridden euro-area average of 64.1 per cent (ibid.). In addition, despite the rise in the GDP per capita witnessed in the 2000s, the major income gap between the poor and rich persisted.

The income of the richest 10 per cent of people in the mid-2000s was, on average across the OECD countries, nearly nine times that of the poorest 10 per cent (OECD, 2008: 3). In Turkey, the richest 10 per cent in the mid-2000s had incomes of more than 17 times those of the poorest 10 per cent, and, in Mexico, the ratio was 25:1 (ibid.). This trend appears to have continued in the latter part of the 2000s, since, according to the OECD data pertaining to the late 2000s, Turkey had the third-highest Gini index for GDP per capita (OECD, 2011: 67).

Persistence of regional disparities in neoliberal Turkey

As briefly raised earlier, previously existing socio-economic regional disparities persisted throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century, as exhibited by the persistence of the long-standing large discrepancies between the predominantly Kurdish ESA provinces and the rest of the country. In May 2003, Turkey's State Planning Organisation (SPO) published the results of a study, titled *Researching the Socio-economic Development Ranking of Provinces and Regions*, shedding more factual and detailed light on the enduring regional divergences in Turkey pre- and post-2001 crisis (SPO: 2003).

In brief, this research, using the SPO's socio-economic development index (SDI), ranked provinces and regions in accordance with their level of social and economic development from

1 to 5: 'first-level developed provinces' being the most developed and 'fifth-level developed provinces' being the least developed. The SDI is employed to measure the social and economic development level of provinces based on 58 socio-economic variables, including employment, education, health, infrastructure, manufacturing and construction.[3] Unlike any other region in Turkey, all of the provinces in ESA, with the exclusion of Malatya and Elazığ, were ranked as fourth- or fifth-level developed provinces (ibid.: 72). In parallel with the latest country report for Turkey prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) quoted earlier, 17 (out of the total 21) provinces in ESA constituted the least developed domains in Turkey (ibid.: 56).

With the country average at 0, the Marmara region at 1.7 was the most developed region. The Aegean and central Anatolia regions were the next developed regions at 0.48, followed by the Mediterranean region at 0.02. The Black Sea region was just below the national average at 0.51, while the south-eastern Anatolia and eastern Anatolia regions fell far below Turkey's average at -1.01 and -1.16, respectively (ibid.: 78). Moreover, as the SPO pointed out, when the findings of this study are compared with those of 1996, it becomes apparent that virtually nothing had changed regarding the socio-economic levels or rankings of the seven main regions in Turkey, as displayed in Table 23.1.

Between 2001 and 2010, the TÜİK, without any explanation, ceased to produce statistics pertaining to the regional distribution of the national income; thus, the actual magnitude of spatial income disparities in the 2000s was not made public. In January 2010, however, it brought an end to this practice by only publishing the national income data for 2004–6. The long-awaited figures revealed that: a) the national income share of the ESA regions which host 15 per cent of the total population of Turkey, typically decreased; and b) the ESA had the lowest average per capita income in the country.

During the era of economic liberalisation in Turkey, analogous to the preceding Import Substitution Industrialisation (ISI) period, the predominantly Kurdish ESA witnessed an incessant decrease in their fraction of national income. In 1979, these regions accounted for 8.2 per cent of the national income; in 2001, this figure fell to 7.7 per cent; and by 2004–6, it further reduced to 6.9 per cent (Sönmez, 2012: 122). Consequently, by 2006, the national income shares of the 21 provinces located in this part of Turkey were less than half of their share of the total population. It is worth noting that this was at a time when Turkey's national income recorded a swift and remarkable growth from $181 billion in 2002 to $400 billion in 2006 (USARM, 2009: 13).

Table 23.1 Socio-economic development index in Turkey, 1996 and 2003

Region	*1996 SDI Index*	*2003 SDI Index*
Marmara	1.69	1.70
Aegean	0.50	0.48
Central Anatolia	0.46	0.48
Mediterranean Region	0.6	0.2
Black Sea Region	−0.54	−0.51
South-eastern Anatolia	−1.03	−1.01
Eastern Anatolia	−1.13	−1.16

Source: Based on SPO figures in ibid.

Table 23.2 Average per capita income, 2006

Region	*Average Income (US$)*
Istanbul	10.352
South-eastern and Eastern Anatolia	3.017
Turkey	6.684

Source: Based on figures in M. Sönmez, 2012: 123

The ESA regions had the lowest per capita income in the country, as the average income in these regions was around 54 per cent less than Turkey's average and, more strikingly, approximately 70 per cent less than that of Istanbul's (see Table 23.2). It would be fair to say that neither the cessation of the militarised conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state between 1999 and 2004 nor the significant economic growth of the 'emerging Tiger' post-2001 crisis was efficiently utilised to remedy the economic underdevelopment of the ESA. As a result, Turkey could not shake off the notoriety of being the OECD member state with the highest level of regional income disparities in the mid-2000s (OECD, 2008: 3).

The massive underdevelopment of ESA and the consequential persistence of regional disparities between these regions and the rest of the country are inextricably linked to three principal factors: first, the regression of agriculture in the predominantly agrarian ESA regions emanating from the negative repercussions of the armed conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state as well as the economic liberalisation policies implemented after 1980; second, the derisory and low level of public and private investments in ESA, which is nowhere near enough to counterbalance the long-standing underdevelopment and/or to minimise the destruction of the war in these domains. The third factor is the top-down developmental policies and vision of the Turkish state in relation to these regions that have thus far resulted in it paying minimal attention to the actual and urgent needs of the local populace in ESA.

The authoritarian neoliberal restructuring of Turkey during the military regime (1980–3) and the transition period to multiparty politics under Turgut Özal's Motherland Party government (1983–7) put into place a stringent regime in the ESA provinces, revitalised the policy of denying the existence of the Kurds in Turkey and neglected the sector on which the predominantly rural Kurdish regions were heavily dependent: agriculture. The most detrimental change for the agricultural sector as a result of the neoliberal economic reforms was the virtual eradication of subsidies and price support programmes after 1980, which combined with the trends in the international market to create a severe deterioration in the sectoral terms of trade.

Intersectoral terms of trade turned against agriculture by more than 40 per cent until 1987, and the agricultural sector showed the lowest rates of output increase during the post-war era, averaging only 1 per cent per year from 1980 (Pamuk, 2008: 288). Moreover, Korkut Boratav, commenting on the fate of farmers growing crops that are found in the predominantly Kurdish south-east, that is, cotton and tobacco, points out that 'for these two commodities, the rapid depreciation of the Turkish lira during the 1980s has been beneficial to the exporters, but not to the farmer' (1990: 215). Consequently, peasant farmers were faced with 'increased and even extreme indebtedness to cover costs' (ibid.: 217). The conditions of the labourers employed in sectors other than agriculture were no better, as real wages during the same period dwindled by as much as 34 per cent (Pamuk, 2008: 288). Strikes were declared illegal, and the Supreme Arbitration Board was set up to settle all pending collective agreements and issued guidelines

for future agreements – this Board was abolished only in April 1987. This in part explains why Turkish capitalism as a whole was prepared and willing to trade off the economic and political problems of this period for restricted democracy, ideological hegemony and a disciplined labour force.

The reticence of the rulers of Turkey to leave behind policies of forcible assimilation based on a mono-ethnic conception of the nation state compounded the problems the Kurds experienced, as well as sharpened the Kurdish question of Turkey. After the military intervention, two-thirds of the Turkish army was deployed in ESA (McDowall, 2000: 414). The authoritarian 1982 constitution did not only strengthen the power of the president – giving him the right to disband the Assembly and to rule by decree – and reduce the Assembly to a single chamber, but it also, under Article 14, restricted the freedoms of individuals and organisations and prohibited political struggles based on language, race, class and sect. Alongside targeting Marxists and Islamists, this provision was directed at the activities of the Kurdish nationalists.

More importantly, in October 1983, the military government introduced Law 2931 proscribing the use of Kurdish. By 1986, under Law 1587, 2,842 out of 3,542 villages in Adıyaman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Urfa, Mardin and Siirt had been renamed in Turkish to obliterate their Kurdish identity (ibid.: 425). The PKK insurgency was one of the alleged causal factors stirring the reassertion of state authority in the 1980 coup, but it was not until 1984 that the PKK armed struggle commenced in earnest. In October 1984, the PKK followed up its initial August attack first by killing three members of a unit in charge of guarding President Kenan Evren at Yüksekova, and then ambuscading and killing eight soldiers in Çukurca, Hakkari.

Derisory public and private investments

The insufficient and low public and private investment in ESA, far from minimising the negative repercussions of the armed conflict and the austerity measures of the International Monetary Fund-inspired economic programmes, played a pivotal role in the persistence of the long-standing large socio-economic disparities between these regions and the rest of country in the neoliberal era. In spite of the continuance of the state-sanctioned incentive scheme of Priority Development Regions (PDRs) Programmes introduced in 1968, private investment in the predominantly Kurdish ESA provinces remained trivial in the years of high levels of armed conflict (1992–9), as well as in the period of relative tranquillity (1999–2004). In the years 1995–2004, ESA had the lowest and third bottom-most average proportions of subsidised investments respectively, as displayed in Table 23.3.

On 29 January 2004, Law 5068 was approved in order to augment private investment by offering additional financial incentives to employers and investors. The AKP government's aim to bolster investment from the private sector through a wide range of incentives, which includes, among other things, investment credits, tax relief, postponement of the value-added tax (VAT) and assistance with energy-related issues, appears to have primarily benefited the parts of the country that are more industrialised and better equipped with infrastructure facilities. In 2006, only 5.78 per cent of the subsidised investments went to ESA regions, and more strikingly, the combined subsidised investment in the years 2002–6 for the 21 ESA provinces was lower than that of the province of Bursa. Bursa's share of subsidised investment in 2002–6 stood at 4.45 per cent, whilst the combined shares of the cities in eastern and south-eastern Anatolia were 4.44 per cent (USARM, 2009: 35–6).

Indeed, public investments, or the lack thereof, have been a major problem in ESA, more noticeably in the 1990s. From 1990 to 2001, ESA received on average TRL 3,000 million public investment per capita, while the remaining five regions of Turkey attained TRL 8,000 million

Table 23.3 The regional breakdowns of subsidised investments in Turkey, 1995–2004

Regions	*Average Shares of Subsidised Investments*
	%
Marmara	42
Central Anatolia	12.7
Aegean	11.8
Mediterranean	12.6
South-eastern Anatolia	8.9
Black Sea	5.3
Eastern Anatolia	2.4
Multiregional	4.4

Source: Based on figures in TESEV, 2006: 45

Table 23.4 The regional comparisons of public investments per capita, 2002–2007 (in %)

Regions	*%*
Central Anatolia	1.83
Black Sea	1.73
Marmara	1.64
Mediterranean	1.57
TURKEY	1.57
Eastern Anatolia	1.50
Aegean	1.26
South-eastern Anatolia	1.23

Source: Based on figures in USARM, 2009: 65

public investment per capita (ibid.: 28). Similarly, in the years 2002–7, the halcyon days of the Turkish economy following the 2001 crisis and prior to the global crisis of 2008 under the stewardship of AKP, the total amount of government expenditure in the ESA regions ranked the lowest among all seven regions of Turkey (see Table 23.4). In addition, unlike the other region that performed below Turkey's average in the SPO's SDI (i.e., the Black Sea region), in ESA public expenditure per person was below the national average, as demonstrated by Table 23.4. In other words, with the exception of these predominantly Kurdish regions, other lagging regions received preferential treatment in the sphere of public investment, so much so that the Black Sea region had the second-highest per capita public investment in the country (see Table 23.4).

In terms of the sectoral distribution of the public investment in these regions, we see that very little has changed from the ISI period. State expenditure in these regions continues to be driven by exogenous factors, and minimal financial attention is imputed to the exigent local needs of the populace in the ESA provinces. From 2002 to 2007, the biggest beneficiary of public investments in ESA was the energy sector (see Table 23.5), which, on account of the lack

Table 23.5 Sectoral distribution of public investment in ESA, 2002–2007 (in %)

Sector	*%*
Energy	19
Agriculture	17
Health	14
Education	14
Communications	8
Housing	3
Mining	3
Tourism	0.9
Miscellaneous	22

Source: Based on figures in USARM, 2009: 65

of industrialisation in these regions and the low level of employment opportunities generated, has nominal value or use to these regions. In 2006, 69 per cent of the electricity generated in ESA was used outside of these regions, yet, only 17 per cent of this energy was locally consumed (ibid.: 43).

In spite of the infrastructural deficiencies in ESA, which prevent the local population enjoying the necessities of modern-day life and hinder private-sector investment in these regions, only 8 per cent of the state expenditure in these regions was spent on communication. In addition, the total public expenditure on healthcare and education (28 per cent) in these regions was not substantially different to that of the combined investments in the energy and mining sectors (22%), which to an extent explains the reason behind the large and persistent socio-economic disparities between ESA and the rest of the country.

The lack of attention to the local needs of these regions is by no means unique to the five years covered here because state planning and investments in these regions in the neoliberal era, parallel to previous periods in Turkey, have largely been in disregard of the socio-economic needs and demands of their people. The two operational codes of the state programmes and funds in these regions have thus far been political control as well as orientation towards meeting the requirements of the economic demands of the rest of Turkey, particularly the ever-growing energy needs of the country. Both of these conventional facets of the Turkish state policy in the predominantly Kurdish and naturally rich ESA are embedded in the socio-economic engineering project born at around the same time as the arrival of neoliberal policies in Turkey: GAP.

GAP: developmentalism from above

GAP at present comprises 13 massive irrigation and energy projects and 22 dams, including the Atatürk Dam, the sixth largest of its kind in the world. It covers an area of about 75,358 square kilometres, which represents 9.7 per cent of the total area of Turkey, spread over nine south-eastern provinces: Adıyaman, Batman, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Kilis, Mardin, Siirt, Şanlıurfa and Şırnak. The GAP region's total population is around 6.1 million, which constitutes just under 10 per cent of the total population.

The origins of GAP go back to a plan of the Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSI) on hydraulic energy and irrigation, which was prepared in 1977. By the second half of the 1980s, the Kurdish insurgency, as well as the increasing regional disparities between the south-east and

the rest of Turkey, shifted the emphasis of GAP to 'integrated regional development' that aimed not only to efficiently utilise water and energy resources, but also to address the socio-economic underdevelopment and poverty in this region. A new plan, the GAP Master Plan (1989), was prepared and a bureaucratic reorganisation was decreed which resulted in the establishment of the GAP Regional Development Administration (GAP-RDA). The GAP-RDA defined the objectives of GAP as: a) generation of hydroelectric power; b) development of regional agriculture through irrigation; c) development of a regional agro-industrial base; and d) provision better social services, education and employment to control migration and attract qualified individuals to the area (GAP, 1990).

The low financial realisation (40 per cent) and the limited economic impact of GAP led to the 1998 decision of the Council of Ministers to revise the Master Plan. GAP-RDA was assigned the task and to ensure its completion by latest 2010. Accordingly, a new regional development plan was devised in cooperation with the UNDP. This novel plan incorporated the newly adopted principle of sustainable human development and resultantly pursued the following aims: a) social sustainability and the development of social services; b) optimum and sustainable utilisation of natural resources; c) human settlements; d) agricultural sustainability and development of agricultural productivity; and e) local entrepreneurship and industrial development for economic viability.

Owing to limited success in meeting these set targets, the completion date of GAP has constantly been revised. The current set date for completion, according to the present GAP administrator chairman, Sadrettin Karahocagil, 'of all main and sub-projects is the end of 2017' (*Today's Zaman*, 2013). One of the factors, if not the main factor, for its continual postponement is the limited success in attaining the set objectives in areas other than the energy projects. That is to say, even after the systematic shift within GAP from dam-building or hydroelectric production projects to a multisectoral and sustainable socio-economic regional development programme, the overriding concern has been electricity production. The 'hydro-imperative' aspect, as well as the enduring aim of controlling Kurdish heartlands, has thus far largely ignored the long-term and most beneficial facets crucial for the development of the south-east: irrigation; agricultural training; crop breeding; industrial development; education; and improving healthcare services.

By the end of 2006, nearly two decades after the commencement of GAP, only 14 per cent of the projected irrigation investments materialised, while 74 per cent of the planned hydroelectric energy investments were realised. Eight hydroelectric power stations were in operation – in 2006, the GAP accounted for 48.5 per cent of Turkey's total hydroelectric electricity production (USARM, 2009: 44). As of 2007, the monetary value of the energy obtained from the GAP region, $17.9 billion, was near equivalent to public investments made for the project up until that point, $18.9 billion. The great majority of the electricity generated in the south-east was, however, consumed outside of this region: in the mid-2000s, in spite of electricity consumption per capita in Turkey being 202 kilowatt-hours (kWh), electricity usage per capita in the GAP region was 78 kWh (USARM, 2009: 66).

The large and persistent socio-economic disparities, as exhibited by the UNDP HDI of 2000 as well as the SDI of the SPO in 1996 and 2003, confirm that GAP project objectives concerning sustainable regional development and minimising regional discrepancies between the ESA and the rest of the Turkey have largely stayed on paper. Likewise, there is a gap between the Turkish state's alleged aims of minimising migration and promoting human settlements in the region and what it applies on the ground in the Euphrates-Tigris basin.

As briefly alluded to previously, the construction of dams as part of GAP – Keban (1974), Ataturk (1992), Birecik (2000) and the pending Ilisu Dam – has resulted in the displacement

of people and the evacuation of villages in ESA, augmenting the total number of migrations from the south-east. Estimates in relation to the number of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) arising from the construction of the dams vary. The number of IDPs was 197,732, according to the DSI in 1999. Other sources do not authenticate official Turkish sources with regard to the number of deportations. Based on a report from a fact-finding mission in south-eastern Anatolia, The Corner House in the UK in the year 2000 claimed that migrants ranged from 150,000 to 200,000 people (The Corner House, 2000). Comparatively, in 2004, individual resources reported that around 350,000 people had been displaced by the GAP project (Behrooz, 2004: 729). Based on the different estimates, it is safe to suggest that the IDPs produced by GAP range from 200,000 to 350,000 people, which raises the total number of forced deportations in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries from ESA to around 1.5 million.

In light of the disclosure of the memorandum in 1993 from President Turgut Özal to Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel advocating the construction of large dams in order to prevent the return of the local deportees back to the south-east, dam-related displacements have naturally raised major doubts regarding the actual purpose of GAP from the local populations (Yildiz, 2005: 79). In 1998, according to a poll conducted by the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB), only 42 per cent of the local populations perceived GAP as a development project, and a mere 11 per cent had either short- or long-term expectations of GAP (McDowall, 2000: 448).

Other factors fuelling the suspicions of the largely Kurdish population in the south-east with regard to GAP are closely associated with the shortcomings of the 28 subprojects launched in the third or sustainable development phase of GAP, like the Multi-Purpose Community Centres (ÇATOM)[4] and the GAP Entrepreneur Support and Guidance Centres (GAP-GIDEM).[5] By 2004, eight years after the inauguration of the GAP-UNDP sustainable development programme, only $1.3 million of the $5.2 million raised for this programme had been spent on the 28 subprojects. This low level of investment is not only indicative of the limitations of transforming GAP into a sustainable development project, but also lays bare the rationale for the Turkish state pursuing the fashionable sustainable development strategy advocated by prominent international developments agencies: to raise funds from a wide range of international institutions like the UNDP, UNICEF and the EU. In addition, the local inhabitants have questioned the motives of some subprojects such as ÇATOM. The perception of some of ÇATOM's services – like the birth control training as an effort to 'contain' the rise of the Kurdish population[6] or the literacy courses in Turkish as an assimilation strategy (Çarkoğlu and Eder, 2005: 167–84) – is symptomatic of both the local populaces' estrangement from GAP and the immense influence the Kurdish question has over GAP.

Another issue closely connected with Turkey's Kurdish question as well as the socio-economic development of the south-east, which to date has largely been ignored by GAP, is the unequal distribution of landownership and the consequential perseverance of the traditional relations of production and social structure in the GAP region. Contrary to the avowed 'urgent' need of land reform in the GAP Master Plan (GAP, 1990), the traditional land tenure system, as well as the disproportionate power of the co-opted Kurdish landed elite in the south-eastern Anatolia region, remained untouched by successive governments responsible for implementing GAP.

In 1990, within the GAP region, 8 per cent of farming families owned more than 50 per cent of all land, while 41 per cent held between 10 and 50 *dönüms* and another 38 per cent held no land at all. Of the large landowning families, significant portions were absentee, content to allow ineffective farming with the proviso that they attain a satisfactory income from their lands (McDowall, 2000: 434). Relatedly, without a land reform, it was implausible that the majority

of the agrarian population could benefit from GAP. The unequal distribution of the land ownership system inherited from the late Ottoman period and tenaciously preserved ever since the single-party period remained devoid of a fundamental reform, nonetheless.

According to the latest Agricultural Census of 2001, in the south-eastern Anatolia region, there is in total 264,361 agricultural enterprises. Of these, 2.7 per cent is large-sized enterprises (i.e., farms over 500 hectares), owned by the wealthy landowning families that account for 33.2 per cent of all land, while 56 per cent is small-sized enterprises (i.e., holdings less than 50 hectares), and they only account for 9.7 per cent of all the land. In Diyarbakir, more strikingly, 3.3 per cent of the large-sized enterprises owned by the traditional landowning class accounts for 41.2 per cent of all land in the province. And in Şanlıurfa, 1.5 per cent of the large-sized enterprises controlled by the wealthy landowning class, accounts for 28.7 per cent of all land (USARM, 2009: 33).

Despite such inequalities in landownership, the issue of land reform went unmentioned in the latest GAP Action Plan (2008–12) launched by Prime Minister Erdoğan in Diyarbakir in 2008 in order to 'complete' GAP (GAP, 2008). As a result, Erdogan, like his predecessors, indirectly assured the pro-government Kurdish landed elites that their wealth, and the immense political power yielding from it, will be conserved. Thus, yet again, the long-simmering issue of land reform, like other exigent prerequisites for the development of the region, has been substituted for political concerns of the ruling classes, in this context, the maintenance of the convenient alliance between the co-opted Kurdish landowning class and the governors.

Pursuing the goal of electoral gains as well as controlling Kurdish heartlands through the co-opted propertied Kurdish elite perpetuates the status quo, which hampers the necessary socio-economic transformation and development of ESA. So long as the local intercessors of the Turkish state own most of the land in these regions, even the positive features of GAP, such as the much-needed irrigation projects, will only enhance the exploitation of the local peasantry and perhaps aggravate its mass resentment. This comes to show that the success of GAP as well as economic development in these regions hinges, above all, on a political resolution of the Kurdish question.

Conclusion

The perceived historic and opportune moment entered after 1999, for reasons outlined above, did not implicate the recognition of the collective right of the Kurds in Turkey, nor did it involve the modernisation of the ancient landownership and large-scale investment in land, human resources or physical equipment in ESA necessary for structural change. By hampering land reform and investments, the state facilitated the endurance of economic de-development because such negligence rid the ESA economy of its capacity and potential for structural transformation by engendering inauspicious factors for development.

From the early 1980s through to the initial years of the 2000s, the predominantly Kurdish provinces of ESA continued to endure stunted economic development, which, in turn, yet again, denied the economy of these territories the aptitude and prospect for structural transformation. The destruction wrought by the war between the PKK and the Turkish state, resulting in the forced displacement of large numbers of civilians and the destruction of Kurdish villages, along with adverse conditions for the agricultural sector created by the neoliberal policies, and the preservation of the antiquated land regime, played a vital role in the continuance of stunted development. Another important factor for arrested economic development is the failure of the GAP to fulfil promises of industrial development, irrigation, agricultural training, crop breeding, education and of improving health services. Ever since its birth, GAP has been a

strategic energy project. Despite official claims to the contrary, it has not promoted sustainable socio-economic development in the GAP region.

However, the energy sources of ESA have functioned as a resource curse rather than as resource wealth, and thereby deepened and protracted the de-development of these regions. The bulk of the public investments in ESA has chronically been energy-oriented and directed towards meeting the continually increasing energy demands of industrial Turkey. Additionally, demands for political pluralism, enhanced socio-economic rights and/or autonomy by the Kurds were, and largely still are, unremittingly negated by the Turkish state because it has incessantly conceived these long-standing appeals as tantamount to or as a building block of secessionism and the resultant loss of these hydrocarbon-blessed ESA provinces.

Neither the Kurdish question nor the de-development in ESA owe their existence to the years of the armed conflict. The Kurdish question and the economic de-development in ESA predate the years of war and are corollaries of the denial, by the dominant state ideology, Turkish nationalism, of differences in general, and the Kurds' existence, issues and rights in particular.

Notes

1 For an exploration of the development literature on ESA, see: V. Yadirgi, *The Political Economy of the Kurds of Turkey: From the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2017, pp. 39–59.

2 Turkey's oil demand rose from 447,000 barrels per day (kb/d) in 1990 to 670 (kb/d) in 2012, and its natural gas demand increased from 3.468 cubic meters per year (mcm/y) in 1990 to 45.254 in 2012 (mcm/y). Source: IEA, *Energy Supply Security 2014*, IEA Publications, Paris, 2014, p. 447.

3 For a full list of the variables, see: USARM (2009). *Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia's Socio-economic Problems and Recommended Solutions*. Union of Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities Publication, Diyarbakır, p.45.

4 ÇATOM started in 1995 and aims to ensure the participation of women in the following services: literacy courses in Turkish, health education, housekeeping courses, maternal education, knitting and weaving courses and poly-clinical services.

5 GAP-GIDEM was founded in 1996 and is financed by EU grants aimed at providing consultancy services to businesses and promotion of private-sector investments in the GAP region.

6 According to official statistics pertaining to the mid-1990s, average fertility in the east and south-east is 4.37 per cent, while this figure is 2.65 per cent in other regions of Turkey. Relatedly, almost 35 per cent of the whole population in these regions is under 15 years of age. Source: GAP, *GAP Social Policy Objectives*, GAP Publications, Urfa, 1998.

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24

"CONCRETE" STEPS TOWARD MODERNIZATION

Dam-, state-, and nation-building in southeastern Turkey

Arda Bilgen

Introduction

For more than 5,000 years, water-retaining structures such as dams and reservoirs have been built around the world to ensure water availability for domestic and agricultural purposes (Biswas & Tortajada, 2001: 9). Powerful ancient empires such as the Mesopotamian, Chinese, Egyptian, and Mayan were well known for their ability in controlling rivers, developing irrigated areas, and making progress in agricultural production (Molle, Mollinga, & Wester, 2009: 329). Since the Industrial Revolution, dams have been constructed also to generate hydropower and deliver economic growth (Altınbilek, 2002: 10). In many states, they have been built to reduce regional disparities and inequalities between socioeconomically isolated regions and growth centers (Huber & Joshi, 2015: 13). At the same time, however, dams have led to extensive negative impacts on rivers; irreversible loss of species and ecosystems; the displacement and impoverishment of millions; the submergence of cultural resources; and changes in land ownership patterns (World Commission on Dams [WCD], 2000; McCully, 2001).

Despite these effects, many large dams—the ones with a height of minimum 15 meters from the foundation—had already been built in different parts of the world by the early twentieth century. Furthermore, between 1949 and 2000, the number of large dams increased from about 5,000 to over 45,000 (WCD, 2000: 8) due to "rapid economic development, increasing demand for electrical power, and governmental support for large public-works projects" (Tilt, 2015: 41). An important context to the proliferation of large dams was the Cold War in which the United States (US) and the Soviet Union built megaprojects for national security purposes (van der Westhuizen, 2007: 335) as well as raced to show greater scientific and technological supremacy in many domains including hydrology (Nixon, 2010: 65). The other important context was decolonization. In the post-1950 period, many newly independent states, especially the ones in Africa and Asia, considered large dams as a crucial means to both stimulate their national development and strengthen their national unity after a long period under colonialism (Biswas & Tortajada, 2001: 11). One after another, they mobilized their resources to pursue a politics of "catching up" and "emulation" to prove that "whatever [their] old colonial masters

[could] do, [they could] do as well" (Nixon, 2010: 65). As a result, the twentieth century witnessed a fundamental transformation of the world's river systems as well as of human–water relationships through the construction of large dams all around the world (Sneddon, 2015: 1).

The role of large-scale water infrastructures in expanding the states' influence, ensuring their legitimacy, strengthening their national identities, and exerting social control has been widely discussed in the past (see Wittfogel, 1957; Mitchell, 2002; Akhter, 2015; Menga, 2015). This chapter extends and complements these studies by exploring the role of large dams in shaping the politics of state and nation formation in Turkey (see also Conker, 2018). The chapter focuses specifically on the dam-building practices carried out under the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP) in southeastern Turkey since the 1970s, and discusses the efforts of the Turkish state to frame and present the project as a symbol of modernity, strong statehood, and strong nationhood. Since the majority of GAP-related studies overlook the symbolic and discursive value of GAP and focus on the technical and economic dimensions of the project (see Bilgen, 2020 for a comprehensive review of the literature on GAP), particular emphasis is placed on the discursive constructions of the project at the national level. Also, due to space constraints, the focus is laid on the elite discourses instead of laypeople's perspectives, and on the domestic dimension of the project rather than its regional and international dimensions. In line with this approach, the sources used in the chapter include 568 proceedings of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) dating to 2014; 315 documents from the archives of the GAP Regional Development Administration (GAP-BKİ); and 64 interviews with politicians, bureaucrats, and experts from institutions such as GAP-BKİ, the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ), and the former State Planning Organization (DPT) conducted between 2013 and 2014. The analysis drew on (qualitative) content analysis and discourse analysis, especially to identify and examine both the subtle and overt meanings and practices embedded in understandings, narratives, and discourses.

The chapter begins with a conceptual discussion on the relationship among dam-, state-, and nation-building. This is followed by background on the history of dam building on the Euphrates and Tigris in southeastern Turkey. An assessment of how the state elites have imagined GAP as a "concrete" symbol especially of modernization, "Turkishness", and "Westernness" follows this section. Finally, the chapter concludes with an overall evaluation.

Dams, state-building, and nation-building

Engaging in an extensive review of the literature on the state, state-building, and nation-building is beyond the scope of this chapter. For clarity purposes, suffice it to say that the state is conceptualized as a dynamic and malleable entity—an abstract domain of powers and techniques, an assemblage of discourses, rules, and practices (Brown, 1995). State-building is understood as the process in which the state neutralizes its rivals within its territory and imposes its legitimacy (Tilly, 1985, as cited in Allouche, 2010: 45), which is closely related to developing economic and military capacity as well as establishing political and institutional power (p. 45). Nation-building, on the other hand, is understood as an amalgamation of both top-down and bottom-up initiatives and policies that seek to create a common national identity and a sense of nationalism, patriotism, and loyalty toward the state as the guide and guardian of the nation (Menga, 2015).

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, most states have adopted a "hydraulic mission" (Allan, 2005), "an attempt to control and manipulate water resources of a country so that its constituents may meet their domestic, industrial, and agricultural needs" (Allouche, 2010: 58). Therefore, politicians, bureaucrats, and experts have been vocal about redesigning

and/or dominating nature in such a way that water should not be "wasted" and should instead be used to the maximum degree possible (p. 58). Relatedly, many states have used hydraulic interventions as a strategy to fix the economic and social problems of their countries and to prevent the disintegration of their nations (Swyngedouw, 2007: 11). The establishment and spread of hydraulic bureaucracies such as the US Bureau of Reclamation in the 1930s and 1940s as well as the introduction of new dam construction technologies made large-scale projects possible and desirable (Molle, Mollinga, & Wester, 2009: 333). The construction of the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River in 1933 and the initiation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the US in the same year were especially crucial events. The TVA was the US government agency established to control the floods, generate energy, and improve the local population's quality of life along the Tennessee River. The TVA model envisioned the combination of

> the concept of unified development (the damming of all the streams of a given river basin to bring the river under total control), the benefits of multipurpose dams (hydropower, flood protection, transportation, irrigation and other users), and the idea of regional development (associating water development with other interventions such as reforestation, production of fertilizers, industrial development, etc.).
>
> *(Molle, Mollinga, & Wester, 2009: 333)*

Over time, the TVA "became the preferred model for how nation-states—particularly those endowed with ample water resources—might best exploit their rivers to achieve economic and social goals" (Sneddon, 2015: 55). The Middle East was particularly seen as the ideal region for comprehensive river basin development and for emulating the TVA to deal with economic underdevelopment, low production and productivity, and increasing population (p. 63).

As mentioned before, the Cold War played a significant role in disseminating a "large dam culture" and new forms of river basin planning. In this period, the US considered providing technical assistance and making massive investments in dams and irrigation systems in "the Third World" countries with potential rural unrests as the best defense mechanism against the expansion of communism (Molle, Mollinga, & Wester, 2009: 335). It also considered the transfer of technological and hydraulic expertise as a means to strengthen geopolitical alliances with newly independent states in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (Sneddon, 2015: 1–3). These activities established as well a "fraternity" of distinguished non-American engineers who would play important roles in the water bureaucracies of their own countries and, in this way, benefit American foreign policy goals (p. 80). The Soviet Union was not exempt from the large dam culture either. In fact, the style of Soviet technologies was highly influenced by "the gigantomania"—the obsession with building large-scale infrastructures to exhibit how scientifically and technologically advanced the Soviet Union was (Josephson, 1995: 520). The construction of large dams on the Don, Volga, and Dnieper as well as of extensive irrigation systems in Central Asia was done as a part of this vision (Conker & Hussein, 2019: 6). For the Soviets, technologies "[were] symbols of national achievement. They reflect[ed] the omniscient power of scientists and engineers. They [gave] legitimacy to political systems. They [were] central to national security strategies. They serve[d] foreign policy through technology transfer" (Josephson, 1995: 521). Therefore, the Soviet Union, too, saw the construction of large-scale water development projects as an opportunity to exert more influence both within and outside its borders.

Large dams are both the means and the products of the hydraulic mission. They represent a solid example of "high-modernism" (see Scott, 1998) in terms of symbolizing "the progress of humanity from a life controlled by nature and tradition to one in which nature is

ruled by technology, and tradition supplanted by science" (Khagram, 2004: 5). They also symbolize a nation's—especially a postcolonial nation's—modernity, wealth, and independence: "[e]ach dam was simultaneously an act of national self-assertion" (Nixon, 2010: 65). For Harry S. Truman, for instance, the Grand Coulee Dam in the US showed the "man's [sic] ingenuity and perseverance [which] have dramatically transformed the energy of a mighty river into a great new source of national strength" (Allouche, 2010: 53–54). For Jawaharlal Nehru, dams were the new temples of modern India (Biswas & Tortajada, 2001: 11). In Gamal Abdel Nasser's Egypt, the Aswan High Dam became "the centerpiece of postwar nation making" (Mitchell, 2002). Many other large dams including, but not limited to, the Marathon Dam in Greece (Kaika, 2006), the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan (Menga, 2015), and the Akosombo Dam in Ghana (Miescher, 2014) all became symbols of independence, modernization, and positive transformation. As will be discussed below, the assessment of the (ongoing) dam-building activities in southeastern Turkey provides a similar picture, despite the Turkish state having a totally different experience with colonialism and modernization from the countries above and from many other postcolonial states.

Damming the Euphrates and Tigris

The construction of water use systems is not new in Anatolia. In as early as the thirtieth century BCE, the Hittites built many urban waterworks. In more recent centuries, the Urartus, Greeks, Persians, and Romans built complicated aqueducts and cisterns in Asia (Kolars & Mitchell, 1991: 8). Both the Seljuk and Ottoman Turks built "hundreds of fountains and diversion dams for domestic use in towns and villages and for watering animals on common pastures" (p. 9). The first examples of modern water development studies on the Euphrates and Tigris, however, could be traced back to the early twentieth century. The Young Turk government, for example, hired foreign advisers such as Sir William Willcocks to help the Turkish Department of Public Works survey the rivers of the Tigris–Euphrates delta and prepare plans for the rehabilitation of the country (Bilgen et al., in press). In other words, such water infrastructures and plans were already present before the inception of modern Turkey in 1923.

Only after its independence, however, did the new state increase its reliance on hydropower to fulfill the vision of elevating the state to the league of "great" states and to "transform its putatively backward society" (Akbulut, Adaman, & Arsel, 2018: 96). The politicians and state planners of the new republic adopted the politics of "catching up" with the West and "emulating" the development trajectory of the West, exclusively to "reach the level of contemporary civilization" (Evren, 2014: 409). To this end, they stressed "'Western' ideals of education, secularism, and modernism; a repugnance of 'Oriental' aspects of the Ottoman legacy; and a desire to mimic all that was 'progressive' and 'good' in the Western and European imagination" (Harris, 2008: 1702). In addition, they saw "hydraulic development […] [as] an important tool for connecting the isolated rural periphery with the center and galvanizing socioeconomic modernization in remote places" (Conker, 2018: 8). The implications of these visions were discernable in southeastern Turkey too. In terms of building water infrastructures, for instance, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the one who introduced the idea of constructing a dam on the Upper Euphrates in the 1930s due to his fascination with the Soviet plans for the Dnieper (Turgut, 2000: 47). The Electrical Power Resources Survey and Development Administration conducted hydrological assessments to this end in the 1930s and 1940s.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Turkey was under the intense political, economic, social, and cultural influence of the West, especially the US. In this period, the efforts of the US to spread liberal economic models worldwide also influenced the policies of Turkey. As

Çağlar Keyder (1993) notes, "the political platform of the [post-1945] period took a very clear anti-communist stance and appropriated Americanism as a shallow and mimetic modernization model without any critique" (p. 123). Becoming a signatory of the Bretton Woods agreement and a recipient of Marshall aid required Turkey not only to change its etatist policies but also attach more importance to infrastructural and agricultural development. From the 1950s onward, the liberalization of the economy was presented and sugarcoated through the idea that "Turkey would become a small America" (İnsel, 1996: 143). As a result, Turkey became a testing ground for "the US style modernization theories", and borrowed some components of these theories to apply in its national development experience (Evren, 2014: 409).

The establishment of DSİ in 1954 can be located in this context. DSİ was given the role of the primary state agency for planning and managing Turkey's water resources—a role similar to that of the US Bureau of Reclamation. The relationship between the Bureau and Turkey began in the 1950s when a group of Turkish engineers were invited to Denver for training (Sneddon, 2015: 182–183). After this contact, the Bureau became involved in Turkey's policies so deeply that the organization of DSİ was modeled directly on the Bureau, and that the institutional setting created for water resource development was based on the advice of Bureau experts (pp. 182–183). As a result, DSİ spent almost 60% of its budget on building dams between 1953 and 1962 (Tekeli, 2008: 58).

In 1960, DPT was established to help governments formulate sounder economic and social policies as well as help them formulate five-year development plans. During this period, the development of the hydro-energy potential of the country was acknowledged as a promising goal for boosting progress and modernization (Evren, 2014: 409). Therefore, the planning and construction of dams gained momentum. DSİ began the construction of the Keban Dam in 1966 and continued to conduct feasibility studies to construct more dams on the Euphrates and Tigris throughout the 1960s. In the 1970s, DSİ conducted additional studies concerning the power production capacity of the dams on both rivers. The Keban Dam was completed in 1974. All other projects for both the Euphrates and the Tigris were merged together and renamed GAP in 1977 (see Bilgen, 2018b for a concise history of GAP).

GAP was launched as a massive package of water and land resources development projects. The construction of 22 dams, 19 hydroelectric power plants, and extensive irrigation networks was expected to utilize the waters of the Euphrates and Tigris, generate 27 billion kWh of hydroelectric energy each year, and irrigate 1.8 million hectares (ha) of land (Kibaroğlu, 2006: 178). At this stage, DSİ administered GAP due to its heavy technical focus and limited scope. In the 1980s, GAP was expanded to include a wide range of additional sectors and, thus, transformed into a multisectoral and integrated regional development project. After this expansion, the responsibility to administer GAP was transferred from DSİ to DPT. In 1989, GAP-BKİ was established and assigned the duty of ensuring coordination among state organizations involved in the project. Following the "sustainability" and "human development" turn in the 1990s, GAP was once again redefined, this time as a "sustainable human development project" (p. 178). From the 2000s onward, in parallel with the European Union accession process and the increasing neoliberal character of the Turkish political economy, the project has been predominantly perceived and implemented as a private sector-friendly project (Bilgen, 2018b: 151).

Indeed, the planning, construction, and operation of dams has passed through different waves of liberalization since the early 1980s. Nevertheless, the state continued to be a major coordinating and controlling actor in the process of constructing large dams until the mid-2000s, and its role in this regard has not entirely vanished until today (Akbulut, Adaman, & Arsel, 2018: 97). Also, despite the evolution of GAP in the past 40 years, the overall

objective of the (ongoing) project to radically modernize the socioeconomic, sociopolitical, and sociocultural structure of southeastern Turkey, which constitutes around 10% of the total surface and population of the country, has remained largely intact. GAP is still expected to remove regional disparities, integrate centrifugal (Kurdish) groups, modernize land ownership, and develop energy, agriculture, and industry sectors (Warner, 2008: 279). In that sense, the project not only reflects the state's commitment to dam construction as a development strategy, but also resembles a silver bullet for multiple local, regional, and national ambitions (Akbulut, Adaman, & Arsel, 2018: 97). The manifestations of the state's (domestic) hydro ambitions and of the state's approach to offer technocratic fixes to its developmental problems are demonstrated and discussed below.

Dams as the symbols of modernization, Turkishness, and "Westernness"

The Turkish state derived its power and legitimacy from its ability to deliver the ideal of modernization through the medium of economic growth (Akbulut, Adaman, & Arsel, 2018: 101). In the context of hydraulic affairs, this modernization imperative referred to developing the country's hydro-potential to the maximum degree (pp. 101–102). Therefore, the utilization of the "dormant" resources of the GAP region was seen as a national duty. The state's hydraulic mission relied heavily on technocratic expertise. Technocrats as well as politicians with a technocratic background not only reinforced the technical development discourse, but also enjoyed privileged positions thanks to their expertise and skills (Bilgen 2019a). As John Anthony Allan (2005) also notes, engineers, who "were very competent in solving water problems", "came to be essential allies of the state in achieving economic goals" (p. 188). Arguably, Turkish engineers aimed at putting their technical abilities into the service of the nation to receive recognition as the only technical labor force instead of foreign engineers in the name of "national professionalism" (Göle, 1998: 116).

The way Süleyman Demirel approached water problems illustrates this point. Trained as a civil engineer, Demirel served as head of the Department of Dams at DSİ between 1954 and 1955, and as director general of DSİ between 1955 and 1960. Because he initiated and completed the construction of numerous dams during his service as the prime minister in different periods between 1965 and 1980, he was also referred to as "the King of Dams" (Kolars & Mitchell, 1991: 25). For Demirel, the primary objective of development was to "activate a country's resources and channel them to the welfare of the population" through using knowledge, science, and technology (GAP-BKİ, 1993: 4). From (t)his perspective, it was imperative to "tame" the Euphrates and "make it contribute to our country's wealth", and "make it the main pillar of the region's development" (Turgut, 2000: 244). It was the "duty" of "Turkey's engineers, technicians, development experts" to "prevent the disasters caused by the rivers and utilize their prosperity for Turkey" (p. 329).

Indeed, Turkey was not comparable to countries like India whose elites hastily began to build large dams after gaining independence to showcase their level of development (Evren, 2014: 409). Nevertheless, GAP has been a useful tool for state elites to present Turkey as a strong, advanced, and capable state, especially in the context of its "rivalry" with the West. From their perspective, being able to design and build a project of this scale (almost) entirely by Turkish engineers, technicians, and capital clearly reflected the strength of the Turkish nation. The related narratives emphasized that the full implementation of GAP would change the "destiny" of both the GAP region and Turkey (TBMM, 1998: 307) and make the dream of an economically strong Turkey come true (TBMM, 1984: 518). GAP was actually "a monument of triumph" rather than merely an umbrella of dam projects.

This sense of GAP-induced national pride was expressed through different means. For example, the original name of the most sensational dam of GAP was changed from "Karababa" to "Atatürk" to make connections among the dam's gigantic size, the image of development, and the greatness of the Turkish nation and its founding father (Bilgen, 2019b). Such links were established especially by high-level politicians. It was not unusual for the then-president Turgut Özal to brag about how "Turkey implement[ed] the huge GAP covering an area as large as the size of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg combined in a record speed" entirely through its "own Turkish finance, contractors, engineers, and labor, without any assistance" (TBMM, 1991: 5). Similarly, the then-president Süleyman Demirel was proud to announce GAP as "the manifestation of not only Turkish engineering, Turkish technicity and labor, but also the determination of our nation" (GAP-BKİ, 1994: 3). "Europeans were telling us that we would not be able to build the dam with our own resources, and saying we were not capable of implementing such a large project. However, we achieved it, as the whole world saw", said a former state minister in charge of GAP.[1] Such sentiments were also internalized in the hydro-bureaucracy of the country, as the administrators and technicians of DSİ were proudly qualifying Turkish engineers as "among the best in the world" and "not behind any other nation".[2]

Large-scale projects become "shared symbols" that cut across ethnic and linguistic divisions and serve to unify diverse groups in multiethnic, economically divided, or ideologically splintered societies (van der Westhuizen, 2007: 333–334). In this regard, GAP, too, can be understood as one of the instruments employed by the Turkish state in dealing with the Kurdish question (Jongerden, 2010). Here, the basic assumption was that there was a causal link between the "backwardness" of southeastern Turkey and the emergence, continuation, and intractability of the conflict (Bilgen, 2018a). GAP, then, would either end the conflict by itself or complement the military solutions toward this goal. The project would improve the socioeconomic conditions of the region, the well-off local population would feel loyal to the state, the PKK would lose its support from the bottom, and the Kurdish question would be automatically solved at the end. In this context, the Turkish state has extended its visibility in the GAP region through GAP. The restoration of the state authority was especially sought to facilitate control over the local population (Özok-Gündoğan, 2005: 95). From the viewpoint of a former GAP-BKİ coordinator, "GAP was a hope for the local population in the GAP region".[3] GAP, then, was expected to impress people and eventually win their hearts and minds through development. Two accounts told by two different politicians in different decades well illustrate this expectation:

> During one of our trips to Şanlıurfa […] I saw the excitement of our people, our citizens who lived in Şanlıurfa and benefited from this national project. I saw their loyalty to their state. They really expressed their pride in living under the flag of crescent and star (TBMM, 1998: 306).
>
> We went to Şanlıurfa, the capital of GAP […] I wish you could see the light in the eyes of the local population, I wish you could see their loyalty to this country, this state, this flag […] [and] that hope in their eyes.
>
> *(TBMM, 2009: 12)*

These examples highlight a strong belief in the transformative power of (water) development and nationalism in crafting a better future society. However, nationalism can also have a Janus-faced character in the context of megaprojects. It can point to "both backward to a glorious past, and forward to a promising future" (Nairn, 1975, as cited in Menga, 2016: 7). Also,

symbols can form and bolster a geographical identity through giving "place" a historical and mythical meaning (Allouche, 2010: 53). In the narratives surrounding GAP, the architects of the project showed a clear tendency to praise the glorious past, fertile lands, and abundant water resources of Mesopotamia (Bilgen, 2019b). This narrative emphasized that Mesopotamia used to be "the cradle of civilization" where groundbreaking developments in history such as the invention of writing and the domestication of animals first took place. In this narrative, the GAP region was imagined as the continuation of this civilization. In other words, the region was accepted as the country's "primary 'anachronistic space,' seemingly stuck in a primal or prior, atavistic time" (Harris, 2008: 1703). In the words of a former president of GAP-BKİ, for instance, the region has been

> the home of civilization, science, culture, and humanity for thousands of years. It is this region that has in some way contributed to progress and accumulation experienced in every region around the world, from east to west, from north to south.
>
> *(Türkiye Genç İşadamları Derneği, 2006)*

GAP, at this juncture, was imagined as a means to "reanimate" the Euphrates-Tigris River Basin (Bağış, 1989), "restore peace and abundance in Mesopotamia" (TBMM, 2003: 344), and "create a new and brighter civilization in Upper Mesopotamia" (TBMM, 2006: 149). Just as the Marathon Dam is thought to be modernizing Greece through connecting it to the West while at the same time reconnecting it to its classical past (Kaika, 2006), GAP has bridged nationalist sentiments about a glorious past and a promising future concurrently.

As mentioned before, Turkey resembles a "mimic state" where the strong desire to be "Western" and "modern" led to the fetishization of the West (Harris, 2008: 1705). Even though the degree of sympathy for the West has fluctuated over the decades, state authorities have arguably continued to work toward reaching the development level of Western states as well as the scientific, technological, and institutional standards of these countries (see Sandrin, 2021). As a signifier of geographical location, the West was highly admired within Turkey too. Regions and cities in western Turkey were considered superior to those located in eastern and southeastern Turkey on many fronts (see Bilgen, 2019b). In the overall GAP framework, both politicians and bureaucrats have portrayed the West as the prime model to replicate, and GAP as the prime means in this endeavor. Süleyman Demirel often compared Turkey with Western countries when talking about the future of the GAP region. In the 1970s, he was referring to southeastern Turkey as "Turkey's California" and claiming that it would "become Turkey's Ruhr with its future industrial plants" (TBMM, 1975: 418). In the 1980s, he made similar connections between Turkey and the US, and emphasized how the efforts of the US government to develop its resources impressed him:

> I am the first Turkish engineer who was sent to western states in the US by the government to enhance my knowledge and skills in 1949. There, I saw a lot and had the opportunity to apply them in my country. When I saw the Boulder Dam on the Colorado River in Nevada with its reservoir capacity of 30 billion cubic meters and power to generate 2 million kilowatts of energy, I sat on a rock and watched it for three days. I just watched and watched.
>
> *(Turgut, 2000: 288)*

The US experience of water resources development and infrastructure building was given extra attention in all stages of GAP. Most state authorities saw the TVA as "the" model for GAP.

Indeed, Turkey was not the only country that made attempts to emulate the TVA. River valley schemes in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Colombia, China, South Africa, and in the Jordan, Danube and Mekong river basins were initiated as copies of the TVA (Molle, Mollinga, & Wester, 2009: 335). The TVA inspired Turkish authorities so deeply that there were calls even inside the parliament to adopt its administration model and "establish an integrated administration that could regulate resource allocation and scheduling by its high authority and authorization" (TBMM, 1988: 626–627). Eventually, GAP-BKİ "was established on TVA's model through the guidance of Turgut Özal" in the late 1980s.[4] The TVA continued to influence the development vision of authorities in the ensuing decades too. In their eyes, the project has remained as "the greatest example ever in this scale" that "transform[ed] a large geography from a desert into a paradise not just physically, but with educational institutions, cultural establishments, and new cities" (TBMM, 1992: 289).

In addition to implicitly and explicitly implying the need to emulate the Western development path in southeastern Turkey, GAP embodied some other aspects of a modernization paradigm in its framework (Bilgen, 2019b). The planning and implementation processes of GAP can be located in the broader context of the state's "high-modernist" efforts to make the GAP region's nature and society more legible, homogenized, and standardized (see Akıncı et al., 2020). GAP-related discourses and practices widely used dichotomies between traditional and modern, underdeveloped and developed, or Eastern and Western. These discourses and practices underlined the need for the traditional to evolve into the modern in stages, based on an evolutionist paradigm. Also, GAP was erected upon a strong belief in the possibility of linear and limitless progress. In that sense, the project was an elite-driven and top-down scheme.

Taking the West as the one and only reference point in a wide array of fields, however, had exclusionary and "otherizing" implications for those that did not fit into the norms and standards defined in accordance with those of the West. Also, the imagining of GAP as a symbol of state power and of the country's glorious past and present actually led to the imagining of the West as a model and a rival concurrently. Turco-centric narratives brought about and reinforced a sense of mistrust toward foreign actors (see Bilgen, 2019b). In this national psyche, many states, specifically the ones in the Middle East, as well as "dark forces", perceived GAP as a threat to their national interests and, therefore, sought to prevent Turkey from implementing the project. In this process, states including, but not limited to, Syria, Iraq, Israel, the US, and Western European countries were widely blamed for supporting the PKK or blocking the ways for the state to find financial and technical support for dams.

Conclusion

Large dams can be located at the intersection of complex networks of altered hydrologies, technical expertise, financial circuits, political desires, displaced communities, and hegemonic ideologies (Snodden, 2015: 2). In addition to their technical and economic functions, they carry politico-ideological functions and possess symbolic values that cannot be isolated from political dynamics at a local, national, and international scale. They present "a way to build not just irrigation and power systems, but nation-states themselves" (Mitchell, 2002: 44).

Despite being launched as an ambitious dam-building project, GAP does not merely represent the construction of large dams and irrigation schemes in a region that has lagged behind the rest of Turkey for years. Rather, the project represents an aggressive modernization vision deployed in southeastern Turkey—a region that has undermined the Turkish state's "unity" for being populated primarily by the Kurds; the state's "modernity" for being economically disarticulated; and the state's "Westernness" for being "traditional" compared to the

rest of the country (Harris, 2008: 1706). In this context, GAP represents the willingness of the state to (re-)build a modern geography in which modern people embrace modern values and identities. In other words, it represents a promise of not just socioeconomic development, but also the radical transformation, or even recreation, of a region through infrastructural power. Moreover, it represents a high-modernist scheme because state authorities (a) identified the goal to ensure development as a higher goal, (b) chose a specific target group to improve their living conditions, (c) adopted an ideology of science to accelerate and measure progress, (d) dominated physical and human nature, and (e) actively used state power in order to achieve their development visions. In this process, the state expected GAP to create a homogeneous and well-articulated space without taking into full consideration the non-technical aspects and consequences of this huge social engineering move.

As a highly visible monumental structure, GAP has been imagined as a symbol of national power—a concrete symbol that demonstrates the position of Turkey in the group of strong and advanced states. The very existence of the project has been a source of prestige and legitimacy of the state. Especially the state elites have instrumentalized GAP to legitimize their political leadership and use the project as a means to promise continuous progress as well as an image of a better society in better conditions. For this reason, the project has at the same time been presented as a vital and inevitable project for both the region and the nation. In that sense, GAP has played an influential role in (re-)shaping the relations between the state and society as well as the relations within different societal groups in the region.

GAP is not the first megaproject the Turkish state has launched, and it will not be the last. At the time of this writing, socio-environmentally destructive megaprojects such as the Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge and the new İstanbul Airport, which will become the largest international airport when fully completed, had already started to operate. The construction of Canal İstanbul, which is planned as a Suez-type canal to connect the Black Sea to the Marmara Sea, is expected to begin in 2021. The striking similarities between the more than 40-year-old narratives surrounding GAP and recent narratives surrounding new megaprojects illustrate that infrastructure, state, and nation interact in a complex set of relationships and are always in the making. Relatedly, these narratives illustrate that the Turkish state may in fact be living in a "Groundhog Day" in which identical visions, promises, and dreams of development are constantly repackaged and re-presented to different generations in different decades, all in the name of making Turkey great—again.

Notes

1 Interview, Ankara, May 12, 2014.
2 Interview, Ankara, May 20, 2014.
3 Interview, Ankara, May 5, 2014.
4 Interview, Ankara, March 20, 2014.

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25

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICTS IN TURKEY

From the Bergama resistance to the Gezi protests and beyond

Murat Arsel, Fikret Adaman and Bengi Akbulut

Introduction

Looking at the ragtag group of peasants lying in the middle of a highway near the tourist town of Bergama, it would have been difficult in 1990 to anticipate that they would go on to form the first sustained environmental social movement of modern Turkey, which would transform its political economy of natural resource extraction. It would have been more difficult still to predict that environmental conflicts would emerge as one of the core avenues of social conflict in a country that does not lack fault lines for conflagration between progressive forces and the state (Adaman et al. 2017). The significance of environmental conflicts in modern Turkish studies goes beyond their phenomenal growth in recent years (Adaman and Arsel 2005; Harris and Işlar 2014; Adaman et al. 2017; İnal and Turhan 2020). Turkey presents a unique case that differs both from developing economies where there has long been strong current of post-development (and later post/de-growth) thinking, and developed ones that are characterized by bureaucratic managerialism. Environmental conflicts hold the potential of enacting a genuinely environmentalized politics that are not merely a critique of environmental degradation but also a struggle to capitalize on the emancipatory potential of the modern republic's ambition to catch up with 'Western civilization' while simultaneously seeking to transcend its underlying injustices.

The form and function of the modern Republic of Turkey can be seen as a dialectical unity that finds its realization in economic development (Arsel 2005a). On the one hand, the state and its bureaucratic form were meant to mirror Turkey's Western aspirations. On the other, the state's mission was to create a society befitting this modern state, which was seen as necessarily homogeneous and actively secular in its political outlook. Both the creation of the state – including its erasure of existing forms of (local) governance – and the creation of the society its founders thought the state deserved required – and continues to require – a considerable degree of violence. But this 'reflexive modernization' was not all stick. The metaphorical carrot

was, and continues to be, material development. In other words, in establishing its hegemony over a sometimes – though not always – reluctant society, the state has been offering a Hobson's choice between violence and development.

This dynamic continued more or less unchanged up until the coup of 1980 (which facilitated the hegemony building of neoliberalism; Tansel 2018). Therefore, to the extent that the creation of a modern Turkish nation-state and its structural transformation from peasant production (with remnants of feudal relationships) towards industrialization has created environmental liabilities, these did not result in sustained cases of environmental conflict. As discussed in detail below, even in the recent past, large-scale hydroelectric dams and irrigation projects such as the Southeastern Anatolia Project (Harris 2008) did not easily spark societal resistance (unless combined with other concerns, such as Kurdish rights) mainly because of the hegemonic belief in the authority of the state to undertake development projects.

It is possible to argue that environmental politics in Turkey is defined by reactions to the post-1980 neoliberalization of Turkey. This confrontation has almost consistently taken the shape of overt conflict. While the sphere of environmental politics is certainly broader than these conflicts (and can include international concerns such as climate change that continue to be sidelined; Adaman and Arsel 2016; Turhan et al. 2016), the impact of both the establishment-friendly nongovernmental organizations pursuing an apolitical mode of conservation and the confrontational yet perpetually feeble green political parties have been somewhat insignificant (Kadirbeyoğlu et al. 2017). In other words, environmental politics in Turkey can be best read as part of a broader reaction against neoliberal politics and policy, manifesting themselves frequently through episodic conflicts between place-based social movements confronting the state and capital. However, instead of seeing environmental conflicts as a small subset of this ongoing dynamic, the chapter argues that they have often acted as the vanguard of societal resistance, demonstrating both the promise and the limitations of efforts to enact a just, equitable and ecologically sustainable practice of development.

Following roughly a chronological order that corresponds to different types of environmental conflicts, the chapter first discusses how the post-1980s process of neoliberalization has created mining conflicts in the countryside. A discussion of energy-related conflicts comes next, which are followed by conflicts over infrastructure, especially in the urban sphere. The final section takes stock of the limited effectiveness of environmental conflicts in Turkey and discusses what it means to environmentalize politics.

Neoliberalization and the rise of environmental conflicts

Environmental politics in Turkey are predominantly in the shape of localized and reactive environmental conflicts targeting specific projects, such as mining investment or infrastructure construction, rather than institutional struggles for the overall greening of the economy and society (for a selection of research on various conflicts, see Avcı et al. 2010; Erensü 2017; Varol 2017; OECD 2019). Much of these have unfolded within the context of and in response to neoliberal economic policies that have been in force since the early 1980s. Turkey's transition to neoliberal governance began – unsurprisingly – during the military junta years of the early 1980s. The Turkish experience is notable not only for being one of the forerunners outside developed countries. The particular nature of the state–society relationship in Turkey, which had its roots in Ottoman administrative culture, made the transition as stark as it was painful.

The 'father state' (*devlet baba*) model that prevailed until the 1980s, its increasingly anachronistic patriarchal nature and clientelistic implementation notwithstanding, had a considerable

degree of social democratic provision of welfare and social protection (Buğra and Keyder 2006). With Turgut Özal, the then-prime minister, a process of rapid dismantling of the public sector and the safety nets it provided was begun. Instead of depending on the state, citizens had to use their wiles and cunning to navigate the rapidly created market society, where survival depended on one's ability to hustle. Özal's infamous pronouncement that 'my civil servants know how to get things done' (*benim memurum işini bilir*) was essentially an instruction to the entire nation and essentially gave blessing to all forms of corruption and unfair dealings in the name of getting ahead (Gambetti 2007).

With the combination of the long-standing ambition of industrialization and the neoliberal requirement to expose all aspects of economy and society to market forces, the rural sphere and its predominantly peasant or small-scale agricultural producers, which were historically relatively insulated from the vagaries of global capitalism, ended up in the trigger hairs of governments, from Özal's all the way up to Erdoğan's (Arsel 2005a; Keyder and Yenal 2011). However, the developmental hegemony outlined above combined with patron–client relationships as well as the ostensible veneration of the peasantry as 'true masters' of society delayed the neoliberalization of agricultural dynamics (İslamoğlu 2017). That particular domain experienced several half-hearted attempts that finally culminated in the more ambitious World Bank–designed Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) of 2001 (Karapınar et al. 2010). Over the years, monopoly power of the state in key sectors was removed (e.g. TEKEL – tobacco and alcohol; ÇAYKUR – tea), producer co-operatives defanged and sidelined (e.g. FİSKOBİRLİK – hazelnuts), and the overall system of subsidies and support mechanisms that helped reproduce agrarian livelihoods were substantially weakened. While there were sporadic attempts to counter these changes (Akşin 2014), they did not result in sustained societal resistance (though, as discussed below in relation to coal mining, they had considerable negative impacts).

The liberalization of mineral extraction in the rural sphere, however, was achieved very early. Whether this was a strategic decision of policy makers because of the relatively dormant nature of precious metals mining in Turkey or merely a strategic accident, the 1985 Mining Law opened up the countryside to a still-continuing boom in minerals investment (Özen and Özen 2009), first by foreign multinationals and, gradually, by national capital (Arsel 2005b). To that end, Turkey was not only a forerunner in the waves of neoliberalization around the (developing) world but also an unwitting pioneer in the extractive turn of capitalist globalization that came to be associated more closely with the Latin American experience. The Bergama resistance introduced at the start of the chapter thus opposed two colossal and world-systemic dynamics, neoliberalization (Castree 2008) and extractivism (Bebbington et al. 2013; Arsel et al. 2016).

While the tale of the Bergama activists has been documented exhaustively (Arsel 2003; Çoban 2004; Orhan 2006; Uncu 2016), the case bears summarizing here less for its overall significance – even though it is hugely significant – than for the template it set for all subsequent environmental conflicts in the countryside. Bergama is a small town an hour west of İzmir, best known for its exquisite Greek ruins that made it the fifth most visited tourist destination in Turkey. Whereas the city of Bergama is dependent on tourism, the rural areas surrounding the city focus on cultivating cotton, olives and other cash crops. Shortly after the liberalization of the minerals law, Newmont Corporation from Australia arrived in the area to explore the gold deposits scattered between the cotton fields and ancient artefacts. The early support for the company soured very quickly, however, once the true nature of mining – characterized by loud explosions, heavy traffic and use and storage of the potentially dangerous chemical cyanide in extraction as well as the creation of only a few jobs for local residents – became better

known. Several relatively affluent villages turned against the company, setting off a struggle that continued for more than a decade. Eurogold – the not so subtly aspirational name given to the Turkish front of Newmont's operations – struggled to secure and maintain an operational permit. The activists challenged the company and decision makers both in the streets – with several high-profile demonstrations not only in their villages but also in Istanbul and Ankara – and in courts across the Turkish legal system. It was only in the wake of the devastating 1999 earthquake that pushed the economy into a severe recession that the tactical sophistication of the Turkish Koza group, who eventually took over the company, managed to defeat the movement and start production. While the resistance failed in stopping the mine from operating, it raised national public awareness of the environmental and social values at stake in such cases and set an enduring example in terms of mobilization repertoires and discursive politics of environmental activism.

The ability of the activists to attract and hold national public attention was without a doubt the single most important determinant of the success of the Bergama resistance. In terms of mobilization strategies, this was achieved by leaning heavily on the national stereotype of peasant folk representing the purest and truest characteristics of the Turkish nation. While the romanticization of the peasantry and their lives as a putatively 'natural state' is by no means limited to Turkey, the extent to which this had purchase not only in the national consciousness but also in the ideology of the state itself has been remarkable. Capitalizing on this imagery to its full extent, the Bergama activists frequently relied on elderly villagers to be the public persona of the movement. One particular activist who had participated in a demonstration in his blue striped pyjamas was quickly dubbed as *Hopdediks*, the Turkish of a naive name for the character Obelix from the famous French comic series *Asterix*. The optics of naive but brave village folk fighting valiantly and defeating against all odds forces much greater than themselves was readily embraced across urban Turkey, where the creep of neoliberalization was more insidious and attempts to fight back were more dispersed and anaemic. Even more important, not just symbolically but materially as well, was the involvement of women leaders in the movement who formed the frontlines of many tense confrontations with the police and gendarmerie. Effectively mobilizing and subverting the trope of innocent Anatolian femininity, women activists – many of whom were old enough to be referred to as *nine*, grandmother – were crucial actors in defending their ground, communicating the messages of the movement and mobilizing other activists.

While the struggle was long and its tactics very rich, one final aspect, the exceptionally creative use of public spaces for demonstrations, deserves further elaboration. The activists were able to stage deeply meaningful and high-impact protests both on their home turf as well as in Istanbul and Ankara. For instance, the centrepiece of a demonstration in a village adjacent to the gold mine was a large banner which, playing on the homonyms in Turkish between '6th'and a gold producer (*altıncı*), compared the foreign corporation behind the mine to the US 6th Fleet, whose docking in Istanbul during the late 1960s resulted in prominent anti-imperialist social mobilization. In another demonstration, the activists congregated outside the building that served as the first parliament of the Republic of Turkey in Ankara rather than the current compound, claiming that the original one belonged to Mustafa Kemal, the founding figure of the Republic in 1923, whereas the latter had been sold off to the International Monetary Fund. In arguably the most memorable episode, a busload of peasant activists demonstrated on the bridge connecting the Anatolian and European sides of Istanbul, chaining themselves to the railing and shouting slogans that rejected the idea of economic development for the goal of westernizing Turkey if this had to be done by gold mining that used cyanide leaching.

These examples demonstrate more than the creativity and bravery of the demonstrators. They also offer an insight into the discursive political positioning of the overall movement. It is worth noting that, occasional minor episodes aside, the demonstrators were not treated harshly by the standards of the Turkish police and gendarmerie. Part of the explanation is likely to be geographical – western Turkey is far less tense politically, with few of the usual 'sensitivities' that are supposed to justify the quashing of public acts of dissent in other parts of the country. But it is also true that the movement carefully calibrated the tone and direction of its critique in such a way as to never antagonize the state. Indeed, the demonstration outside the old parliament building was presented as an attempt to save the state from outside forces, rather than an act of defiance against the parliament. Similarly, the reference to the protests against the US 6th Fleet aimed to demonstrate the nationalist credentials of the activists, who were frequently accused of not acting in the best interest of the nation by turning down lucrative and much-needed foreign direct investment. But this was not meant to be an inward-looking, isolationist nationalism. The activists made it clear that their concern was focused on sovereignty, not just at the local level but for Turkey as a whole. Becoming developed, westernized and a member of the European Union would not be acceptable if they – speaking on behalf of the nation – had to compromise on their safety. Their political project was the construction of a prosperous, modern and independent Turkey. A country like that would not risk the well-being of its citizens by exposing them to cyanide poisoning!

The 'success' of Koza Corporation in overcoming the legal, administrative and political challenges to its investment opened the door – as had been expected at the time of the liberalization of the mining law in the 1980s – to a large number of similar projects for precious mineral extraction. Indeed, there are several prominent newer developments such as the ones in Efemçukuru, Lapseki and Alaplı. Some of these have inspired shorter, more sporadic resistance attempts but a few were able to put together a sustained struggle, as was the case in Mount Ida (Avcı et al. 2010) and the more recently emerging movement in Cerattepe, Artvin (Taşdemir-Yaşın 2019). Nevertheless, anti-gold mining struggles have been significant in the development of environmental conflicts in Turkey.

Deepening neoliberalization of economic and environmental policy, however, has opened up other spheres of nature and natural resources for similar extractive relationships. Especially since the late 1990s, it is possible to identify two broad categories of new arenas of environmental conflicts, energy and infrastructure. Both are driven by similar dynamics: the sustained growth of the economy during the first decade of the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi – AKP), which was underwritten by the influx of hot money in the shape of cheap credit into the Turkish economy, and the mobilization of this credit to a set of corporate players distinguished primarily by their closeness to Erdoğan and the AKP (Adaman et al. 2014; Madra 2018; Öniş 2019; Orhangazi and Yeldan 2020; Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming).

From minerals to energy and beyond

The liberalization of energy regulation – which took more than a decade longer than that of minerals – came at an opportune moment to capitalize on the above-mentioned dynamics. Favourable rates of purchase guarantees from private producers opened the door for a massive influx of investment into the sector. A particularly stunning area of growth was micro-hydroelectric power plants (where water is diverted from natural streams through a pipeline to produce electricity), which took advantage of the public ownership of Turkey's riverine systems (Işlar 2012; Adaman et al. 2016; Erensü 2017). Ostensibly following the extensive environmental impact assessment requirements, but in practice short-circuiting them by using

'off the rack' reports, these micro-hydroelectric power projects effectively shut off hundreds of communities from accessing the and streams around which their livelihoods were structured. While these projects cover the entire breadth and width of the country, the mountainous Black Sea coast was particularly hard hit, and it was in this region that some of the most dramatic acts of resistance were launched. While some were spontaneous, the *Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu* played an important role in the struggle (Yaka 2017). It was notable, however, that rural residents who opposed micro-hydropower projects, which were exclusively undertaken by private interests, were less willing (and perhaps less able) to stand up to larger, state-led, conventional (and sometimes mega) dam-building projects implemented in the same region (Akbulut et al. 2018).

Similarly, there has only been faint resistance against another arena of state-led energy development, nuclear power (Akbulut et al. 2017). Developing civilian nuclear technology has been an ambition of the Turkish state since at least the 1970s, and in recent years concrete steps have been taken to realize this problematic dream (Jewell and Ateş 2015). Whereas previous efforts – especially during the time of Prime Minister Ecevit in the 1990s – had been confronted by small but well-organized campaigns that also collaborated with environmentalists from Greece, Cyprus and other potentially affected neighbouring countries, the campaign against the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant, the most advanced of the three planned plants, has not managed to gain traction. There are numerous reasons behind this surprising absence of conflict. The hegemonic belief in the prerogative of the state to undertake such ambitious projects, the AKP's ability to exercise party discipline amongst its supporters within these regions, progressive parties' and movements' inability to overcome persistent in-fighting and an overall sense of inevitability are especially important in explaining why conflict failed to materialize.

Where conflicts did emerge is coal power plants. Again spurred by purchase guarantees, *termik* power plants have been experiencing a growth spurt in recent years. There are currently 42 such plants, with seven additional ones under construction and 13 more in the licensing stage. These have created numerous cases of environmental conflicts and the one surrounding the now-abandoned Gerze project was without a doubt the most prominent case of rural environmental uprising since Bergama (Arsel et al. 2015). The unfolding of the resistance against the plant proposed by the Turkish-owned Anadolu Group was similar in many ways to the Bergama resistance in its mobilization of rural and agricultural interests within a stable, relatively prosperous region. Just as Bergama had shaped the politics of gold and silver mining, the legacy of the Gerze movement is likely a major contributor to a recent episode of national indignation against an omnibus bill in the parliament that granted a 30-month extension for the installation of filtration systems on 15 recently privatized *termik* plants. After vociferous opposition from across Turkish civil society, the provision was removed from the bill following a direct intervention by Erdoğan himself, who likely sensed the strength of public sentiment on the issue. Five of these plants have since been shut down.

The economic boom engineered under Erdoğan's watch depended on a vicious cycle driven by increasingly larger energy and extraction projects. These gave large corporations the possibility of undertaking major investments, which would displace rural communities as it made their already precarious livelihoods untenable. The former peasants and now unemployed workers would then get absorbed into the labour market, if not to work on the very projects that displaced them then on others in urban centres. This would not only generate economic growth – at least statistically – it would also keep the political fallout from the treadmill of displacement manageable or even, perhaps surprisingly, win the AKP additional votes.

This was indeed the case in the town of Soma and its surrounding villages, where 301 miners perished in Turkey's worst mining 'accident' in 2014. Although the workers were fully

aware that they were being made to labour under lax safety standards by a company under pressure to continuously increase its production, the decimation of the tobacco sector in the countryside had left them little choice of employment in the region and thus reduced their bargaining power. The AKP was nevertheless able to restore its strong support in the region a few years after the disaster, partly due to increased social spending and other short-term measures (Adaman et al. 2019). Yet the Soma disaster did nothing to slow down the perverse economic game of musical chairs, which requires a continuous influx of cash for investment and the opening up of new domains of space and nature for accumulation. As such, mining and energy-related investments could not have been sufficient on their own, and the third part of this strategy was found in infrastructure projects.

Infrastructural bridge to urban conflicts

Infrastructural projects – as with minerals and power generation facilities – created sporadic cases of environmental conflict. Perhaps the most significant – both in terms of visibility and durability – was one that was again based on the Black Sea coast. An ambitious 2,600 km road construction project, the 'Green Road', aimed to connect the pastures (*yayla*) of eight provinces with the ostensible goal of increasing the tourism potential of the area. Its critics challenged the logic of the project by arguing that it would not only destroy the fragile ecosystems of the region and harm communities' livelihoods and lifestyles, but it would also serve primarily as a means to intensify mining and other extractive dynamics (Turhan and İnal 2020). Once again, similar to the Bergama case, women were on the frontlines of the demonstrations. Rather than challenging the state itself, the activists were careful to single out the AKP government for blame.

Unlike mineral extraction and power generation, however, infrastructure construction has also transformed urban areas in addition to the rural sphere. The overall logic of most urban infrastructure projects – such as airports, bridges and roads – was essentially the same as those set in the countryside. But many of the urban projects took on added symbolic value, with their grand ambition serving in and of themselves as justification for their desirability and necessity. The 'Third Bridge' starting north of Istanbul and connecting to the 'Green Road' discussed above, the 'Istanbul Airport' which is claimed to be the world's largest, and the undersea road and rail tunnels connecting the two sides of Istanbul are some of the prestige projects from which the AKP and Erdoğan have derived considerable political capital by showcasing the financial and engineering might of contemporary Turkey (Akbulut and Adaman 2013; Paker 2017; Akbulut 2019). In addition, the state-controlled mass housing authority (TOKI) co-financed and co-executed with private finance massive housing projects across urban centres. These served multiple logics: their construction created new jobs (for those displaced from the countryside); they offered improved housing stock for the working classes who were offered cheap credit; and they helped legitimize the gentrification of neighbourhoods deemed to be not in keeping with Turkey's modern ambitions (with earthquake preparation serving as additional justification, especially in Istanbul).

Environmental conflicts in Turkey have by and large stopped at the edges of urban centres. There have of course been a few notable exceptions, especially the successful demonstrations against the construction of a parking lot in Güvenpark in Ankara during the late 1980s and the movement against the construction of the proposed Third Bridge in Istanbul in the much more central than the eventually constructed version in the neighbourhood of Arnavutköy in Istanbul. These were ultimately isolated incidents, driven more by NGOs and affluent 'not in my backyard' activists. In fact, the attempts at resistance against many of the other urban

construction projects – such as the new airport in Istanbul – have been driven more by NGOs than community-based activists, which perhaps partly explains their relative ineffectiveness. It is also important to note the absence of working-class activists – individually or through their labour unions – in urban environmentalism beyond questions of workplace safety.

The relative absence of urban environmental conflicts and their overall lack of efficacy is of course strikingly contradicted by the example of the events surrounding the proposed conversion of Gezi Park into a neo-Ottoman-style commercial complex (Yörük and Yüksel 2014; Arsel et al. 2017). Emerging seemingly out of nowhere but in reality reflecting extensive experience in organizing against the transformation of the Taksim neighbourhood, the Gezi Park protests are perhaps second in significance only in comparison to the attempted coup of 2016 during the AKP rule. At first, protests were carried out by a small group of committed activists who had camped out in the park to prevent the entry of construction machinery ready to destroy this small green space in an otherwise highly built-up area. The heavy-handed approach of the police and the spectacular resistance of the activists barricading themselves into the park under a heavy cloud of tear gas touched a raw nerve in society. Not unlike the Bergama peasants, the young protesters of Gezi Park – collectively as well as individually as in the case of 15-year-old Berkin Elvan, who died after a head injury caused by a tear gas canister the police fired at him – attracted broad national attention and sympathy (İnceoğlu 2014). The ensuing occupation of the square by tens of thousands of 'ordinary' citizens was as spectacular as it was unprecedented not simply in terms of environmental politics but in terms of societal dissent in general. Whereas the protest was eventually put down with the help of overwhelming police power, the events demonstrated the potency of environmental concerns in fomenting generalized political dissent and the extent of the pent-up frustration with Erdoğan himself and the AKP in general.

The Gezi Park protests are especially significant not just analytically but also politically, precisely because the way in which what at first seemed like a fringe issue took on such an overwhelming political significance as to threaten the rule of arguably the most dominant political movement since Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In Erdoğan's reading of the events, environmentalism was used as a convenient ruse for revolt by his opponents, who would clutch at any excuse to discredit him and his party's political project. A shallow reading of the environmental significance of Gezi Park would of course legitimize this view. After all, the park was not especially popular or noteworthy for its design or content. The argument that he, as the leader who had overseen the planting of billions of trees, rather than those defending 'a few trees' in a minor park, spoke directly to this view of environmental politics as a narrow, specialized activity.

Environmentalizing politics

It is neither necessary nor productive to ask what constitutes 'true' environmentalism. Instead, the above exposition of the rural roots of environmental conflicts, the exceptional yet spectacular example of urban environmentalism in Gezi Park, and the ultimate 'failure' of all of these to fundamentally alter the direction of contemporary Turkish development requires asking what it means to be political in relation to nature and natural resources. Before engaging with this question, it is necessary to discuss who in the above examples of environmental conflict from Bergama to Gezi was exercising political agency on the side of non-state actors.

Ethnic, religious or other forms of social difference have consciously not been presented centrally in environmental movements in Turkey (Adaman et al. forthcoming). To the extent that gender has been emphasized, it was often done in a way to emphasize the perceived non-threatening nature of women's activism, especially in relation to the prominence of elderly

women activists. Returning to the example of Bergama, the fact that many of the activists from the mines surrounding the villages belonged to Turkey's much-abused Alevi faith was only expressed sotto voce, even within movement circles. For their opponents, the Alevi faith of the activists demonstrated that they were not necessarily motivated by environmentalism but were either coming from a deeper history of defying the authority of the state or being (unwittingly) manipulated by outside powers who capitalized on their (past) grievances. Either way, the Aleviness of the Bergama movement was often seen as a liability, including by the activists themselves, who were at pains to diminish the significance of this fact. To the extent that Alevi political agency was recognized, this was often done so by way of recognizing Alevis' connection to social democratic movements in general and the Republic People's Party in particular.

The Kurdish struggle too has made limited use of environmentalism in its sustained and multifaceted conflict with the state. The campaign against the Ilısu Dam is the clearest exception to this. Although ultimately unsuccessful, this movement managed to bring together a large variety of national as well as international actors largely due to the fact that water retention in the dam would cause the ancient city of Hasankefy to be inundated. As the region has prominently been inhabited by Kurdish people who faced displacement and felt threatened by the massive dam project, the Kurdishness of the opposition was not easy to downplay. Then again, such a strategy might have been counterproductive since the Ilısu Dam movement more than any other environmental conflict in Turkey chose a 'boomerang' approach to its political strategy, aiming to exert pressure on the Turkish state by mobilizing opposition against the project in the UK to choke off financial and engineering support to it. Just as the Ogoni people in Nigeria found that their struggle against the partnership between their authoritarian rulers and Shell was much more effective if presented in environmentalist terms (rather than a critique of the corruption inherent in Nigeria's federal structure; Agbonifo 2009), it is likely that Kurdish activists found it effective to link their demands as Kurds to the powerful environmental and historic symbolism of a threatened Hasankeyf.

The role of class – in both actual organizational dynamics and the political self-positioning of movements themselves – is perhaps even more complicated. As already alluded to in the case of Bergama, protesters often hailed from relatively comfortable economic stations in life, representing peasants who owned land and engaged with (agrarian) markets in fairly favorable terms. In many prominent rural environmental struggles, the weakest and poorest segments in the countryside have either been silent or actively opposed to environmental campaigners mainly because of their hopes for potential employment generation by the proposed projects. Furthermore, in Bergama, Gerze and Mount Ida, among many other examples, the group of directly affected community members who were secure in their economic conditions to actively campaign against extraction or construction projects were accompanied by a group of urban activists who were motivated not simply by environmental concerns but (often pre-existing) left-wing political grievances. The collaboration among these groups complicates the often-referred distinction between 'environmentalism of the poor' and 'environmentalism of the rich', a phenomenon we have described elsewhere as 'environmentalism of the malcontent' (Arsel et al. 2015).

Admittedly, the analytical starting point for this distinction departs from the same observation made by Erdoğan, which he used in an attempt to discredit activists in Gezi Park and beyond. However, closer scrutiny of these movements shows that both the involvement of left-wing activists in these conflicts as well as the broader popularity of prominent examples such as Gezi, Bergama and Gerze across much of the political spectrum take the analysis back to the observation made in the opening of this chapter in relation to the hegemonic status of

development in modern Turkish history, leading to two interrelated observations in relation to the nature of the ideological space available for critical engagement with economic growth in Turkey.

Whereas in Latin America, South Asia and beyond, marginalized groups such as indigenous communities openly articulate their identities as part of their struggles, environmentalists in Turkey have (again with the exceptions in relation to Kurdish struggles) chosen to subsume their interests as national interests by appealing to a shared sense of Turkishness. This is mainly because state-making histories in contexts such as Ecuador (Arsel et al. 2019) or India (Cederlöf and Sivaramakrishnan 2005) have placed far less premium (at least until recently) on unitary national identities. To the extent that neoliberalism has increased the tension between these groups (who often belong to territories under which lie rich natural resources) and the state, neoliberal multiculturalism has aided and encouraged rather than made it disadvantageous for marginalized groups to emphasize their identities. For Turkey, however, neoliberalism has done little to dampen the deeply entrenched unitary political structure of the state and the perceived necessity to maintain an illusion of homogeneous Turkishness, reducing the political space in which dissent against development policies and projects can be articulated. This has meant that not only could activists not emphasize their own material interests and particular subjectivities, they could also not challenge the state directly.

Moreover, the hegemonic status of economic growth – which while arguably at first was a top-down imposition as part of a post-imperial instinct to 'catch up' – has been sufficiently internalized across society to foreclose the possibility of group-based interests to be articulated in ways contrary to the logic of economic growth (Akbulut 2019; Adaman and Akbulut forthcoming). In other words, whereas some Amazonian indigenous communities have been arguing that their definition of well-being is fundamentally incompatible with (industrializing) economic growth, no segment within Turkish society – be they Alevis, Kurds or other religious or ethnic minorities – has been willing to articulate a sense of communal identity that lends itself to questioning economic growth. This is arguably the core reason as to why despite their strong presence across the world, post-development movements have not materialized in Turkey. From the strict Islamist discourse of Erdoğan to the Kurdish struggle for independence, systemic challenges have not questioned the desirability and necessity of industrialization. The latter has more recently began to break away from this imperative, most notably in their project of Democratic Economy, which espouses ecology as a foundational principle to constrain all economic activity and envisions a non-accumulationist economy not oriented towards growth, efficiency or profit maximization. Yet, it is notable that concrete manifestations of these ambitions are taking place outside of Turkey's political boundaries, namely in Rojava (Akbulut 2017).

In practice, therefore, criticisms of the state and its development vision in neoliberal Turkey do not question the if but the how of economic development. Whereas certain other issues – such as the role of Islam in public life – are deeply divisive in contemporary Turkey, there is especially widespread agreement regarding the necessity of continued economic growth. This certainly has some advantages in terms of the mobilizing potential of environmental politics. Social actors across the political spectrum are able to – at least momentarily – put aside their ideological, religious and cultural differences as was the case of national support for the Bergama movement and the swelling of the crowds in Taksim Square, to question the political system for the way in which it executes the idea of development, rejecting perceived excesses such as the exposure of farmers to cyanide leaching or protesters to police brutality. However, while increasing the vibrancy and popularity of environmental

conflicts, this shared belief in the promise of economic growth simultaneously undermines the potency of these critiques.

This analysis does not necessarily amount to a prediction that environmental conflicts in Turkey will remain unproductive as long as they adapt a de-/post-growth position. Nevertheless, while effectively eliminating growth as a shared ambition would likely short-circuit the AKP's electoral strategy, it is important to recognize that the AKP's success in implementing short-term neoliberal economic policies is to a large extent the symptom rather than the cause of the broader fetishization of economic growth. The challenge for progressive forces locked in environmental conflicts – or, more precisely, the challenge of environmentalizing politics – is to channel the emancipatory promise of growth in a way that delivers development and change without undermining the well-being, identity and prosperity of the disparate peoples and communities of Turkey.

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26

AGRICULTURE AND RURAL LIFE IN TURKEY

Murat Öztürk, Joost Jongerden and Andy Hilton

Introduction

Historically, farming was Turkey's largest source of family provisioning and the agricultural sector its largest employer and contributor to GDP. At the turn of the millennium, almost half of the working population in Turkey still earned an income directly from agrarian activities. However, industrialisation has caused the relative importance of the agricultural sector to change for several decades now, a process extended by the development of the tertiary economy (service industries). Notwithstanding the decline of the contribution of agriculture to employment and GDP, it continues to play a crucial role in Turkey's economy and in people's lives, including as a source of sustenance and income. The country had been self-sufficient for most major food products until very recently. Its fuller entry into global markets caused Turkey to struggle to produce sufficient food to feed the population.

Irrigation (about 25% of the worked land is irrigated), different climatic conditions and variety in soils are among the factors that have fostered a wide range of agricultural activities. In the Mediterranean and Aegean coastal regions, fruit and vegetable production is important,[1] while in the Black Sea coastal region, hazelnuts and tea are major cash crops. Wheat, barley and maize, often in rotation with lentil, are standard crops in central and south-eastern Anatolia. In the more mountainous areas, livestock farming is dominant (sheep and cattle mostly, with feed). In recent years, industrial poultry farming has also become significant. In addition to those mentioned, the main crops are sugar beet, cotton, tobacco and olives (OECD 2011; Öztürk 2012).

Around 23 million hectares of land are used for agriculture in Turkey today by something in the order of three million farms (an accurate number is difficult to ascertain for a variety of reasons). These are mostly family farms and thus, there is a continued preponderance of smallholder farming in the country. Some 90% of farming units comprise households with less than 20 hectares of land, and two-thirds have fewer than five hectares. Economically, this means that well over half of all holdings make registered annual sales valued at less than 4,000 euros (and a fifth at less than 1,000).[2] The vast majority of these small farmers combine livestock for sale with crop production for feed and also subsistence.

In this chapter, we present a periodisation of agricultural activities and related policies in Turkey and discuss some general trends related to rural life. First, two main periods are distinguished: from the Republican establishment of 1923 to 1980, which was characterised

by a state-led agricultural development, and then the post-1980 period of liberalisation. This is followed by a discussion of trends, focusing on economic and demographic decline. The former means particularly the relative decrease in farming work and income – the diminution of the agricultural sector and its fall from pre-eminence in terms of national importance – while the latter refers to the collapse of the population residing in the countryside. These trends are contextualised against a background of *peasant strategies* and what we refer to as *multi-place-living structures*, which are intergenerational and multi-occupational and aim at the creation of liveable lives.

As a side note on terminology, the idea of the smallholder as *peasant* refers to a political reading in which the peasantry constituted a class with a history of resistance. Contemporary usage invokes this by extending the idea in a categorical revivification that expands from basic subsistence through to market-based smallholder farming in a context of struggle with the forces of the 'corporate food machine' (McMichael 2003). Further, while *agriculture* indicates in particular the activities of an economic sector, *farming* and *farming practices* we understand as deliberate interventions by human agents in an effort to coordinate a complex assemblage of plants, animals, buildings, techniques, ideas, norms, values and so on (Berg 2018: 315). Or, following Van der Ploeg (2008: 23), farming is a *co-production* of human agents and living nature in interaction with markets. Again, and like Ploeg (ibid. 23), we refer to the smallholder human agents who create and develop 'a self-controlled and self-managed resource base' as 'peasants'.

Period I: 1923–1980[3]

Upon the foundation of the Republic in 1923, Anatolia had been ravaged by a long century of wars, population movements and displacement. The economy had collapsed and the country's food production insufficient without imports to cover the shortfall. The Armenian population of Anatolia had been destroyed and the Greek (*Rum*) population removed from Anatolia with a formal 'population exchange'. Many of the newcomers who took their place – Muslim populations, mostly from Greece and Bulgaria – were not very productive in the first years of their settlement (Erden 2004). It was in this context that the state expected three main contributions from agriculture: 1) to feed the population, 2) provide raw materials for the emerging industry, and 3) generate foreign currency through exports (Tekeli & İlkin 1988: 39). However, the possibilities for peasants to expand production were limited and mainly dependent on the availability of labour.

The speed of mechanisation in this period was low. In 1924, for example, there were about 500 tractors in the whole country. Within four years, this number had multiplied to 1,200, but it did not reach 1,750 until 20 years later, after World War II. Most of these tractors were hard to operate on stony and hard ground (Toprak 1988: 33–34). There was also a problem of maintenance, and broken tractors became useless. This problematic situation prompted new efforts to mechanise agriculture and increase yields, accompanied by the success of state farms established to open new areas to cultivation (Tekeli & İlkin 1988: 87–88).

In addition to the government lease of tractors, policies designed to encourage mechanisation during this period included military service exemption for machine operators and exemption from customs, consumption and monopoly taxes on fuel (Köymen 2008: 208). The system of Ottoman agricultural schools was expanded, with new institutions accompanied by fruit and olive cultivation organisations and nursery stations and the establishment of agricultural research stations.[4] Other new initiatives included the establishment of a sericulture school and station, poultry institute, breeder bull distribution system and environmentally tailored breeding

stations, and forestry schools, management centres and nurseries to supply saplings. The state's agricultural development policies supporting the sector included also the purchase of agricultural production, improvement of the transportation infrastructure and development of an infrastructure to move produce to the market, together with the provision of subsidised credits, prices and specific incentives, and education of an expert class in agronomy. Consequently, agriculture production increased significantly faster than agricultural employment and much faster than the rural population and hugely so in comparison to the barely unchanged amount of arable land available (see Table 26.1).

Investments in agriculture rose sharply following Turkey's inclusion in the Marshall Plan after World War II, an economic development project that brought European countries, so also Turkey, into the sphere of influence of the US. Of a total of 184.5 million USD Marshall Plan aid between 1948 and 1952, over 38 million USD was allocated to the agricultural sector. It was thus that the motorisation of agriculture occurred: 9,079 tractor ploughs, 1,439 cereal seeders, 2,732 cotton seeders and 2,516 one-way ploughs were purchased (Ozer 2014). By the end of the 1960s, the rather modest limit of new land that could be brought under cultivation was approached, which was also when intensive agricultural technologies to increase productivity began to flourish through the use of chemical fertilisers, pesticides, high-yielding seeds and irrigation. As a result, upon the development of the 'green revolution', the 1970s saw further yield increases.

Fertilisation in this period increased by almost a half, tractor usage covered three-quarters of all cultivated land, and although there was negligible expansion of farming land in total, there was a considerable expansion of that which was irrigated. These developments were influenced by larger coverage of support purchases, favourable terms of trade and world prices and subsidised fuel prices (Kazgan 1988: 264). For smallholders, however, market conditions were prohibitive. According to a study based on the 1970 Agricultural Census and the 1973 State Planning Organisation (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı, DPT) income distribution survey, around three-quarters of all small farms were either unable or barely able to provide a subsistence income for a farming family (Köymen 2008: 291).

Reviewing this period from the establishment of the Republic in 1923 to the beginning of the liberal period in 1980, the Turkish agricultural policy generally can be characterised as state-led developmentalism, with a strong focus on a centrally organised building of national production capacity by simultaneously stimulating competitiveness through an expansion and

Table 26.1 Period I (1923–1980): selected indicators

	1923	*1950*	*1980*
Rural population	10.3m*	15.7m	25.1m
Agricultural employment	4.5m	7.4m	8.3m
Tractor number	220	16 585	436 369
Animals (cattle)	5.2m**	11.1m	16.9m
Animals (sheep, goats)	21.3m**	41.5m	67.7m
Arable land (ha)	19 100m ***	19 452m***	22 764m

Sources: TÜİK, GDP Statistics, Agricultural Statistics, General Population Census; Çavdar & Düzgüneş (1973)

*1927 **1929 ***Includes fallow lands

intensification of production and protecting the home market (Ercan 2007). The ultimate aim was to establish a self-sufficient national economy with the state as the main organising actor, protecting the national economy from international competition to facilitate its growth (Varol 2018).

Period II: Post-1980

The developmental process spurred by the capitalisation of the agricultural sector that had been stimulated by the Marshall Plan injection of financing, especially for tractors, gradually approached a 'natural' tailing off during the 1970s. The land available for expansion had been brought into production and the major gains from mechanisation, employment and fertiliser/pesticide applications available at the time had generally been made. Thus, agricultural advancement now became sluggish. It was in this context that important changes were first introduced in the form of (neo)liberal policies linked globally to the Washington Consensus, a set of policy recommendations agreed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB), with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) promoting a global and free market economic model for developing countries.

Generally, this new approach involved a turn away from the state-guided project of national-development towards policies articulated around free markets and business groups (Varol 2018). In Turkey, it initiated a redefinition of the role of the state, which moved away from emphasising the protection of its national markets and five-year projects of development and turned instead towards taxation and input support reductions and collaboration with private corporations as the drivers and reflectors of market forces.

Although the neoliberal turn began in the 1980s, its full effect was quite slow in coming to Turkish agriculture. Initially, the policy shift was prepared through other agreements with Europe and internal administrative changes. The first involved the European Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) of the then European Economic Community (EEC). With the reform process within the framework of CAP, a transition was envisaged from crop-based support policies to others shaped by such criteria as rural development, food safety and animal health (Aydın 2004: 88). In 1984, taxes and fees on imported food products were reduced by the government in Ankara and an increase was observed in the volume of food imports. In the year after that, the public administration for agriculture was reorganised, with the abolition of several General Directorates in the Ministry of Agriculture for Agricultural Affairs.[5] As a result, while the management capacity of the Ministry declined, other units in public administration gained a say in relation to agricultural affairs. The ambiguity in division of tasks and mandates brought with it authority clashes and a lack of coordination, making agricultural management even less effective (TKB 2004).

Then, in the mid-1990s, the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) came into effect with the completion of the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Turkey was a full participating member state of GATT, and, upon completion of the process of domestic ratification, in 1995, it, too, became a party to the WTO agreement and its annexes. Under the 'Market Access' terms of the agreement, Turkey committed to engage in tariff reductions of (at least) 10% for each agricultural product and 24% on average for all agricultural products, within a period of ten years.

The EU was involved in Turkey's deregulation process again from the mid-1990s, through the Custom's Union. Even though its agricultural products were exempt from this, the EU Custom's Union agreement together with the WTO agreements provided an external framework for the sector, as well as the strategy for privatisations. Thus, starting from 1999, the

Agricultural Reform Project (Tarım Reformu Projesi) was implemented, marking a transition to new agricultural policies. These were thereafter shaped by this policy, in combination with agreements and stability programmes developed with the IMF and WB in the wake of the 2000–01 financial and economic crisis.[6] Turkey's route to free trade was also guided by the Barcelona Process of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership aiming at the European Union-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EU-MED FTA, or EMFTA).[7]

Finally, in 2001 following an accommodation with the IMF in 1999 and an Economic Reform Credit Agreement with the WB in 2000, the landmark Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) was instigated. ARIP committed Turkey to a range of radical shifts in its agricultural policy that were to bring it into line with the neoliberal project (Öztürk 2012). These included

- privatisation of the state agricultural monopolies TEKEL (for tobacco and alcohol), TŞFAŞ (sugar), and ÇAYKUR (tea),
- restructuring of the agricultural marketing cooperatives,
- setting of prices in supported purchases according to world commodity exchange prices,
- phasing out the current support system and introduction of direct income support and
- abandonment by the Agricultural Bank of the subsidised credit scheme (with which farmers took loans to finance, among other things, the purchase of agricultural machinery, especially tractors).

Privatisations

One of the major liberalisation policies assumed in line with commitments to and agreements with the IMF and WB at the turn of the millennium was the liquidation or at least diminishment of the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and other organisations engaged in the marketing of agricultural products and credit extension. These institutions were never, of course, in a position to wholly purchase the produce of farmers and completely regulate the market, including in those crop/product sectors over which they had most control. Yet, even in sectors where their influence was weaker, they could still provide a market with subsidised price guarantees through support purchases. Upon the liquidation of these organisations – partial or complete – small-scale farmers were suddenly left to the market, directly facing traders, speculators, retail chains, industrial enterprises and international agricultural corporations.

The major first phase of privatisation in Turkish agriculture had occurred during the 1990s, with the liquidation of SOEs for feed, meat and fish and milk. Founded in 1956, the animal feed production Fodder Industries (Yem Sanayi) was privatised in stages during the period 1993–95; the Meat and Fish Corporation (Et-Balık Kurumu, EBK), which had contributed significantly to the growth and development of stock breeding since its establishment in 1952, was sold in 1995; and the Milk Industries Foundation (Süt Endüstrisi Kurumu, SEK), set up in 1956 to support milk producers, market hygienic milk and milk products, support and pioneer the private sector and generally ensure the development of the national milk industry, was privatised in 1995 (Aysu 2002).

With the privatisation of SEK, half of the national milk market came under the control of fewer than ten companies, a development exacerbated by the cessation of government support, in this case the development incentive premiums paid to dairies, which in 1998 had been valued at over 30m USD (Togan, Bayener & Nash 2005). Nowadays, milk is increasingly processed by large concerns, some of them multinational, with marketing tied in to supermarket chains.

Of about ten billion litres of milk produced, a third is processed and sold by medium-size enterprises and the umbrella organisation SETBİR (Süt, Et, Gıda Sanayicileri ve Üreticileri Birliği), representing the major meat and dairy producers (of the rest, three billion litres are now consumed or processed by milk producers themselves, one billion are marketed by street vendors, and two billion processed by small dairies (*mandıra*) (FAO 2007: 6).

The largest denationalisations came in the early 2000s with the break-up of the sugar and tobacco manufacturing and marketing monopolies, which had huge implications for the hundreds of thousands of small enterprises whose products they used. Between 1998 and 2002, price supports were almost completely eliminated from the tobacco and sugar sectors, to the tune of half a billion (US) dollars (Togan, Bayener & Nash 2005: 49).[8] Parallel to this, and in line with commitments to the IMF, legislation enabling the privatisations was enacted, facilitated by the establishment of new regulatory agencies.

Law no. 23478 (2001) enabled the break-up of Turkish Sugar Factories Inc. (Türkiye Şeker Fabrikaları A.Ş., TŞFAŞ) and transfer of its regulatory powers to a new management board under the Independent Regulatory Agency (IRA, Bağımsız Düzenleyici Kurum), the Sugar Agency (Şeker Kurumu).[9] TŞFAŞ had been established in 1935, bringing together the sugar factories established from 1926 and over the course of time growing to 30 plants in total. As an organisational structure, the Turkish sugar SOE was privatised rather than dissolved – indeed, it remained a huge concern and dominant in the home market – but the down-scaling of its operations did involve a sell-off of three of its plants into private hands and, more importantly, enable the suppression of supported prices (thereby enabling large reductions in line with newly reduced EU norms). At a stroke, in 2001, Turkey's total sugar beet output plummeted by 33% (from 18.8 to 12.6 million tons). In the decade that followed, beet output still averaged less than 15 million tons, considerably down from the level that it had attained, and it was not until over 15 years later that the previous levels of production were matched. The Sugar Agency has now been abolished; the privatisation of sugar plants is ongoing.[10]

The case of tobacco was even more pronounced. With the price support mechanism for tobacco gone by 2002, TEKEL, the massive SOE originally formed as far back as 1841, was disbanded and its regulatory powers transferred to an IRA, the Tobacco, Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages Market Regulation Agency (Tütün, Tütün Mamülleri ve Alkollu İçkiler Piyasası Düzenleme Kurum, TAPDK). Thereafter, the tobacco sections were privatised – bought eventually by British-American Tobacco – while the Texas Pacific Group acquired the beverages section. The import of tobacco became effectively allowed (Günaydın 2009: 200). In combination with changed smoking habits as consumers moved away from Turkish tobacco (*şark tütünü*), tobacco production in Turkey plummeted, down by a half between 2002 and 2018, during which period the number of producers decreased by 86%, falling from a little over 400,000 thousand to 56,000 (Ziraat Mühendisleri Odası 2018). The Turkish tobacco market is now controlled by five transnational companies.[11] Thus, the establishment of the IRAs for sugar and tobacco became functional in restricting supportive policies of state and control[ing] production of Turkish farmers in order to provide advantaged conditions for international firms […] even in […] competitive market areas (Sönmez 2004: 198–9).

Çay-Kur was the other major state monopoly to be dealt with during this period. Established in 1971, this tea corporation was engaged in such activities and policies as responding to domestic tea demand, establishing tea processing plants, guiding farmers in tea cultivation, improving the quality of tea and marketing. The corporation is still active, but having to survive in competitive conditions with the market entry of private tea companies, so its domain has narrowed. In 2017, the state assets of now Çaykur were moved to the sovereign Turkey Wealth Fund (Türkiye Varlık Fonu), which was then, in 2018, placed under the direct control of the

president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, along with, among others, the Agricultural Bank (Ziraat Bankası).

In addition to the targeting of the state monopolies engaged in product manufacture and supply, the marketing organisations were also diminished during this period. With origins dating back to 1863, these were formally recognised in 1935 as the Agricultural Marketing Cooperatives and Associations (Tarım Satış Kooperatifleri Birlikleri, TSKB). These now have a much curtailed domain of activity, primarily through government credit-flow reductions. Indicative of the trend here is the EU-supported Agri-Marketing union of cooperatives, active in a wide range of product areas, but in vocational training, and not directly in marketing itself. Indeed, the 1980s origins of the new policy of state (non-)intervention in agriculture can be traced back through changes in the functioning of a marketing organisation, the Soil Products Office (Toprak Mahsulleri Ofisi, TMO).

TMO was actually a grain marketing board, established in 1938 with a mandate to purchase grains from farmers for domestic and international markets, provide for state reserves in grains, keep up with related standards and establish and run flour mills, bakeries and storages. Up until 1988, TMO had prevented overproduction and drastic price falls through purchasing goods from farmers, with credit extensions from the central bank in particular. From 1988, however, it was decided by the government that the TMO should provide for its funds from existing markets, and the corporation started to go into loss. In line with WB/WTO agreements, corn supports were phased out between 1999 and 2002. At present, the TMO maintains its purchases – of wheat, barley, rye, oat, triticale, maize and paddy crops – but it gives lower prices and purchases smaller amounts.

In January 2008, TMO determined to set minimum purchase quantities, thus expressing a bias towards larger farmers (TMO, n.d.). The minimum buying amounts for wheat, barley, rye, triticale, oats and corn have risen in each year since then, from five tons in 2011–12 to 60 tons in 2017–18 and currently 80 tons. Small farmers now have to sell their produce on the market, collectively or to traders (who are then allowed sell to TMO).[12] From an institution providing price support to (small) farmers, TMO is thus developing into a trading house for larger agricultural enterprises and middlemen.

Trends

Probably the most fundamental shift in Turkish agriculture over the last century or so has been the dismantling of market protection and the privatisation of state enterprises. This made the entry of new actors possible: corporate business. Two further, important and interrelated trends in Turkish agriculture may be observed. One is its massively decreased share in national GDP and employment provisioning, and the other is what may be referred to as the emergent phenomenon of *multi-place living structures* and *hybrid residence and employment combinations*.

First, regarding the context of these trends, the history of the Republic saw a rise in both rural population and smallholding numbers during the 1923–80 period, to a peak at around 1980, and then a subsequent fall during the second period to the present. This can give the impression of a rough constancy when viewed in terms of a comparison between the initial and most recent figures, but which actually belies the massive upheaval of the recent decline. Although it is to be noted that the details of any such historical assessment are hugely compromised by widely divergent and unreliable data-gathering procedures, the broad sweep of the change is quite evident.

Regarding the rural population, the pre-World War I numbers of people living in the countryside were put at up to 10 million, a figure that had risen to 25 million by 1980, lagging but

Table 26.2 The rurality: farms, population and agricultural employment (1950–2020)

	Period I			*Period II*	
	Foundation	*1950*	*1980*	*2000*	*Present*
Number of farms (million)	2.5m^	2.5m	3.6m	3.0	2.1*
Rural population (million)	10m^^	16m	25m	24m	6m**
Share of total population (%)	76	72	56	35	8
Agricultural employment (mil.)	4.5m^	7.4m	8.4m	7.8m	4.9m***
Share of total employment (%)	90	83	51	35	17
Agricultural GDP (share of total, %)	43	41	24	10	6.4***

Sources: TÜİK, population and agricultural censuses, labour force statistics; Çavdar & Düzgüneş (1973).

^1923; ^^1927; *2018, Farmer Record System (FRS-ÇKS); **2014; ***2019

loosely following the national trend as a whole, that is, growing like the cities, though not as fast. Subsequently, however, that number fell back to under 20 million, and then, following a radical redefinition of the category 'rural', back to under 10 million again. Similarly, according to the Farmer Recording System, there are currently around two million farm units, down from 2.5 million when the system was introduced in 2001, which was basically the same number as that recorded in 1927.[13] However, this number is disputed, since many small farmers are unregistered or go uncounted. In a paper produced for the FAO, Okan and Okan (2013) even gave a figure of close to four million farm holdings (see Table 26.2).

Taken together, the official figures show that in direct contrast to the expanding picture prior to the pre-1980 period of state direction, the absolute measures – the number of farms, total rural population and total employment in agriculture – all decreased rapidly in the post-1980 period of liberalisation. The relative indicators – the proportions of people living in the countryside and employed in farming and the share of agriculture in GDP – have all been falling since the 1950s. In short, the rurality and its economic base, agriculture, became underdeveloped as the Republic moved more fully into a neoliberal regime.

Notably, at the establishment of the Republic in 1923, Turkey's rural population comprised some three-quarters of the national total, a 3:1 proportion that was finally inverted to 1:3 around 2010, a process that has continued. Although the relative decline began after 1950, however, the rural population still continued to grow until the 1980s to some 25 million. Then, the total rural population started to fall. Growing education and employment opportunities in the cities played an important role in this change. However, it is no coincidence that the rapid fall in rural population commenced when state supports to farming were largely withdrawn, agricultural industries denationalised and protective import duties abandoned (Öztürk 2012). Neoliberalism thus marks a major transformation in the economics of farming that was closely linked to the restructuring of rural demographics. The resident rural population is not only declining but also ageing, with a much higher elderly population share in villages than in cities.

The rapid development of industrialisation and urbanisation in Turkey from the 1960s saw a growing number of people moving to the major cities, particularly Istanbul (Erman 2001). Thus, the standard perception is of a mass migration from rural to urban areas as economic development accelerated and then the neoliberalisation programme got underway during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Indeed, by the mid-1970s, fully 10% of the national

Table 26.3 Direction of rural/urban migration, 1975–2000 (millions, % of total, net)

	1975–80	*%*	*1980–85*	*%*	*1985–90*	*%*	*1995–2000*	*%*	*Total*	*%*
Rural-to-urban	.6m	17	.9m	23	1m	17	1.2m	17	3.6m	19
Urban-to-rural	.7m	19	.5m	13	.7m	13	1.3m	20	3.2m	16
Total	3.9m	100	3.8m	100	5.4m	100	6.7m	100	19.5m	100
Rural-to-urban *net*	-1	2	.4	10	.3	5	–.2	3	.4	2

Source: TSI, (2000). General Population Census), 1927–2000.

population were recorded as 'migrant' (Içduygu 2009), while between 1975 and 2000, some three and a half million people were recorded as having migrated from rural to urban areas (Table 26.3).

However, over half of the total intranational movement occurred between urban areas (mostly town-to-city and small-to-large city), and there was also a major migration of almost three million people *out of* urban (to rural) areas. Thus, while rural-to-urban migration did lead to a net decline of the rural population, from the perspective of migration, this was outweighed by a movement in the opposite direction in the periods 1975–80 and 1995–2000. In fact, the net rural-to-urban movement only totalled around half a million people during the 25 years prior to full implementation of neoliberal policies in agriculture.[14]

Not only did the rural population still continue to grow quickly until the 1980s, but, somewhat contrary to conventional wisdom, i) the massive growth of the handful of major cities until the millennium seems to have been mainly fuelled by migration from provincial towns and smaller cities (rather than villages); and ii) urban-to-rural ('counter') migration was already a major phenomenon (even though, until the mid-1980s, the majority of the populace were still living in the countryside). Manifestly, the generalised impression of depopulation and impoverishment of the countryside – which led, for example, to the widespread closure of village schools – requires the nuance of a more complex picture of rural–urban intermingling.

In fact, there is evidence of a weakening relationship between rural settlement and agriculture, such that their traditional equation becomes increasingly untenable. A significant proportion of people involved in agriculture no longer live in the village, or not all the time, while many people living in the village are not employed in farming, or not all the time. Currently, approximately 40% of rural employment is engaged in non-agricultural jobs, and total non-agricultural income is higher than agricultural income in many villages (Kentel & Emre 2017). Some of this non-agricultural employment is in rural areas such as grocery, local trade, trucking, and school bus and local trade jobs, while the other parts are in mining, construction and industry in the vicinity and nearby cities. Further, novel forms of residence-employment patterns have also emerged that suggest a rather different meaning of 'development' to the usual conception of modernisation as a simple emptying (depopulation) of the countryside.

Semi-absentee urban rural farmers, for example, combine returns to the village to look after their land (e.g. to harvest the grass for hay) with family visits for important social events (weddings, funerals), thereby maintaining the rural social fabric but from a distance. Villagers, meanwhile, maintain their small farms through a multitude of market and family-based and age (life-stage) related arrangements. These are wide-ranging, and include, among others, direct sales of produce at farmers' markets and the development of geographically branded products (local honey, cheese, etc.), along with new services, such as tourist-related activities, or off-farm

work. These strategies are referred to in the peasant literature as 'deepening', 'broadening and 'regrounding' (Ploeg & Roep 2003).

Moreover, when looking at the overall situation, there is not only decline, but a messy process of change in which further new arrangements emerge. This reordering does not only take place at the farm level but also at village, regional and national (and international) levels. There is, for example, a wide range of arrangements involving village-return agriculture and life in the rurality more generally. Commonly, for example, older people as well as mothers and children will split their year seasonally between the village and the city, dependent on the weather. They might rent out their land to those permanently resident in the village and just do gardening for a semi-subsistence support to the family provisioning. There are also many forms of place identification as 'home' (where people feel they belong, whether they feel they have actually migrated and/or returned, or not). Generally, in Turkey, there is a strong connection to the homeland, and even those who are permanently resident in the city psychologically reference and routinely cite their community of origin. Thus, even for the 'urban migrants', their urban lives may be regarded as and/or ultimately turn out to be only a temporary affair – even if it is one lasting decades.

As returnee, the urban migrant is not infrequently found to inhabit a world in which the twinned movements out of the village and back specify a rather indistinct category of living arrangement. The picture is further complicated insofar as spouses – and children – do not (necessarily) *return* as such – insofar as it is their partner's village or else considered a native land (*memleket*) despite not actually being where they grew up. Strikingly, also, the contemporary social phenomenon of a combination of (human) urban- and rural-directed movements results in a back-and-forth channelling of varied material and cultural goods and services. These include, for example, the village produce of families sent to support and supplement their city relatives, or the care work of women returning for extended periods to look after sick relatives. In this respect also, the impacts of the huge increase in mobility (access to transport) and communication (mobile phone, internet) over the recent period should also be emphasised.

Lived spaces are thus created which span geographically distant locations. These are made into multivalent living structures through human relationship and (other) socio-economic networks. What we observe is that people are increasingly spending their time split between two or three places located in both rural and urban settings, while rural-based households and family complexes are increasingly oriented to living structures that include multiple places, in the village (and hamlets), in the local town and the nearest city, and in the distant metropolis(es) and foreign countries. These may be combined with the more localised, rural movements (migrations and mobilities) as well as with the development of urbanite commuter 'villages'. The result is an overarching development of *rural-urban connectedness* through a *dual settlement* or *multi-place, hybrid life* in which people (including nuclear and extended families) integrate innumerable, dynamic residence/employment combinations. Farming as a constituent part of life in the rurality remains fundamental to the new, hybrid living forms emerging, but agriculture is no longer the life-defining matrix of village life that it once was. Indeed, 'village life' as such has transmuted – into new modes of living.

Conclusion

For the greater part of its history, agriculture in the Republic of Turkey was led by state policies aiming to develop the home market. This involved a range of institutions and mechanisms that supported and protected farmers while stimulating growth. Until the 1950s, rural life was the norm and the village remained a dominant feature in social culture. In the recent past, however,

agriculture and the rurality have gone through a period of radical change. The destructive effects of neoliberal politics on local agriculture have weakened the sustainability of farming and rural life. Against this, though, the creative response of farming families, communities and related social developments have created a new and different reality.

The acceleration of agricultural mechanisation in Turkey with the Marshall Plan after World War II enabled an increase of agricultural land. In the 1950–70 period, increased agricultural land, mechanisation and agricultural employment resulted in higher agricultural incomes, which provided for the financing of investment in agriculture (and also supported rural migration). Reaching the (then) limits of agricultural land and attracted by the employment opportunities in the cities, the rural population and agricultural employment started to stagnate in the 1980s and then decrease. In the same period, cities and their economic output grew rapidly, causing agriculture to become less attractive.

Even today, however, and despite the weakened incomes in farming production due to the relatively high input and low product prices, small commodity production continues. Thus, although the agricultural sector has modernised with increased capitalisation, monocropping, chemical additives and domination by private corporations as opposed to public institutions, the peasant economy in Turkey remains vital and the rurality vibrant. Small farmers still carry out the greater part of the agricultural production in the country, despite negative developments arising from the agri-food system. This should be recognised as a literal grounding and an ongoing result of a very human agency motivated by the commonplace desire to maintain the farm and the rural roots of the family.

The effort to maintain the existence of small commodity production manifests itself in several ways and has various other, social consequences. In order to increase their agricultural income, small farmers change their product composition, and turn to the production of vegetables and fruits. These are both labour-intensive and high added-value productions. Indeed, they produce more economic value with the production of vegetables and fruits in about 10% of agricultural land than the remaining 90%. Another important adjustment mechanism of the small farmer against the decreasing agricultural income is to earn income by working in non-agricultural jobs. The existence of non-agricultural income allows an important part of the rural population to continue both its life and agriculture. The interaction between the rural and the urban economies over the past 70 years, enabled by the development of transportation and communication opportunities, has contributed to the development of multi-place lifestyles.

Notes

1 Especially olives, potatoes, onions, cucumbers and tomatoes, watermelons, apples, citrus fruit, grapes and figs.

2 The 2016 exchange rate: 3.3 TL = 1 €; massive depreciation in the value of the lira since then (c. 150%) means that farming income is currently much lower; crucially these figures do not include non-farming incomes of farmer households; in the 2016 data, over a third of holdings were valued at less than 8,000 euros (TÜİK 2016).

3 For the paragraphs on periodisation, we used historical information and data from Murat Öztürk's book *Agriculture, Peasantry and Poverty in Turkey in the Neo-Liberal Age* (2012).

4 Agricultural Combat Research Institutes (*Zirai Mücadele ve Araştırma Enstitüleri*).

5 Namely, those for Agricultural Combat, Animal Husbandry Development, Food Affairs, Veterinary Affairs and Water Products (with the General Directorate of Soil and Water Affairs being merged with the General Directorate of Roads, Water and Electricity).

6 Turkey experienced a boom-bust cycle through the '90s with crises in 1991, '94, '98 and '99, leading to an agreement with (the intervention of) the IMF. This was unable to prevent – and partly triggered – a banking-led financial collapse, which caused massive currency devaluation, lost the country about a third of its GDP and worked through to a 50% rise in unemployment (Macovei 2009).

7 The country's EU Custom's Union membership committed it to the EU position detrimentally, insofar as it aligned Turkey with developed countries rather than developmentally better-suited Mediterranean allies for WTO agricultural negotiations (Türkekul 2007).
8 This was also true of the cereals sector, although since this was (is) a much larger sector financially and more heavily represented by large-size enterprises, the effect of the withdrawal of support there was less acute.
9 Turkey has a total of nine IRAs, including the two mentioned here (for tobacco and sugar), six of which were created between 1999 and 2002, partly to facilitate the scaling down of the public sector.
10 At the time of writing, there were 32 sugar plants (25 public, of which 14 were in the process of being privatised); EU quotas had been lifted and beet production was steady at around 20 m tons, but farmers who had previously sold to state plants were choosing to diversify with other crops due to the uncertainty of the new market conditions (GAIN 2019).
11 PhilSA, Japan Tobacco International (JTI), BAT, Imperial and European had acquired 99.5% of the Turkish cigarette market by 2015 (Keklik & Gultekin-Karakas (2018).
12 www.tarimdanhaber.com/tahillar-ve-baklagiller/tmo-bugday-aliminda-nasil-bir-politika-izleyecek-h10082
13 www.verikaynagi.com/grafik/cksde-kayitli-ciftci-sayisi/
14 The statistics also reveal a decrease in rural-to-rural migration, suggesting that many of the people who moved from a village to the city would have previously moved anyway, but from their village to the rural centre (nearest market town).

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THE LAYERS OF AN ONION

Food and nation in Turkey

John William Day

Introduction

The 'father of food anthropology', Sidney Mintz, once noted that just as food is, for some individuals, a more important part of life than for others, for some societies, too, food—its preparation, presentation, sharing, and enjoyment—is simply made more of. Such is certainly the case in Turkey, where, for instance, discussing subtle differences between two takes on the same dish—across regions,[1] or from one relative's delicate touch to another's—is something of a national pastime. If Turkish food ranks among such renowned cuisines as French or Chinese, an estimation Mintz shares with many food writers in Turkey (e.g. Halıcı 2002), this is likely because, says Mintz, enough people '[assign] a "first place" to the real pleasure of consuming food' (1996, p. 104).

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that food, so socially central, is also often put to uses in Turkey beyond the strictly alimentary—that food is, to borrow that well-worn phrase from Lévi-Strauss (1963), not only good to eat, but 'good to think'.[2] Of the many forces, at many scales, that inflect food and its pragmatics in Turkey, this chapter focuses on food's entanglement with basic questions of community, of how people do and do not live together. Specifically, since the ways in which community is conceived of and performed is, in Turkey as elsewhere, shot through with the conceits of the nation-state form, any exploration of the everyday politics of food must address the always-unfinished business of nation-building. The ongoing effort, at once material and meaningful, to produce—and reproduce, as natural, as given—a viable national community out of the variegated human geographies and political histories of Anatolia has left little of social life untouched in Turkey. This includes food, which is examined here as an important, if often overlooked, site where central questions of national communality are debated, and whereby people come to understand the world and their relationship to it: What is a people? What is Turkishness? Which stories of the past and present are sayable and hearable, and which are left unsaid or censored? Who belongs to the nation state and how?

To this end, three paths of the interweaving of food and political life are explored. First is the banal politics of localism centred on famous produce, conspicuously materialized in the curious statues of fruits and vegetables found in cities and towns across Turkey. Produce pride is here explored as a way of rendering national affect and national conceits more idiomatic, immediate,

tangible, and taste-able. Second, nation-building as damage is explored through anthropological portraits of the aftermath of forced displacement in Kurdish Turkey. Here, ordinary talk about eating and food takes issue with the national order of things, raising questions about injury, injustice, and Kurdishness as a fundamentally differential form of belonging in Turkey. Third, recalling, with poet-farmer Wendell Berry (1992, p. 374), that "eating is an agricultural act", recent public anxieties over food price inflation are examined for what they might say both about meaning in the analysis of economic and political life, and about the future of food scholarship in Turkey.

Cutting across these paths of inquiry is a concern with how the nation state's contingent understandings of the world are naturalized, and rendered a seemingly ordinary and unremarkable part of everyday categories of thought and action. Nation-building, here as elsewhere, involves what, to borrow a term from anthropologist Clifford Geertz, one can think of as a 'struggle for the real', which for Geertz names the 'attempt to impose upon the world a particular conception of how things at bottom are and how men are therefore obliged to act' (1973, p. 316). Because nation states are historical, and not natural, entities, all projects of nation-building entail an attempt—or more accurately, *attempts*, to engage different groups with different visions of a national real, in contentious relations at different conjunctures—to make their subjects believe in the reality, in the firmness and fixity, of what Michael Billig calls a 'whole way of thinking about the world […] implicated' in nationalism (1995, p. 61). This chapter explores how such implicated worlds are 'transformed into familiar common sense' (Billig 1995, p. 63) through the ingredients food provides.

'Just food'

> 'Ideology never says, "I am ideological"'
>
> *-Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses'*

> 'The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building'.
>
> *Michael Billig, Banal Nationalism*

Framing Michael Billig's classic work on nationalism (1995) is an apparent conundrum. Though exceptional events like revolutionary wars or coups are the stuff of many state rituals meant to sustain a collective investment in nationalism, most of the time, of course, life is not so eventful. And yet, nationalism goes on functioning; people still speak of their affective and intellectual ties to the nation state, still insist on the reality and vital importance of its key conceits. The reason, says Billig, is that these conceits are constantly indexed, in so many mundane, often barely noticed instances. Precisely through such repetitive re-membering, nationalism's theses end up having 'seeped into the corners of our consciousness' (Billig 1995, p. 12).

And seep they do. But how is it that, as Bourdieu asks, the 'state manages to impose itself so easily' (2014, pp. 162–4)? How, that is, do the state's claims to a 'monopoly of the power to make people see and believe, to get them to know and recognise […] [its] divisions of the social world' (Bourdieu 1991, p. 223) actually stick, actually take on a reality and importance for subjects? The answer would seem to lie in a double movement. States posit a reality: in this case, that there is a coherent people called the Turks, with a shared origin story and destiny, coinciding with a territory, language, and culture all conceived of as more or less homogeneous and singular. The state then stamps its claims onto social reality, rearranging spaces, ways of talking and daily comportment, and institutions in line with its posited conceits, such that these

conceits reappear to subjects not as historical artefacts of one particular contingent struggle for the real, but as the real itself.

In Turkey, the struggle to naturalize one group's contingent vision of community has taken many forms, from building roads, schools, government buildings, and new neighbourhoods in the new capital (Kezer 2009) to the regulation of bodily adornment, lexicon, and even (as if taking a cue from Plato's Kallipolis (1992)) musical modes (Tekelioğlu 1996). Though perhaps not the object of such deliberate state efforts of social and semiotic engineering as those noted above, as a testament to the capacity of the conceits of the nation to suffuse so much of social life (sometimes to absurd effect[3]), food in Turkey—thought about food, talk about food, acts around food—is deeply enmeshed in national theories of how the world is.

But might food be something more than just one more example of the surprising reaches of the national cosmology? Might there not, that is, be something peculiar to food that has made it a particularly potent site for national reproduction? The answer may lie in the fact that food does not seem overtly political; it never says, 'Here I am, to remind you of the nation's conceits'. On the contrary, by a politics of significance that transcends Turkey, food is frequently passed over as a base act, unrelated to the more important matters in life (as when, for instance, Plato contrasts those who do little but 'feed, fatten and fornicate' with those devoted to the life of the mind (1992, p. 257)).[4] Food, by this logic, is simply taken to not matter much[5] when it comes to the 'serious' stuff of politics. Yet here, in food's seeming insignificance, may lie the answer to why and how practices around food reproduce political ideas. In other words, inasmuch as food appears as something 'mere',[6] something basic, inasmuch as, like Billig's flag, it goes unnoticed—it works, in silent efficacy, to reproduce the nation state's claims to the legitimate definition of reality. We turn, then, to some of the ways this works.

'Oranın nesi meşhur?': the banal politics of localism

In rendering the nation, as Kezer (2009) puts it, 'imaginable', the role of writing is well established (Anderson 1983, and specific to food and nationalism, Appadurai 1988). Much of the writing on food in Turkey in Turkish is shot through with the implicated worlds of nationalism. To be sure, some echo Revel's (1992) or Mintz's (1996, pp. 92–105) doubts about the meaningfulness of 'national cuisine', as when, for example, Dağdeviren (2019, p. 10) writes, 'food has geography not nationality'. However, most of this discursive field treats food in Turkey as though its national origins and character were obvious and beyond debate: thus, for instance, an essay on local foodways in a village outside of Sivas that traces the origins of Turkish cuisine to a monumental inscription to the Central Asian Turkic ruler Tonyukuk (Özen 1996, p. 71), or a Sun Language Theory-tinged approach to the history of Turkish farming (Özçelik 1990) that attributes the initial cultivation and dissemination of many common foods to the pioneering agricultural efforts of Turks in Central Asia.[7]

As important as writing is for the reproduction of national claims on reality, though, it is neither the only such site nor perhaps the most salient. A short intercity bus trip in Turkey is enough to familiarize one with a curious subgenre of statues, found in main squares and thoroughfares in towns and cities across Turkey, of fruits, vegetables, and sometimes local dishes: a pistachio in Siirt, watermelons in Adana, hazelnuts in Giresun, or a giant meatball on a fork in İnegöl, to name but a few. That such statues, most of which seem to have been built relatively recently, are at least as common as the more familiar figures of monumentality—scenes from the Independence War, for example—raises the question, why their ubiquity? And what social and political work might these fixtures of cityscapes and townscapes be doing? In one sense, these statues concretize something hardly unique to Turkey: the association of

produce with place. This association informs political economies and semiotics of *terroir* around the world, at work in the marking and marketing of wine (Trubeck 2008) or cheese (West et al. 2012), for instance, and touching down in Turkey's ongoing efforts, under the concept of *coğrafi işaret*, to adopt a system similar to the European Union's protected denomination of origin (Oğuz et al. 2006; see also the Turkish Patent and Trade Office's list of protected foods (n.d.)). Nor, in Anatolia, is this association especially new; the Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi, for instance, writing over 300 years ago, took careful note, in his journeys, of cities' renowned fruits (Yerasimos 2014, pp. 152–81).[8]

Something does not have to be peculiar or new, however, to do social work. One reading of these statues, the products of so many anonymous bureaucrats, is to see them as attempts by local politicians, city planners, and business councils to tap into the growing internal markets in Turkey of gastro-tourism, of people taking day trips out of big cities into surrounding towns to see the sites and sample local foods. And so they are, in part. But beyond their status as somewhat gauche efforts to catch the attention of tourists, these statues can also be read as monuments to a mode of subjectivity (in the basic sense of a subject who acts, and who has certain feelings about how to act) tied to pride in local products of the soil. These statues concretize and ask their viewers to recollect associations between foods and locality, to think about how they relate to themselves, to a locality, and to others, and they do so in a way that is particularly sensual, particularly immediate and embodied. Thus a bean stew with oxtail (*pöç*) brings an Armenian woman to tears as she recalls childhood visits to the family's village outside Kayseri (Küçükkırca & Yılmaz 2018), while across the globe, a writer in China asks, 'What is patriotism but the love of the good things we ate in our childhood' (Yutang, cited in Fine 2009, p. 1). One need only recall how people caught up in Turkey's many overlapping histories of mobility (rural–urban labour migration since the 1950s, violent forms of displacement and dispossession across Kurdish geographies in the 1990s), in longing for places left behind or lost, speak with great pathos of the fruits or vegetables their birthplaces are known for (see Day 2013). What I wish to call further attention to here, though, are the ways in which these strong associations of place, produce, senses, and subjects are refracted through nationalist orders of classification. In what sense, in other words, is a carrot statue in Beypazarı's central square—a privileged stage, as noted, normally reserved for the monumental in its more familiar senses (Lefebvre 1991, pp. 220–8)—indeed a national monument? In the imagination of locality in Turkey, in addition to certain distinct features of the landscapes or cityscapes of certain geographies (the mountains of Dersim, say, or the basalt city walls of Diyarbakır), few cultural objects rival food's centrality. Food is metonymic of place, and acquires its potency as a sign both through its indexical associations with the soil, the lay and look of the land, the seasons, as well as through the many positive moral valuations carried by soil, cultivation, and a valorized rural life more generally (as in the foundational ideology's praise of the peasant as a key symbolic carrier of nationalist meaning); produce stands, in simple but rich terms, for what is truly good, both gustatorily and morally, about a place. As such, nationalism finds in the affective clustering of topophilia and pride around local produce rich, morally suffused grounds for naturalizing at least one of its key tenets: that Turkishness is naturally tied to the soil of Anatolia, with soil here laden with senses of blessed fertility, so much so, for instance, that in the 1950s, when a film in Turkey about the life of the folk bard Aşık Veysel containing a scene of wheat fields some 30 cm high went before state censors for review, this scene was flagged for removal, as it was felt to incorrectly portray the state of agriculture as backwards, and to not capture the mythic blessedness of Anatolia soil (Sabah 2012). In sum, through monumentalized fruits and vegetables, nationalism's somewhat abstract conceit of a meaningful and natural coincidence between people and territory are given palpable, taste-able evidence, suffused with affect and the sensual.

Pride in local produce not only links subjects to places in tangible ways. It also offers people a language, translatable across contexts, for talking to others about how one's beloved locality fits into and feeds, literally and symbolically, the national whole. With palpable ingredients, this particular idiom of localism renders the nation imaginable across scales. In the stereotypical question between strangers sharing the fleeting intimacy of a bus ride, 'oranın nesi meşhur'? (what's that place famous for?), the ability to explain one's place of origin in terms of produce provides both a familiar reference (Turkey has been, across most of its history, a country of largely rural producers) to imagine and communicate one's place within the abstract national whole, and does so through a morally suffused idiom tied to ideas of fertility and sustenance (and, one should not ignore, pleasure). While localist attachment might seem to present an obstacle to nationalism in Turkey, in a way perhaps analogous to how so many particular wills within a body politic represent, for Rousseau, possible obstacles to the functioning of a general will—and indeed, one may further assume this to be so given the fierce monism informing Turkish nation-building, and the acts of erasure (through denial, through violent suppression) of cultural and linguistic differences deemed outside the acceptable range of the national classificatory social order (Oran 2018)—in practice, one finds no such contradiction. Passionate attachment to the local is allowed, even celebrated, within what remains a deeply singular logic of nationalism in Turkey precisely when such localism is an affirmation, and not an affront, to national unity.[9] In other words, topophilia is encouraged, and does social work, because it has, as it were, two arrows: one pointing with affection to the peculiarities of place, and one to the nation, in which such peculiarity is nested, and which it literally and metaphorically feeds.

The forms of localism involved in this distinct monumental practice[10] thus provide an everyday site for the re-entrenchment of the theories posited by the nation state: specifically, that a 'we' exists who, despite or precisely through such local differences, finds a place within the national whole. And the seeming unremarkability of produce seems important, here, to its social work towards reproducing national reality. As banal bits of everyday material culture, statues of tomatoes or carrots, alongside everyday talk about famous foods, sit in the unremarked background like still flags. To be sure, love of the local is not only about the reproduction of nationalism; it may also be something richer, more ambivalent, even potentially subversive. But that one often finds, across the political semiotics of food localisms in Turkey, love of the idiosyncratic and local having been asked to sing in a key of love of the nation underscores how morally charged landscapes and their products work to bring the nation home, as it were, to the intimate practices of daily routines (homes, kitchens, tables, and family rituals).

Yet as often as the nation state is successful in imposing its conceits, there are limits.

National damages

In Corrigan and Sayer's (1985, p. 3) memorable pun, 'states […] state', but who listens and how remain open questions. States label and name; they refashion landscapes and everyday materialities in attempts to recruit subjects to reproduce nationalism's conceits. Yet they are not necessarily able to compel people to accept these conceits across the varied human geographies states contain. Here, again, food is illustrative, and provides powerful moral ingredients for contesting these conceits—for example, that all citizens belong equally to the nation. A starting point here is the metaphor of sitting at the same table, of commensality.

Many students of food have noted the social and political work involved in the act sharing (or not sharing) food. Bloch (1999) states this unequivocally: 'In all societies, sharing food is a way of establishing closeness while, conversely, the refusal to share is one of the clearest marks of distance and enmity' (p. 133). What the sociocultural analysis of hospitality (Pitt-Rivers

2012) illustrates particularly well are the deep ties between the sharing of food and the pragmatics of recognition, the working out of relations between friend, stranger, and shades in between.

In carrying out ethnographic research in the late 2000s in Diyarbakır on the afterlives of displacement, which so remade country and city across Turkey's predominantly Kurdish southeast in the 1990s, I frequently heard the image of sharing food deployed to raise questions about whether the state and the rest of Turkey really understand Kurds as equal social agents, as citizens with the same rights as anyone else. This research, it should be said, took place at one peculiar conjuncture in the historically shifting terrains of politics and political subjectivity in Kurdish Turkey—on the heels of the violent 1990s, almost a decade into an uncertain peace process involving reformulations of the Kurdish movement's horizons and experiments in legal politics and decentralized municipalism and the ruling Justice and Development Party's (JDP) experiments to constitute its own vision of a Kurdish subject of politics largely through Islam, and before the violent end to the peace process in the mid 2010s. A little over a decade prior to my research, villages across south-eastern Turkey were evacuated and property destroyed or seized by military and paramilitary actors, and entire households were uprooted to urban centres such as Diyarbakir, where the echoes of dispossession, of lost lifeways and ecologies of work, still very much reverberated, then as now. Close experiences with state damage meant that many of the people I spoke with gave little credence to official claims of formal equality in citizenship. Thus one young man, in his early 20s at the time, after recounting a fairly representative history of working life after displacement (selling ice cream and tissues on the street as a kid, then working in teahouses and restaurants), addressed an imagined rest of Turkey in our interview as he said, 'we want to sit at your table, we want to eat from the food you eat, and you too eat from the food we eat', and wondered aloud why 'Turks […] always exclude us' (then ongoing JDP attempts to hail a particular Kurdish Muslim subject of politics around the *iftar sofrası* notwithstanding). His words should be read carefully, however. This was not a plea for inclusion; rather, in a discourse I heard often at this conjuncture, here the openness of Kurds to engage in dialogue, and to be open to sharing and exchange, is contrasted with an unchanging position of violence and exclusion on the part of the rest of Turkey. This became clearer as the conversation drew on, when my interlocutor went on to compare the hospitality that he said any Kurd would show a Turkish visitor to Kurdish Turkey with the treatment—in reference to not just stories of violent attacks and lynching carried out against Kurdish migrant workers in the west of the country, but to his family's experiences as migrant labourers as well—he said Kurds receive when they travel beyond Kurdish geographies. In this context, at one point, when describing the lengths his family had gone to, to get by after moving to Diyarbakır, he seemed to slip and call south-eastern Turkey a country (*ülke*), only to pause and, instead of correcting this, double down: 'The southeast is really a very poor, er, *a country,* yes, it's a country, because it's outside of Turkey. Turkey doesn't embrace it'. That Turkey seemed to him not only to have no place for Kurds but to actively discriminate against them, carrying out violent acts of damage and injury on Kurdish geographies and bodies, furthermore struck this young worker, like many other ex-villagers I spoke with in Diyarbakır, as all the more unjust and unconscionable in light of the crucial labour that his own family had supplied, as seasonal agricultural labourers, in harvesting the food that fed the rest of the country:

> If we didn't do their work, they would die from hunger. Really! If we didn't do the Turks' work, they would die from hunger. Because, today, er, be it their hazelnuts or their pistachios, their cotton, their this or that, Kurds do it all.[11]

In writing about the phenomenology of state violence and damage in another context, philosopher Adi Ophir notes, 'many struggles—political, economic, legal, and others—are waged over the question of who can or cannot be damaged and what counts as expressible depreciation' (2005, p. 127). And much of the cunning of damage lies in the intricacies—sometimes impossibilities—of its expressibility. Again Ophir:

> The discourse in which loss is expressed, the exchange system in which damage is assessed, the translating machine that determines compensation, all draw the line between loss that is expressible and assessable as a damage, due to which compensation can be claimed, and damage whose existence cannot be expressed, let alone proven.
> *(p. 162)*

The damage involved in having been violently cut off from the familiar rhythms, landscapes, and subsistence practices of the countryside left many of the people I spoke with struggling to find a semiotic system to express this loss. References to sharing food, as above, but also to certain foods as symbolic of past riches, of life in the village remembered (from vantage point of post-dispossession livelihoods) through a rural idyll of stability and even relative abundance, served to underscore what many perceived as the fundamental amorality of displacement. An older man I interviewed thus summarized life before and after displacement pithily, saying, 'In the village we made breakfast every day of honey and butter, here we can't even see an olive!'[12] Rural rhythms and ecologies punctuated daily by luxurious goods in the rural economy of foodstuffs (butter, cream, honey) here stand in contrast to a lone, shrivelled fruit. In this and similar accounts of past riches, when, for instance, older men would break into tears in the middle of an interview at the memory of the delicious fruit in villages they were no longer allowed by the state to return to, food is indeed doing a great deal of semiotic and political work. In memories of village life via fruits or dishes, food, wed to locality, works as a refuge of sorts, a moral space where the damaging reach of the state can at least be imagined as kept at bay for a bit. Food also incurs meanings of unpayable political debts, as thorny, crucial questions of the nature of justice, belonging, and sovereign power are turned over in this litmus test of citizenship and belonging in Turkish nation-building.

The layers of an onion: peeling food inflation

Much of what has been discussed so far can be read as an argument for the importance of practices of meaning in understanding the overlapping lives of food and nationalism in Turkey. This final section sustains this point—that meaning is not, as worn out ontologies would have it, something floating ethereally above more important matters (rarefied superstructural icing atop the base), but is in fact very much *material*, in both senses of that word. To enrich this point, as with many a good dish, we begin with onions.

In 2018 and 2019, onions were the object of a great deal of public anxiety in Turkey. Due in part to their symbolism—alongside a load of bread, a poor man's humble meal—and in part to the simple and striking fact that onions, doubling and tripling in price, registered among the highest rates of food price inflation at the time (TCMB 2018), the high price of onions caught the attention of ordinary people and politicians alike. Government officials thus called for raids on depots in one onion centre in Turkey, Polatlı, and in speeches-as-spectacle afterwards, blamed prices on unethical stockpiling and promised, through more raids, to get more stock to the market soon (Hürriyet 2018). As politicians competed over who could carry out more raids, one observer noted that the ensuing reporting looked more

like something out of the pages of anti-narcotics or counterterrorism news than of agriculture (Yıldırım 2019, pp. 126–9). Tariffs were soon dropped on imported onions, eliciting no small amount of grumbling from opposition politicians and writers, and touching the nerve of a widespread political emotion that equates agricultural dependency with a betrayal of certain core Kemalist principles—at once economic and affective—of self-sufficiency and independence. 'The onion has become more valuable than the dollar', said then-Republican People's Party presidential candidate Muharrem İnce, as he continued in a swipe against the ruling Justice and Development Party and the neoliberal reforms to state–capital relations it has overseen, 'because it's a Turkey that doesn't produce' (Sözcü 2018). Meanwhile, beyond political spectacles, photos circulated on social media of onions as engagement rings or onions displayed alongside gold in jewellers' windows,[13] as papers ran no shortage of puns about tears (Milliyet 2018) and bitterness (Cumhuriyet 2018).

Meanwhile, in the aisles and bazaars, worry was real. Food prices were high across the board, and stayed in the radar of politicians, such that some supermarkets even began pulling vegetables from their shelves, fearing they might become the target of government investigation into price manipulation (Yackley 2019)—understandably so, perhaps, after President Erdoğan spoke of eliminating the 'terror in the marketplace', just as, he said, his government had eliminated terror in Cudi (Takvim 2019). One seasoned journalist predicted that the March 2019 local elections would be fought and won on the issue of food inflation (Sönmez 2019a). The ruling party, having staked so much on delivering economic improvement, did indeed lose key contests, and the immediacy of the price of a week's groceries may have brought home the severity of the economic situation.

Beyond its importance for any single election, though, the soaring costs of basic foodstuffs pointed to a fundamental problem in Turkey's system for the production and distribution of food and Turkey's shrinking agricultural sector (Sönmez 2019b), with fewer and fewer young people remaining in a difficult and precarious line of work. When such conditions as crop failures and rising production costs due to a spike in the price of inputs such as fuel and fertilizer combine, many see in such stop-gap measures as turning to imports and temporarily lowering tariffs to weather such instabilities, signs of failed policy. Agricultural dependency and the opening of markets to global agriculture are now a part of a normal trip to the supermarket in Turkey, where one finds garlic from Iran and China, avocados from Kenya, pulses from Canada, and meat from Serbia.

In the work of journalists like Sönmez and Yıldırım is a clear sense of alarm at the future of food security in Turkey, of the ability (in the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization's definition of food security) of 'all people, at all times, [to] have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy lifestyle'.[14] There is indeed work to be done to understand not only the discourses and practices of the government's biopolitical management of food, but also other responses to emergent food anxieties, some of which take place within the questionable imaginative parameters and politics of consumer choice, but with others (e.g. emergent forms of cooperatives; see Aykaç 2019) calling into question the dynamics of power and inequality structuring people's differential access to food, allying these assemblages more with food sovereignty activists (Patel 2009) than with the discourses and practices of food security.

Emergent food anxieties further underscore the need to take seriously the structuring work of meaning in every social and political field. In the layers of onion price inflation are questions of not just the political economy of neoliberal agricultural markets, but also of the historically sedimented forms of imagination that shape how opposition parties articulate other political and economic possible futures at such times of crisis. And here, it is important, of course, to

keep in mind that the country's political history is not the story of a single nation unfolding smoothly, but of multiple groups with different visions of the nation vying, through projects marked by contestation and struggle, to impose their particular definition of the real. Thus, the shift under the JDP's neoliberal and Islamist national vision away from agricultural self-sufficiency has shaken Kemalist imaginaries, left and right, of economic independence so central to Republican visions of national economy building, leaving many (e.g. Yıldırım 2019) nostalgic for the dream world of the İzmir Economic Congress. From such a viewpoint, it seems a slippery slope from importing pulses to capitulating to foreign powers and thus betraying the Kemalist principle of resisting forms of foreign intervention framed as menacing meddling. Such a structure of feeling also shapes the solutions to contemporary impasses in the political economy of food that oppositional voices are able to articulate. One can question whether longing for a return to etatist policies of subsidy and support as *the* solution is indeed creative enough to think at the many scales of action—from municipal budgeting about food and the right to the city up to global decisions about transboundary water use, for instance (Patel 2009, p. 49)—that many on the frontlines of food activism see as necessary. Even in the tedium of inflation rates and agricultural markets, then, meaning has critical material consequences for the structuring of human futures.

This chapter has called attention to the ordinary, often unremarked acts of meaning whereby nationalism's conceits are indexed and made to seem real, as well as thrown into question. Food is but one such act, but a potent one, due both to the repetitiveness of food rituals (we cook, eat, and think about food daily) and to the fact that, unlike an anthem, say, food does not announce itself as political, perhaps making it all the more effective. If it is true, as many argue (e.g. Oran 2018), that the occasionally violent monism at the heart of nation-building and maintenance in Turkey must be critically dissected if a viable community is to be forged, then understanding the banal sources—the *pazar*, the dinner table, the unremarked statue—for the reproduction of national categories of thinking and feeling is an important step. In a way broadly similar to the need for a shift away from the carefully policed epistemic borders of what can and cannot be said about history and society in and of Turkey (Ünlü 2018) and towards a more salutary engagement with grounded realities, there is a clear need to move beyond all forms of unthinking, toeing-the-nationalist-discursive-line in food writing in and on Turkey to clear a space for the analysis of rapidly changing assemblages: of the tensions of community, of contested politics and histories, of transforming political and semiotic economies of food, and more.

For the future of food research in Turkey, to those areas explored above, others will be added. New work in the social history of food in Anatolia like that of Singer (2011) or Trepanier (2014) will continue to add to our understanding of the complexities of food and society in the past, and, as effective histories of the present, push against both contemporary popular, ahistorical neo-Ottomanisms and selective multiculturalisms (e.g. Eksen 2001) romanticizing certain culinary pasts (Armenian, Rum, Jewish) while silencing or condescendingly dismissing other extant social differences. Still other work will turn to emergent assemblages of the legal, economic, and semiotic involved in the attempt to institute a practice of geographical certification similar to the French *appellation d'origine contrôlée* for local and regional agricultural and culinary products in Turkey or related gastronationalist (DeSoucey 2010) projects; or to the forms of governmentality and dissensus at play in state welfare policies and practices (Koç 2014, Görmüş 2019); or, inspired by Roland Barthes's psychosociology of food (1997 [1961], the semiotics of 'foreign' foods in changing middle-class practices of cooking and dining out; or else to new modes of ethics that the threat of food and water insecurity may incite, and the possibility of new forms of community built on a radical embrace of social vulnerability, interdependence, and care, and an invigorated politics of the commons (Butler 2004, The Care Collective 2020,

Federici 2019). The futures of food research in Turkey, like those of food more generally, are many and complex, and will require careful untangling.

Notes

1 There is much work to be done on regional cuisine in Turkey: on its differential commodification in the semiotic economies of international and intranational tourism, for instance, or on emergent assemblages of market and meaning in practices of geographical indication (*coğrafi işaret*) led by the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office (2020). On regional cuisine more generally, see Revel (1992). On region as an object of political struggle, see Bourdieu (1992).
2 On the uses and misuses of this phrase, see Garber (2008).
3 See Amberin Zaman's inspired reporting (2000) on cats and nationalism.
4 See Onaran (2015) on the gendered dynamics of power that distinguish between and hierarchically value men and women's cooking labour.
5 Scholars of food often seem to feel compelled to address questions of significance head-on, as Belasco's title, 'Why Food Matters' (1999).
6 On the politics of significance and mereness, see Herzfeld 1997.
7 So ingrained is this cosmology that critics of the impasses of nation-building in Turkey also occasionally reproduce its conceits, as when Oran (2010, p. 3) sees a taste for grilled meat and flatbreads in Turkey as traces of Central Asian nomadism. For a critique of spurious culinary and botanical histories, see Uhri (2014)—e.g. its criticism (pp. 68–71) of Perry's (1994) essay on baklava.
8 It is interesting to compare Çelebi's notes to today's associations, called out in vegetable markets across Turkey ('Finike oranges!' 'Beypazarı carrots!'). E.g., Bursa is today synonymous with peaches, though not for Çelebi (perhaps because, Yerasimos speculates (p. 158), orchards then would have been used for mulberries and silk production, with peaches only coming in to take their place after the decline of the silk industry).
9 This echoes Herzfeld (2003), who in exploring the 'nesting of local pride within the production of an externally unified and culturally homogeneous patriotism' for folklorists of Crete, detected 'no practical contradiction between that patriotism and the most aggressive pride in the local culture of Crete' (p. 308).
10 See the playful spektakulersehirheykeleri.tumblr.com, which documents food statues and notes, 'Every day, we pass in front of them. Most are what result from enlarging a city's most important symbol by a hundred. They are so ugly that most of the time, we prefer to overlook them'.
11 Author interview, winter 2008. See also Day 2013.
12 Author interview, spring 2009. See also Day 2013.
13 Thanks to Bahar Şimşek for keeping an eye on social media.
14 www.fao.org/3/y4671e/y4671e06.html

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28

MIGRATION FROM RURAL ANATOLIA TO METROPOLITAN CITIES

Tahire Erman

Introduction

Migration from rural areas to cities is a major factor in Turkish urbanization. Turkey underwent radical transformation as a result of mass rural-to-urban migration starting in the late 1940s. In 1927, 24% of the population lived in urban areas;[1] today it is reversed: 74% of the population live in urban areas (website worldometers 2018). Between 1945 and 1950, the number of rural-to-urban migrants was 214,000; increasing four times, it reached 904,000 between 1950 and 1955; it doubled between 1965 and 1970, reaching 1,939,000; and between 1980 and 1985, it increased 1.5 times, reaching 2,582,000 (DİE 1995). In this chapter, I explore migration from rural regions of Anatolia to metropolitan cities, with a focus on the transformative effects on Turkish society shaped by the specific ways that migrants responded to it. I ask how rural-to-urban migration transformed cities and villages alike.

I identify three causes of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, namely, the restructuring of the world economy in the aftermath of World War II, capitalism expanding to the so-called Third World countries in the bipolar world system in the late 1940s/early 1950s; the restructuring of the world economy in the aftermath of the oil crises in the 1970s, that is, the introduction of neoliberal policies; and the transformation in southeastern Anatolia by development projects such as the Atatürk Dam in the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP: Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi), along with the peak of the repressive policies against the 'Kurdish problem', that is, forced migration from the southeastern countryside in the 1990s. In the sections that follow, I first provide background information on rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, discussing the conditions that paved the path for peasants to move out of their villages to cities in large numbers. I then move to explore the spatial, sociocultural and socioeconomic transformations caused by migration that come in forms and features specific to the Turkish case. While doing so, I frame the discussion by the materialization of informality in the cities as migrants built their houses without state authorization and participated in the informal market, followed by the support mechanisms of migrants that characterize the sociospatial transformations in Turkish cities, namely, chain migration, spatial clustering of migrants with their relatives and those from their villages, the invention of *hemsehrilik* in the urban context to refer to those people from the same place of origin, and the continuing relationship with the villages. I suggest that preserving

ties with the village and with the people from the village acted to keep migrants outside the influences of modernity in the city. The last section delves into whether and in what ways these mechanisms of support are challenged by the advent of neoliberalism.

Rural-to-urban migration: when, why, and how?

As capitalist modernization came to transform rural Anatolia through the mechanization of agriculture, it triggered mass migration from villages to metropolitan cities (Gürel 2011; Tekeli 2008). The Marshall Plan, which was initiated by the United States in the aftermath of World War II and was embedded in the discourse of helping war-torn Europe to recover its economy, worked toward the commercial transformation of agriculture in Turkey. Envisioned as the agricultural storehouse of Europe, and with its geographically strategic position, regarded as the outpost of the capitalist Western bloc against the perceived threats from the communist Soviet bloc, Turkey was included in the Marshall Plan in 1948, with priority given to economic productivity and a road network that would carry agricultural products to the markets, which would also be needed for the military role of Turkey in NATO (Schipper 2007). The commercialization of agriculture entailed far-reaching outcomes when villages went into a process of restructuring, with variations among them due to size, geographic location, and land ownership (Kıray 1999). As new technology was introduced to increase productivity for the integration of the agricultural sector into the markets, such as tractors with subsidized credits,[2] along with new types of crops and chemical fertilizers, and technical infrastructure, such as irrigation systems, was underway,[3] the traditional agricultural sector was disrupted. Village societies entered into a process of transformation guided by the logics of the market economy, displacing people. It gained momentum at the end of the 1950s when the mechanized cultivation reached its limits (Gürel 2011).[4] The displaced population was mainly small landowners and sharecroppers. Sharecroppers gradually became agricultural laborers in some cases,[5] and among those who were given small parcels of state-owned commons land, there were those who migrated to cities (Keyder 1983). Families of small land ownership, which was consolidated in the 1950s (Keyder 1983), responded to this by sending their young single men to metropolitan cities where industrial production had started. The young men were followed by other family members once some connections in the city were made. Thus, on the highways originally built by the Marshall Plan to connect villages to commercial markets, came peasants in large numbers to cities, which slowed down only at the end of the 1970s (Keyder 1983).

Istanbul, the center of industrial development, was the main destination. Soon it came to be known as the city whose streets were paved with gold (*taşı toprağı altın*), implying for the incoming migrants the quick way of becoming rich. Ankara as the capital city of modern Turkey under construction, and Izmir as the commercial port city, were other places of attraction for migrants. Those from the Black Sea made the first wave of migration: in the mountainous geography of the region, they started moving to Istanbul as early as the mid-1940s, their numbers increasing as the result of developments in the highway system. Those from southeastern Anatolia were the last to join the migration waves: the remnants of the feudal system and its poor infrastructural connection to the rest of the country delayed the outflow.

Informality in the city

This move of surplus labor produced by the mechanization of agriculture could have some positive outcomes in terms of supporting emergent industrialization in cities. In the model of capital accumulation of the time in which import-substituting industrialization (ISI) was

pursued by the state based on the import of expensive foreign technology, cheap labor was needed, which could be provided by the flocks of migrants from the countryside. Moreover, in the hegemony of the modernization paradigm worldwide that was built upon the idea that countries would develop by the spread of modern (Western) mindsets from cities to the rest of the society (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991), rural-to-urban migration could help transform the society under the modernizing effects of cities. In this perspective, migrants were expected to adapt to urban life, leaving behind their traditional values and ways of living, which included fatalism and religiosity (Perlman 1974). Yet, given the rates of urbanization exceeding the rates of industrialization, these expectations proved to be unrealistic (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991). The terms rapid urbanization, irregular urbanization, overurbanization, and pseudo urbanization were coined to differentiate Third World urbanization from the Western experience of urbanization in the nineteenth century, the former being discredited for deviating from the model set by the latter. Informality came to define the megacities of the Third World, and megacities came to define the Third World, for which the term 'urban primacy' was used, in which a single city dominates other cities in terms of both size and investments (Kasarda and Crenshaw 1991). These cities were stigmatized as problem sites of overcrowding, crime, poverty, pollution, and inadequate services and infrastructure. For poor migrants flowing to cities from the countryside, under the condition of a lack of affordable housing, informal housing that remained outside of the formal housing market in terms of legal conventions and regulations came to be their only means of accommodation. Calling it squatter housing, Third World states pronounced their engagement with informal housing only temporarily, which proved to be wrong. Under the lower levels of industrialization that failed to absorb migrants into formal economy, informal economy that was not part of the regulated economic enterprises expanded in the cities of the Third World (Moser 1978; Portes, Castells, and Benton 1989). Stigmatization followed: informal housing and informal economy, both signifying lack of regulation, were easily associated with illegality. And despite their large numbers, migrants living in informal housing and working in informal economy were defined as marginal (Perlman 1974).

In the Turkish case, *gece-kondu*, which literally means 'landed in the night', emerged in the city as a new housing type; it was perceived as a foreign element in the project of modernizing cities and reacted negatively to by the state and urban elite alike. The term gecekondu signifies the anxiety people felt while building their houses – in a hasty manner and in the dark, making sure that their building activities were kept out of the attention of the state authorities. In the early stages of gecekondu formation, the general practice was to build one room first, putting a roof on top with a Turkish flag to give the impression that the house was inhabited. This practice was a tactic of survival by taking advantage of the law in which a court order was needed to demolish an inhabited house. Delaying the demolition would give the builders time to improve the construction, making it more difficult for authorities to tear it down.

In the ISI regime, the state's priority was to promote national industrialization, neglecting its duty to provide affordable housing to economically weak families. In the face of inadequate housing in the cities, gecekondus mushroomed, and this was not without problems. The rural image of the gecekondu, along with its unplanned growth, was perceived as a big problem. This was especially so in the case of Ankara, which was envisioned by the state elite as the newly designed modern capital city of modern Turkey. The urban elite was uncomfortable both with the unplanned development of 'their' city and the ruralization of its population (Yörükhan 1968). The rural Other soon came to be associated with gecekondu dwellers (Erman 2001). In the 1940s, the governor and the mayor of Ankara (the two offices were represented by the same man, Nevzat Tandoğan) would not allow those with a peasant appearance into the city.

Another problem was the violation of private property, which is the cornerstone of capitalism. Yet, the land ownership in Turkey made it less important in this period. The availability of vast tracks of land that the Turkish state inherited from the Ottoman Empire[6] that was outside private ownership in the Ottoman land system (Keyder 2000), and the expropriation of the property of non-Muslim foundations (*vakıf*) by the Turkish state (Kezer 2015) created conditions that eased the construction of gecekondus. Populist politics is another factor that engendered the mushrooming of gecekondus (Erman 2011). In clientelist relations, gecekondu dwellers bargained with politicians, exchanging their votes for services to their gecekondu neighborhood, and for the legalization of their land ownership via the allocation of title deeds. More importantly, the indispensable role of the labor power provided by migrants for the industrialization of the urban economy backed by the state brought tolerance both by the state and industrialists. As they established in the years to come, gecekondus developed into low-density neighborhoods with basic services and infrastructure (Şenyapılı 1982). Having obtained titles distributed by populist governments, early migrants started building apartment houses on their gecekondu plots, which continued to be informal/illegal due to their lack of construction permit (Balaban 2011). This deepened the fear of the urban elite that Turkish cities were being ruralized, obstructing the modernization of society. It also meant the reproduction of conservative/religious beliefs and ways of life in the urban context that opposed the secular tenets of the Republic. Moreover, gecekondu development bought a kind of urbanization that diverted from the ideal of the planned cities of the West. On the other hand, enabling poor migrants to produce their own spaces on the peripheries of the cities gave them the chance to survive in the city (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001).

To sum up, the paradigm of the ruralization of the city built upon its spatial visibility via the gecekondu, and its cultural production via the everyday practices of gecekondu dwellers dominated the era of national developmentalism. It made invisible the contributions of many gecekondu dwellers to economy as a cheap and unorganized labor force in industry and as working in the expanding informal sector.

Despite the stigma of the gecekondu and rural migrants, migration from villages continued. Under the unequal distribution of employment opportunities, as well as health and educational services favoring big cities over Anatolian towns and villages, not only people from villages but also from small towns carried the propensity to move. The regional inequalities further initiated outflow from eastern and central Anatolia to western Turkey. Another factor that played a role in the continuing flow of peasants to cities was the controversy regarding land reform, whose implementation was on the agenda of governments several times yet was never put into effect (Parvin and Hic 1984).

As pioneers – mostly young men – made their presence in the city, they built shanties in and around the city at geographically undesirable sites, preferably close to the jobs available to them.

As they established their lives in the city, family members and relatives moved later to join them. This served the interests of both villagers moving to the city and those already in the city: while the former group gained access to services and opportunities such as health and education via their people already established in the city, the latter, with the power brought by numbers, increased their ability to build their informal lives in the city that included invading land for gecekondu construction in the informal land market that had become increasingly competitive over the years (Seufert 1997). As a result, chain migration came to characterize the Turkish case.

As seen above, rural-to-urban migration proved not to be the solution to the problem of economic underdevelopment when the growing number of migrants in a few metropolitan cities was not congruent with the slow pace of industrialization. In the section below, I discuss

the support mechanisms formed by migrants in a context that lacked affordable housing, a dynamic job market, and adequate state provision of infrastructural facilities and social services needed by migrants in their new lives in the city.

Migrants' support mechanisms

Chain migration and the social embeddedness of rural migrants in the web of people from the same place of origin form the basis of their support mechanisms in the city. In chain migration that characterizes rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, family members follow their pioneers to the city as do families from the same village follow those who have migrated earlier. This facilitates the clustering of migrants from the same place of origin in the same spaces in the city and the continuing relations with the people from their hometown, creating multiple dependencies and mutual support in the network of migrants. In this context, the term *hemsehri*[7] (colocal) is coined, which refers to people from the same place of origin. It rests on the boundary between us versus them, drawn in flexible ways to respond to their interests and needs in the city (Ayata 1990/91). Through the hemsehri networks, migrants rely on their people to have access to housing, jobs, and other resources that they need, whose provisions are not aided by state agencies. This has identity-related outcomes. It reinforces original identities as migrants rely on the people from the same place of origin to meet their needs and to entertain themselves. In the competitive environment of the city where migrants encounter the Other – the ethnic and the sectarian Other as well as the modern urbanite as the Other – these identities are sharpened, and even politicized (Seufert 1997). Despite its positive contributions to the survival of migrants economically, socially, and psychologically, remaining inside the migrant community can be problematic, for instance, holding back those who want to connect with established urbanites in their everyday lives (Erman 1998). Moreover, the center-left parties condemn the hemsehri identity, arguing that belonging to the city should replace belonging to the place of origin (Schüler 1999).

Another survival mechanism is the continuing relationship with the village, which supports migrants in multiple ways: they compensate for their economic disadvantages by bringing food and other stuff from their villages; and they do not feel alienated in the urban life in which they occupy lower ranks in the urban hierarchy. Shown in the political economy perspective, the continuing relationship of migrants with their villages as a source of economic provision functions to keep wages low in the city; and the income transfer between rural and urban areas produces a class of semi-proletariat peasant workers lacking the consciousness of workers dependent on their wages for their livelihood (Gürel 2011). Furthermore, the networking of villagers with migrants in the city, and also with immigrants in Europe, keeps small farm holders going, thus preventing big capitalist holdings from replacing them (Keyder 1983; Gürel 2011). Accordingly, we can interpret the continuing relationship of migrants with their villages not only from the perspective of migrants but also from a wider perspective that takes into account the peasant family extending to the city and to Europe through its members. As Öztürk, Jongerden, and Hilton suggest (2018), it is the strategy of peasant families to survive by sending out some of their members to the cities in Turkey or to Europe, creating complex networks of dependencies. Goods, capital, and investments flow in both ways: rural-to-urban migrants in Turkey and immigrants in Europe may buy houses in their villages[8] or turn the already existing ones into vacation homes; they may invest their labor in harvesting the family agricultural land, getting shares in return; and villagers may take advantage of the city's resources through their family members living in the city, visiting it, for instance, for reasons of health and children's education. Here it is important to recognize that these relations do not always work smoothly: there

may be conflicts of interest between those members of the family living in the village and those living in the city or in Europe, leading to disputes and even violent fights.

The strong bonding with the village and with the people from the village living in the city has resulted in migrants' organizing themselves around hometown associations. The number of hometown organizations multiplied in the 1990s, with village associations making up the majority (Tourmarkine and Hersant 2005; Pérouse 2005). Hometown associations organize fundraising events such as dinner parties and picnics, and by bringing together people from the village and those in the city, they function as a bridge between the village and the city. Yet, putting the village at the center, these organizations reproduce the urban elite's stigma of peasants in the city. Such networking, which often has a spatial dimension, also reproduces ethnic and/or sectarian identities: when Kurds and Alevis as minority groups create their own networks of solidarity, oftentimes clustering spatially and socializing with their own people, their ethnic and/or sectarian identities are reinforced (Seufert 1997). Thus, far from dissolving ethnic and religious identities foreseen by modernization theorists, living in the city may reinforce them, disrupting the idea of citizens as individuals in modern thinking (Erman 1998).

The popularity of hometown associations outnumbering other types of organizations today should not allow us to ignore labor associations. In the identity politics that has superseded class politics in the shift to postmodernism in the neoliberal era, hometown associations have a better chance of recognition. On the other hand, in the 1960s and 1970s that witnessed the spread of a leftist ideology worldwide, the unionization rate was high; in Turkey, it exceeded one million by 1971 (Dinler 2012). Those rural migrants and their grown-up children employed in factories were often members of labor unions. This turned into a polarized movement as left-wing workers organized themselves around the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK; Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, founded in 1967) and right-wing workers around the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş; Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu, founded in 1952).[9] DISK was active in organizing strikes, defending the rights of the workers who belonged to the unions affiliated with DISK (about 500,000). Moreover, leftist activists initiated the liberated zones project in the late 1970s; the children of rural migrants among them, they moved into gecekondu areas for the ideological training and collective mobilization of gecekondu dwellers (Erman 2020). In their goal of a radical transformation of society, which they believed would end the exploitation of the working class, they approached rural migrants as the urban poor exploited by the capitalist system and as potential revolutionaries. Yet, as Avcı (2014) argues, gecekondu people were, by and large, regarded by different political factions of the time as nonideological, lacking any agency to act on their own. Nonetheless, by constructing them based on their potential to resist the exploitative division of labor in society, leftist mobilization contested the view of rural migrants as peasants in the city.

The neoliberal policies adopted by successive governments following the military coup of September 12, 1980, opened a new era. This was part of the global shift from a Keynesian economic model to a neoliberal one following the economic crisis triggered by the oil crisis in the 1970s; the declining profitability of mass production industries was regarded by right-wing parties as the crisis of Keynesian welfarism. Below, I discuss the effects of neoliberalization on both the city and the village.

The neoliberal regime

In this section, I focus on the neoliberal regime instituted in the 1980s onward and discuss the changes that challenge or support the characteristics of migration specific to Turkey, discussed

above. I explore the transformative effects of neoliberal policies on rural migrants in the city and rural migration to the city. I aim to reveal the consequences of the changing economic regime regarding migrants and migration. In doing so, I pay attention to how changes in economic policies affect migrants in spatial, sociocultural, and socioeconomic terms. I make two major points: in the process of the commodification of urban land, the transformation of gecekondus into apartment houses, on the one hand, created a new class of nouveau riche among rural migrants, and on the other hand, it produced new poverty; and the transformations in the agricultural sector initiated another big wave of migration to cities, which had detrimental effects for the displaced villagers.

The 1980s signified a radical shift in economic policies in the world when the Keynesian economic model of welfarism was abandoned for the neoliberal global economy; and in Turkey, the inward-oriented, state-led industrialization was abandoned for export-led growth in an open market economy (Önder 2007). The austerity policies of the post-military Özal government, along with the policy shift from the promotion of state economic enterprises (SEEs) to the promotion of the private sector, created serious disadvantages for migrants as layoffs increased and labor unions lost their power (Öniş 1991). Şenyapılı (1998) argues that the Özal government introduced a policy of the transformation of gecekondus into apartment buildings to bribe gecekondu owners, who were becoming increasingly disadvantaged under the new economic policies. After several amnesty laws, gecekondu owners whose houses were in advantageous locations became entitled to significant shares from the rent appropriated in the process of apartment houses replacing gecekondus; it moved them up economically fast.[10] When the newly gained prosperity was not accompanied by cultural change in the family, it deepened the hegemonic view of rural migrants as peasants in the city. A rural migrant man, now the owner of several apartments in a luxurious building, sitting cross-legged at the block entrance with prayer beads in his hand, came to occupy the social imaginary of society: he was the nouveau rich deficient in culture, the undeserving Other (Erman 2001). When gecekondu owners gained the chance for apartment ownership, it caused complaints in different sections of society: in the words of an urbanite, "Once they built their gecekondus in one night, and now they are becoming millionaires in one day" (Erman 2001: 994); and in the words of a public employer, who was a rural migrant himself, "I feel like I am punished for not violating the law. Some of my friends who built gecekondus now own several apartments, and despite my hard work all my life, I am still a tenant" (personal conversation with the photocopy man working in my department, 8 May 2003). It seems that the neoliberal policies that benefited the wealthy, bringing fast profits, would meet objections when they brought economic advantages to the poor.

Neoliberal policies had sweeping effects on cities during the rule of the Development and Justice Party (AKP; Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi); privatization and securitization of urban space, and more important for this chapter, the commodification of peripheral land became the defining features of neoliberal urban policies in the 2000s. The construction sector boomed during the AKP government, acting as the engine of economic development (Karatepe 2016). As suggested by several scholars (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Karaman 2008; Bartu-Candan and Kolluoğlu 2008), the AKP has been the major actor exploiting city spaces for its profit-oriented projects. Today the term 'urban transformation' (*kentsel dönüşüm*) has become the buzzword associated with radical transformations in cities via rent-seeking projects, including the transformation of gecekondu areas. Different from the earlier phase of gecekondu transformation in which small-scale private developers were the main actors (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001), the new phase under AKP rule is characterized by the intervention of the state at a mass scale in gecekondu settlements via urban transformation projects (UTPs) carried out by partnerships

that municipalities form with Mass Housing Administration (TOKI – Toplu Konut İdaresi), the state's housing development agency. In the war declared against the gecekondu using the discourse of crime and violence on the one hand, and the discourse that gecekondus, by their supposedly ugly and disorderly sight, are threatening the proper image of the city on the other hand (Erman 2016a), the government is determined to 'clean up' cities from their 'tumours' (Karaman 2008; Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010). UTPs act as neoliberal market-making tools (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010: 54) enabling the state to appropriate rent in the commodification of the gecekondu land, which it shares with big capital (Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). In this process, the government has succeeded in developing its own circle of contractors: contractors enter via TOKI's bidding processes into a relationship of loyalty with the AKP, making donations to Islamic foundations and AKP-run municipalities, among others (Karaman 2013a). The Islamic charity has been part of the political rationality governing poor rural migrants whose gecekondu land is commodified via UTPs (Karaman 2013a). Moreover, as social support networks embedded in gecekondu areas are disrupted by UTPs, Sunni *tarikat*s (Islamic orders banned by the Turkish state) increasingly replace them (Erman 2019), bringing new exclusions to Alevis (Erman 2016b).

Islam has been a significant part of the lives of rural-to-urban migrants more than ever under the rule of the AKP. Some gecekondu districts are transformed in the entanglement of rent-seeking interests with Islamic tenets (Akçaoğlu 2018; Tuğal 2009). Tuğal (2009), based on his field study in the district of Sultanbeyli in Istanbul, argues that rural migrants who came to the district with the hope of finding cheap land and housing were Islamized under the influence of Islamist activists in the district who recognize the importance of the place of origin of migrants in their lives (*hemsehrilik*). In their aim of building consent for their Islamist project, they empower the migrant subjectivity against the stigma attributed to their rurality by the secular establishment, succeeding in absorbing (Sunni) rural migrants into Islamism (Tuğal 2009). Moreover, Tuğal argues that neoliberalism has absorbed radical Islam as Islamists internalized the project of neoliberalism, naturalizing the integration of Islam with a neoliberal economy, and thus turning into supporters of moderate Islam.

The transformation of gecekondu areas by the neoliberal urban coalition (Erman 2011) has brought disadvantages to many rural migrants living in gecekondus: coercive marketization (Karaman 2013b), top-down formalization (Erman 2016a), and incorporation into the mortgage system as a market-disciplinary tool (Karaman 2013b) are some concepts used to address the challenges brought to their lives by gecekondu transformation. More importantly, displacement is always a threat for those who cannot afford the terms of relocation in TOKI housing estates built in urban transformation projects. Especially tenants who are excluded from the projects are at risk of displacement. In sum, new opportunities and new challenges have arisen for gecekondu residents as cities are restructured by a neoliberal logic, which have both cultural and economic aspects. When gecekondu areas are transformed into apartment estates via UTPs, their residents cannot maintain the way of life that they had in the gecekondu (Erman 2019); in the dialectical relationship between people and space, they transform their new housing environment and are transformed by it (Erman 2016b). And under the new expenses of apartment living and mortgage payments to attain the ownership of the apartments into which they were relocated, they experience financial problems. This forces family members to seek paid work, which is challenged by traditional values that dictate keeping women at home (Erman and Hatiboğlu 2017). In the process, neoliberal subjectivities are produced; rural migrants of humble background becoming desiring subjects for more and better; and as they become more and more integrated into consumption, they are stuck in debt (Erman and Hatiboğlu 2017; Erman and Kara 2018). Under the challenges of their new housing and new lives, it is yet to

be determined what the outcome will be: the 'best' scenario would be lower-middle-class families living in apartment complexes, which veils the new conditions of poverty it created in its process of transformation, and the worst scenario would be impoverished families living in ghetto-like housing estates as residents relocated from the gecekondu cannot afford the cost of maintaining their lives and buildings.

Neoliberal policies have also transformed villages in Turkey (Keyder and Yenal 2011; Coban 2013; Önal 2013). The marketization of agriculture and the scaling down of the market protection mechanisms of the state that include the shrinking of agricultural subsidies, have pushed small- and medium-sized households to abandon their enterprises (Aydın 2010). Market reforms were instituted in the 1980s, but they were not applied until the 2000s; when the country faced a severe economic crisis in 2000–2001, a World Bank-inspired model was put into practice (Güven 2009). Accordingly, a new wave of migration to cities has been taking place since the 2000s. Similar to the first wave of migration, the new migrants adopt the strategy of keeping their ties with their villages; some members of the families (usually young men) are sent to the city, while others hold onto their land, transcending the rural-urban divide (Öztürk, Jongerden, and Hilton 2018). But, different from the first wave of migration, they move to a city whose peripheral land is already occupied by the early-comers, and under the neoliberal urban policies, to a city whose spaces are in the process of commodification (Yükseker 2009). As a result, they rent apartments in buildings built by the early migrants (Işık and Pınarcıoğlu 2001; Balaban 2011). The village is their refuge; like the first wave of migrants, they often receive material and psychological support from their family members in the village and send remittances to their families back in the village.

The Southeastern Anatolian Project (GAP) that targets the economic development of the region is another factor that has created outmigration, if only temporarily. Mostly young men travel to metropolitan cities for temporary work. Seasonal agricultural laborers,[10] who include women and children, furthermore, move to different regions of the country during harvest times. Their poverty, deepened by their ethnicity, creates the conditions for their multiple victimization (Çınar 2014).

In the section that follows, I focus on the issue of Kurdish ethnicity as a factor that disadvantages migrants from southeastern Anatolia in deeper ways than ordinary rural-to-urban migrants.

Political repression

In this section, I move my attention to migration as a result of political repression. I focus on Kurdish people displaced by violent confrontations in the southeastern part of Turkey between the Turkish Armed Forces and the Kurdish guerrillas. My purpose is to demonstrate a case that Erder (1998) calls *köysüz 'köylü' göçü* (migration of villagers without village), in which the ties of migrants with their villages are cut off.

Political causes complicate migration induced by shifts in political economy. As a result of the political conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish PKK militants and the strategy of the military to evacuate villages to cut off the logistics to PKK insurgency (Ayata and Yükseker 2005), forced outmigration of villagers in Kurdish-populated eastern and southeastern Anatolia in the 1990s came onto the agenda. It spurred migration as displaced families moved to the cities in the region as well as to western Anatolia, seeking livelihood. Some became seasonal agricultural workers when the cities in their region could not absorb them economically. Those who made it to Istanbul suffered from poverty and exclusion (Keyder 2005). Today, they rent or occupy rooms in deteriorated houses in inner-city slum neighborhoods, for instance

Tarlabaşı, Süleymaniye, and Eminönü. These are the sites of UTPs, making their poor residents vulnerable to displacement. The Tarlabaşı UTP is particularly important in the commitment of the public–private partnership in the project to 'clean' the neighborhood from its 'undesirable' population before they open it to the consumption of the wealthy attracted to Tarlabaşı for its historic houses and its convenient location close to the city center (Kuyucu and Ünsal 2010; Ünsal and Kuyucu 2010). Along with other vulnerable populations, the Kurdish families displaced from their villages are now facing a second displacement, this time from their homes in the city (Yılmaz 2008).

The new migrants from southeastern Anatolia suffer from poverty, unemployment, and a lack of access to health and educational services in the cities (Ayata and Yükseker 2005). In their multiple exclusion, they are candidates to become Turkey's underclass (Yılmaz 2008). They are disadvantaged not only by the conditions in the city but also by their lack of relationship with the village (Erder 1998). Cut off from the support of the village, they try to survive by their meager means in the city, mostly employed informally in the most undesirable sectors, collecting recycling garbage, working in construction sites, selling stuffed mussels in the street without official permits, all rendering them vulnerable to the police. Their economic disadvantages are coupled with social troubles when they are stigmatized as terrorists and separatists (Saraçoğlu 2009). Accordingly, the most problematic occurrence in migration is the case of the forced migration of Kurdish people, in which the problems created by urban neoliberalism and political repression intertwine. The favorable conditions of the earlier period of migration in which rural-to-urban migrants were able to build their houses and create their communities on the peripheries of cities, and preserved their relationship with their villages that secured support in multiple ways, do not exist now for Kurdish migrants. They have been superseded by disadvantages in the neoliberal era under the increasing commodification of urban land, coupled with the political measures that forced villagers in eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey to migrate to cities, creating multiple victimizations.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed rural-to-urban migration in Turkey, with a focus on the features that characterize migration in the Turkish case, such as chain migration, migrant communities and networks, and hometown associations. Through these mechanisms, migrants maintain their lives in ways that reproduce old identities and ways of life in the new context. Such ties, furthermore, create the conditions to sustain small-scale farming in the villages, which would disappear under neoliberal policies. I extend this chapter to discuss the changes and challenges to the survival mechanisms by neoliberal policies in a globalizing world, which are coupling with Islamism in the Turkish context, as well as by political repression at the national level. Overall, I suggest that this type of migration shaped Turkish society's encounter with Western modernity, challenging radical transformations toward individuality and urbanity, as well as the complete commercialization of the agricultural sector. Today, as urban spaces are transformed by neoliberal policies through the processes of commodification, informality in housing is lost; gecekondu neighborhoods are increasingly incorporated into property markets via urban transformation projects, making some gecekondu owners better-off and pulling others into poverty. In this shift from the model of import-substituting industrialization to the neoliberal model that restructures cities and villages alike with an economic logic and produces new subjectivities embedded in consumption and competition, coupled with the rise of Islamism, migrants and their communities face new challenges. We need new theoretical frameworks and analytical tools to make sense of the new migrant subjectivities and the emergent mechanisms in which

the support networks and hometown relations of earlier times are reworked or completely lost, and exclusionary practices based on class, ethnicity, and religion are increasingly carried out.

Notes

1 In the Ottoman Empire, the non-Muslim population was particularly dense in urban areas. Of these, the Armenians were subjected to forced migration in 1915, and the Greeks were exchanged with the Turks living in Greece after the Turkish Republic was established. Accordingly, the urban population was considerably lessened.
2 "After the 1954 import-substitution drive, joint venture firms were established for domestic manufacture of tractors" (Parvin and Hic 1984: 219).
3 See Gürel (2011) for detailed information on the outcomes of the Marshall Plan.
4 Some villages with fertile land and close to railways were already commercialized, producing specialized grains such as cotton and tobacco for European industry (Akşit 1967, 1993).
5 In the villages of Adana, as a result of mechanization, the big landowner lowered the shares of peasants working on his land from one-third to one-eighth of the agricultural product, eventually replacing shares by pays of very small amount (Kıray 2000).
6 In the Ottoman land system in which the sultan was the owner of public land, much of the land existed outside private ownership (Parvin and Hic 1984).
7 The term *hemsehri* is used in a flexible way to connect oneself to those defined as coming from the same place of origin. See Güneş-Ayata (1990/91) for a study that investigated how the Kurds from eastern Anatolia defined who their hemsehri was; in this schema, their villagers were located at the center, and those from eastern Anatolia at the periphery. Those from western Anatolia were not included into their category of the hemsehri.
8 This trend has recently shown some variations as some immigrants prefer towns over villages to build their houses that they use in the summer.
9 Another union was HAK-İŞ, which was "founded upon Islamist ideologies during the radical polarization of the 1970s" (Alemdar 2009). In 1970, the Confederation of Nationalist Workers' Unions (MISK) was founded, yet its success remained limited (Dinler 2012).
10 The transformation of gecekondus was selective, and the amount of rent appropriated differed based on location, contractors preferring those gecekondus closer to the city center.

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29

THE ARCHITECTURE OF DISPOSSESSION, DISASTER, AND EMERGENCY IN URBAN TURKEY*

Eray Çaylı

Introduction

Turkey spent much of the second half of the 2010s under emergency rule. Scholarship on this period has decisively shown that democracy and emergency rule are, and have historically been, dependent on and entangled in rather than antithetical to each other, while also revealing the social and geographical distribution of the effects of this mutual dependence and entanglement to be differential (Bargu 2019; Gökarıksel and Türem 2019). But precisely how these differential effects unfold and are contested in embodied and material ways, and what this might mean for Turkey-specific ways in which to understand the relationship between democracy and emergency remain underexplored. This chapter explores these questions with a focus on architecture and through specific sites. The sites are the Istanbul neighbourhood of Küçükarmutlu—a revolutionary left stronghold, most of whose residents are Alevi—and Suriçi—the historic centre of Turkey's largest predominantly Kurdish inhabited city Amed, otherwise known by its official name Diyarbakır.[1]

The chapter's empirical context has two defining features. The first concerns the so-called construction boom that Turkey has witnessed from the late 2000s onwards. Intense demolition and construction activity had begun to increase in the mid- to late 2000s but entered a new phase in mid-2012, culminating in its 'boom'. This was when a piece of legislation known popularly as the 'Disaster Act' was issued—avowedly, to disaster-proof the country. The second contextual feature is the increasing visibility of political tension and violence, which followed a period of purported democratization and peace in the late 2000s and early 2010s. I use 'purported' advisedly; the mainstream approach to political periodization that has been at work in the case of Turkey and that is premised on such binaries as peace versus violence and democracy versus authoritarianism is itself worthy of reconsideration in a critical analysis of the sort this chapter seeks to offer.

Responding to this empirical context, I ask, precisely how and why has the entanglement between democracy and emergency had differential sociopolitical effects across urban Turkey and what role has architecture played in them? My response is twofold. First, I argue that

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understanding these differential effects requires situating them within a history much more expansive than just the mid-2010s. This is a history which includes episodes from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including those involving the dispossession and violence suffered by Turkey's non-Muslim populations (Üngör 2012; Biner 2020), and which has featured the built environment much more centrally than as an auxiliary medium that gives material and spatial form to relevant legislation, discourse and policy. Secondly, I argue that the differential distribution in question is best conceptualized as deriving from intracolonial dynamics. In arguing this point, however, I diverge from Foucauldian formulations of colonialist methods' moving from the periphery to the centre or, more broadly, with a Global North and a Global South distinction that imagines each of these geopolitical entities as socially and politically monolithic.

Emergency and democracy

While scholarly accounts of Turkey's recent state of emergency are manifold—see, for two recent examples, the volume of articles edited and introduced by Bargu (2019), and vol.118 no.1 (2019) of the journal *South Atlantic Quarterly*—here I focus on one that I have found most insightful and relevant to this chapter's critical analytical objectives. This account is by Gökarıksel and Türem, who problematize the prevalent scholarly tendency to understand such states of emergency as a '"backsliding" or "retreat" from democratic gains' (Gökarıksel and Türem 2019: 177). The authors find this tendency problematic for overlooking the ways in which liberal and illiberal methods of governance are entangled in rather than antithetical to one another, and for focusing narrowly on political ruptures at the expense of historical continuities that indeed evidence such an entanglement. Gökarıksel and Türem's alternative is to focus on how seemingly 'exceptional' states of emergency in fact build on various precedents implemented selectively in certain parts of the nation state's geography at purportedly 'ordinary' times in its history (ibid.: 179). The authors consider foremost among these precedents the various episodes of emergency rule that have taken place in northern Kurdistan or the predominantly Kurdish-inhabited eastern and south-eastern region of Turkey. '[S]ince the foundation of the Republic', observe Gökarıksel and Türem, these episodes of emergency rule not only have 'been more frequent, intensive, and enduring' in the region but also have become particularly 'immobilizing and destructive' following the halt in 2015 of more than six years of semi-official peace talks which had come after more than two decades of fighting between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (in Kurdish: Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan, or PKK) guerrilla and Turkey's armed forces (ibid.: 180).[2]

Gökarıksel and Türem's attention to the geographically and historically uneven ways states of emergency have been implemented in Turkey is relevant to my analysis both contextually and methodologically. The contextual relevance is evident in one of the cases I explore below: Suriçi, the historic centre of Amed, the city that constitutes the sociopolitical and cultural heart of the very region that Gökarıksel and Türem consider most disadvantaged by the uneven distribution of emergency rule. Methodologically, I see this attention as a call to reconsider the binarism of democracy versus emergency used in understanding the uneven disadvantaging of such parts of Turkey as Amed's Suriçi, considering it instead as a case of intracolonization.

In this reconsideration, I not only draw on but also seek to contribute to relevant scholarship on Turkey. The notion of Turkey's being a colony of the West has been the mainstay of revolutionary leftist movements in the country (Bargu 2014). The idea that Kurdistan has been colonized (both by Turkey and by Western powers) has been the premise of modern-day pro-Kurdish politics in Turkey since its outset in the 1970s (Jongerden 2007: 54–57; Duruiz

2020), while also being incorporated into the ideologies of some of the aforementioned revolutionary leftist movements as a micro-scale colonization that works in tandem with the macro, Turkey-wide one. From the early 1990s onwards, Kurdistan's being a colony began featuring in relevant scholarship in Turkey pioneered particularly by İsmail Beşikçi (1991).[3] In Amed's case, approaching the city through the lens of colonization has led scholars to analyse counter-policies implemented in the region since the mid-2000s by pro-Kurdish municipalities—policies such as the renaming and redesign of urban spaces—as exercises in decolonization (Jongerden 2009: 13–18; Gambetti 2009). Elsewhere in Turkey, particularly in its largest city, Istanbul, neighbourhoods inhabited predominantly by Alevis and revolutionary leftists have, since the 1990s, seen successive periods of intense violence and marginalization that have indicated their differential treatment from the rest of the country's comparable urban populations (Yonucu 2018a; Yonucu 2018b).

Their many strengths notwithstanding, such analyses of how colonization works and/or is challenged in the region have tended, in both spatial and temporal terms, to either prioritize large-scale trends (e.g., regional geography or the long term) or adhere to a Foucauldian demarcation of the colony versus the metropole. Such tendencies overlook

> the actual production of space: an analysis of the relations and practices constituting particular productions of space and the performativity of spatial practices, or how people experience and shape the places they live in, how social relations co-define and institutions occupy geographical location as territory.
>
> *(Gambetti and Jongerden 2011: 377)*

This chapter aims to address this oversight by approaching intracolonization as a method which operates on multiple spatial and temporal scales including those smaller than the scale of regional geography and that of long-term processes, and which indeed interweaves these scales as well as the locales otherwise compartmentalized through Foucauldian notions of colony and metropole.

The Foucauldian notions in question characterize the most frequently cited formulation of colonization as and through methodology. According to Michel Foucault, if the world has, gradually throughout the second half of the twentieth century, become a postcolonial one, this has not meant the complete eradication of colonialism. If anything, the period has seen the methods used in the colony begin to permeate the metropole (Foucault 2004). Spatially oriented scholars have questioned Foucault's formulation especially in terms of the sociopolitical flatness deriving from the temporal and spatial hierarchizations characterizing it. Among them, geographer Derek Gregory and anthropologist Ann Stoler have decisively problematized the idea that coloniality and postcoloniality have uniform effects across each of the territories associated with one or the other, and are always necessarily separated by the temporal gap that the prefix 'post-' indicates (Gregory 2004; Stoler 2016). Meanwhile, the temporalization of the spatial gap separating the colony from the metropole has been problematized for methodologically reproducing the Orientalist notion that the colony lags behind the metropole in developmental and civilizational terms. As Joe Turner has shown, the reproduction at work here occurs despite the temporal–political inversion of the Orientalist notion and it does so in two ways. First, the Foucauldian formulation still sees the colony as a pioneering model for methods that are then employed in the metropole. Secondly, it considers colonization a method which the monolithically imagined geopolitical entity of the Global North applies to the similarly imagined Global South and which only then boomerangs back at the former (Turner 2018: 766). Spatially focused scholarship on related matters in Turkey, which has yet to

explore this sort of a problematization of the Foucauldian formulation, stands to benefit from the non-essentializing approach to the politics of geography and the nonlinear understanding of the political temporality of colonization that characterize Turner's critique.

To unpack such benefits, it is worth continuing to think with Turner. His alternative to the Foucauldian formulation of the relationship between colony and metropole is to focus on

> how seemingly disparate practices of colonial pacification and social civilisational work come together in novel, yet familiar, ways […] that not only draw from experiments in […] counterinsurgency […] but are also buttressed by older histories of social work's 'civilising' mission.
>
> *(ibid: 779)*

But there is a caveat when focusing on these continuities, which Turner unpacks via anthropologist Elizabeth Povinelli. Considering contemporary governance practices as colonization requires attention to the 'contingencies, shifting remobilizations and logics' of what Povinelli terms 'late liberalism' and, particularly, its strategies of promoting 'cultural recognition' (ibid.: 772). These strategies constitute a shift from how 'liberal states' throughout much of the twentieth century approached the question of race as they purport to undo colonialism's racial and gendered hierarchizations. But they still sustain coloniality insofar as their valuation of life and nonlife is based on colonially grounded discourses and practices of developmentalism and civilizationalism, and particularly on a (racialized and gendered) compartmentalization of subjects into 'developed', 'underdeveloped' and 'undevelopable' ones, where the latter are deemed disposable (Povinelli 2011: 22–27).[4] Turner conceptualizes this compartmentalization as 'internal colonisation': a contemporary mode of governance which 'denies the subjectivity of the internally colonized and draws on [the] orientalist […] demarcation between the civilised and savage', and which at times does so by purporting to shift away from colonial modes (Turner 2018: 770–72).

I find Turner's conceptualization useful because it helps approach the uneven ways in which emergency is distributed across a given geography and history not through a hierarchization between certain instances of its implementation (i.e., precedents versus antecedents) but rather through an emphasis on how they depend on one another to come into existence. It moreover helps understand this dependence as premised on the developmentalist and civilizationalist valuation of subjects that is common to the various instances of emergency's implementation and that, as detailed below, is central to this chapter's empirical context. The question through which I would like to pursue my analysis, then, is, what might be Turkey-specific about the uneven distribution of the entanglement between democracy and emergency that Turner conceptualizes as internal colonization?

The architecture of emergency/democracy in mid-2010s Turkey

I would like to begin my empirical analysis by recalling the two contextual features that framed Turkey's urban and architectural affairs throughout the mid- to late 2010s: first, a so-called construction boom; and, secondly, the increasing visibility of violence. In fact, it is difficult to isolate these features as they worked in tandem. The increasing visibility of violence operated against the backdrop of government-endorsed discourses and practices of democratization that were prominent throughout the late 2000s and early 2010s. It was then that a project of Europeanization and democratization instituted by the ruling party, which first rose to power in late 2002 and has since ruled Turkey in what has been the country's longest ever series of

consecutive majority governments by a single party since its transition to multiparty democracy in 1946 (Alessandri 2010), promised to confront the troubles of the twentieth century throughout which various episodes of state-endorsed violence had targeted demographically minor or politically dissentient groups, including Kurds and Alevis. While this promise did materialize in a series of culturally oriented reforms geared towards historically marginalized minorities, including a so-called Alevi opening and a Kurdish opening accompanied by de facto peace talks with the PKK, the resulting boost in political legitimacy was employed by the government to further consolidate its social and economic grip (Köse 2017).

A most prominent realm through which the government's attempts at such consolidation played out was the construction sector. The government made it into the foremost driver of Turkey's alleged 'economic miracle', leading to a so-called construction boom throughout the first half of the 2010s (Çaylı 2015). The government aided this transformation in two ways: through publicly funded large-scale infrastructural projects such as bridges and rail transport networks, which catalysed land speculation and privatization of publicly owned lands (Doğan and Stupar 2017), and by launching a comprehensive and legally stipulated episode of physical transformation across urban Turkey through a specific piece of legislation passed in May 2012. This legislation is the Act (no.6306) on the Transformation of Areas under Disaster Risk, known popularly as 'the Disaster Act'. The legislation aimed, according to the government, to disaster-proof the country's building stock, following from the experience of the violent earthquakes that devastated parts of Turkey's tectonically active north-west in 1999 and that killed nearly 20,000 and destroyed more than 150,000 buildings (Güzel 2016).

Although, at the outset, the government pitched the Disaster Act as an earthquake-related measure, its purview has not been limited to vulnerable regions or buildings. What has been redeveloped under this legislation includes not just buildings and areas designated as 'risky' but also zones identified as 'safe' for new settlement.[5] This renders its scope so expansive as to make the entire country susceptible to redevelopment. Indeed, over the past five years, the authorities have declared numerous neighbourhoods in their entirety as 'urban transformation' areas to be redeveloped often by pro-government contractors. The Disaster Act has therefore been criticized for serving 'ideological, political and economic interests' in line with the government's agenda, such as power centralization, population redistribution, conflict management and the reorganization of land-based interest groups (Özkan Eren and Özçevik 2015). Moreover, it has implications for the everyday lives of millions, as flat owners whose property is located in a building or area subject to redevelopment under the Disaster Act are left with two choices: either to have their property expropriated if they refuse to agree with fellow residents on the terms of their building's transformation, or to engage in intense deliberation, survey and market study to try and stretch those terms as much as possible (Angell 2014).

The Disaster Law has catalysed the capitalist–accumulationist entanglement between emergency and democracy across Turkey but with different effects on populations and the places they inhabit. Indeed, this difference has operated in tandem with the second feature characterizing the context of the mid-2010s: the increasing visibility of violence. A failed coup attempt in July 2016 unleashed a witch hunt through which the government targeted not only the network it saw as the plotters but also members and supporters of the revolutionary leftist and pro-Kurdish political movements. In late 2015 and 2016, the flare-up of war between the PKK and the state's forces brought immense destruction to city centres and towns across Turkey's Kurdistan, including Amed's historic centre, Suriçi (literally: within-city-walls), nestled within 5.8-kilometre-long ancient walls. Just three months before the start of war, Suriçi's ancient walls and citadel were listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, alongside the adjacent Hewsel Gardens that connects the historic district to the Tigris River and an eleventh-century bridge

spanning the river. Following the fighting, the central government employed an amendment to the Disaster Act to subject 80% of Suriçi to urgent expropriation, followed by wholesale demolition and architectural overhaul including that of its listed buildings.[6] But this process—as my conscious preference for such a phrase as 'the increasing visibility of violence' over simply an 'increase in violence' indicates—entailed less a shift from peace to war than one of a rearrangement and redistribution of the various ways in which and degrees to which war and peace had already been entangled in each other. I illustrate this point through my discussion below of Küçükarmutlu and Suriçi, while also unpacking precisely what is architectural about it.

The architecture of dispossession, disaster, and emergency

There is a micro-scale aspect of the uneven distribution of emergency measures affecting such areas as Suriçi, whose significance is not gaugeable through critical analytical lenses that attend only to peripheral sites hosting racialized demographics—in Foucauldian terms, the colony versus the metropole—or to larger historical or geographical scales. Unpacking this micro-scale aspect first requires attending to longer-standing histories of violence and dispossession waged in the modern mode. While initially not affecting the presently affected demographics, these histories are nevertheless of utmost significance because they institute a structure of dispossession as the underlying material and spatial condition of the locales in which they take place, and as such come to affect contemporary life in such places. In the case of Turkey's Kurdistan, the histories in question involve those that targeted the region's non-Muslim populations throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Üngör 2012; Biner 2020).

To continue with Amed's Suriçi, according to the 1914 Ottoman census, 21% of the province's population comprised non-Muslims and the majority of this population consisted of Armenians. While such statistics are by definition unreliable (Verheij 2012), if anything, the actual number of non-Muslims was likely not lower but higher than this official number and, percentagewise, corresponded to a larger share of those living in urban centres like Suriçi where mercantile populations, many of whom were non-Muslim, resided (Çelik and Dinç 2015). Following the Hamidian massacres of 1894–96 and the deportations of 1915–16 that primarily targeted the region's Armenians and that amounted to genocide, and a series of other measures throughout the first half of the twentieth century such as the Wealth Tax, Amed's non-Muslim population plummeted to such an extent that it now numbers at virtually a handful (Üngör 2012). In Suriçi, the same period caused dramatic changes to property ownership, whether due to market dynamics or to direct government intervention, while also witnessing the heyday of modernist architecture and town planning. This led the middling sort and the bureaucratic classes to settle outside the walled city, thus gradually making Suriçi available to new migrants from the countryside and the poor. The process continued throughout the 1980s and the 1990s, a political period defined by the military coup of 12 September 1980—and saw a population boom in Suriçi mirrored by the exponential rise in the number of *gecekondu*s (informal settlements) built therein.

The process unfolding in Suriçi since the mid-twentieth century took another dramatic turn in the late 2000s when, as explained in the previous section, the construction sector acquired an ever-more prominent role in Turkey's neoliberal economic model. In September 2007, TOKİ (Turkey's centrally governed Housing Development Administration) and Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality (run by a member of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi; BDP) signed a protocol titled 'Urban Renewal of Diyarbakır's Historic City Wall Protection Band'. The 'renewal' in question entailed the eradication of *gecekondu*s along the historic walls, which, according to the authorities, was what the city's

conservation master plan required. About six months later, the protocol was expanded in scope to include not just the buildings adjacent to the walls but also entire neighbourhoods—those of Alipaşa and Lalebey. Its signatories also expanded to now include the district municipality Sur (also run by a member of the pro-Kurdish party). In October 2009, the same signatories signed a new protocol reiterating their commitment to seeing the project through and specifying the architectural logistics of displacement: the Metropolitan Municipality was to conduct expropriation and demolition in Suriçi, while TOKİ was tasked with building 1,272 flats 11 kilometres outside of the historic district where its residents would be rehoused. Implementation of the project was postponed, however, due to a new conservation master plan being prepared in lieu of the existing one dating from 1990—preparations that had been taking place since 2008 and had temporarily suspended the existing conservation master plan. While the new conservation master plan's being issued in January 2012 led demolition work to begin in Suriçi, some of its residents, particularly those in the Alipaşa and Lalebey neighbourhoods, rejected TOKİ's rehousing proposal and remained in place. The project thus came to a halt, and the Metropolitan Municipality withdrew from it altogether, citing its violation of Suriçi's residents. The central government followed by employing the Disaster Act to designate these neighbourhoods as a 'risky area' (Şahin and Hasar 2016).

As Suriçi, like many other town centres in Turkey's Kurdistan, was devastated by the flare-up of war, the government amended the Disaster Act in March 2016 with a clause that redefined disaster risk by including in its definition both insecurity ('the disturbance of public order and security in a way that halts or interrupts ordinary life') and informality ('areas where at least 65% of the building stock was constructed unlicensed or in violation of the building code regardless of their being grated a retrospective permit of residence or construction'). I will shortly return to this amendment to discuss how its effects reached beyond Turkey's Kurdistan. But, to continue momentarily with Amed's Suriçi, this amendment was then employed to designate the entire walled city as a risky area (TMMOB Diyarbakir Provincial Coordination Board 2017: 46); a total of 26,084 residents living in neighbourhoods where curfews were declared were displaced as a result (Union of Southeastern Anatolia Region Municipalities 2016). Despite various appeals—legal and otherwise—by relevant professional organizations in the city and despite the government's declaration in March 2017 of an end to its counterinsurgency operations, the area affected by the fighting has remained inaccessible except for a select group of contractors, construction workers, and government officials implementing Suriçi's physical overhaul. The overhaul is based on a revised conservation master plan dated December 2016 and authorized by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. Most revisions cited security reasons and prescribed related interventions, including six new police precincts and the widening of certain streets into major thoroughfares such that an unprecedented 'ring road' is formed to facilitate touristic consumption flows as well as law enforcement patrols. Suriçi's listed status as an Urban Heritage Site has been endangered as a result, evident in the 59 listed buildings situated in the district having already been demolished.

To return to the further-reaching effects of the government's March 2016 amendment to the Disaster Act, consider the case of Istanbul's Küçükarmutlu: a *gecekondu* neighbourhood, where around 35,000 people live across 150 hectares of public land located just north of the city's so-called second bridge. There is much more to Küçükarmutlu's history than this section can possibly cover, but suffice it to draw here on Gönül and Cörüt (2007) to mark two historical junctures significant to my purposes: the late 1980s and the early 2000s. The late 1980s are important because this was when Küçükarmutlu's population increased exponentially, following the 1980 junta's introduction of a neoliberal economic model that boosted land speculation, and the construction of large-scale infrastructures such as Istanbul's second

cross-continental bridge, whose European end was built at the neighbourhood's southern-eastern edge after a six-month-long geological survey in early 1983. For much of the 1980s, successive administrations from across the political spectrum had promised formalization to neighbourhoods like Küçükarmutlu where squatter populations grew often by 'leasing' or 'buying' from the land mafia who operated in such parts of Istanbul. By late 1988 when the new bridge and its access roads were complete, the authorities had not only failed to fulfil these promises but also begun to adopt an actively hostile attitude towards Küçükarmutlu. In 1989, law enforcement raided the neighbourhood and 500 houses were demolished.

Enter the revolutionary youths, whose traditional political venues had been rendered inaccessible to them by the 1980 coup and who were now being invited to neighbourhoods like Küçükarmutlu by residents sympathetic to leftist ideology. With these youths on their side, Küçükarmutlu's residents invited their relatives and political kin to move here (mainly from Sivas, Tokat and Amasya) and take part in the reconstruction effort. The development was not received well by the land mafia, who responded with violence. A petition signed in July 1990 by nearly 300 residents to report the mafia to the authorities did elicit an official response, albeit one which targeted the signatories rather than the aggressors. The third day after the petition saw a raid that lasted nearly 20 hours where the police shot and killed Hüsnü İşeri (a street vendor who lived in Küçükarmutlu) and wounded 11 others. Clashes between the state-endorsed mafia and revolutionary-left-backed residents continued for two years, at which point the police used the pretext of public safety to turn part of the neighbourhood's primary school into a precinct. Six months later, seven-year-old pupil Sevcan Yavuz was run over by an armoured police vehicle in the school's backyard. The makeshift precinct was shut down following a lawsuit by the residents. But a new and still-intact one was set up in late 2001 after the police raided the neighbourhood and killed four residents as a follow-up to the state's violent countrywide crackdown on prisoners fasting unto death in protest against the introduction of solitary confinement (Bargu 2014). The millennial turn was also significant as a devastating earthquake shook north-western Turkey in 1999, after which a seismological report commissioned the country's government commissioned from the Japanese International Cooperation Agency showed in 2002 that the area around Küçükarmutlu sits on one of Istanbul's firmest grounds.

In 2012, immediately after the introduction of the 'Disaster Act', Küçükarmutlu was declared an 'area under disaster risk'. The residents appealed against this decision and won thanks both to the firm rock formation upon which the neighbourhood is situated and the soundness of the construction atop it. The mid-2010s witnessed the killing of two young residents: Dilek Doğan, who was shot by the police in her bedroom before the eyes of her family members during a misaddressed raid, and Hasan Ferit Gedik, who was killed by the mafia in another left-leaning neighbourhood whilst campaigning against drug sale and use. In 2016, the neighbourhood was once again declared an 'area under disaster risk', based this time on the March 2016 amendment that expanded the definition of said 'risk' to include insecurity and informality. In July 2018, the head of the neighbourhood's cultural association and an activist–architect campaigning against urban renewal were arrested and remain in prison to this day (Doyduk 2018). Note that the historiette narrated above involves only the most troubling highlights. The neighbourhood, throughout this entire period, was the scene of law enforcement's raids, checkpoints and the demolition of non-residential sites such as youth centres and vegetable gardens, which are too numerous to recount here.

How might Küçükarmutlu help rethink Suriçi and vice versa? The reason I bring them together in this chapter is not for comparison, and there undoubtedly are dynamics particular to each case. Joost Jongerden's chapter in this book, for example, shows that there has been

a certain neoliberal paradigm at work in Amed that unites particular members of ideologically varying political movements in the revaluation and reconfiguration of urban space and its residents in terms of their ability to serve real estate, tourism and consumption flows (cf., Dinçer 2011: 43–60). Contrarily, in Küçükarmutlu, no such unitedness existed. Hence the neighbourhood's being subjected to much more overtly aggressive and continuous methods of coercion than those in Suriçi. Rethinking a case like Suriçi through Küçükarmutlu, then, helps reinforce a twofold point. First, the neoliberal consensus of a supposed 'peacetime' was nowhere near a ubiquitous experience in early- to mid-2010s Turkey. This may be a contextual observation that Küçükarmutlu throws into sharper relief than does a case like Amed. But, on closer look, it is equally valid for the latter. Specifically, throughout the first half of the 2010s, Amed was as much characterized by both ongoing attempts at violent marginalization and active resistance to them in the streets and prisons where hunger strikes were carried out (BIA News Desk 2012), as it was by a neoliberal consensus of the sort mentioned above. But—and this is the second point related to the first—making this contextual observation requires as much an acknowledgement of the irreducibility of any popular political movement, including the pro-Kurdish one, to a monolithic entity, as it does of the entire country to a homogenized beacon of peace or hotbed of violence.

What, then, might be a critical analytical focus that avoids this reproduction? I suggest that one such focus might involve the law-denying and, in turn, law-founding practices carried out on the ground by the same actors who instituted or are tasked with upholding that law in the first place. Consider how, in Amed, despite the conservation master plan's rendering impossible wholesale demolition of areas like Suriçi and despite the authorities' legal obligation to comply with it, the district's physical overhaul was given the green light in 2012 under the Disaster Act. This was the epitome of the government's contravention of its own laws, aided by the Disaster Act's granting the Ministry of Culture and Tourism the freedom to make executive decisions regarding heritage sites in areas designated as risky. Although the Ministry was technically obliged to comply with heritage statuses and conservation masterplans in places like Suriçi, it authorized the wholesale demolition and reconstruction that the government pursued in designating such areas as risky.[7]

Viewing the matter through such a critical analytical focus and in light of a case like Küçükarmutlu where, throughout the first half of the 2010s, both coercion and dissidence were more crystallized than in Amed, also helps give nuance to the apparent failure to halt the government's onslaught. If the relatively more dissident voices within the pro-Kurdish political movement remained quieter than those involved in the neoliberal consensus mentioned above, then this was not so much the result of a complete subscription to the dominant economic model. Rather, it was the outcome of those likely to dissent about the overhaul of such urban areas having been already burdened with a heavy political workload of dissensus—work that continues to unfold throughout purported periods of consensus as they did in parts of Turkey throughout the first half of the 2010s—as evidenced in Amed by hunger strikes and violently quashed street protests, and in Küçükarmutlu by the neighbourhood's being blockaded and its residents' being murdered with impunity. I conclude this chapter below by reflecting on what this rethinking of Suriçi and Küçükarmutlu through each other might mean for democracy's entanglement in emergency and the role of architecture therein.

Conclusion

I propose that the unevenness of the late liberal distribution of democracy's entanglement in emergency across populations—insofar as it has taken place in Turkey—is best understood as

an intracolonial governance method. This, moreover, is a method that, both temporally and spatially, operates in ways that are neither linear nor reducible to such hierarchizations as colony versus metropole or coloniality versus postcoloniality. Its operations may rather involve turning particular sites into a near tabula rasa or colonizing them by employing a methodology of dispossession originating in the Foucauldian metropole, follow by using these colonies for ramping up such methodologies, and then deploy the latter at—or colonize—further sites. Consider one possible historical arc emerging from this chapter and running through at least three episodes of dispossession. The first episode involved the dispossession that affected non-Muslims in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in places like Suriçi in Turkey's Kurdistan, which were not its methodological origin—the method of racializing Armenians as a monolithic group, rounding them up and marching them to their death was, after all, first implemented in Istanbul on 24 April 1915 (Üngör 2012: 67)—but rather the scene of one of its most intensive implementations. The second episode of dispossession targeted rural populations throughout the second half of the twentieth century who—due whether to war or to capitalist agriculture policies—moved to cities, including those who filled the spatial vacuum left behind by the non-Muslim populations and in so doing became the urban poor. Finally, the latter demographic faced dispossession in the late 2000s and early 2010s when neoliberalism encroached on urban space and did so both by instrumentalizing risk of disasters and by redefining disaster itself through the Disaster Act of 2012 and its amendments dated 2016.

The various ways the Disaster Act's implementation has been pursued across Turkey may have been united by a certain developmentalist mission, but there are nuances between each pursuit that considerably differentialize its effects. In much of Turkey, the developmentalism in question has proclaimed a techno-determinist approach to resilience. While this approach surely merits critique for being a mere facade behind which to prop up the country's 'construction boom', it is noteworthy that the Disaster Act's deployment in intracolonial sites like Suriçi and Küçükarmutlu has not even bothered to adopt such a facade. In Suriçi, the Disaster Act was deployed, first in 2012 in unamended form, to complete a project that proclaimed to protect and enhance the historic centre's significance as heritage and its potential as a touristic destination, rather than, say, the structural revamping of the building stock such that it could withstand disasters. This interweaving of historical preservation and disaster resilience as architectural emergencies requiring a sort of consensus that transcends political and social divisions then gave way to emergency rule proper when war flared up in Turkey's Kurdistan. As a result, the Disaster Act was amended in March 2016, this time openly incorporating architectural informality and threats to national security into the list of issues it sought to rectify. The amendment was then deployed in Küçükarmutlu to declare it a risky area. In sum, this was not simply a case of emergency measures being premised upon the imperative to prepare for disasters and dispossessing certain populations as such, but also one of disaster itself being continually redefined to legitimize the dispossession in question and extend it into the future, such that its operations in particular sites like Suriçi and Küçükarmutlu would not require the developmentalist and civilizationalist facade found elsewhere in Turkey even as a rhetorical device.

Notes

1 Amed is considered by many Kurds living in the region and elsewhere in Turkey as the unofficial capital of northern Kurdistan or the Kurdish capital of Turkey. Demographically, it is the largest predominantly Kurdish-inhabited city in south-eastern Turkey. The chapter uses the city's Kurdish-language name except when referring to official institutions such as the Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality.

2 The most recent region-wide emergency rule that affected Turkey's predominantly Kurdish inhabited east and south-east started with a piece of legislation on 19 July 1987 to then be extended (and in some cases geographically expanded) 46 times for four months each until 30 November 2002, when it was shelved. The years between these two dates witnessed vast human rights violations across the region under emergency rule. The official number of deaths resulting from it has been recorded as the following. A total of 5,105 civilians, 3,541 security personnel, and 25,344 guerrilla fighters died. A total of 371 members of the armed forces and 572 civilians lost their lives due to mine or bomb explosions, and 1,248 activists or politicians were extrajudicially killed. Perpetrators of 421 of the latter remain unidentified. 18 lives were lost under custody and 194 were disappeared. Some of the latter were found in prison, either still serving their time or having lost their lives therein, but 132 are still missing. A total of 1,275 complaints of torture were recorded, 1,177 of which were investigated. A total of 296 cases against civil servants were brought to court. Although 60 of these court cases resulted in convictions, only four sentences have been carried out while the rest have been suspended (Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı 2004: 30–32).

3 The colonization at work here involved not only the expulsion of Kurds and Kurdishness but also their replacement with Turkish-speaking refugees coming in from ex-Ottoman territories (Jongerden 2007: 129–30). For instance, the '1934 Settlement Act, Law Number 2510' settled Turkish-speaking migrants at sites of strategic importance such as the vicinity of infrastructures and borderlands, while also forcibly displacing Kurds, of whom the law spoke as non-Turkish-speaking Turks, to Turkey's western regions (ibid., 173–217). Legislators spoke of these assimilationist discourses and practices as a civilizing mission that would bring what they deemed non-Turkish speaking Turks up to date with Turks proper (ibid., 198). While this early Republican policy never granted northern Kurdistan the official status of a colony (Yarkın 2019), it paved the way for more recent policies such as the village evacuations that the state carried out in the 1990s as part of their martial strategy against the PKK (Jongerden 2014: 166–67).

4 Turner's discussion here of how subjects are compartmentalized on grounds of developability draws heavily on Weber (2015: 81).

5 The Disaster Act defines three urban-architectural categories as its purview: (1) 'risky areas', i.e., zones identified as at risk of causing damage to lives and property due to their soil composition or the characteristics of the buildings they host; (2) 'risky buildings', i.e., buildings which, while not necessarily located within risky areas, have 'completed their economic lifespan' or have been 'scientifically proven' to be at risk of falling down or receiving severe damage in case of disaster; (3) 'reserve building areas', i.e., zones identified as safe for new settlement (Çaylı 2016: 365).

6 Around the same time, across much of Turkey's Kurdistan including Amed, the central government ousted democratically elected pro-Kurdish mayors—distinct from the other administrative authority operative at the local level across Turkey, which comprises governors appointed by the Ministry of Interior Affairs—and replaced them with so-called 'caretakers' it appointed (Gumrukcu and Kucukgocmen 2019).

7 A report prepared by local representatives from the Union of Engineers' and Architects' Chambers has identified a total of 17 violations of the law that have marked the government's activities in Suriçi (TMMOB Diyarbakır İl Koordinasyon Kurulu 2017).

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CIVILIZING SPACE

Addressing disorder in rural and urban landscapes

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Introduction

The administrative elite in Turkey has been preoccupied with the production of place and people since the establishment of the Republic (see, for example, Nalbantoğlu 1997, Bozdogan 2001, Jongerden 2007, Öktem 2009, Gambetti and Jongerden 2014). Places and people considered to infringe the new national order were subject to removal, erasure and assimilation. In this contribution I will discuss Turkey's concern with negative place and subject identities 'within' the nation: places and people defined as negative in the order-making (Bauman 2003) and thus having to be erased or rendered invisible. Further, I will not discuss a particular case but show through references to multiple instances how the articulation of negative identities to people (the poor and the Kurds) and places (the rural and the urban) contributed to a process of continuous reordering with, as a result, a continuous wasting of people. I will start my discussion with urban renewal in inner-city neighbourhoods defined as an inconvenience in Diyarbakir in the 2000s, followed by a discussion of negative identities in Turkey's cityscapes from the 1920s until today and the definition of negative villages and rural places from the 1920s until the 1990s, before returning to Diyarbakir.

Inconvenience

At a preparatory urban planning workshop in Diyarbakir in 2011, the future of the Ben û Sen neighbourhood in the city's historical city centre was discussed. Until the 1950s, most of the inhabitants of the city of Diyarbakir had lived within its walls, with the exception of state officials, who held residence in what would become Yenişehir (lit.: the New City). With the development of the city beyond the walls, an urban flight of the relatively well-off took place. In the 1980s and 1990s, Diyarbakir received a high proportion of migrants from the countryside. Official figures indicated a growth of the city population from approximately 170,000 in 1980 to 380,000 in 1990 and 545,000 in 2000 (Genc 2014: 123, 132). In those years, the inner city and the lots around the city wall became an area of arrival for rural migrants whose villages had fallen victim to a policy of systematic evacuation and burning by the Turkish Armed Forces in a desperate attempt to gain control over the areas it had lost to the Kurdistan Workers

Party, the PKK. The migrants met a stagnant urban economy and a distrustful state. Lack of job opportunities and affordable housing resulted in development of an informal economy and 'do-it-yourself' housing involving the construction of shacks and low-quality apartment blocks. Ben û Sen was one such neighbourhood in the city centre, where land was squatted and low-quality houses constructed by the forced migrants. The foot of the ancient city wall, parts of which had been demolished by the governor of Diyarbakir in order to allow air flow and the city to 'breathe' during the hot summers (Gambetti 2010), provided a place where the forced migrants could create a place to breathe for themselves.

At the 2011 workshop, in which several administrators of the city participated (among them then-mayor Osman Baydemir), the neighbourhood was described as an illegal yet consolidated district, providing housing to some 20,000 people. The participants furthermore described Ben û Sen as a no man's land, and referred to in terms such as 'obscure' and 'no status.' Moreover, being illegal and 'outside the law,' the neighbourhood was equated with being 'outside the city' (Penicaud and Errera 2011). At the foot of the magnificent city wall overlooking the gardens at the Tigris River valley, the dissonance between the economic profile of the dwellers and the plans for developing the city centre into a touristic open-air museum and space of consumption made the neighbourhood's inhabitants not belong to the city (Yüksel 2011). The workshop concluded:

> Ben û Sen is an inconvenience. Because of the illegal buildings, the parallel economy, the rural way of life, it reveals poverty and violence. It is inconvenient because it hides the view of the wall. It could also be an inconvenience because it is located on a potentially high-value area, near the city center.
>
> *(Penicaud and Errera 2011: 17)*

People who could not afford it, should not live in the city (Roy 2014); for those who could not consume (Bauman 2003), there was a place in the periphery.

Something needed to be done.

Following Mary Douglas (1984: 36) in her seminal work *Purity and Danger*, the performative effect of the workshop was that the neighbourhood Ben û Sen and its inhabitants were produced as 'matter out of place.' This occurred against a policy of urban renewal that, since 2005, had developed plans and then reordered the centre as potential touristic hub and space of consumption, causing land prices in the run-down neighbourhoods and the potential value of real estate to spike (Yüksel 2011). In this context, the places of the urban poor within the city walls came to represent a 'contravention' of the new order that was being created (Douglas 1984: 36). Since the urban poor, their dwellings and neighbourhood as a whole now became considered an infringement of the city order (Yüksel 2011), elimination could be considered 'a positive effort to organize the environment' or 'a creative moment' to reorganize the city (Douglas 1984: 36). Being matter out of place, the neighbourhood was physically inside but not belonging and therefore defined as an entity, thus virtually 'outside the city.' It had acquired a negative identity in the context of a European Union – and UNESCO – supported beautification of the city centre, and the urban poor and the places where they lived had become the negative of the new beauty. Boundaries became created between the city culture and the rural culture of the migrants, who had started to populate the city centre in the 1990s but became considered a superfluous population within the newly-to-be-created order.

So something was done.

The municipality set in motion a process of demolition and relocation of inhabitants to apartment blocks constructed under the direction of Turkey's mass housing administration

Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı (TOKI). Unable to pay for the mortgage or faced with the relative high price of commuting to their work in the old city centre, however, many moved on to alternative low-cost housing opportunities (Bağlar) closer to the historical centre (Yilmaz 2019).

The case of Ben û Sen and the demolition of houses, and the resettlement of its inhabitants elsewhere, is far from unique. In the period after the AKP rose to power in 2003, urban renewal or urban transformation, sustained through commodification by appropriation of public land, became an engine for economic growth. This accumulation by dispossession (Çosar and Yücecan-Özdemir 2012, Saraçoğlu 2014, Saraçoğlu 2015, Tansel 2019, Yilmaz 2019) was facilitated by a range of new laws, such as the Municipality Law 5393 (passed in 2005), and later the Forest Law 6292 and the Disaster Risk Law 6303 (both passed in 2012). These laws gave wide-ranging authority for the designation of urban renewal areas, regardless of existing residential infrastructure or environmental status (Hinze 2016, Tansel 2019). This was a break with previous decades, which had been marked by a legalization of informal housing and served, in practice, as a vehicle for the upward mobility of migrants to the city. Until the 1980s–1990s, people migrating to the cities had met their own housing needs by quickly erecting low-quality dwellings on squatted public land. Many of them found work in industry or the public sector.

Together with the neoliberal turn in Turkey, warily introduced under conservative governments after the 1980 military coup and gaining full speed under the AKP after 2003, public land, not considered to have much monetary value, became key assets for the expanding real-estate and construction sector in the development of housing estates, business centres, shopping malls, and tourist attractions (Öztürk 2012). The urban poor, who had previously populated the factories and workplaces or found work in the public sector had become redundant with the flight of industry to lower-income countries and the neoliberal downscaling of the public sector. While their labour became superfluous, the places in which they lived became sites of interest for the expanding the service sector and its orientation towards consumption and tourism (Yonucu 2008, Öztürk 2012). The central state, municipalities and the private sector came to consider the areas in which the urban poor lived and which were of interest for the development of real estate as places of danger and degradation (Yonucu 2008, Saraçoğlu 2014, Saraçoğlu 2015). From Izmir to Istanbul to Diyarbakir, these neighbourhoods were referred to in such terms as 'stain,' 'illegal,' 'criminal' and 'unsanitary' (Yonucu 2008, Penicaud and Errera 2011, Saraçoğlu 2014, Saraçoğlu 2015) thus requiring 'purification' (Saraçoğlu 2015). These places of human settlement, and the people living there, had become the order's 'inconvenience' – matter out of place.

The rural as problem

At a conference organized at the Flemish Parliament in Brussels in 2014, the mayor of Diyarbakir, Osman Baydemir, declared that as a result of forced migration, the city had become ruralized and that the renewal to be undertaken under his mayorship would return an urban identity to Diyarbakir.[1] Concerns with a spoiling of the city's identity in Turkey is not new. In order to protect the urban identity of Ankara during the early Republic period, villagers were banned from entering the central districts of the capital, the urban symbol of the modern nation state. The reason, according to Abdullah Nevzat Tandoğan, the city mayor from 1929 to 1946, was that their appearance and behaviour were inappropriate (Ghulyan 2019). More generally, assimilation into what was considered a modern Turkish identity has been a key concern in Turkey. Thus '[for] the established urbanites,' the urban migrant villagers were 'the "rural Other" who failed to become urban, constituting an obstacle to Turkish modernization' (Erman 2014: 76).

Apparently, the perceived assimilative capacity of the city had met its limits. At the turn of the 20th century, there had been a strong confidence in its civilizing power, when the transformation from a so-called traditional to a 'modern' society came with the rise of cities, absorbing and civilizing people. The Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924), whose political life was mainly led in Diyarbakir in the late Ottoman period, had a strong confidence in the assimilating capacity of cities. He held that the city assimilated people into the intertwined projects of nation and modernity. Gökalp made a distinction between rural and urban civilizations in his sociological work. He argued that in the east, where he lived most of his life, cities are centres of Turkish civilization, while the countryside is a centre of Kurdish civilization. While Turks who settle in villages Kurdicize, Kurds who settle in cities Turkify. Inspired by the work of Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss and Ferdinand Tönnies, who considered the transition of rural–agricultural communities to urban–industrial society the most important process of our time, Gökalp equated modern society with urban society and a general tendency to Turkification (Gökalp 1923, Jongerden 2007: 211–212). The city would turn rural folks into urbanites and Kurds into Turks.

Yet the decision to block the entry of villagers to particular parts of the city indicated an increasing discomfort with the arrival of migrants because of their alleged traditional appearance and behaviours. In the 1920s and 1930s, a growing concern was felt too with the fate of the countryside and its dispersed settlement structure, made up of tens of thousands of rural settlements, some not larger than a couple of houses. At that time, the city was increasingly identified with class and conflict, and the village became idealized as the basic cell of society and national being, as noted by Nusret Kemal Köymen, the founder of rural sociology in Turkey. Köymen (1937) envisaged a spatial organization of society that would not require people to migrate to cities but rather would make urbanization modular and transferable to the countryside.

Unlike the other Turkish nationalist, Ziya Gökalp, Köymen thought that the nation could be found in its purest form in the countryside and considered villages and village life to be the basic social formation. This purity he found to be undermined by the coincidence of two processes, urbanization and industrialization, that had occurred in Western modernization. For Köymen, this articulation of industrialization through the city was a historical mistake that had contributed to the fragmentation and dispersal of settlements, not a model deserving imitation (Köymen 1937: 1–2). In his idea of modular urbanization, industry and village were (re) connected, becoming centres of production and population, while the city remained mainly a centre for administrative coordination (Jongerden 2007: 195–198).

Köymen's work contributed to thinking urbanization as modular – in terms of components, that is, which could also be brought to the city as a way to move beyond the problem of rural scatter and urban sprawl. In 1962, Mustafa Ok,[2] a prominent member of the Republican People's Party (CHP), wrote a prize-winning essay on small-settlement reduction. Ok proposed to abolish all hamlets and lower the number of villages through the establishment of village-towns – clusters of villages around a central settlement. This daring proposal was supposed to contribute to the establishment of effective administration over the countryside and a Turkish national identity assimilation of the rural population. Since urbanization was considered the historical trend, modular urbanization was regarded as historically progressive. Modular urbanization could create a process of urbanization without cities; it could 'civilize' its populace yet without committing the historical mistake of urban–industrial coincidence allegedly characterizing Western modernization.

In the years 1963, 1983 and 1987, the state calculated the costs of abolishing existing hamlets and villages and resettling populations into new villages, but the funds required for such a far-reaching operation scared off administrators. In 1963, one year after Mustafa Ok's

prize-winning essay, the cost for the settlement of the inhabitants of all hamlets and villages into 10,000 larger settlement units of 10,000 houses each was calculated at 120 billion US dollars. Three years after the military coup of 1980, but still under the military prime ministership of retired admiral Bülent Ulusu, the Ministry of Village Affairs and Cooperatives (Köyişleri ve Kooperatifler Bakanlığı) drafted a Model Village Project (Örnek Köy Projesi) in which the costs for the abolition of all hamlets and the establishment of their population in larger settlements were recalculated. At an estimated 1.5 million US dollars per village, the total cost was this time estimated at over 15 billion US dollars. In 1987, a new calculation for the abolition of 52,000 hamlets and the concentration of the population into 10,400 villages (an average of five hamlets per new village) was put at 20 billion US dollars (about two million US dollars per village) (Jongerden 2007: 156–157).

For Köymen, Ok and many others, this modular urbanization was part of a larger, existential mission:

> In the winter, our villages go into hibernation just like ants, as if we only have six months in a year in this country compared to twelve everywhere else. Remember, moreover, that half of the time of those six months is night. We have both direct (open) and indirect (hidden) unemployment. We cannot even discuss democracy and traditionalism in these conditions. Villagers will remain reactionary as long as they only go to the cities on market day and politicians will remain as demagogues so long as they do not visit the villages between one election and the next.
>
> *(cited in Jongerden 2007: 153)*

Urbanization, modular urbanization, was a political project aimed at creating a national population space, or territory.

In previous times, concerted efforts to 'nationalize' rural Turkey had been referred to as 'internal colonization' (Anonymous 1938, Barkan 1948). The notion of a (cultural) missionary was invoked, implying that the rural population in Anatolia had to be 'converted' or 'civilized' (Köymen 1934). This conversion of local (backward) villagers into national (civilized) subjects was considered to be contingent on the (re)organization of space. The architect Abdullah Ziya emphasized the nationalist mission of architecture, arguing explicitly that it was the responsibility of architects to design villages that would guide and direct their inhabitants to become Turks (Ziya 1933). For Abdullah Ziya, and many of his contemporaries, the term 'nation-building' was more than a figure of speech: they truly believed that the new environments they constructed really could turn villagers into Turks This was thought to be a precondition of such a project, the construction of a nation state from the rump Empire. Backwardness came to be defined as an expression of the rural form, the settlement scatter. The production of modern villages would produce modern Turks (Jongerden 2007).

Something had to be done.

It is in this context of an organization of space and the construction of identity, that the Settlement Act No. 2510 should be considered. Passed into law in 1934 and hailed as providing the means for nation-building in Anatolia, this was hailed by Köymen as a means for the production of a *soy düzeni* in Turkey, a term one might translate today as 'racial' or 'ethnic order' (Köymen 1934). The Settlement Act categorized Turkey's inhabitants into three groups (Articles 12, 13, and 14) and divided Turkey into three zones (Articles 2, 12, 13, and 14). The three groups were: those who spoke Turkish and were considered to be of Turkish ethnicity (Turkish-speaking inhabitants of Anatolia and Turkish-speaking immigrants); those who did not speak Turkish but were considered to be of Turkish ethnicity (non-Turkish speaking

'Turkish' immigrants, and – presumably – Kurds, who were deemed Turks that had forgotten their mother tongue); and those who did not speak Turkish and were considered not to be of Turkish ethnicity (Arabs and non-Muslim minorities, the two 'others' in the east and the west of the country). The three zones were: those areas in which it was deemed desirable to increase the density of the culturally Turkish population (Zone 1); those areas in which it was deemed desirable to establish populations that had to be assimilated into the Turkish culture (Zone 2); and those (vulnerable and/or politically sensitive) areas that it had been decided should be evacuated for economic, political, military and/or public health reasons, and where settlement was forbidden (Zone 3). The Act determined different settlement policies for different groups in different zones, and granted powers to the Minister of Internal Affairs to implement the necessary policies to produce Anatolia as the homeland of the Turks. In Turkish law, therefore, the rural other now intersected with the ethnic other (Jongerden 2007).

Negative villages and negative people

The idea of modular urbanization was considered not only in the form of a physical abolishment of existing settlements but also through an idea of identifying villages with potential into centres of attraction for the surrounding settlements and to stimulate growth (in and towards this new, centrally located village). Instead of a costly instant reordering of space, a process approach was adopted to deal with the matter out of place. This centre-village concept – and variations on it, such as the village-town and agricultural-town – was proposed as a state-wide policy for the first time in the third Five-Year Development Plan, for 1973–1977, and continued to return to the agenda.

Basically, the idea aimed at the identification of rural settlements that could be equipped with the necessary means to perform central functions for other rural settlements in the immediate vicinity. The maximum population of a centre-village – including both the core settlement and surrounding dependent settlements – was determined at 10,000 (Korkut 1987; Doğanay 1993). The centre-village did not start with a concentration of the population but with a concentration of services, and it avoided the need for an expensive and complicated resettlement operation (Güven 1974, Tütengil 1975, Güven 1977, Günaydin 2001). The most important services envisaged were administrative (state governance) and cultural (national education). It was assumed that, over time, centre-villages would grow through migration and develop into towns, and that the ability of the authorities to supervise and control the countryside would improve as a consequence. The integration of rural settlements into the national grid was imagined as producing a shared socio-cultural framework, including common language and cultural values, and was supposed to be accompanied by the assimilation of 'subcultures' into the 'national culture' (Tütengil 1975; Korkut 1987; Doğanay 1993). This was a means to deal with what were considered negative spaces and negative identities, and to produce the spatial settings that would create a modern Turkish identity.

The efforts to produce a new settlement structure were supposed to directly address the notions of what the state considered negative spaces and negative identities. While Ok in 1962 had defined the small and dispersed settlement structure as a barrier to civilization, the architect Abdullah Ziya used the term 'negative villages' (*menfi* or *negatif köyleri*) to coin settlements 'having no value' and being 'not worth describing' (Ziya 1933: 374).[3] The inhabitants of such negative villages were equally denied existence and likened to dead bodies ('I felt as if I stepped on a grave') or to nonhumans ('bodies wiggling in the cavities of the slope') (Nalbantoğlu 1997: 205–206). Indeed, the reflection on order and disorder, as Mary Douglas (1984: 2) argues, is one of 'being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death''.

Something had to be done.

In 1993, when the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) was at the height of its territorial control of the Kurdistan region in Turkey's south-east, the concentration of the population was deemed desirable in the fight against the social fire of anarchy and disorder that had weakened the power and authority of the state. Using a medical metaphor, it was argued that the problem in the region was the cancer of small settlements that had spread through the national body. The restorative medicine proposed was the development of settlements of sufficient size (Akin 1993). More revealing than the details of these plans (see Jongerden 2007: 119–172) are the depictions of the environments and their inhabitants in terms of illness and disorder to be treated through means of purification. As in the case of the 1934 Settlement Act[4], the rural other and the ethnic other intersected, and displacement and resettlement were considered means to deal with the other within the modern landscape.

In the 1990s, the small rural settlements in Kurdistan were considered the negative environment fostering PKK guerrillas. The PKK had used an insurgency strategy that involved the progressive development of spatial control and counter-institutions. Though the PKK had a well-organized network of militants in the towns and cities, the main build-up of forces took place in the countryside. Initially, the Turkish Armed Forces prioritized the defence of the larger villages and towns, and in doing so contributed to the fulfilment of the PKK's strategy. When the army learned that a successful counter-insurgency could not be waged from defensive positions, it applied a new approach in which a reorganization of rural space played a central role. The Turkish Armed Forces started to regard the countryside not (merely) as a site (where the fighting took place), but as itself a medium (for warfare), to be shaped and changed by 'micro-tactics' and ultimately controlled by overwhelming force. A central objective of this 'field domination' doctrine was to bring about a contraction of rural space.

The contraction of rural space effected an annulling of remoteness, inaccessibility and distance, and was realized through a combination of geopolitics and dromopolitics.[5] While the latter took the form of a focus on military mobility and rapid response, the former was based on the evacuation and destruction of rural settlements as a means to 'smooth' space. The Turkish Armed Forces also systematically evacuated rural settlements. This was intended to isolate the guerrilla forces from the local population and thus deprive them of finance, intelligence, food, shelter and recruits. In the words of General Osman Pamukoğlu, who headed the fight against the PKK in Hakkari,

> Where there is sea, there are pirates. In this province [Hakkari] [there] are 674 villages and hamlets. These settlements form the spider's web in which the PKK feeds itself. […] Why don't we concentrate all [the villagers] in two or three main settlements?
>
> *(Pamukoğlu 2003: 59)*

The evacuation of villages was a means of destroying what was a positive environment for the guerrilla but (therefore) a negative environment for the state. Then, the sum of a negative rural and a negative ethnic identity became aggregated in the concept of 'terror'.

At the time, several ideas were suggested for a resettlement of the population in larger settlements. The destruction of the 'negative villages' had to be completed with the construction of positive settlements that could teach the rural–ethnic other to become like modern Turks – and if not, at least to fall under effective surveillance. A comprehensive master plan for resettlement was drafted in 2001 under Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, leader of the (nationalist) Democratic Left Party (DSP). Employing a designer logic, the forced evacuation came to be considered an 'opportunity' for the creation of something new, namely, of conditions in

which the forced could become more productive, both for themselves and for 'their country.' The evacuation of the rural settlements, therefore, was treated as a terra nullius on which a new settlement structure could be developed that was more 'rational' and 'vital.' The old dispersed and 'unproductive' settlement units, now destroyed in war, were to be replaced by new settlement units of sufficient size and potential. At the core of the plan, therefore, was the concept of a transformed rural space (Oyan et al. 2001: 1). However, when the idea of modular urbanization was dusted off, the costs of constructing a new settlement structure and the lack of willingness of the population to resettle (again) in such central villages prevented the idea from materializing (again).

In spite of the obsession with space and identity, therefore, few plans have actually been implemented at anything like a systematic level. In many cases, the costs involved required modesty, at least when it came to the construction of 'productive environments' following the completion of destruction. Nevertheless, the neoliberal turn afforded new opportunities, especially in cities, where a reconstruction of negative neighbourhoods came not with costs but with opportunities. Such settlement areas were no longer considered toxic but also as assets, as an appropriate space for real estate development – such as in the case of Ben û Sen, and other neighbourhoods in the old city centre of Diyarbakir.

Urban transformation

In Diyarbakir, the influx of migrants in the 1990s occurred as a result of the state's evacuation and destruction of rural settlements in the war against the PKK. For many who came to Diyarbakir, the old city centre was a first destination, 'a point of entrance to city life, which symbolizes a temporary site to be left behind as soon as one has adequate resources' (Genc 2014: 175). The proximity of the Hevsel Gardens and vacant lots was suitable for some vegetable production. After Feridun Çelik, the candidate of the People's Democracy Party HADEP (Halkın Demokrasi *Partisi)*, a predecessor of the current Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi; HDP) took office as mayor, the city was administered by mayors who were part of the Kurdish movement. In the first years, the efforts of the municipality were oriented to a 'decolonization' of the city (Jongerden 2009, Gambetti 2010) and the provisioning of services to the urban poor (Gambetti 2010); in subsequent years, however, the main concern of the municipality became urban renewal, with a changing focus from poverty as a problem, to the poor as a problem.

Towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium, the municipality started to work on an urban renewal approach that highlighted the touristic and consumer potential of the old city and revalued land for the construction of detached houses to replace the informal housing constructed throughout the1990s. Further to the municipality, the central state also tried to expand its role in the redevelopment of the neighbourhood, including through its main institution, the Mass Housing Development Administration (TOKI). In the plans developed by the municipality and TOKI, low-income residents in the old city face potential displacement, once again (Genc 2014).

Within the Kurdish movement, the plans to gentrify the neighbourhood had met fierce criticism. Discontent disrupted when an expensive restaurant was opened in the Tigris River valley at the foot of one of the poorest areas of the inner city. When a new mayor, Gülten Kişanak, assumed office in 2014, she pulled the gentrification plug:

> In the previous period, our friends had started a study with TOKI in two neighbourhoods in the city. We stopped it because we did not find it right that people because they are poor have to leave the city. Now we are developing an on-site

> transformation project. […] The municipality should somehow make it possible and renew the inner city in a way that the existing residents can stay. We, as the municipality, want the central government, to support this too. In other words, TOKI should not be a mechanism to carry people living in the city center outside of the city, instead we need a policy which provides houses to the poor in the city center.[6]

However, Kışanak's new approach to the inner-city neighbourhoods implied a break with the policy of accumulation by dispossession; it would protect the urban poor and also protect areas where Kurdish militants could move around with relative ease. On October 25, 2016, Gülten Kişanak was arrested as part of a major (unprecedented, in fact) crackdown on the Kurdish movement (Christofis 2020), and a week later the central government appointed a 'trustee', thus establishing mastership over the municipality.

Already after the elections of 2011, Erdoğan had claimed the beginning of a new era of mastership, his mastership.[7] This came with an erosion of institutional checks and balances on the executive power, a weakening of the distinction between state and party, and various restrictions on civic freedoms (Somer 2016a, 2016b). What was effectively a seizure of the state met an obstacle in the form of the June 2015 elections, however. In gaining over 13% of the popular vote, the HDP managed to pass the 10 percent threshold for repeasentation in parliament, where it took 80 of the 550 seats. Not only had the Kurdish movement-rooted party won entry to parliament in its own name for the first time in the history of the Republic – although under a non-exclusive and pluralistic advocacy for broader democratic rights – but the governing AKP had lost its majority for the first time since it came to power in 2002. The response was a nationalist pivot, with an effective end to the so-called 'resolution process' (a series of talks with the PKK, directly and via the HDP, for a political solution to the Kurdish issue) as a prelude to the organization of a second, snap election. Erdoğan's AK Party was successful in what was essentially an annulment of the June election and the re-establishment of the Kurdish issue as a security issue. Weaponized for political gain, the issue of nation-state identity was intrumentalized to keep power.

In its turn, the Kurdish movement responded by reaffirming its determination to autonomy through local self-organization, a politcal principle it had already held and put into operation for many years. When this reaffirmation became articulated in the erection of barricades in neighbourhoods in the old city centre, with its many narrow streets and cul-de-sacs, a full stand-off developed between Kurish armed youth and the state security forces (Bakan 2018). Then, for several months during 2015–2016, a violent exchange spread, covering some 30 urban locations in south-east Turkey (UNHHR 2017). As a consequence of the security operations, 355,000–400,000 people were displaced while 2,000–3,000 were killed in the fighting, lockdowns and brutality (GABB 2016: 3; UNHHR 2017: 7). Satelite images revealed that in the fight against what was referred to as an urban insurgence, the security forces used heavy weapons and bombed from the air densely populated neighbourhoods, while the destruction of houses and public buildings continued after security forces had regained full control over the areas. The urban war had cleared the area of Kurdish militants – and of the poor.

Some have expressed their surprise about the state's response. The barricades that the youngsters had put up seemed rather simple, basic structures: 'They were hardly a means of resistance, let alone war, if you ask me. I was surprised that the state took it all so seriously' (Baysal 2017). Yet the state likely had a different perspective and considered the inaccessible neighbourhoods as bastions of militancy, which, together with the HDP-run municipalities, were part of the PKK's political–military complex (Yeşiltaş and Özçelik 2018). When security forces escalated the level of violence and the militant youth dug in, the guerrilla forces increased

their activities in rural areas in an apparent attempt to support the urban defence of the youth militants against security forces. However, the inexperience of the militant youth required the guerrillas to move from rural to urban areas, which affected not only the capacity of the guerrillas there, but also their ability to provide supplies to militants in urban areas (Yeşiltaş and Özçelik 2018: 151–154).

The architecture of the urban areas where the warfare took place was favourable for the militants, allowing them to move through the neighbourhood from rooftop to rooftop, avoiding the streets (Bakan 2018). However, despite the many connections to rural areas, the guerrillas in rural areas and the youth in the cities were prevented from taking advantageous positions by the intensive use of drones. A combination of vertical and horizontal surveillance in combination with engagement and curfews was thus successful in immobilizing the resistance (Yeşiltaş and Özçelik 2018: 152, 162). Adding symbolism to the physical violence, the Council of Ministers in Ankara decided on the Kurdish New Year, March 21 (2016), to expropriate 6,292 out of 7,714 parcels of land in the war-affected city centre of Diyarbakir, some 82% of the total area. Most of the remaining 18% was already in the possession of the state, via TOKI and the Treasury (Ayboga 2017, Soyukaya 2017: 12). The destruction of the area continued apace, now as a civil operation. The local residents were given no chance to return as an urban renewal gentrification plan was now declared practice (Ayboga 2017). A doubly negative environment – poor community residency of an urban area that was attractive for real estate development and also a safe haven for militants – had been cleared, and a re-creation could be effected.

Looking backward

The history of modern Turkey has been one of obsession with negative identities – both those of places and people defined as backward and having no value, and of infringements to the dominant ethno-cultural ideology. The elimination of both negative places and negative people was considered necessary for the creative constitution of a civilized nation state. The holiness of the nation defined the impurity of its spaces as a discursive opposition (Douglas 1984: 7). The negative villages of Abdullah Ziya, inhabited by 'wiggling bodies' (having non-identity), the rural settlements evacuated and destroyed in the war against the PKK, and the inner-city neighbourhoods inhabited by the poor shared with one another the characteristic of 'matter out of place', of contravening an order created, that of the nation, comprising Turks and Turkishness, and of the neoliberal, characterized by and enabling urban accumulation. Indeed, the conclusion of the 2011 workshop about Ben û Sen, that the population in the neighbourhood had 'no sense of permanence,' could not be more right. Their permanence had been destroyed when they were displaced from their villages because they embodied a negative, namely Kurdish, identit, the HDP municipality objected to their residence in the city for being poor, and then the state did so again, radically and violently, for being poor and Kurd. Order-making and the oppositional corollary of definition as the negative of that order comes with the destruction of environments and the wasting of people (Bauman 2003).

Notes

1 September 19, 2014, Conference: 'Het Koerdisch model als antwoord op de impasse in het Midden-Oosten,' Vlaams Parlement, Brussel.

2 Mustafa Ok, who represented the Manisa district in parliament for the CHP party during the 1960s and 1970s, occupied the post of Minister of Village Affairs and Cooperatives (*Köyişleri ve Kooperatifler Bakanı*) in Bülent Ecevit's first coalition government, between January and November 1974.

3 '*Negatif kölerin ekli ve bedii bir kiymeti olmadığından fazla bahse lüzum görümyoru*.'
4 The Settlement of İskân Kanun No. 2510 was accepted on 14-6-1934, and published in the *Resmi Gazete* on 21-6-1934. See: www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/2733.pdf.
5 The concept of 'dromopolitics' comes from Virilio (2006), whose *Speed and Politics. An Essay on Dromology* emphasizes the importance of the modern technologies of motion and acceleration; new weapons systems and military strategies are based on high speed and mobility, he observes, which have transformed positional warfare into wars of movement (Kellner 1999; Armitrage 2000).
6 Interview with Diyarbakir mayor Gülten Kişanak, August 7, 2015.
7 '*Yarın ustalık dönemi başlıyor*'; see e.g. www.akpartituzla.com/habergoster.aspx?ID=1420 (accessed October 9, 2017).

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31

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND URBAN ACTIVISM IN TURKEY

Christopher Houston

Introduction

Today, the large majority of Turkey's citizens live in cities. In them social movements, civil associations, and urban activism have become key modes of inhabitants' political endeavours, oriented towards a range of political and cultural ends. Yet as we will see below, in Istanbul itself, as in other Turkish cities, this urban activism has a long history. Even in the early days of the Turkish Republic when Turkey was a more rural-dwelling society, urban social movements and their partisans can be interpreted as being central to its politics. Indeed, the existence and activities of social movements in Istanbul and Anatolia may be traced back to before the 1923 founding of the Turkish Republic. For example, in his study of workers' movements in the late-Ottoman period, Yıldırım (2013) examines the frequent labour unrest and protest in the Empire before the First World War, as well as the resurgence in labour associations and industrial action after 1918. And of course, there is a huge literature on another, much more fateful, social movement in the two decades before the institution of the Republic, that of Turkish nationalism.[1]

In this chapter I make the somewhat unorthodox argument that social movements have been integral to Turkish politics at least since the founding of the Republic in 1923. The claim implies, further, that contemporary social projects, NGOs, and civil society associations must grapple still with the continuing legacy of these earlier movements. The argument is unorthodox for at least two reasons. First, it appears badly out of time. New social movement theory (NSM) traces the historical origins of classical social movements only to the 1960s (e.g. Millward & Takhar 2019), analysing in Western Europe and in the USA collective mobilizations seeking change in a diverse range of social and political fields. These include environmental, anti-war and disarmament/peace movements, and social action against inequality on grounds of gender, sexuality, race, religion, and [dis]ability. In Turkey, too, much of the literature on social movements dates their onset to the period after the 1980 coup d'état and to the handover of government to civilians after the years of junta rule (i.e., Şimşek 2004).

Secondly, and perhaps more controversially, asserting that social movements constitute one core political force or dynamic in the foundational years of the Turkish Republic runs counter to other more usual ways of accounting for its political practices. Kemalism, for example, the political programme of Mustafa Kemal and his party and the "persistently official and

semi-official, hegemonic ideology of the Turkish Republic" (Parla & Davison 2004: vii), has since the 1950s been interpreted most commonly as a modernizing, westernizing, and secularizing procedure, three terms that carry evolutionary connotations and present it as conforming to inevitable long-term processes of social development. Their teleological overtones mute perception of the radicalness and originality of the self-instituting and developmentalist actions of the Kemalist movement, even while justifying them as scientific state midwifery to the birth of modernization.

To unfold my argument concerning this rich history of urban activism in Turkey, I have divided this chapter into three sections. Section One contextualizes that activism within the broader social science literature on social movements. In doing so it notes how that literature and its various conceptual approaches to social movements – for example, its theories of rational action, resource mobilization, and political process (see Edelman 2001: 287–294) – reflects both the particularity of their Euro-American case studies, and the intellectual training of their authors in particular disciplines. To understand social movements in Turkey requires construction of a similarly empirically based theory, one grounded upon the specificities of the Turkish social formation that critiques the state–society binaries created or reproduced in social movement theory. Section Two more explicitly analyses this history as producing an activist government, a political force that we can call a *social movement-state* assemblage, which sought both to sponsor profound cultural change and to educate over time generations of activists as embodied experts in these new social practices. Section Three explores how this *first* social movement has continued to interact with and influence social movements and urban activism in Turkey up until the present, using three brief case studies. These include the social movements of the 1970s; the Gezi Park protests of 2013; and the urban and political activism sponsored by the AKP (Adalet[Adalet] ve Kalkınma Partisi – Justice and Development Party) government in response to both the failed military coup in 2016 and to the Gezi Park event.

Grounding social movement theory

Political science scholars speak about social movements in ways that do not necessarily make good sense for Turkey. For example, in an overview of social movement theory in the *Annual Review of Sociology*, Amenta, Caren, Chiarello, and Su define political social movements as "actors and organizations seeking to alter power deficits and to effect social transformations through the state by mobilizing *regular citizens* for sustained political action" (2010: 14, 2) (my italics). Social movements, they further clarify, "seek to influence states by mobilizing people, resources, and claims around lines of action" (ibid: 14, 3). Certain presuppositions inform these claims. One is that both Government members and state actors are "open" to activist pressure, being persuadable policy-wise over time by democratic demands, described by political scientists as targeting the "political opportunity structure" (see Kriesi 2004; Edelman 2001). Another is that there is a clear separation and distinction between social movements (here characterized by "regular citizens," "people," "actors," or "organizations") and the states to which they address concerns and against whose policies they protest. A third assumption is that in this contentious relationship between social movements and states, states themselves are *non-activist*, their institutions (educational, legal, planning/environmental, public-spatial, aesthetic-cultural) aimed disinterestedly at en-skilling citizens, at preparing citizens for the present–future, rather than at constituting actors' perceptions and embodied consciousnesses.

Given the history of the Turkish Republic, none of these presumptions are warranted.[2] Taking them in reverse order, in the first place Turkey's educational institutions and core

state policies (i.e., compulsory male military conscription) are not perceptually neutral but consciousness-constituting, intended to fabricate a Turkish-supremacist citizen–subject. In a recent paper on oral history Leyla Neyzi identifies just one consequence of this process, the difficulties university students have in accepting and confronting unauthorized memories and accounts in researching historical events, even when explained to them by participants. For Neyzi, the problems arise from a "society with a centralized education system that inculcates a hegemonic national(ist) history" (2019: 1). In other words, "regular citizens" is a naive construct, positing the existence of something whose particular qualities on the contrary needs to be explained.

Secondly, rather than clearly demarcated, more typically the Turkish state, sympathetic social movements, and peak civil society organizations have been intimately connected. Tanıl Bora argues that up until the 1960s, the Professional Chambers (of Physicians, Pharmacists, Veterinary Surgeons, Commerce, Bar Association, Architects and Engineers etc.) were both *established* and *regulated* by state-centric legislation, and characterized by "commitment to the modernist-positivist pioneering mission, their close ties with the state bureaucracy, and their concern to develop a professional deontology, which is some cases led to a 'professional chauvinism" (2000: 100–101). Leftist professional associations did emerge in the 1970s, only to be ruthlessly prosecuted by the Atatürkist military junta after the 1980 coup d'état, which criminalized their reconceptualization of professional work as involving an interest in democratic solutions to social problems. To give just one example of their pre-coup commitments, in a 1978 article published in *Mimarlık* (the journal of the professional association of architects), Tuncay Çavdar, one of the chief architects of Istanbul municipality's huge cooperative İzmit New Settlement Project, described its practice of *participatory design*, which included a series of mass surveys completed by likely inhabitants before any building was begun, discussion meetings with them in coffeehouses, workplaces, and union rooms attended by planners/researchers, and the incorporation of (potential) residents' feedback into "mobile" design plans.[3] In response to such initiatives, the junta's 1982 constitution restricted professional chambers' scope for political organization and activism (see Houston 2020).

Thirdly, the literature's foregrounding of socio-juridical contexts understood as *opening up* political possibilities in the form of "political opportunity structures" (or POS) is misleading. For Turkey, more focus on a different structure is required, one that analyses how civil society and its independent social movements operate in insecure relationship to a repressive *social movement–government* that heavily polices unauthorized political activism. Rather than POS, then, in Turkey – and no doubt in many other places around the globe – "political constriction structures" (or PCS) should be foregrounded in discussion of contemporary social movements.[4] The clearest example of this need for reformulation is in the south-east of Turkey, a region in which millions of people have lived, for most of the 100 years of the Republic, under an almost continuous legalized "state of emergency," including for decades under martial law (Parslow 20[16]. Indeed, in the Kurdish areas we might describe the executive's domination of society and of its social movements as a normalized and long-term policy of "politicide," designed to prevent any development of Kurdish political–cultural autonomy or federative constitutional arrangements.

A further significant factor structuring *political constraint* in Republican Turkey has been four military interventions or coups d'état (in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997), as well as the failed insurrection in 2016. Each event has caused democratic "shrinkage" in Turkey, through the sudden termination of evolving political arrangements, the censure and prosecution of civil society movements and groups, and in the legislating by unrepresentative "assemblies" of new constitutional clauses designed to obstruct civil society's institution and organization of itself.

The effect of political constriction structures (PCS) on social movements can best be demonstrated in a case study, here presented in the current difficulties anti-war organizations, human rights groups, and peace movements have in effecting any political change in the state's long-term and bloody-minded military response to pro-Kurdish sentiment in the south-east of Turkey. Described as a "long-standing low-intensity conflict" in the abstract language of comparative politics, the phrase incorporates the event into more general theoretical models, even while obfuscating the particularity of the Turkish Republic's ceaseless attempts to assimilate Kurds and ignoring the terrible suffering of civilians and others in the war zone (see Aras 2014). On another front, the lifetime of prosecution and punishment dealt out to pacifists, as well as to the groups or individuals who support them, makes Turkey the only country in the Council of Europe that denies the right to conscientious objection against mandatory male military service (Çınar 2014). Likewise, although Turkey bans gay men from military service – again the only country in NATO to do so – according to civil society groups (that advise gay men), the examination related to the process of exemption is intrusive and humiliating and in clear violation of rulings of the European Court of Human Rights.[5]

On a different matter, in the ten years between 2002 and 2012 more Turkish soldiers committed suicide while conscripts than were killed in active duty.[6] The Turkish Armed Forces has refused parents and families any independent investigation into military bullying and mobbing. Somewhat similarly, the power of PCS over-against social movements in Turkey is revealed in the two-decade struggle by human rights organizations, leftist journalists, and dissident psychiatrists to overturn the Turkish military's denial of war trauma in young men conscripted to fight against Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas in the Kurdish-majority regions since 1984. Despite the advocacy of doctors' groups and veterans' associations that produce evidence of high rates of trauma amongst hundreds of thousands of conscripts sent to the war, the military has consistently denied the existence of "south-east syndrome" in returned conscripts, thus refusing to admit it as cause for financial compensation for psychological injuries (see Açıksöz 2015). Last, the prosecution in 2015 of the "peace academics" for signing a petition protesting the Turkish Armed Forces' rejoining of hostilities against the PKK is the most recent manifestation of the Government's hostility to civil society's advocacy of alternatives to official policies. In short, each of these examples testifies to the PCS that bear upon social movements in Turkey.

How might we understand the origins and development of these structures of constraint facing oppositional social movements in Turkey today when mainstream approaches in the literature do not "stretch" to cover the uniqueness of the Republican context? To comprehend them, we must explore the history of the *first* social movement in Turkey.

The first social movement in Turkey

Let me return to one core claim of 1980s new social movement (NSM) theory, its assertion that social movements encompass the "work that society performs upon itself," the aim of which is "control of *historicity*" (Escobar 1992: 403–404; italics in original). What is meant by historicity? For NSM, "historicity" involves reflection upon and contestation over society's social order, including its aesthetics, laws, values, and collective identity. More prosaically, social movements can be defined less as political forces oriented to economic gain and development, and more as actors that struggle to lucidly [re]-institute society.

Where in the history of the late Ottoman Empire and of the early Turkish Republic do we find such movements or struggles? We see it most significantly and efficaciously in the early twentieth-century social movement in late Ottoman society advocating for Turkish nationalism.

To give just one example, in 1904 the journalist and activist Yusuf Akçura wrote an article titled "Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset" (Three styles/types of politics/policy), and published it in the *TURK* newspaper, based in Cairo. Oriented to the extended political crisis besetting the Ottoman Empire, in the article Akçura identified and defined three different "ways," "ideas," or "policy packets" as potential political programmes to ensure the independence and reform of the Ottoman state. Following general trends, Akçura named these three styles of politics Ottomanism, [Pan]-Islamism, and Turkism, even as he expressed his preference for Turkism. His was just one voice in a burgeoning social movement agitating for a new self-fabrication of society, one based on the unification and privileging of the Turks.[7]

Secondly, we find it too in the institution of the Turkish Republic itself and in its explicit cultural revolution, which included the lucid creation of a whole range of new practices polemically related to the Islamic institutions and social identities of the Ottoman Empire. Here the endeavour of the Kemalist movement was to put into question established Ottoman institutions and representations via its positing of new social practices. Contrary to analyses that [mis]describe this revolution as a process of westernization, in this civilizational creation the "republic," the "nation," "revolution," "religion," and even "Islam" are better understood in Castoriadis' terms as *imaginary significations*: new forms, ideas, and images through which Kemalist historicity was produced. The Kemalist social movement's propagation of a "way of life, forms of behaviour, and needs," Touraine's description of the aims of a social movement (1988: 25), was made in *knowing relation* to a host of other societies (including to the Bolsheviks), via trade, mimicry, antagonism, improvisation, appropriation, transformation, and development. It also incorporated a long history of Ottoman self-reflection on the adequacy of its own social institutions.

One reason that this political project advocating Turkish nationalism and civilizational alteration has rarely been considered a social movement is because of its political success. Its transition in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire from a network of secret organizations, cultural associations, student groups, intellectuals, journals/newspapers, and ethnic business lobbies to governmental and political power, first in the Young Turk regime and then in their institution of the Republic, has acted to disqualify it in the categories of NSM theory. For NSM theory, social movements by definition resist and challenge extant authority. (By contrast, other writers recognize how over time social movements may become more institutionalized, "with some of them evolving […] into interest groups or even political parties" (Snow, Soule, & Kriesi 2004: 8).

Another, more negative, reason might be found in the arbitrary distinction made by many analysts between social movements and revolutionary politics, reflected in Snow, Soule, and Kreisi's claim that the study of revolutions constitutes its own separate field (ibid: 13).

A third important reason for the disinclination to perceive the Kemalists' project as a social movement pertains more to the eurocentrism of new social movements research itself. Escobar (1992: 403–407) faults both the work of Touraine (1988) and of Laclau and Mouffe (1985) for claiming that in the developing world *social mobilization* and not *social movements* predominate, given those countries' supposed lack of "historicity": that is, their (in)capacity for self-production. In other words, for NSM research, in their struggle over "cultural" projects, social movements and actors emerge only in the advanced or *post-industrial* countries of Western Europe and of the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, producing new identities and discourses oriented towards alternative lifestyle practices of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, food production, animal rights, and so on. By contrast, in less advanced, *industrial* countries political mobilization remained more "conventional," focused on material production and distribution of economic resources, on modernization, and on conflict between labour and capital.

Contra these distinctions, the nationalistic Young Turks, like the communist Bolsheviks "next door" in the Soviet Union, conceived their movement as pursuing a total social project, one that sought to transform cultural practices from gender and family arrangements to religion and language, from cross-ethnic relations to urban living, from music to the visual arts. As a revolutionary social movement their success in gaining control of the state means that we should conceive the Turkish Republicans as constituting a specific or special type of government, a compound *social movement–state* assemblage animated by a revolutionary cultural and nationalist program. As both social activists and as members of the bureaucracy, the military, the party, or the government, Young Turk–Kemalist militants initiated a movement for historicity, a project that sought, in the words of Touraine, to alter "the set of cultural, cognitive, economic, and ethical models […] through which social practices are constituted" (1988: 40–41).

A huge literature has zeroed in on these formative years in an attempt to describe and diagnose the political project of what we have redefined as a hybrid *social movement-state* actor. Allow me here to briefly summarize what I have written elsewhere (Houston 2015). The Kemalist movement in the single-party period can be characterized as a dual politics. First, it involved an *excluding modernism* partly operating as a form of status distinction distinguishing an enlightened secular class from "backward" Muslims. Second it encompassed a *radical Turkism* directed against both non-Muslims (in particular against Greeks, Armenians, and Jews) and non-Turks (in particular against Kurds). The movement's language purification campaign conjoined both, combating the claim to epistemic sovereignty exerted by Arabic and Persian "loanwords" heard as threatening the integrity of the nation's own world view, and substituting them with newly minted Turkish replacements. At the same time the language mobilization campaign simultaneously prohibited the speaking and writing of Kurdish, suddenly creating new linguistic minorities in Turkey along with their exclusion from monolingual state institutions within the national territory. Cultural revolution also involved the creation of a new national arts repertoire, constructed sometimes through the disaggregation and nationalizing of what were previously *trans-regional* cultural-artistic traditions and skills that overlapped ethnic and religious communities (see Hough 2010).

Further, Kemalism as a social movement encompassed a powerful urban activism designed to alter the Ottoman city and its built environments, including its sonic features, its ethnic and class composition, as well as the spatial practices of its inhabitants. In its first decades (1920–1960), the Kemalist *movement-state* made a number of ruptures in Istanbul's (and other cities') history of dwelling. Most significant was its forced migration or expulsion from Istanbul of its indigenous Armenian, Greek, and Jewish residents, enabling themselves to benefit from their new fashioning of its environment. In the novel *Huzur* (2001[1949]), Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar describes another rupture, reflected in the perturbation and melancholy experienced by Istanbul's inhabitants at the Kemalists' alteration (in the same years) of the "sensuous presentations" (Casey 1996: 22) of the city. Most palpably this included Istanbul's familiar sonorities, by the muting of Ottoman music. These two events were aspects of a nationalistic transformation of Istanbul, antagonistically aimed at its cosmopolitanism and at the life-worlds of many of its inhabitants.

Last, we must affirm that like any social movement Kemalism sought more than dissemination to the public of new ideologies/discourses, and more than pursuit of strategic political, social, legal, and policy outcomes. For Kemalist activists themselves, the movement also fostered reformation of the self, through its education of their attention and emotions that enabled alternative ways of perceiving the world, the city, and its inhabitants. Thus, Kemalist urban activism possessed *self-altering* force, modifying subjects' affective intentions, intersubjectivity, embodied

consciousness, and sense of temporality. Citing Yılmaz, Kolluoğlu-Kırlı (2002: 5) identifies what she calls the "manifest disposition" of the first partisans of the Turkish Republic, exemplified in their "determined gaze towards the future":

> This generation of the Republic, which has been reared with a modernist understanding, is the children of a worldview which targets the future, not the past. Hence, embedded [in this generation] is the belief that habits can change, and that it is not possible to try to keep the past alive.
>
> *(Yılmaz in Kolluoğlu-Kırlı ibid: 5)*

In brief, participating in Kemalist activism fostered specific perceptual modifications for partisans, their revolutionary intentions changing the aspects and meanings of events, people, urban entities, and the past itself.

Social movements in Turkey today

Mustafa Kemal, first president of the Republic, leader of its Kemalist social movement, died in 1938. Yet in the embodied practices, multisensory perceptions, and affective sentiments of those who claim his legacy, Atatürk is made to live on, a source of inspiration, ethics, agency, and social power. In short, Kemalism as social movement continues to be a project of self-institution and social distinction for a powerful class of Turkish citizens. Accordingly, certain ongoing dimensions of its micro politics also require analytical attention: the gendered and embodied self-presentation of Kemalist actors (corporeal styles and techniques, comportment, manners, clothing); features of their affective existence (mood, senses, and sensibilities, including their satirical humour about pious Muslims[8]); and Kemalists' associational practices and the political knowledge they generate. Indeed, as Göle notes, the public sphere "provides a stage for the didactic performance of the modern subject in which the nonverbal, corporeal and implicit aspects of social imaginaries are consciously and explicitly worked out" (2002: 177). Today this first social movement in Turkey continues to reproduce itself intergenerationally by enthusing neophyte partisans to inhabit, apply, and propagate its visions and narratives.

But Kemalism as social movement lives on in less direct ways as well. For one, the efficacious historical influence of the movement in politics and in its supporters' personal lives means that other social movements, even those with apparently contrary social aims, have often felt the need not to reject but to *transcend* its ethical, cultural, and political models. Research on the sprawling, interconnected but bitterly factionalized leftist and rightist social movements of the 1970s provides us with a good example. The 1970s in Turkey was a decade of radical urban activism, in which an eclectic range of civil society organizations, legal and illegal leftist parties, and associations organized to mobilize city inhabitants, including residents of the workers' suburbs on the edges of rapidly expanding urban centres. The university and even high-school youth groups of those parties and associations were active in educating students in their analyses of Turkey's retarded social development. At the same time, labour militancy was growing amongst workers in state industries and in large private factory plants, with membership in unions fractured between two major rival confederations, the Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions (DİSK) and the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türk-İş). An active and heavily factionalized radical leftist movement generated its own opposition, not only in employers' federations or in right-wing political parties vying for parliamentary domination, but in the form of a paramilitary anti-communist organization, officially known as

the "Idealists" (Ülkücüler), whose intention was to combat, violently or otherwise, the influence of the left (Çağlar 1990).

Activism itself – like any skilled practice – is a mode of embodied perceptual alteration, transforming activists' attunement to the city and their interpretation of the "affordances" that its parts provide. In the 1970s, revolutionary activity and intent provoked both a new constitution of and a new receptivity to the urban environment's opportunities for action. In discovering and pursuing new spatial practices, revolutionaries activated an affinity between the city and mass political action that does not exist in either the house or in the village: walls for inscribing dissonance; boulevards for marching in or barricading; public buildings for occupation; places for the amplification and feedback of attack and reverb; private associations for secrecy and dialogue; audiences to broadcast one's message to; strangers to address; passers-by to solicit; statues to drape with flags or slogans, to climb on or demolish; cemeteries in which to commemorate or desecrate the famous dead; squares for mass meetings or punitive massacres; streets for mob lynching, or for dumping mutilated corpses. The city accommodated assassinations in crowded streets, and beatings in deserted lots or unlit alleys; it facilitated begging, and the showing of poverty.

Yet despite the explicit socialist or communist commitments of many leftist groups and parties in the 1970s, in my interviews with ex-activists, most affirmed that nearly all leftist factions at that time believed that historic Kemalism had been a progressive force for change, even if it required *completion*. That is, from their perspective in the present, ex-militants acknowledged the *affective* legacy of Kemalism in the 1970s, attributing it to the success of the Republican *movement-state* in inculcating embodied dispositions in leftist activists through their schooling and in its generation of political memory.

More precisely, partisans perceived how two pre-existing schemas germane to the official history of the founding of the Republic moved them in the 1970s. The first was the virtuous legitimacy of political violence done in the name of establishing a new, independent Turkey, freed from the machinations of imperialist powers. The justifying myths of the Kemalist social movement authorized a continual liberation struggle. Right-wing nationalists, Islamists, and leftist socialists alike shared this conviction, even if their imperialist enemies and their internal co-conspirators were different. Furthermore, Atatürk's famous address to youth that positioned them as the preservers of the Republic meant that, as Çağlar points out, "the Greywolves [ultra-nationalist conservatives] were not alone in seeing themselves with a mission to save the country; all youth groups gave themselves the same mission, the Left included" (1990: 97).

The second legacy of the Kemalist movement, adapted by activists of all political persuasions, concerned its validation of a ceaseless civilizing project originating from the enlightened "centre" and directed at the transformation of the periphery. Most groups thought that in the form of the *gecekondu* (illegal settlements) the periphery had come to the city. Even if culture was understood by the Marxian left as a feature of the superstructure conditioned by the infrastructural forces of production, ex-militants noted that no one doubted the continuing need for "cultural revolution." Indeed, given that Kemalism historically described itself as "revolutionary," and denoted several of its reforms in exactly the same way – hat revolution, alphabet revolution, music revolution, and so on – the legitimacy of revolution directed at the masses was taken for granted. In the 1970s, the sanctioned word *devrimci* (revolutionary) was everywhere, affixed to civil society and to legal and illegal organizations and parties alike.

In sum, my research showed that one side effect of present-day reflections on the 1970s and on the 1980 military coup by many leftist ex-activists has been a critical re-examination of Kemalism's pristine years in search of clues to the gross human rights abuses of the post-1980

Atatürkist junta. In the process ex-activists have been forced to uproot commitments to previous [Kemalist] ways of configuring ethico-political perceptions and urban militancy. This self-examination is seen most clearly in an interview with ex-militant Ümit (from Devrimci Yol, or Revolutionary Path), who in participating in the unexpected explosion of urban activism in Gezi Park in Istanbul in 2013 immediately recalled – and problematized – one taken-for-granted aspect of the 1970s. For him, most striking about the Gezi protest were the peaceful relations between the coalition of groups, individuals, and civil society organizations that participated in and supported the protest – the rainbow symbol of Istanbul's emerging LGBT groups, waved alongside the flags of Turkey and those of socialist factions, of football teams, of "anti-capitalist" Muslims, and Kurds. Once or twice, posters of Atatürk and Abdullah Öcalan (the leader of the banned Kurdistan Workers' Party) were held up side by side. More humorously, protesters proclaimed that they were the "soldiers of Mustafa Keser" [not Mustafa Kemal] (Mustafa Keser'in Askerleri), an unimportant pop singer.

> "We weren't like that", Ümit commented ruefully.

Ümit's experience of the massive Gezi Park protests points to a social movement and to an urban activism whose spatial tactics, mood, interests, and political discourse appear to have made a clean break with Kemalist politics. Rather than restoration of the pristine Atatürk-led movement of the early Republic, one aim of the Gezi Park movement was the fostering of urban citizenship, including, of course, the right to protest against decisions about the city's development without being gassed. Political struggle and mobilization generated an effervescence of street art, creative political tactics, and humorous prints and graffiti. Painted around the city were slogans such as "Gaz Festivali" (Gas Festival); "Isyanbul" (Rebel Istanbul); "Edison Bile Pişman" (Even Edison is sorry), referring to the AKP's light bulb symbol; "Bizim gibi üc çocuk ister misin Tayyip?" (Tayyip, do you want three children like us?), playing on Erdoğan's gratuitous family planning advice to Turks; "Çilekli yok mu" (Don't you have strawberry flavour?), in reference to pepper spray; "Gezikondu" (for the tent city in Taksim), playing on the Turkish word for shantytown; and "Dün çok çeviktin Polis" (Police, you were very agile yesterday), parodying the name of the special forces (Çevik Kuvvet) that attacked the protesters.

Yet despite the prominent inscription of both cyber and Istanbul space with comic visual retorts to Erdoğan, the humour connected with resistance to the Gezi Park redevelopment scheme was not structured by a laic/Islamist, Turk/other, or Atatürk/Erdoğan divide. Up until the Gezi Park protests, as readers might imagine, one core opposition to the AK Party government was expressed in terms of its perceived threat to the principles and mood of Kemalist politics. By contrast, the Gezi Park movement was activated by demonstrators' concern for their "rights" to the city: the right to have a say on urban development, public space, quality of life, and lifestyle (including sexual), rights that were taken away in 1980 and again in 1982 (under the military constitution). Taksim Dayanışması (Taksim Solidarity), the group that organized the initial environmental protest, met with then-deputy prime minister Bülent Arınç on June 5. The group put out a press release listing the primary issues motivating the protest and several demands:

> preservation of Gezi Park, an end to police violence, the right to freedom of assembly and the prosecution of those responsible for the violence against demonstrators, and an end to the sale of public spaces, beaches, waters, forests, streams, parks and urban symbols to private companies, large holdings, and investors.[9]

[Houston and Şenay] (2017) explore how the Gezi Park demonstrations also played a pivotal role in transforming the perspectives and feelings of participants (and their sympathizers) towards the ruling AK Party. The dominant electoral force in Turkey since 2002, the AK Party (AKP) has always polarized voters, who have expressed vastly different feelings towards its rule. Its violent response to the Gezi Park protests antagonized a large segment of the population but not, as argued above, according to pre-existing Kemalist political critiques and perceptions. Rather, post–Gezi Park, a new affective knowledge concerning Tayyip Erdoğan's *illiberality* began to inform the urban politics of a significant number of people in Istanbul. (Gezi-Park participation numbered in the hundreds of thousands.) Accordingly, the Gezi Park event is best seen as transforming the political subjectivity of its participants, expressed most clearly in the emergence of their new experience of the AKP as *authoritarian* rather than as either *Islamist* (for threatening secularism), or as *progressive* (for its earlier challenging of military tutelage).

Reference to the AKP draws our attention to a third prominent social movement in Turkey over the last three decades or more, that of Islamic or Muslim collective action and urban activism. Given word constraints, I cannot much discuss its early years and development in the 1980s and 1990s. Then it organized against what its various strands perceived as the Republicans' westernizing social engineering and elitist class distinction project, and for freedom of religion from state control, for "local" religious values and practices and later, for democracy. Here I am referencing key themes of the document written by Yalçın Akdoğan for the AK Party in 2004 titled *Muhafazakar Demokrasi* (Conservative Democracy).[10] Alongside its more ideological claims, Islamism for its partisans, like any social movement, also generated subjective and intersubjective experiences. Thus, in the micro-practices of everyday life the central stakes of Muslim counter-distinction were enacted in tension with competing and similarly self-conscious secularist presentations and definitions of self, embodied practices, and attempted counter-use of common spaces. In particular the visibility of embodied secularist difference in public transformed the living of Islam into a mode of similarly assertive self-creation. Contra Kemalism, living a Muslim life, too, had to be chosen, one possible lifestyle amongst other alternatives.

Despite this, as with the social movements of the 1970s, we might argue that the AKP's chosen route towards political resistance and domination revealed not only antagonism towards Kemalism but also indirect emulation of it. The trajectory of the Refah (Welfare) Party and then of the AKP resembles the history of the *first* social movement in Turkey, in transitioning from a broad and disparate social movement into Government, and then (in the last decade) into an authoritarian, *social movement-state* compound that heavily censures non-authorized oppositional social movements and urban activism in turn. As Jenny White (2018: 113) puts it, "Muslim victimhood now authorizes oppression."

Nowhere is this transformation more apparent than in the AKP government's response to the unexpected coup d'état attempt of July 2016. Due in part to the bravery of thousands of citizens who occupied the squares and streets of Istanbul and Ankara in opposition to the soldiers and tanks, the intervention failed within 24 hours. Designated by the AK Party as the "15 July Event," the government has disseminated its authorized version of the coup attempt both through mobilization of its activists/supporters (who perceive the AKP as a movement that carries their affects and interests), and secondly through a performative urbanism. In it the government has justified nearly two years of emergency rule by recasting the symbolic production of politics in Istanbul (and Ankara, Diyarbakır, Batman etc.), occupying and theatrically transforming public spaces, renaming city landmarks, redecorating state buildings (i.e., classrooms and exhibition sites), circulating approved public commentary, and instituting new public holidays.

Crucial in these processes has been the attempt by the AKP to position and compare the "democracy martyrs" killed on the night of the attempted coup with the "looters" (Tayyip Erdoğan's phrase) that made the Gezi Park protests. Three weeks after the failed coup, the AKP held a huge "democracy and martyrs vigil" in Istanbul. After reading out the names of the slain martyrs, the government used the rally to announce an end to the "democracy watch" – its own sponsored version of "Gezi Park," during which it encouraged tens of thousands of its own supporters to occupy the squares and parks of Istanbul and Ankara. Here it counter-posed the nationalism and morality of its defenders of democracy to the immorality of the Gezi Park demonstrators. Mobilizing urban space after the defeat of the coup as relegitimizing riposte to the crisis caused by its violent Gezi Park actions, in "democracy watch" the AK Party retook the city, even as the presence of its partisans in public space intimidated urban inhabitants who did not support it. Indeed, Tayyip Erdoğan is still referencing the Gezi demonstration, proving its ongoing relevance: speaking at the opening ceremony in 2018 for a new building that will replace the iconic Atatürk Cultural Centre in Gezi Park, he noted,

> Now we are transforming Atatürk Cultural Centre into one of the world's best opera venues. Those Gezi protesters also yelled against this. You can yell as much as you want. Eat your hearts out! Rant and rave, we demolished it.[11]

Conclusion

In this short account of social movements, collective action, and urban activism in Turkey, a number of features have come to the fore. Most significant is a history of political and social action oriented not only to economic conflicts but also to altering ways of life, types of behaviour, forms of knowledge, and embodied consciousness. Linked to a crisis of modernity, and characteristic of a striving for historicity by "new" social movements, in Turkey these social struggles have often targeted control of the government, an aim inspired by what Castoriadis (1990: 128) identifies as one core imaginary signification of modernity: the idea that "if one wants to transform society, it is both necessary and sufficient to seize control of the State" (Castoriadis 1990: 128) – and perhaps also of its social movements. This revolutionary dimension of social movements in Turkey, seen in Kemalism, in the 1970s leftist movements, and in Islamic political projects alike, has led – when successful – to the unique institution of a *social movement-state* assemblage, a governing power that seeks to alter cultural and symbolic aspects of social life. This history has had other consequences as well. Although not all social movements in Turkey aim at state power, the legacy of the Kemalist Republicans, the first *social movement-government* in Turkey, looms large for all other citizens' movements. In brief, the Kemalists made a revolution whose social institutions still operate to enable or curtail cultural critique today.

Further, the chapter also shows one-way social movements in Turkey (and elsewhere) "operationalize" their cultural projects: through their periodic transforming of the city itself into a stage for symbolic production, making political props of its urban assemblage. This performative environmentalism encompasses more than political activity *in* the city, in which its urban affordances (boulevards for marching; walls for graffiti; buildings and parks for occupation etc.) are used as a space of theatre for politico-cultural protests. It also aims at the constitution and alteration *of* the city, through struggle over the design, ownership, use, and meaning of urban space. In that struggle a last significant dimension of social movements is revealed – that the event and experience of activism itself involves militants in specific perceptual (phenomenological) modifications. Social movements educate partisans. Thus, in neutralizing in novices

previously deposited attitudes towards the city and in instigating in their place a socialist, Kemalist, or Islamist (etc.) mode of reckoning with it, social movements also generate selves that constitute the world anew.

Notes

1 See for example Arai 1992; Parla & Davison 2004; Bora 2017.
2 One must add that it is not clear whether these presuppositions actually describe the realities of politics in the US either. For example, no social movement or peace movement there has ever persuaded the American state to give up nuclear weapons, or has managed to stop the US military's initiating of war or covert action in numerous places around the world. In other words, in every political formation there are "red lines" that social movements appear unable to redraw.
3 The İzmit project's broader political vision may be discerned in the title of Çavdar's [1978] article: "Participatory Design as a Tool for Raising Community Consciousness."
4 The absence of a free press is another factor contributing to political construction structures in Turkey.
5 See for example "We Need a Law for Liberation: Gender, Sexuality, and Human Rights in a Changing Turkey" (2008: pp. 80–89), Human Rights Watch.
6 The figures were reported in a panel organized in 2015 by two civil society groups (the Union of Turkish Bar Associations, and the Association of Retired Non-Commissioned Officers). The numbers are alarmingly high for both causes of death, at 934 (suicide) and 818 (combat). See *Daily Sabah* 14/03/2015, [www.dailysabah.com/turkey/2015/03/14/more-turkish-soldiers-died-from-suicide-than-combat-in-10-years-panel].
7 For confirmation of the influence and power of the *İttihat ve Terakki* (Union and Progress) movement, see Üngör's (2011) study of its population policies in Eastern Anatolia from 1913, sketching out how a generation of Young Turk militants carried out a violent project of societal transformation to secure the existence of a future Turkish nation state.
8 See Houston and Şenay (2017) for an analysis of Kemalist political cartoons and visual humour.
9 Available at: http://Whatishappeninginistanbul.com (accessed June 26, 2013).
10 I realize of course that over those decades the Islamic social movement was never a unified force, and that its concerns, political tactics, and social practices changed over time. For conflict and disagreement between religious Turks and Kurds, see Houston 2001. For an analysis of "world view" and cultural change from the first to the second wave of Islamism, see Çayır's (2007) work on Islamic novels. For an interesting personal account of changes in Islamic political sensibilities, see Metiner (2008).
11 See "'Rant and Rave, We Demolished Atatürk Cultural Centre' Erdogan Tells Gezi Demonstrators," in *Sol International*, April 1 (2018), [https://news.sol.org.tr/rant-and-rave-we-demolished-ataturk-cultural-center-erdogan-tells-gezi-demonstrators-174399] (accessed July 5, 2018).

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32

RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS IN TURKEY

Ceren Lord

Introduction

The global 'revival' of religious politics since the 1970s, and particularly Islamist[1] movements have commonly been understood either through civilisational terms as traditionalist reaction or as a modern, grass-roots reaction to the crisis of the modern secular state and colonialism. While the first has been thoroughly critiqued as essentialising Muslims and Islam as unvaried, static and unchanging (Said 1978; Zubaida 2011), the latter remains the predominant approach, aided by the near 'orthodox' position of 'Asadian' scholarship (inspired by the works of Talal Asad) in the study of religious politics (Enayat 2017). At the core of this approach is a sharp distinction between an authoritarian secular modern state in opposition to what is conceptualised as an authentic religious self in the postcolonial setting. Taking for granted Islamist identity politics, Islamists are viewed from this lens as the authentic representatives of Muslims, with secularists dismissed as colonised minds or imperialist collaborators (Enayat 2017).

The study of religious politics in Turkey has not been an exception to these broader trends. Indeed, the 'master narrative' (Kandiyoti 2012: 515) of Turkish politics conceives of religious politics since the transition to multipartism from 1950 as the reaction of predominantly Muslim society against the top-down modernisation and secularisation project of the authoritarian Kemalist state, understood as a highly unitary entity. Based on this, the ascent to power of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP) in 2002 was viewed as the Turkish state's democratisation and the triumph of the 'periphery', or the Muslim masses. An alternative perspective elaborated here traces how the rise and success of Islamist politics have been facilitated from within the state rather than as a reaction to it.

Accordingly, the first section reviews the existing literature before outlining an alternative perspective of state religion-relations. The ostensible secularism of the Turkish state is challenged by the existence of the Presidency of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, from here on referred to as Diyanet). Continuing the Ottoman incorporation of the Islamic authority within the state, the Diyanet was established in 1924 as a state body legally charged with overseeing Muslim religious life by the Turkish Republic and the majority of the ulema (Muslim clerics) were absorbed within it.[2] In turn, the Diyanet, which privileges Sunni Muslim access to state resources to the exclusion of others, has been a key state actor driving Islamisation and enjoyed successive waves of expansion of its role since the transition to multipartism in the

1940s. Together with the expansion of state-administered religious education, Islamic charities and Islamic finance, these dynamics have facilitated the persistence of the salience of religious markers in economic and political competition and Islamist mobilisation. In other words, the enlargement of the religious field by the state is crucial for understanding the growth of the Islamist movement and its rise to power.

The second section traces the intellectual roots, main currents, factions and groups within the Islamist movement and their evolving and contrasting strategies over time, together with how they have been affected by the rise of the Turkish nation-state and post-1980s neoliberal economic restructuring. Alongside the highly influential role of the Naqshbandi and Nurcu communities, Turkish Islamism has been closely integrated within nationalist rightist coalitions and networks. The third section elaborates how these networks contributed to Islamist party political mobilisation. The fourth section considers the record of the Islamist AKP in power, which contrary to widely held expectations has 'demonstrated less moderation over time' (Berland 2017: 137), alongside the impact on the wider Islamist movement and its future. The final section discusses the Alevi movement, which is distinguished from the Islamist movement as involving mobilisation for the recognition of equal citizenship rights rather than for political power, catalysed by the sectarian politics of the Turkish state and Islamist politics.

Religion–state relations in Turkey

Early studies of religious politics in Turkey were based on modernisation theory and approached Islamist politics as a traditionalist reaction to the progress of modernisation and secularisation stretching back to the Ottoman Empire (Berkes 1964; Lewis 1961). Subsequent approaches rejected the positivist and teleological premises of modernisation theory and Orientalist essentialising culturalist analyses distinguishing between a westernising elite and unchanging Islamic civilisation (Said 1978; Zubaida 2011). In response, while the 'multiple modernities' perspective has emphasised Islamism as an alternative to Western modernity (Göle 1997; Göle 2002), it also suffers from essentialism in asserting a clear distinction between two cultural patterns treated as discrete and possessing a uniform essence (Zubaida 2011: 4).

Largely mirroring the broader literature on Islamist politics as grass-roots reaction, the dominant paradigm through which religious politics is understood in Turkey, including the multiple modernities approach, is based on Şerif Mardin's Shilsean centre–periphery (Shils 1975) approach (Mardin 1973). The centre–periphery dichotomy has been subsequently re-articulated as a confrontation between the authoritarian Kemalist state or 'assertive' (Kuru, A. T. 2009) state secularism and a majority Muslim society, and viewed as comprising the fundamental underlying dynamic of modern Turkey since the Ottoman era (e.g. Aktürk 2015; Ayata 1996; Göle 1997; Heper and Toktaş 2003; İnsel 2003; Kadıoğlu 1996; Özdalga 1998; Taşpınar 2005; Toprak 1981; Yavuz 1997; 2003; 2009). Broadly, there are two (overlapping) versions of this 'master narrative' of a struggle between the secular Kemalist state and traditional Muslim society (Kandiyoti 2012: 515). The first emphasises secularisation reforms enacted during the one-party period (1923–1946) as comprising a break or rupture with the Ottoman past leading to the suppression or 'cleansing' of religion from the public sphere (Kuru 2009; Sunar and Toprak 1983: 425–426; Yavuz 2000). The second version highlights continuity between the Ottoman and Turkish polities in terms of the state's control and instrumentalising of religion as opposed to separation or neutrality (Gözaydın 2009; Parla and Davison 2004; Toprak 1981: 38). Building on these, other scholars have described the adoption of the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis Islamisation programme following the 1980 military intervention as the secular state's instrumentalising of religion (Can and Bora 2004: 150–189; Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu

2009: 10; Eligür 2010: 20, 85; Sakallıoğlu 1996: 244). These narratives rely on a binary analytical framework and result in perceptions of Islamist success as democratisation, culminating in the ascent to power (or 'secular centre'), of the 'Muslim periphery' represented by the AKP in 2002 (discussed below).[3] They overlook structural factors and expansion of the religious field from within the state, including by the Diyanet, and rightist actors (Lord 2018).

While religion had comprised a fundamental pillar of the Ottoman regime, secularism was adopted as a foundational principle following the declaration of the Turkish Republic in 1923. Secularisation reforms included the diminished role of Islamic religious authority with the abolition of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations and the caliphate in 1924, the unification of education, the adoption of the Swiss civil code in 1926, the removal of Islam as the state religion in 1928 and the adoption in 1937 of laicism as a constitutional principle (Berkes 1964; Toprak 1981; Zürcher 2004: 186–195). However, Ottoman legacies, including the incorporation of Islamic institutions within the state and the emergence of religion as an ethnic marker ensured important dimensions of continuity in the ostensibly secular Republic. Consequently, despite the break with the Ottoman order, Turkish nation-state building proceeded on a religious majoritarian logic involving both the construction and elevation of Sunni Muslim identity as the basis of the nation and owners of the state and accorded them a privileged status in citizenship and distribution of state resources. The perpetuation of this logic over time was enabled by institutions such as the Diyanet, alongside state-administered religious education, and Islamist associations (Lord 2018).

Established in 1924, the Diyanet emerged as the chief Islamic authority despite its reduced remit in comparison to the Ottoman office of the Sheikh ul-Islam which it had replaced. Housing the majority of Turkey's ulema, the Diyanet is key to understanding the mobilisation and salience of religious politics. However, owing to the prevalence of the master narrative, the Diyanet has been viewed as an apparatus or passive tool of the secular Kemalist state or the AKP for controlling, nationalising and utilising religion in line with regime ideology or 'securing' the secular nature of the state (Gözaydın 2009; Kara 2014; Kuru, A. T. 2009; Öztürk, Ahmet Erdi 2016). Secularisation in the one-party era diminished the power and status of the Islamic authority, but the Diyanet also absorbed the Ottoman ulema, which thereby remained incorporated within the state. This continuity is an aspect of the Diyanet's agency in pursuing Islamisation and expanding its role, in cooperation or conflict with other state factions.

In this vein Turkish secularism was not purely about control or separation of religion from the state but evolved as a redistribution of power between factions of within the state comprising differing political visions. However, secularisation reforms did not end this struggle within the state. The power balance between different factions with their contending visions of society and politics shifted over time. Such shifts were driven by the actors themselves alongside external events including the Cold War and neoliberal economic restructuring which created windows of opportunity to push for a change of the status quo. For instance, from the late 1940s the Diyanet increasingly lobbied for an extension of its role and Islamisation by positioning itself and Islam as an antidote to communism. The ostensibly secular military agreed, and the Diyanet went subsequently enjoyed successive waves of institutional expansion and was accorded a central role in the 1980's Turkish–Islamic Synthesis programme. This expansion continues at an unprecedented pace under the AKP. Likewise, with the related growth of state-administered religious education and rise of *imam-hatip* schools as a parallel education system, Islamic charities and associations and Islamic finance have contributed to building a distinct habitus for the mobilisation and reproduction of Islamist cadres (Lord 2018). These underpinned the deepening of social stratification which gathered pace in the 1990s with the rise of 'Islamic' business groups and social spaces.

While the Diyanet is not the only institution that matters for understanding religious politics and Islamist mobilisation, as a state institution it has a privileged role and capacity to influence political strategies and life. It can provide spaces, resources and networks for Islamist mobilisation such as by lobbying for Islamisation and ensuring the persistence of the saliency of religious markers in political and economic competition. This is further underlined by the fluid relationship between the Islamist movement and Diyanet ulema which has become more visible in the AKP era (Lord 2018). In addition, the Diyanet's rejectionist stance towards minority Alevi demands for recognition (discussed below), ensures the persistence and reproduction of Islam as a marker of Turkishness, and Sunni Muslim privilege in access to the state and citizenship rights. The augmentation of this sectarian dynamic of the state in the 1980s and Islamist electoral successes were key catalysts of Alevi mobilisation in the 1990s. In sum, the structural environment, including the incorporation of Islamic authority within the state, combined with contingent events such as the onset of the Cold War and neoliberal economic restructuring in the 1980s shaped the nature of religious movement mobilisation together with the agency of these actors.

Islamist mobilisation from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic

Political Islam is a modern phenomenon that emerged in the late twentieth century. However, its intellectual roots stretch to the eighteenth-century, to the idea of a revitalisation of Islam in reaction to European imperialism and the weakening of Ottoman and Muslim power. Together with this, Turkish Islamism was greatly influenced by the intertwining of Islamist and Turkish nationalist currents from the late nineteenth-century. These ties deepened in the lead-up to the establishment of the Turkish Republic and formed the intellectual underpinnings of the 'Turkish–Islamic Synthesis' programme developed by rightist conservatives in the 1970s (Çetinsaya 1999).

The establishment of the Turkish nation-state, and subsequent military interventions, particularly in 1980 and 1997, were consequential for the trajectory of the Islamist movement, reorienting it firstly towards closer integration with Turkish nationalism, and secondly a pro-capitalist neoliberal framework (Lord 2018: 209–210). During the early phases of nation-state building, which by its nature comprised a territorially bound logic, transnational pan-Islamist and traditionalist currents that rejected Turkish nationalism were sidelined, while reformist or nationalist camps including from amongst the ulema remained within the founding coalition and incorporated within the state (Bein 2011: 108–109; Lord 2018: 214). The emergence of a one-party regime from 1925 with the declaration of the emergency Law for the Maintenance of Order (*Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu*) ended space for all political and religious activity beyond that overseen by official religious institutions. Martial law was triggered following an armed rebellion by Sheikh Said, a Kurdish Naqshbandi, which had both Kurdish nationalist and Islamist (reaction to the caliphate's abolition) underpinnings (Gunter 2007: 117–123; Olson 1989; Yeğen 1996: 221; Zürcher 2004: 169–172). Shrines were closed, tariqa orders were denounced as 'centres of reaction' and Law 677 adopted in the same year ordered the abolition of the dervish lodges, the confiscation of their wealth and a ban on religious titles. Regime fears of a counter-revolution were exacerbated by a disputed incident in Menemen in 1930 when a soldier was decapitated by a group of Naqshbandi dervishes calling for the return of sharia law and the caliphate (Zürcher 2004: 179). In reaction to the ensuing crackdown, many Islamist actors went underground (Zürcher 2004: 191–193).

However, not all Islamist currents were excluded from politics or the state. Rather, they continued to engage in and became intertwined with the Turkish right and conservatism,

particularly over their common agenda of anti-communism (Bora 2013: 518–519; Duran 2005, 129–156: 135–139; Kara 2014: 27–28). Particularly from the 1940s, avenues for Islamist mobilisation expanded with the influence of anti-communism following the emergence of the Cold War which catalysed the formation of rightist networks and solidified with the founding of various political parties and associations. This mobilisation within and outside the state chiefly occurred within the framework of the Turkish–Islamic synthesis (Çetinsaya 1999), which subsequently triumphed following the 1980 military intervention as revealed by the junta regime's adoption of a comprehensive Islamisation programme dubbed the Turkish–Islamic Synthesis (TIS). Broadly, these networks included 'traditionalist–conservative' (*gelenekçi–muhafazakar*) circles within the one-party regime, and the emergence in the 1940s and 1950s of a bloc comprising a new generation of Turkish nationalist and Islamist intellectuals called the nationalist–conservatives (*milliyetçi–muhafazakarlar*) or nationalist–sacredists (*milliyetçi–mukaddesatçılar*) (Çetinsaya 1999: 366–370; Taşkın 2007).[4] At the associational level, three organisations stand out in terms of their influential role in solidifying these rightist networks. Firstly, the National Turkish Students Union (Milli Türk Talebe Birliği, MTTB) established in 1916 as a Turkish nationalist/Turkist organisation, was influenced by growing anti-communism from the 1940s and increasingly incorporated Islamist currents from the 1960s. Prominent MTTB actors include Abdullah Gül (AKP), Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (AKP), Bülent Arınç (AKP), and far-right nationalist Devlet Bahçeli (Nationalist Movement Party, Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP). Anti-communism was also the common denominator for the second organisation, the Association for Fighting Communism (Komünizmle Mücadele Derneği, KMD), founded in the late 1940s (Poulton 1997: 139; Seufert 2014: 7). The KMD's role in connecting Islamist–nationalist–conservative rightist networks is exemplified by the involvement in the 1960s of Islamist Fethullah Gülen as one of the founders of a local branch, and president Cemal Gürsel (1960–1966), who briefly headed the organisation (Meşe 2016). The third organisation is the Hearth of the Enlightened (Aydınlar Ocağı), founded in 1970 by a small group of influential intellectuals (including the prominent Islamist Hayrettin Karaman), which shaped the 1982 constitution and the TIS programme (Can and Bora 2004: 150–189; Lord 2018: 66, 219, 224–225; Şen 2007: 65; Toprak 1990; Taşkın 2007; Yavuz 2003: 77). These rightist clusters influenced party political mobilisation, including the establishment of the first Islamist party in 1970 and its successors including the AKP. They also found reflection in rightist coalitions in party political life from the Nationalist Front (Milliyetçi Cephe) governments (comprising the Justice Party – Adalet Partisi), the MHP and the National Salvation Party – *Milli Selamet Partisi* (MSP)) of the 1970s, the ANAP in the 1980s, the RP's electoral pact with the MCP in the 1990s, and the AKP from 2002 (including its alliance with the MHP from 2015), indicating an important dimension of continuity (Şen 2007: 65).

From the 1970s, Islamists increasingly extended their transnational networks. Turkish Islamists were traditionally highly nationalist in orientation in comparison to global Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. However, since the 1970s, Cold War–related developments including the creation of a 'green belt' against communism, funded by oil rich Arab monarchies and particularly Saudi Arabia's Muslim World League, extended resources for domestic Turkish Islamist mobilisation (e.g. facilitating the growth of Islamic finance) but also transnational coalitions and exchanges between Islamist forces (Ahmad 1988: 761–762; Eligür 2010; Köni 2012: 97–110; Lord 2018: 110–111)., From this perspective, the 1980 junta regime's efforts to deepen the integration between Islamist and Turkish nationalist currents was a means to check pan-Islamist currents spurred by these linkages, alongside an effort to strengthen rightist blocs against socialist currents (Lord 2018: 230–231).

A further layer of Islamist mobilisation involved the role of Islamic tariqa orders and communities (*cemaat*). The Naqshbandi[5] order played a significant role in the Ottoman and Turkish states 'in merging the revivalist fundamentalism of the lower classes into the established orthodoxy' (Karpat 2001: 21, 24). They 'operate as a repository of virtually all cultural and religious traditions that have existed in Turkey; they bridge the gap between the Ottoman period and the current Islamic socio-political revival' (Yavuz 2003: 134). Naqshbandism has

> served as the matrix for the emergence in the 1970s of the four leading contemporary Turkish Islamic political and social movements: the neo-Naksibendi Sufi order of Süleymancı[6] and other orders; the new Islamist intellectuals; the Nurcu movement of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi, with its offshoot led by the charismatic Fethullah Gülen; and the MGH [National Outlook Movement] of Necmettin Erbakan.
>
> *(Yavuz 2003: 11)*

Naqshbandis led rebellions against the Republican state during the one-party era but also mobilised outside and within the state including within the Diyanet, spreading through the mosques, a key centre being the İskenderpaşa mosque in Istanbul Fatih (Karpat 2001: 113; Yavuz 2003: 140).

Alongside the various Naqshbandi *cemaat* is the prominent offshoot called the Nurcular, with an estimated five to six million members (Yavuz 2003: 140), who are the followers of Bediüzzaman Said Nursi (1877–1960), a prominent Islamist of Kurdish origin. Nursi's association with Naqshbandism is contested given his critique of Sufism, leading some to distinguish the Nurcu from traditional tariqa orders or Islamism (Çakır 2002: 89–90; Kuru and Kuru 2008: 108–109). However, both the various Naqshbandi and Nurcu groups 'stressed the constitutive role of Islam as a shared language and practice for a community to have a meaningful life' (Yavuz 2003: 56). During his lifetime, Nursi was involved with the Turkish nationalist Committee of Union and Progress (İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti) in the Ottoman Empire, as well as Kurdish nationalist and Islamist movements (Mardin 1989; Özdalga 2000: 85; Seufert 2014: 12). Following a period of reclusion triggered by disappointment in the new Republican regime, the Nurcus became highly active in political life from the 1940s, particularly through staunch anti-communist engagement within the right (Bora 2017: 424).

Following the death of Nursi in 1960, several Nurcu offshoots emerged, the most prominent being the Gülenists led by Fethullah Gülen (1941–) who grew from the 1970s into an 'autonomous faith-based societal movement'[7] (Yavuz 2003: 180). Alongside his anti-communist activism, Gülen is a Diyanet imam, a highly statist Turkish nationalist,[8] who leads one of the most powerful Islamist movements in Turkish history. The Gülenists engaged in education provision to build a Golden Generation (Altın Nesil) infused with Islamic morality with whom they targeted state power by building cadres of followers within the bureaucracy (Çobanoğlu 2012: 403; Lord 2018: 219–225; Şık 2014). At its height, the movement had a vast education and business empire, including more than 1,000 schools in over 120 countries (Hendrick 2013: 3). Gülenist activities continued to expand even after Gülen's self-enforced exile in the United States following the 1997 military intervention. Gülen had supported the military, which was in keeping with his gradualist strategy of advancing his project while avoiding direct confrontation. This strategy and a seeming tendency to try and establish a monopoly was why the group was often regarded with suspicion and relations with other Islamist currents and leaders were uneasy. However, until their fallout, a fruitful alliance was struck from 2002 between the AKP and Gülenists that enabled them to expand their cadres within the judiciary, and security forces to remove any opposing factions (Çakır 2002: 113–116; Şık 2014: 125–130). This was

chiefly achieved through allegations of coup plots and the existence of clandestine or deep state forces targeting the AKP through coup plot trials (Cizre 2016; Lord 2018: 269–278; Seufert 2014). The government's initial public disavowal of the Gülenists followed the 2013 corruption investigations targeting the AKP by the judiciary. As the fallout deepened, they were finally designated as the Fethullah Gülen Terrorist Organisation (Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü, FETÖ) in 2015, with the AKP blaming their former partners for the 2016 failed putsch.

Islamist political party mobilisation

Following the 12 September 1980 military coup, the junta regime closed the MSP alongside all political parties. The intensifying class-based politics, severe left–right polarisation and economic crisis in the 1970s had stoked a 'hegemonic crisis' (Yalman 2015: 237) following which the junta regime adopted far-reaching political and neoliberal economic restructuring including the TIS programme. The TIS was a comprehensive policy of social engineering reorienting society towards 'the mosque, barracks and the family', to create a 'pious' nation through expansion of religious (Sunni Islamic) education and widening Diyanet activities from beyond the mosque to all spheres of life including hospitals, prisons and families (Lord 2018: 66–67; Toprak 1990: 11). This shift in the balance of power within the state towards rightist factions catalysed expansion of religious infrastructure including Sunni religious education, Islamic associations and foundations, Islamic finance and the self-styled Muslim or conservative business organisations. The state's increased privileging of the majority religion through the distribution of resources and incentives in turn provided greater opportunities for Islamist mobilisation over other types of movements (Lord 2018: 66–67). This dynamic is also revealed by the soaring membership of the Islamist trade union Hak-İş only after the junta regime closed all other labour unions and only allowed the right-wing nationalist and Islamist ones to operate (Duran and Yildirim 2005: 233; Öztürk, Aykut 2018: 461).

Against this background, the MSP was reborn as the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, RP) in 1983. In the 1980s, the RP's electoral showing was weak. It failed to cross the 10% threshold with 7.2% of the vote in the 1987 elections. This was partly owing to the governing ANAP's prominence as an umbrella party for rightists. The fragmentation of political parties in the 1990s, together with successive economic and political crises including short-lived coalitions, corruption and armed conflict with the Kurdish nationalist movement, proved a boon for the electoral fortunes of the Islamists. With efforts of the Hearth of the Enlightened, the RP struck an alliance with the rightist-nationalist National Work Party (Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi, MÇP, the heirs of the MHP) in the 1991 elections and raised their joint share of the national vote to 16.9% (Şen 2010: 64). In 1994, the RP gained 19% in the municipal elections including control of major cities of Istanbul, Ankara and Diyarbakir and won a plurality of the national vote (21.4%) in the 1995 general election.

Factors underpinning the RP's success included its cross-class appeal compared to the MSP's petty-bourgeois base (Gülalp 1997: 434, 444–445; Şen 2010: 66). The party was able to appeal to the urban poor partly owing to the 1980 junta regime's obliteration of the left and post-1980s expansion of faith-based organisations engaged in welfare provisioning (Göçmen 2014), alongside the new Anatolia-based capital groups benefiting from 1980s economic liberalisation. The rise of Anatolian capital or pious Muslim business groups has been associated with the rise of a pious 'Muslim bourgeoisie', widely taken for granted as underpinning Islamist moderation (Atasoy 2009; Demiralp 2009; Gümüşçü 2010, 835–861; Nasr 2005, 13–27; Tuğal 2009; White 2008). A by-product of these dynamics was the founding of pious Muslim business organisations, the first of which was the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's

Association (Müstakil Sanayici ve İş Adamları Derneği, MÜSİAD) founded in 1990, followed by the Association of Anatolian Businessmen (Anadolu Aslanları İşadamları Derneği, ASKON) alongside the Gülenist Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (Türkiye İşadamları ve Sanayiciler Konfederasyonu, TUSKON) which was closed following the 2016 attempted coup.[9] Reflecting the 'master narrative', scholars commonly asserted that they were initially stifled by the 'secular' Kemalist state and capital based in the traditional business centres of Istanbul and Izmir (Demir, Acar and Toprak 2004; Gümüşçü and Sert 2009: 961; Yavuz 2003; 2006). Various studies show that such claims of victimhood are without basis and take for granted Islamist discourses (Bedirhanoğlu and Yalman 2009; Cengiz 2013; Lord 2018: 167–178).

A distinguishing feature of the RP and its successors compared to other parties has been the successful vertical mobilisation of the poor through faith-based associations and the horizontal mobilisation of business and middle-class networks through involvement in these associations affiliated to and or brought together by the political party (Akinci 1999; Öniş 1997: 755–756; White 2002). Reflecting its diverse social base, the cornerstone of the RP's political programme was the Just Order (Adil Düzen) ideal, viewed as socialistic, Third Worldist, populist politics that offered 'a compromise between the ideal Islamic order […] and a classical welfare state' presented a third way between capitalism and socialism (Tuğal 2002: 105–106; 2009: 137–140; also see: Toprak 2005: 185; Çakır 1994: 131–149; Gülalp 2001: 442; Yavuz 2003: 221–222). Yet, 'the Just Order program was not radical enough for the radicals and too radical and unrealistic for the emergent capitalist sectors within the [Islamist] movement' (Tuğal 2009: 249). Overall, the RP maintained the MSP's main themes of anti-Westernism, anti-Zionism, the championing of Anatolian capital, the critiquing secularism and adopted a majoritarian emphasis at the ballot box. The constitution restricted the call for an Islamic state, but the RP's promotion of legal pluralism akin to the Ottoman *millet* system constituted an implicit call for sharia law (Toprak 2005; see also: Bulaç 1998; Guida 2010).

The rise of the AKP

The splintering of the RP based on these internal divisions was spurred by the 'post-modern coup' on 28 February 1997 which had resulted in the resignation of the RP-led coalition government. The RP was subsequently closed by the Constitutional Court for anti-secular activity. Two currents emerged within the RP: 'traditionalists' (*Gelenekçiler*) sought to be an ideological cadre party, while the 'reformists' (*Yenilikçiler*) wanted to become a mass party (Çakır 1994: 76). Beyond differences in political strategies, the reformists were mindful of their experience of the 1997 military intervention and represented the rising Anatolian capital and pious Muslim bourgeoisie. Once the RP's successor, the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP), was also closed by the Constitutional Court in 2001, these divisions crystallised in the formation of the AKP by the reformists and the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) by the traditionalists. The AKP rebranded itself as a 'conservative democratic' party (Akdoğan 2003) by dropping the Just Order programme, renouncing its Islamist roots and ties to the National Outlook movement, and adopting a liberal economic programme coupled with a pro-European Union, pro-Western and human rights discourse. This reorientation continued a trend that had begun with the FP in contrast to the SP which maintained the National Outlook agenda (Cizre-Sakallıoğlu and Çınar 2003: 326–327). Compared with the FP's 15.4% of the vote in the 1999 general elections, the SP gained just 2.49% of the vote in the 2002 elections, while the AKP won 34.3%.

Both structural and agency-based factors underpin the AKP's successive electoral victories: 46.6% in 2007, 49.8% in 2011, 40.9% in June 2015 and 49.5% in November 2015, and

42.6% in 2018. Structural factors include the post-1980 neoliberal restructuring and the rise of the pious 'Muslim bourgeoisie' and business groups (e.g. Gümüşçü and Sert 2009; Hosgör 2011: 354; Özcan and Turunç 2011; Tuğal 2009: 6–10; Yavuz 2006); economic achievements (Kalaycıoğlu 2010; Öniş 2009: 23); the highly majoritarian Turkish political system (Lord 2012; 2018: 241–281); the disintegration of the centre-right political parties following a deep political and economic crisis in 2000-2001, and corruption scandals, following which the AKP emerged as the main party of the right in 2002. Agency-based explanations focus on party mobilisation and discourse strategies (Baykan 2018), how 'activists intervene in ordinary people's lives' (Tuğal 2006; 2009); the extension and monopolisation of clientelistic mechanisms, including neoliberal reforms and the development of particularistic social welfare policies (Bermek 2019; Buğra and Candaş 2011; Köse and Bahçe 2009, 492–509; White 2012); attempts to establish and promote a pro-AKP business class (Buğra and Savaşkan 2014; Esen and Gümüşçü 2018; Gürakar 2016; Köse and Bahçe 2009); vertical mobilisation through party membership giving voters access to opportunities (Doğan 2016); and the AKP's initial rebranding as a 'conservative democratic party' to appeal to a wider audience beyond its traditional base of pious voters (Hale and Özbudun 2009; Şen 2010: 64–65).

Islamists in power and future prospects

The AKP government's record has undermined the widespread expectations of Islamist moderation through inclusion, political learning, pragmatism, Europeanisation and capitalist absorption, resulting in inevitable democratisation against the Kemalist authoritarian state or the emergence of a 'conservative democracy' (Cizre 2008; Demiralp 2009; İnsel 2003; Kalaycıoğlu 2007; Kuru and Stepan 2012; Müftüler-Baç 2005; Özbudun 2006; Somer 2007; Sayari and Hasanov 2008; Yavuz 2009). This conviction was underpinned by the 'master narrative' (outlined above) and AKP's early liberalising measures targeting civilianisation of the military, engagement with ethnic and religious communities, market-friendly economic policies, the start of EU accession negotiations in 2005 and the expansion of the (Muslim) religious field. Consequently, the AKP era is commonly periodised as involving liberalisation and civilianisation between 2002 and 2007, consolidation of power from 2009 to 2011 and a drift towards authoritarianism and Islamisation from 2011 onwards (e.g. Sezal and Sezal 2018). However, while the AKP 'always worked from the premise that Turkey is a Sunni Muslim-majority country' (Akan 2017), the party's early authoritarian tendencies, including efforts to criminalise adultery in 2004 and periodic sectarian outbursts,[10] were largely overlooked owing to the dominant democratisation narrative. Important junctures catalysed the augmentation of the AKP's authoritarianism including the 2007 military e-memorandum, the coup plot trials during 2008–2014 targeting the military, the 2013 Gezi Park protests, the outbreak of the Arab uprisings in 2011, the power struggle with the Gülenists marked by the December 2013 corruption investigations targeting the AKP and the 2016 failed putsch. The trend towards a highly personalised autocratic regime was consolidated by the 2017 constitutional referendum which instituted a highly centralised presidential system that further weakened checks on executive power.

A key dimension of the AKP's authoritarian politics has involved the pursuit of Islamisation (Kaya 2015; Lord 2018; Pupcenoks 2012; Rubin and Yeşilada 2010; Şen 2010). This means an unprecedented expansion of the role of the Diyanet; religious education (reflecting the desire to raise a 'pious generation' as declared by Erdoğan) (Çakmak 2009, 825–846; Coşkun and Şentürk 2012, 165–177; Kandiyoti and Emanet 2017, 869–876; Lüküslü 2016, 637–649; Ozgur 2012; Türkmen 2009, 381–397); and the growth of faith-based associations and Islamic

capital in the context of neoliberal transformation of the economy (Başkan, F. 2004; Buğra and Savaşkan 2014; Eder 2010; Hosgör 2011; Yankaya 2014). In turn, the enlargement of the religious field has extended the Islamic habitus involving growing social stratification with the emergence of Islamic holidays and fashion and the restructuring of social spaces with venues without alcohol and gender segregation (Crăciun 2017; Gökarıksel and Secor 2010; Öncü and Balkan 2016). Moreover, the AKP has promoted conservative gender roles and patriarchal religious values including the adoption of pro-family social policies (Arat 2010; Coşar and Yeğenoğlu 2011; Kaya 2015; Yılmaz 2015) and the sectarian targeting of minority Alevis (Lord 2019). Foreign policy, too, particularly since the 2011 Arab uprisings, has become more sectarian and been conducted through an 'Islamist interpretive frame' (Ayata 2015; Başkan 2018; Çınar 2018; Hinnebusch and Tür 2013; Hintz 2018; Ozkan 2014).

Concomitantly, the AKP's discourse has shifted from its earlier, relatively more pragmatic presentation of itself towards a more explicit 'exclusionary' populism (Çınar and Sayın 2014: 375) involving a re-emphasis on its Turkish–Islamist ideology and anti-Western civilisational discourse. Islamist discourse has largely mirrored the master narrative in exuding a 'politics of *ressentiment* that encourages the projection of hatred onto groups or classes seen as privileged and exclusionary and as oppressors of the national "underdog"' (Kandiyoti 2014; italics in original). This politics is underpinned by a narrative of

> victimhood in relation to the rising secularist Western world and Kemalist elites [which] is a constitutive element of the hegemonic imaginary of Turkish-Islamist ideology in Turkey. […] Turkish-Islamist intellectuals have constantly promoted the idea that devout Sunni Turks from Anatolia were the real victims of the elitist top-down modernisation process.
>
> *(Yılmaz 2017: 487)*

Islamists including the AKP have employed this victimhood narrative together with an anti-Western 'civilisation discourse' in their quest for power to enlarge their hegemony (Açıkel 1996; Yılmaz 2017: 484).

Two factors will be consequential for Turkey's Islamist movement. Firstly, from its initial founding in 2001, the AKP had emerged as the primary umbrella under which diverse groups and factions of Islamists, conservatives, nationalists and rightists gathered. However, this is fracturing owing to the augmentation of the AKP's hold on the state and crackdown on dissent which has catalysed an unprecedented power struggle within the Islamist movement, as revealed by the violent fallout with the AKP's former allies, the Gülenists, and animosity against other Islamist groups such as the Süleymancı and the Furkan Foundation.[11] Secondly, shifts in the external field, including geopolitical upheavals and conflict since the 2011 Arab uprisings, which have resulted in the AKP's involvement in the Syrian conflict and its support for and collaboration with Islamist forces across the region, raises the spectre of growing 'salafisation' and radicalisation of Turkish Islamism (Cakir 2015; Hammond 2017, 417–435; Tezcur and Ciftci 2014; Vicini 2018). These dynamics also include the AKP's strengthening ties with the Muslim Brotherhood since 2011, viewed as part of a wider ambition to establish an AKP-led Islamic union across the region (Başkan 2019).

The transnational Alevi movement

In contrast to the Islamist movement which is focused on the attainment of state power, the Alevi movement emerged in the 1990s as a transnational movement in both Turkey and

Western Europe focused on asserting Alevi distinction from Sunni Islam (Dressler 2008: 282) and demanding equal citizenship rights. In addition, while the Islamist movement was facilitated from within the Turkish state and enjoyed a privileged status owing to their Sunni Muslim identity, the Alevi movement has emerged partly in reaction to the sectarian politics of the Islamists and the Turkish state.[12] Given the rights-based focus and demands, and internal debates as to whether Alevism can be considered a 'religion' comparable to the Abrahamic religions, the designation of the Alevi movement as a 'religious' one comparable to Islamism is also contested.

Alevis are estimated to comprise 10% to 30% of Turkey's total population (Shankland 2003: 21) but remain officially unrecognised and subject to discrimination by the Turkish state. The nature of Alevi identity is highly contested, with questions centring on origins, including its relationship to Islam, ethno-linguistic roots (e.g. Turkish, Kurdish, Zaza) and whether it is a religion, philosophy, way of life or culture (Şahin 2005: 479; Sökefeld 2008). Consequently, in modern usage 'Alevi' has emerged as an 'umbrella term' referring to heterogeneous communities with different ethno-linguistic and regional characteristics (Açıkel and Ateş 2011: 717; Erdemir 2005: 938; Karakaya-Stump 2017: 66).

Under the Ottoman Empire, groups viewed as beyond the pale of orthodox Sunni Islam were designated as Kızılbaş Alevis and persecuted by the state (Deringil 1990: 555; Gündoğdu and Genç 2013; Ocak 1998: 15–17). These dynamics were exacerbated by confessionalisation of the Ottoman state (Karakaya-Stump 2019) until the turn of the twentieth century when Turkish nationalists became interested in Alevis, fearing Christian missionaries and relations with Armenians. Alevis were subsequently re-articulated as 'genuine Turks', in contrast to Sunni 'Arabised' Turks, and as carrying pre-Islamic and pre-Ottoman Turkish traits traced back to Central Asia. Previously 'heretical' Alevism was reformulated by Republican Turkish nationalist historians as a 'syncretic' religion and Turkish heterodox Islam. This came to be known as the 'Köprülü paradigm', becoming the primary paradigm through which Alevism is understood (Dressler 2013; Karakaya-Stump 2019; Karolewski 2008). Recent works challenge this narrative: Dressler (2013) situates modern Alevi identity as being shaped by the Turkish nation-building project, while Karakaya-Stump (2019) traces the emergence of the Kızılbaş in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries from within the cosmopolitan Sufi Middle East environment.

In theory, the ostensibly secular Turkish Republic offered equal citizenship regardless of religious belonging, but in practice, as outlined above, it privileged Sunni Islam, consigning Alevis to invisibility (Zırh 2012) at best, or targeted them with violence (e.g. Gazi massacre of 1995) and ethnic cleansing (e.g. Dersim massacre 1937–1938) at worst. In the multiparty era, Alevis continued to be subjected to periodic bouts of violence and pogroms perpetuated by rightist mobs with the complicity of the state authorities (e.g. in Maraş in 1978, Çorum in 1980, Sivas in 1993), particularly following engagement with the left from the 1960s and 1970s. In general, reflecting the dynamics within the state outlined above, two types of state strategies against Alevis emerged: i) nationalist factions particularly in the military which sought to assimilate Alevis as Turkish Muslims; and ii) the Diyanet, as carriers of Sunni orthodoxy, which maintained a rejectionist stance towards Alevism and Alevi distinction but also adopted a more assimilationist approach from the 1980s. As the balance of power within the state has shifted towards more rightist factions, especially under the AKP, sectarian targeting and discrimination against Alevis amplified. The AKP's 'Alevi opening' between 2007 and 2011, comprised a renewed assimilationist strategy (Lord 2016b).

While Alevi activism can be traced to the 1960s, emergence of a transnational Alevi movement seeking communal mobilisation and recognition (Sökefeld 2008) only occurred in the 1980s. It was catalysed by the post-1980 augmentation of the Turkish state's Sunni

majoritarian character and the rise of Islamism resulting in increasing sectarianism, collective trauma (owing to sectarian violence), the left's annihilation, and the global shift from class to identity politics including Kurdish nationalism, transnational networks and organisation emerging amongst European Alevi migrants, political liberalisation and expansion of media communications (Massicard 2013; Şahin 2005; Sökefeld 2006; 2008: 37; Zırh 2012). The reconstitution of Alevism as a 'social movement' as opposed to a 'religious 'community' (Sökefeld 2008: 37; see also: Dressler 2008, 280–311; Massicard 2007; Şahin 2001; Zırh 2012) was facilitated post-1960s migration and urbanisation which weakened Alevi religious traditions and practices and resulted in the emergence of lay elites who have shaped associational life since the 1990s.

The diverse Alevi movement comprises groups organised around traditional religious networks, alongside village, regional and national associations, federations and transnational confederations. The contestation over Alevi identity also delineates factions within the movement that can be broadly distinguished as comprising 'traditionalists' who view Alevism as within Islam and 'progressivists' who construe it as a distinct belief (Zırh 2012: 183–187). Across Europe, the leading Alevi organisation is the largely progressivist Alevi Associations in Europe Confederation (Avrupa Alevi Birlikleri Konfederasyonu, AABK, est. 2002), with smaller Kurdish and traditionalist groups. In Turkey, the picture is more fragmented, with divisions crystallised under three major federations: the Alevi Bektashi Federation (Alevi Bektaşi Federasyonu, ABF, established 2002), Alevi Associations Federation (Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu, ADFE, established 2008), and Alevi Foundations Federation (Alevi Vakıflar Federasyonu, AVF, established 2005), which generally but not exclusively represent progressivist, in-between, and traditionalist factions, respectively. Despite the lack of a hierarchy within Alevism and diversity within the movement, common demands from the state include the following: i) abolition of the Diyanet; ii) abolition of compulsory religious classes; iii) official recognition of *cemevis* as Alevi places of worship; iv) conversion of the site of the 1993 Sivas massacre into a museum; v) the ending of mosque construction in Alevi villages; vi) restitution of dervish lodges appropriated in 1925 (Karakaya-Stump 2017; Zırh 2019).

There have been two attempts at party political mobilisation, the establishment of the Turkey Union Party (Türkiye Birlik Partisi, TBP) in 1965 and the Peace Party (Barış Partisi) in 1995, both of which failed to garner mass Alevi support. The movement's political preferences involve close engagement with leftist politics and social democratic parties (Ertan 2019; Schüler 1999). Since 2015, an unprecedented engagement with pro-Kurdish Peoples' Democratic Party (Halkların Demokratik Partisi, HDP) involved election of Alevi activists to parliament.

In contrast to the Islamists' success in capturing state power, the Turkey-based Alevi movement's demands remain elusive owing to the AKP's Islamisation drive. In comparison, the European leg of the movement has achieved major successes in gaining official recognition of Alevism as a distinct faith community across Europe (currently 12 countries including Germany, France and Britain), with numerous attendant rights such Alevism lessons in schools and recognition of religious holidays. These achievements and spaces for activism in Europe will be consequential for the future of Alevism and the movement which faces several internal and external challenges. Internally, the contestation over the definition and nature of Alevism, the questions over religious authority, and ethnic polarising between Turkish and Kurdish Alevis will be exacerbated by the diverging processes of recognition and non-recognition in Europe including Turkey. On the external front, the Turkish AKP government's violent sectarian targeting of Alevis and its Islamisation drive coupled with assimilationist measures (Lord 2019) constrict spaces for future mobilisation of the Alevi movement and increase the insecurity of Alevis and the future of Alevism.

Conclusion

Religious movements in Turkey have been fundamentally shaped by the interaction of the institutional framework with groups' internal dynamics and their wider networks and alliances. The institutional framework encompassed the nature Turkish nation-state building, the privileging of Sunni Muslim Turkish identity as the basis and rightful owners of the nation-state, alongside important dimensions of continuity with the Ottoman state that saw the integration of religious authority within the state. Contrary to the common wisdom of Islamism emerging as a reaction to the ostensibly secular Kemalist state, the imbrication of religion and state in the early phases of nation-state building ultimately facilitated Islamist mobilisation through the provision of spaces and state resources for a movement that claimed to be the authentic representatives of a nation imagined as a Sunni Muslim majority. Through time, this integration with state power involved negotiations of the bounds of the Islamist project, to influence a more Turkish nationalist rather than pan-Islamist current, which was solidified through Islamist involvement within rightist networks. Accordingly, the Turkish–Islamic synthesis, with its intellectual roots in the late Ottoman cooperation between Islamist and Turkish nationalist currents, not only continued but was augmented as the power balance within the state shifted towards conservative currents in the multiparty era.

The discrepancy between the promise of secular citizenship enshrined in the Republican constitution and the Turkish state's institutionalised privileging of the Sunni Turkish majority was consequential for the development of the Alevi movement. While in the Islamic Ottoman Empire, those designated as Kızılbaş were increasingly regarded as heretical, early Turkish nationalists sought to incorporate them into the nationalist project, but only through rearticulating Alevism as Turkish Islam. With the nation imagined solely as Sunni Muslim, there was no room for Alevi distinction, and this was an area where there was an overlapping consensus between different factions within the state. The augmentation of the Sunni majoritarian character of the state over time and accompanying sectarian violence were catalysing factors in the growth of Alevi movement from the late 1980s. The movement has maintained its focus on equal citizenship rights and forged alliances with leftist, secular and democratic forces while utilising transnational spaces for mobilisation. Overall, the development and evolution of religious movements in the ostensibly secular Turkish case suggest a need for a reconsideration of dominant understandings of religious politics that present stylised descriptions of state and society.

Notes

1 Modern Islamist movements mobilise in the name of an interpretation of Islam which they instrumentalise and seek the transformation of state and society in line with this vision, harkening back to a re-imagined golden age of early Islam (Ayoob 2008: 2).

2 Since 2018, the Diyanet has been tied to the presidential office, and has over 120,000 personnel and controls over 80,000 mosques.

3 Similar designations include 'Black Turk' (i.e., Muslims) vs. 'White Turks' (secular Turks) (Demiralp 2012).

4 For overview of evolution of Islamist thought and debates, see: (Guida 2010; Köseoğlu 2019; Pirický 2012; Şentürk 2009; White 2005; Çetinsaya 1999)

5 The founding of the Naqshbandi Sufi tariqat order, with an estimated 8-10 million followers in Turkey (Karpat 2001: 108), is dated to the fourteenth century. Naqshbandim in Turkey is rooted in and represents different offshoots of the Khalidi branch, inspired by the 'revivalist' Naqshbandi teachings of Mevlana Halid (1776–1777/1827). The Khalidi-Naqshbandi have been among the most active tariqa orders during both the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic. Yavuz notes that 'One of the major reasons that the Khalidi branch managed to penetrate the Ottoman state was the religiously orthodox and politically activist doctrine of the order. Both the state and the Naksibendis were critical

of heterodoxy in society. The ulema of Istanbul favoured the order, too, in their fight against the heterodox Bektaşis' (Yavuz 2003: 136). In Turkey's Naqshbandism, the Menzil, Erenköy, İskenderpaşa, İsmailağa, Işıkçı and Süleymancı communities are amongst the most prominent alongside the Nurcus and their various offshoots including the Gülenists. For further analysis of Naqshbandis, see: (Karpat 2001; Yavuz 2003: 133-150; Mardin 1989: 57-59).

6 The Süleymancı, the Naqshbandi followers of Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, are a powerful traditionalist branch active within the Diyanet and religious education provision, with an estimated 2-4 million followers (Eligür 2010: 57; Yavuz 2003: 145).

7 For critical scholarship on Gülenists see (Lord 2018: 219-225; Çobanoğlu 2012; Şen 2007).

8 Regarding Gülen's approach to Turkish nationalism (and animosity towards Kurdish nationalism) see: (Çobanoğlu 2012: 237, 251; Yavuz 2003: 202; Lord 2018: 219-225; Seufert 2014: 13; Turam 2007: 35; Bora 2017: 428, 434; Bulaç 2008: 318).

9 For a detailed overview of pious business organisations see Buğra and Savaşkan 2014; Hosgör 2011; Şen 2010; Lord 2018: 166-178; Demir, Acar and Toprak 2004; Durak 2013; Önis and Türem 2001; Balkan, Balkan and Öncü 2015; Yankaya 2014; Çokgezen 2000.

10 These include remarks made by Erdoğan against opposition CHP leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu and his Alevi roots during the 2010 referendum, references to alleged domination of the judiciary by Alevis and referring to the citizens murdered in a 2013 terror attack in Reyhanlı as "Sunni martyrs".

11 e.g. the Menzil tariqa order recent rise within the bureaucracy (Middle East Eye 12 June 2018; Kandiyoti October–November 2016).

12 Commonplace assertions of an alleged allegiance between Alevis and secular state elites or affinity of secularists towards Alevis are undermined by historical evidence (Lord 2016a; Lord 2016b; Lord 2019) and underpinned by a deep 'Aleviphobia' (Karakaya-Stump 2013).

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33

THE QUEST FOR CULTURAL POWER

Islamism, culture and art in Turkey[1]

Özgür Yaren, Cenk Saraçoğlu and Irmak Karademir-Hazır

Introduction

As recognized by many, one of the ideological building blocks of political Islam in Turkey has been a victimization narrative (e.g. Açıkel, 1996; Yılmaz, 2017). This narrative is built on a claim that Islamists have been suffering in all spheres of life since the hegemony of a dominant Kemalist, secular, and Westernist ideology was established. Articulation of this idea in the political field not only facilitated the formation of—albeit short-term—political alliances with other opponents of the Kemalist establishment but also maintained Islamists' group identity (Hazır, 2019). The Justice and Development Party (AKP) continued to circulate and reproduce this narrative even after it managed to win many significant political achievements. However, this narrative recently began to shift slightly, this time highlighting how this victimhood continues to be effective in some areas more than others. For instance, a popular claim circulating lately in Turkey is that the conservative segments of society could not achieve as striking of an upward progression in the art field as they did in the domains of politics and economy. Islamist thinkers and opinion leaders strongly argued that the established art forms have been under the control of an elitist circle (secular, leftist,[2] Kemalist;[3] interchangeable targets) that has excluded pious artists from the art field to date (Keten, 2018). Islamic-conservative politicians and opinion leaders have repeatedly complained that they lack cultural power. This discourse of "exclusion" and victimization continued even after governmental positions and lucrative investment opportunities were deliberately allocated to individuals with conservative and pious backgrounds. Even though many AKP supporters have achieved significant economic and political upward mobility, and the party consolidated its power to the extent of operating a de facto party-state over the past two decades, AKP officials' and Islamists' discontent with a perceived deprivation of cultural power has continued unabated. According to Erdoğan, the cultural field has been hitherto under the control of a handful of "marginal elites," who typically despise both the conservative laypeople and his own party for being "uneducated" and ignorant of "art, theater, cinema, poetry" (Ferguson, 2014: 78). The same discourse was articulated in the mission statement of the pro-government Islamist weekly magazine *Cins* (Sezer, 2019). According to its chief editor, İsmail Kılıçarslan, *Cins*'s main aim was to fight the cultural hegemony sustained by the Kemalists. Sertaç Timur Demir (quoted in Bora 2018), a pro-government academic in

the field of media and communication, left-wing secularists have secured the cultural field and reproduce the hegemony of the founding ideology. He argues that pious people have been facing this for more than a hundred years, talking about it for half a century, and searching for ways to be equal for the last 20 years.

In recent years, this discourse of being historically bereft of cultural power has accompanied a conspicuous interventionism in the field of culture through the use of the state's ideological apparatus and economic resources. The first years of the AKP's reign were shaped by liberal cultural policies aiming to withdraw the state (and its support) from the realm of culture and art (see Birkiye, 2009; and for a rather belated survey on this trend, see Aksoy & Şeyben, 2015). Nevertheless, as they consolidated their power, cultural policies made a U-turn towards interventionism, proactively aiming to create a conservative art field. These interventionist policies rested on the effective use of bureaucracy and ideological tools (schools, universities, public broadcasting, financially controlled private media mouthpieces, and so on) to enact the strategy of promoting proponents' artwork while curbing the perceived opponent producers. In view of this, the government prepared financial support schemas for ideologically and aesthetically favourable cultural producers and enforced obstructions or bans on dissident cultural products and dissident producers. It was through this strategy that the official authorities sought to supplant the cultural initiatives of autonomous civil society organizations with the well-financed activities of GONGOs (government-organized nongovernmental organizations). One salient example is the prestigious İstanbul Film Festival organized by İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV), a foundation defined as a cultural establishment, facing a rival, the Bosphorus Film Festival, organized by a GONGO, which was founded for creating an alternative scene. In this chapter, we first try to situate the AKP officials' and Islamists' yearning for cultural hegemony within the general political and ideological context of contemporary Turkey. We then examine the forms in which the AKP has utilized the state's ideological apparatus and economic resources to intervene in the cultural field. Lastly, we assert that such recent attempts to transform the field of culture from above are a historically specific phenomenon that cannot be simply grasped as yet another manifestation of a long-standing polarization between secularists and conservatives in Turkey.

Contextualizing "cultural power"

The claim for cultural power came to the fore more openly at a particular stage of the AKP's rule.[4] The transition from a seemingly "liberal" discourse of withdrawing the state from the field of art to the strategy of crude interventionism is indeed a manifestation of a shift in the ideological strategies that the AKP pursued for its hegemony at large. A neo-Ottomanist and Islamist-nationalist outlook blended with a neoliberal economic vision with anti-Kemalist overtones has always been a core element of the societal vision of the founders and leading figures of this party (Atasoy, 2009; Şen, 2010). The pretension of representation in the sphere of the state having allegedly overlooked the conservative/pious majority and its cultural values was the hallmark of right-wing political forces in Turkey from the Democratic Party (DP) throughout the 1950s to Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (ANAP) in the 1980s (Coşar & Özman, 2004; Mert, 2007). However, the AKP, which has presented itself as the heir to these right-wing figures and parties (Taşkın, 2008), has diverged from this tradition in two interrelated ways. First of all, it has claimed not only to *represent* these supposedly "victimized and excluded" masses but also to *identify* with them, juxtaposing itself on behalf of the nation against the Kemalist establishment. Second, the AKP did not limit itself to incorporating and/or reconciling the Islamic conception of "nation" with the established Kemalist view of Turkish nationalism.

Rather, by reformulating the conception of "nation" in line with Sunni religious values, the AKP embarked on a comprehensive ideological struggle to dethrone the Kemalist conception of nation and supplant it with a new vision of nationalism (Saraçoğlu and Demirkol, 2015). Notwithstanding these core ideological premises, the party was also pragmatic and flexible enough to engage in alliances with divergent political forces to consolidate its power in Turkish politics. Depending on the course of social struggles and the changing balances of power in the political sphere, the AKP utilized varying ideological strategies to circumvent some obstacles in its search for a monopoly of power. The recent claim for "cultural hegemony" or "cultural power" needs to be contextualized within these shifting ideological strategies.

In the first periods of its rule (roughly between 2002 and 2009), due to the continued presence of non-Islamist, secularist cadres in the state bureaucracy, the judiciary, and the military, the AKP was faced with difficulties in building and consolidating its political authority. This hindered its efforts to transform the social sphere and ideological domain in accordance with its own Islamist-nationalist outlook. As such, what characterized this period was the AKP's quest for obtaining as much broad international and domestic support as possible. The aim was to embark upon some pioneering ventures towards crippling and even eliminating the persistent Kemalist influence in the state's security apparatus and bureaucracy. At the international level, the ongoing European Union integration process required concomitant legal and institutional reforms that increase the power and autonomy of elected governments. This functioned as a favourable framework through which these ventures were advanced in a legitimate fashion (Çınar, 2018). At the domestic level, in its arduous assault against what it referred to as "militaristic and bureaucratic tutelage," the party sought to obtain the support of different political and social forces. These forces included liberals, socialists, and the Kurds, long disgruntled with the Kemalist-secularist establishment. In order to obtain legitimacy, the AKP sought to brandish itself as the representative of civilian politics, pluralism, and democratic transition, fighting against a ramshackle but simultaneously overbearing Kemalist elite long clinging to the state bureaucracy. It was in this stage that the AKP used a neoliberal discourse of distancing the state from the field of art.

By the end of 2010, the AKP seemed to have managed to remove both the ideological and the political influence of the Kemalist-inclined cadres in the military, judiciary, and bureaucracy. The Fethullah Gülen congregation, which was a staunch ally of the AKP until the mid-2010s, mobilized its clandestine cadres in the state to organize a series of mass trials. These trials targeted hundreds of suspects including members of the army and bureaucracy, lawyers, and academics, as well as the politicians and elected mayors of the legal party of the Kurdish movement. Some journalists were also prosecuted for organizing a coup plot against the government. As the AKP further strengthened its control over the state thanks to its alliance with the Gülen congregation, it shifted from an inclusive hegemonic project to a strategy of total control of the fields of political, legal, and social space. This grip would not leave any room for opposition to its authority. The Gezi uprising in 2013, characterized by a massive reaction against these authoritarian politics and neoliberal economic outlook, was suppressed by brutal force. The growing power of the Kurdish movement under the People's Democratic Party (HDP), as manifested in the June 2015 elections, was curbed by the "remilitarization" of the Kurdish issue. The June elections were followed by the complete breakdown of negotiations between the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and the AKP and a subsequent spiral of armed conflict. Furthermore, the 2016 coup attempt pioneered by Gülenists was pushed back successfully and that was used as a pretext to further suppress opposition. Thus, control over the political and legal fields has so far been successfully achieved by means of an effective mobilization of both the coercive and the ideological apparatus of the state. Nevertheless, such an increase

in political and legal capacity has not yet managed to spill over into the fields of art and culture, where the Islamists and nationalists are far from securing a monopoly. It was in this particular context that Erdoğan made the following remarks on May 28, 2017:

> Politically ruling is one thing. Socially and culturally ruling is another thing entirely. We have been in power for 14 years but we still have problems with ruling in the social and cultural field.[5]

The AKP's claim for "cultural power" was by no means limited to the objective of extending its growing domination to another sector of society. This interventionism also aimed to prevent "the field of culture" from becoming a reservoir for the themes, symbols, and discourses of any potential mass opposition or mobilization. Such a concern became conspicuous especially after the Gezi uprising, where not only did publicly revered artists help the movement gain legitimacy and popularity but the protesters themselves used various forms of arts to express their demands and defiance (Taş & Taş, 2014; Aytekin, 2017).

The march to culture

Through the bumpy path to full control over social and cultural space, the AKP sees the field of art as an "uncontrolled" territory that needs to be taken over with a new "native and national culture." It has to be saved, according to their interpretation, from the preponderance of the Westernist, self-colonialist,[6] unrooted, non-native, materialist, individualist, and synthetic style of the established secular elites.[7] This diagnosis led the AKP government to take effective measures to alter the cultural panorama.

The new interventionist cultural policy manifests itself with several symptoms:

- Subversive critiques of established art fields
- Condemnation of certain segments of popular culture
- Revival of nativist roots
- Substitution of art with traditional crafts

The discourse of the Islamist-conservative cultural claim is replete with antagonistic and reactionary sentiments. It is preoccupied with a subversive critique of the established art field, leaving the goal of creating an alternative canon short-winded. This dimension matches up with the current global trends of right-wing populism, characterized by ruthless criticism of elites perceived as the conveyors of creeping rootless cosmopolitanism against "native and national" values (Vieten, 2018). This anti-elitist stance is a handy strategy typically appealing to ultra-right movements around the world (Mudde, 2004; Brubaker, 2020). It rests on channelling the bitter sentiments of powerless masses against the economic and political elites towards scapegoats selected among intellectuals (Vieten and Poynting, 2016: 534). In Turkey, this strategy is accompanied by the consecration of certain aspects of popular culture as the true taste of the nation. As a vaguely defined (but nevertheless doubtlessly linked with Turco-Islamic identity) category of popular morals and taste, folk wisdom has been juxtaposed against the established art of "rootless elites." The locus of this so-called "Anatolian wisdom" is the provincial Anatolian heartland, which strives to retain its purity against the cosmopolitan cities harbouring the cultural elites. The "elite" trope exists primarily as a scapegoat, and it serves as a negative reference point in the process of exalting "the native and the national." As such, so-called native and national art is dependent on what it needs to subvert; this obstructs the

Islamists from developing an alternative framework for the art field and limits them to a reactionary position in either sense of the word.

Nevertheless, when it comes to certain elements of popular culture possessing a somewhat dissentient quality, it has also been the case that the AKP-oriented pundits in the media could easily abandon this "anti-elitism." Contemporary popular figures and cultural products or their historical counterparts that have become a part of the national canon or were recognized as indisputable common values for decades could also meet with antagonism if they are conceived as incompatible with the discourse of native/national/Islamic art. This has been the case with Cem Yılmaz, a hugely popular comedian and film-maker, who despite distancing himself from daily politics cannot avoid being condemned by the Islamists.[8] Likewise, Kemal Sunal, the late comedian who starred in several low-brow comedies and social satires through the end of his career, became the target of a recent desecration—reversing Bourdieu's conception of the retrospective consecration of cultural products—by Islamic critics, probably to neutralize his potential critical symbolism.

Kemal Sunal and his oeuvre of films have recently been criticized for not being Islamic enough (the working-class families depicted in these films do not observe religious practices, they consume alcoholic drinks, and so on), but perhaps most importantly, the villains in some of his films are conservative, religious, or pious, yet greedy and corrupt figures, who benefit from feudal or capitalist forms of exploitation regimes, including capitalists, landlords, employers, the bourgeoisie, or straightforward right-wing populist and corrupt politicians.[9]

The depiction of the stock villains of Kemal Sunal's films is indeed a very sensitive issue, since Islamism in Turkey, after decades of utopian yet unclear anti-capitalist rhetoric, has made peace with capitalism in its most unbridled, neoliberal form once and for all during the AKP governments. Sunal's films pose a considerable threat since they effortlessly undermine the Islamic rhetoric of victimhood and its understanding of the nation (as poor but pious Muslim "folk"), expose the class formation of the AKP, and, to make matters worse, are available and aired frequently by Islamic TV channels since they cost next to nothing (thanks to inadequate royalty regulations) and guarantee audience ratings. Censoring profanity, obscenity, or scenes with brandy glasses, as these Islamic TV channels do when they air Kemal Sunal's films, does not remove the subversive symbolism of these films. What is required is a more programmatic refutation. In this case, the elitist discourse of the highly criticized cultural hegemony, trivializing popular products for being culturally insignificant, being of poor taste, or being "trashy," can be emulated by Islamist critics without hesitation. In this respect, the populist Islamist discourse on cultural hegemony is not necessarily against cultural hierarchies, but it is against those who set the hierarchies.

Against the established cultural formation, the Islamist-conservative cultural claim suggests a retreat back to nativist roots. This involves the exaltation of historical legacy, particularly a Turco-Islamic reinterpretation of the Ottoman and Seljuk Empires, and hence the popularization of Turco-Islamic symbols and motifs. The anachronistic and fictitious concept of "Ottoman–Seljuk style" (Batuman, 2018: 194) and Ottoman revivalism in urban planning and architecture (public buildings and mosques) is widely criticized by many, including conservative circles.[10] The persistence and prevalence of Turco–Islamic symbols and motifs in public space amounts to symbolic violence (Tutal, 2017). The Seljuk-style octagrams covering every surface from building facades to street furniture, mass transportation vehicles to interior design, official documents to kebab joint decorations, and public restrooms to garbage bins have appeared in urban space as the most explicit manifestations of the AKP's claim to "cultural power."

The other prominent symptom of the Islamic–conservative cultural claim is the substitution of visual arts and plastic arts with traditional arts. The government made strenuous efforts

to revitalize traditional arts such as miniatures, calligraphy, marbling art, and gilding (some of which, in fact, are not arts but rather crafts). However, this enterprise has achieved limited success so far, primarily yielding hobby courses, personal development classes, and workshops held in the classrooms and exhibition halls in town cultural centres run by the government or municipalities. Some Islamist critics discredited these efforts for falling into the trap of culture industry in the guise of traditionalism (Yıldırım, 2018: 295–303). Nevertheless, the government continued to allocate increasing financial resources for this goal. In 2018, the Yeditepe Biennial, the first biennial of traditional arts, was held in İstanbul, heavily funded by state funds, public corporations, and those private companies that "succeeded" during the AKP period in closing deals for some critical public procurements and municipality tenders. Although it was discontinued in 2020, the much-boasted event was clearly positioned against the İstanbul Biennial, an international contemporary arts event held by a civil initiative, the İKSV, since the 1980s.

Such bold attempts to transform the field of culture would be unthinkable without the immense mobilization of the financial resources and institutional coordination of several branches of the state bureaucracy, such as the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, municipalities, and TRT (Turkish Radio and Television Corporation), the national public broadcaster. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism has the legal mandate to control and coordinate the national directorates of the most extensive art companies in Turkey, such as the Turkish state theatres and the State Opera and Ballet. Before interventionist cultural policies gained prominence, the publicly funded status of the state theatres and opera and ballet was a particularly hot debate topic (see Aksoy & Şeyben, 2015). Despite the apprehension in the early periods of the AKP as to the withdrawal of state support from these institutions, they remained public, while their repertory maintained a balance between nationally or internationally acclaimed plays and "native and national" texts by iconic Islamist playwrights such as Necip Fazıl Kısakürek and Nuri Pakdil.

Another agency of the Ministry of Culture, the Film Supporting Board, is also implicated in the AKP's interventionism. In recent years the board, which consists of representatives of the film industry and ministry bureaucrats, has been criticized for losing its impartiality. Film professionals and critics denounced the board for operating heavily on political criteria and blocking funds to those filmmakers known to be politically distant from the government. The Supporting Board indeed has declined to fund many projects including internationally acclaimed and awarded films such as the Berlin contender *A Tale of Three Sisters* (dir. Emin Alper, 2019) and Sundance-awarded *Butterflies* (dir. Tolga Karaçelik, 2018). The filmmakers claimed that they were rejected not because of the "politically harmless" films themselves, but because of their dissident reputations, and particularly their support for "academics for peace," an initiative to demand a restarting of the "peace process" between the state and the PKK, which was punished by draconian State of Emergency decrees.[11]

In the 1990s, municipalities became the springboard to national power for the Islamist line of parties, including the AKP. Until the 2019 local elections, most of the metropolitan municipalities including İstanbul and Ankara were under the control of the AKP's or its preceding Islamist parties' mayors for roughly a quarter century. Municipalities play a strategic role in the struggle with their immediate effect on cultural agendas through locally run cultural centres (generally multipurpose structures that can host conferences and stage art performances or art exhibitions) and other cultural organizations such as public concerts and recreational events. The costs of these organizations, the selection of the commissioned performers (who is favoured, who is banned), and their paycheques are constant subjects of discussion in terms of clientelism and penalization of dissidents. A politically favoured performer in this context does not necessarily need to be a party member but known to speak in praise of the ruling party and

its leader. A dissident, by the same account, could be almost anyone, including non-partisans, as long as they have publicly criticized government policies at some point.[12]

Many "city theatres" run by municipalities in metropolises have formed exclusive repertoires of Islamist or right-wing writers. Up until the 2019 elections, the Başkent Theatre run by the Ankara Municipality funded and organized some Islamist-nationalist agitprop plays, such as a piece on the Turkish Armed Forces' operation in northern Syria (Malazgirtten Afrin'e) and a play depicting the civil resistance to the 2016 coup attempt (Karanlığa Karşı Direniş), which were hastily written to meet the exigent political and ideological needs of the government. After losing the three largest metropolitan municipalities of İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir to the opposition in 2019 local elections, the AKP lost this formidable instrument of seeking "cultural power" as well as a large market for its partisan performers.

Always having served as a mouthpiece for the government in power, the national broadcaster TRT with its several television and radio channels addressing both popular and high-brow taste has also been a useful instrument in implementing cultural policies. In terms of popular culture, TRT offers very popular historical dramas such as *Payitaht: Abdülhamid*, about the late Ottoman sultan who is a revered figure in the Turkish–Islamic movement. The double-layered stories of the series at once boost nostalgic neo-Ottomanist and Islamic sentiments and address actual events to serve the day-to-day needs of the current political power (Özçetin, 2019). It also imposes an analogy between the turn-of-the-century monarch Abdülhamid and today's president, Erdoğan. Historical dramas, particularly historical action dramas with their trademark swords and shields, attract many devoted viewers, but are also criticized by many, including pro-AKP writers.

Regarding art and culture, TRT has followed the general blueprints of the AKP cultural policies. Before the interventionist policies took effect, in 2010–2011, TRT gave up its thematic TV channel and radio stations on culture and arts. TRT2, the thematic culture and art channel, became TRT Haber, a news channel. Soon after that, the range of FM Radio 3, a thematic channel dedicated to classical music, jazz, and Western pop music genres, was limited to metropolitan cities only.[13] The shutdown of TRT2 and the allocating of Radio 3's transmitters to other thematic TRT radio channels broadcasting Turkish traditional and folk music was in line with a policy to limit governmental funds for "promoting Western culture," or its liberal apology, "the withdrawal of the state from culture and arts." However, in 2019, TRT relaunched its culture- and art-themed TRT2, which now promises to broadcast "Hollywood films as well as distinguished examples of World cinema and festival films," and to cover all art disciplines "from traditional to contemporary art, from traditional Turkish street theatre to opera and ballet."[14]

"Cultural clash": myth or reality?

As has been the case for the analysis of many other thorny issues during the AKP period, many scholars and journalists assessed the AKP's and Islamists' claim for power from the lenses of the "center/periphery" paradigm. This paradigm is a grand narrative that explains the structure and transformation of Turkish society as a perpetual cleavage and confrontation between a modernizing military–bureaucratic center and a heterogeneous mass on the periphery. Originally, the framework was developed by Shils to understand the dual structure of societies. Shils (1975) suggested that each society has a centre that holds together a complex network of institutions (political, economic, and cultural) and a periphery that struggles to integrate with the center, causing social problems. After Mardin's seminal article (1973), in which he explored the explanatory power of the center/periphery duality for Turkish politics, the framework

received vast attention from social scientists as well as politicians. Briefly, the approach suggests that Turkey has a periphery that has been excluded from the institutions held together by the state as well as the privilege and cultural codes that come with it (Bakiner, 2018). In Shils's formulation, the tension between centre and periphery is not everlasting; the center finds mechanisms to integrate with the periphery. Mardin, on the other hand, argued that while the Ottoman state managed to claim political and economic control of the periphery, it failed to do so in the realm of culture. As a result, unlike in Western societies, Turkey inherited a centre composed of the new generations of modernizing elites, who distinguished themselves from the periphery. The periphery responded to this cultural gap by holding onto religious values. According to Mardin, this fundamental tension reproduced itself despite major political transformations that took place since the late Ottoman period (1973). However, a new critical group of scholars recently challenged this dualistic view. For instance, Lord (2018), focused on the role of the Diyanet (Presidency of Religious Affairs) and showed how such clear-cut opposition fails to represent the historical transformation of the institutions accurately. Despite such recent criticisms regarding its explanatory power, the centre/periphery approach has been considered a key to understanding politics from late Ottoman to twenty-first-century Turkey.

The main tenets of this approach informed a number of studies discussing the AKP's electoral rise and its capacity to mobilize masses (e.g. Yavuz, 2006; Cizre, 2008). In fact, the interest shown in Mardin's article increased dramatically after 2001, "at the height of the tension between the ruling AKP and a coalition of self-designated Kemalist judges, prosecutors, military officers, and civilian politicians" (Bakiner, 2018: 7). For many, the AKP was/is associated with the periphery, primarily due to the assumptions regarding their main voter profile: religious–conservative and of low socioeconomic status. Also, the reaction of institutions that make up the secular core of the Turkish state, such as the military and judiciary, to the rise of the AKP was/is seen as proof of Erdoğan's position as the mobilizer of the periphery. Despite Mardin's reluctance to attribute a positive value to the periphery, the rise of what the AKP and some other liberal circles called "democratic conservatism" at the time, considered as the revenge of the oppressed, was thus a progressive development.

The major premises of this centre/periphery paradigm cast their shadows on the studies that have examined the ways in which the increasing economic resources and political appeal of Islamism throughout the 1990s resonated with the increasing visibility of Islamic and conservative cultural patterns in urban space. These studies turned their attention to such new styles of consumption as five-star hotels with women-only beaches or fashionable veiling brands and magazines, treating them as by-products of the accumulation of capital by the conservative segments of society (Göle, 1999; Navaro-Yashin, 2002; Saktanber, 2002; White, 1999, 2002). However, this literature also acknowledges that the economic upward mobility and the motivation to "upgrade" cultural habits did not necessarily carry the periphery to the centre. As Sandıkçı and Ger (2007) suggest, the secular media's emphasis on conservatives' lack of taste increases the latter's concern with taste, resulting in an ongoing struggle over recognition.

One can also see the traces of this dualistic centre/periphery perspective in more recent studies that utilize such concepts as *Kulturkampf* and/or "polarization" in their attempt to explain the transformation of the cultural field during the AKP period. Originally, the concept *Kulturkampf* emerged to explain the power struggle between the church and the Kingdom of Prussia over the control of educational institutions in the nineteenth-century. The term, however, is used by extension to refer to the ongoing tension between democratic states and religious institutions, and more generally between the conservative cultural milieu and the secular one. Most recently, "culture wars" was used by Hunter (1991) to explain how America was demarcated between the "orthodox" and "progressive" camps, both offering alternative

moral frameworks for people as they pick their positions on controversial issues ranging from abortion to gun control. Since then, various empirical studies have explored to what extent "culture wars" have explanatory power over the American cultural and political sphere (e.g. DiMaggio, Evans, & Bryson, 1996). Empirical studies aiming to understand Turkish society from the lenses of this framework have reached different and often conflicting conclusions. Kaya and Sunar (2015), for example, showed that the polarization of social and political attitudes is only limited to certain topics, while the responses given to most issues suggest that a dual structure has no empirical basis. On the other hand, analysing voting preferences, Kalaycıoğlu (2012: 7) suggested the existence of a *Kulturkampf* "deeply dividing along cultural lines into two large communities." In a similar vein, Akçaoğlu (2018) suggested that the culture war is the main characteristic of this nation's collective unconscious. As Kaya and Sunar's review (2015) demonstrated, the tensions between Muslim and Western, secular and religious, and modern and conservative have been considered as the prime character of Turkish society by many other academics and politicians (e.g. Baran, 2008, 2010; Kuru, 2009; Cornell and Karaveli, 2008; Yavuz, 2009). Akçaoğlu (2018) argued that no matter who the winner of the culture war is, the main concern has always been determining whether the content of cultural currency is secular or conservative. Such an argument assumes the existence of two camps whose power of legitimation on the cultural field changes in relation to the political field. However, Akçaoğlu (2018), with his much more refined approach to culture, also acknowledged its complex and multilayered nature. He argued that while the AKP managed to establish its hegemony over certain cultural fields such as education (e.g. expansion of religious vocational high schools), media (e.g. consolidation of pro-government TV channels), and urban architecture (e.g. decline in the number of studio apartments), it failed to do so for visual and audio culture.

The arguments revolving around such concepts as *Kulturkampf* and polarization conceive the AKP's recent cultural strategy as a manifestation of a long-standing political and cultural clash between the conservative, pious majority on the one hand and the secularist and Westernist minority on the other, haunting the entire history of modern Turkey (Kaya, 2012: 4; Birkiye, 2009; Gögüs and Mannitz, 2016). By designating the recent contestation over culture as an incarnation of a historically rooted tension between two camps, these approaches cannot adequately concede its "historically specific" aspects. The Islamist intellectuals' recent quest for transforming the cultural field takes place in a context where an Islamist–conservative party controls the economic resources as well as the legal and ideological apparatuses of the state. As such, the Islamists' recent attempts to "reclaim" the field of culture cannot be seen simply as a manifestation of an erstwhile sociocultural clash. Rather, the trajectory of the political struggles and rapidly changing balances of power under AKP rule, as stated in earlier sections of this chapter, moulds the timing, objectives, and forms in which this "cultural struggle" takes place (Shukri and Hossain, 2017).

The arguments predicated on the notion of polarization and *Kulturkampf* also carry the risk of inadvertently reproducing the very foundational presuppositions that the AKP and its affiliated intellectuals have used to justify their cultural interventionism. AKP officials and the organic intellectuals affiliated with this party depict a simplistic picture of Turkish society in which two monolithic and antagonistic sections of society historically collide with each other. The construction of an exalted image of a "pure," morally worthy, and repressed population and its native culture is reliant upon a crude representation of its polar opposite, that is, degenerated, immoral, imperious intellectuals and their alien culture. In fact, not only the AKP but also virtually all right-wing political movements preceding it appealed to a self-victimizing rhetoric representing conservatives as being historically oppressed by Westernist elites throughout modern Turkish history (Açıkel, 1996). Nevertheless, it was in the AKP period that this rhetoric

was utilized in a full-fledged manner not only to aspire but also to expand power and not only to denounce but also to sideline opponents.

Despite not attaching such normative traits to the two poles and not necessarily reaching the same conclusions as Islamists, the scholarly arguments revolving around the notion of polarization and *Kulturkampf* also rest on a vision of Turkey divided into two monolithic social entities, with mutually exclusive visions and interests. It is true that the AKP's monopoly over state power and its Islamist–nationalist rhetoric and policies alienated large sections of society from the political establishment, induced them to act in a united fashion at critical political junctures, and led its political opponents to form alliances, especially in elections and public referendums (Aydın-Düzgit and Balta, 2018). By the same token, the electoral support base of the AKP was further consolidated and ossified in due process as they were challenged by a fierce opposition, especially during and in the aftermath of the Gezi uprising (Keyman, 2014). However, this context-dependent and contingent political reconfiguration does not necessarily translate into the formation of two monolithic "cultural blocs."

Neither the opponents nor the supporters of the AKP's hegemonic project are immune to internal fragmentations and strife and capable of building and representing a coherent cultural vision and taste. In modern Turkish history the wide array of opponents of the Islamist–nationalist project of the AKP, such as socialists, secularists, Kemalists, and the supporters of the Kurdish movement, could never form an agreed-upon cultural or artistic school of thought, coherent standards to assess the aesthetic value of an artistic product, and hence a consistent sociocultural outlook to juxtapose themselves as a united bloc against the Islamist vision of culture. As such, the "secularist cultural bloc" against the authentic and native Islamic–conservative culture needs to be conceived not as a fact, as a social and political subject/agent, but rather as an ideological/political construction. As such, it would be misleading to utilize "secularist/leftist culture" as a category of analysis "in a reifying way that posits its presence as a substantial bounded entity" (Sturm and Bauch, 2010: 189). Rather, it needs to be treated as a "category of practice" through which certain ideological and political projects are legitimized and pursued (Brubaker, 2013).

Assuming that Islamist and/or conservative intellectuals, pundits, and artists who strive to contribute to the AKP's quest for cultural hegemony form a "coherent cultural bloc" is equally misleading. Although there is a convergence among Islamist and conservative circles on the idea that a secular, materialist, and non-native practice of art dominates the field of culture in Turkey, they do not seem to reach a robust agreement on the markers of their own "cultural identity." Despite the fact that the significance and pertinence of endorsing a "native and national" art is virtually a leitmotif used by those Islamic-conservative writers, one cannot discern from their writings a coherent conception of the specific aesthetic principles demarcating the borders of "nativeness." As such, the quest for "native and national art" and the discussions revolving around "cultural power" do not generate a distinct aesthetic/artistic genre on the part of Islamist circles, remaining limited to the reproduction of the image of the opponents of the AKP project as a cultural enemy. On top of this, some Islamist-nationalist writers go so far as to see state (AKP)-orchestrated endeavours to intervene purposefully in the field of culture as futile attempts to break the hegemony of "secularist elites." Some well-known Islamist columnists such as Yusuf Kaplan, Celal Fedai, and Orhan Gazi Gökçe, albeit from different angles, have criticized the AKP's quest for transforming the field of culture as a form of "social engineering" that recalls the Kemalists' "patronizing" gaze on art and culture and their will to power in the early Republican period (Sezer, 2019: 22–30). Moreover, some actions of the AKP cast doubt on this ambitious programme of Islamic cultural hegemony and caught the conservative intellectuals who are not immediately linked with party circles on the wrong

foot. The expropriation of one of the oldest/Islamic NGOs in the field of culture and arts, the Foundation for Sciences and Arts, and the private Şehir University run by this foundation is one of many indicators of the fact that the AKP's struggle to hold exclusive political and economic power doubtlessly outranks the efforts to create conservative/Islamic culture and art. Many Islamic public figures have protested, if only in a low-key manner, the expropriation of this once respected foundation.

Conclusion

The AKP's recently intensifying endeavours to dominate the sphere of art and culture by mobilizing the economic resources and political and ideological apparatuses of the state is yet another aspect of this party's quest for entrenching its Islamist-nationalist hegemonic project. This attempt has also shown the tendency of the AKP leadership and affiliated Islamist and nationalist pundits and artists to sideline, delegitimize, or, at best, co-opt those expressions of culture incompatible with this hegemonic project. The debates sparked by Islamist and conservative circles revolving around the concepts of "cultural power" and "cultural hegemony" generated discourses and tropes justifying this hegemonic strategy. In these discussions, the core assumption was that the field of culture in Turkey has long been dominated by Kemalists, secularists, and leftists who acted in unison to impose, from the top down, an "alien" Westernist cultural orientation on the pious masses. As such, a new cultural policy like the one that the AKP pursues is necessary and legitimate, according to these writers, to ensure that hitherto submerged and dismissed "native" art and culture can take to the stage and thrive. The tendency of some analysts and scholars to see this hegemonic strategy as another manifestation of a fruitless "culture war" and "polarization" between the conservative and secularist sections of society is problematic and misleading in two respects. First of all, these dualistic interpretations stemming from the centre/periphery paradigm cannot adequately contextualize the AKP's and Islamist and nationalist circles' endeavours to transform the field of culture within the specific trajectory and dynamics of power struggles during the AKP period. Secondly, they carry the risk of reproducing the misleading depiction of Turkish society as consisting of two mutually exclusive camps, an ideological construction on the basis of which the AKP and Islamist nationalist intellectuals legitimize and carry out their quest for dominating the field of culture. In this vein, what is needed is a perspective that would situate the AKP's cultural policies and its discourse of "cultural power" within the context of this party's shifting political and ideological strategies to entrench its hegemony and vanquish real or potential political opponents.

Notes

1 This work is based on a research project (No. 218K152 – "The Transformation of the Fields of Art in Turkey: Cultural Distinction and Conservative Taste") funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK).

2 Hakan Arslanbenzer (2017), *Kültürel İktidar Solda mı?* [*Does the cultural power belong to the Left?*]. İstanbul: Avangard Yay.

3 "Today, in Turkey, the terms 'art' and 'artist' remind one of people who would join 'Pro-republic demonstrations,' who have the base character to open banners calling the army to duty, who are politically inclined to a neither-fish-nor-fowl category of 'Kemalist-left' and a political stance which can be summed up as 'let this government be gone, no matter how it happens'." Özlem Albayrak, "Dindarlardan Neden Sanatçı Çıkmaz?" *Yeni Şafak*, May 8, 2012. www.yenisafak.com/yazarlar/ozlemalbayrak/dindarlardan-neden-sanatci-cikmaz-32304.

4 "Devlet Eliyle Tiyatro Olmaz," *Hürriyet*, April 30, 2012. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: "I ask you, who the hell are you? Is theatre in this country your monopoly? Is art in this country your monopoly? Are you

the only people who are licensed to comment on art? Those days are over. The days are over when you could wave your despotic enlightened finger to belittle and scold the nation" (as cited by Nilgün Tutal, "The Struggle for Cultural Power in Turkey," *Eurozine*, October 25, 2017. www.eurozine.com/pro-patria-mori-and-obsequium/#footnote-10).

5 Erdoğan's aforementioned speech continues as follows: "Today there are many useful tools to shape future generations, but the most important factor is the dedicated servants who will turn this ambition into service […] Curriculums that were prepared with an animosity-filled approach to our ancestors and culture in many fields, from our language to our history, have been changed [by the government]. In many places—from the media to the cinema, from science to technology and law—there are still people with minds that are foreign to the nation in the most effective places." *Hürriyet Daily News*, "We Still Have Problems in Social and Cultural Rule: President Erdoğan," May 28, 2017. www.hurriyetdailynews.com/we-still-have-problems-in-social-and-cultural-rule-president-erdogan-113644.

6 Oğuzhan Bilgin, "Cultural Hegemony in Turkey," *Daily Sabah*, November 15, 2018. www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2018/11/15/cultural-hegemony-in-turkey.

7 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'ın Yeditepe Bienali Açılışından Yansıyan Kareleri," *Sabah*, April 2, 2018. www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/cumhurbaskani-erdoganin-yeditepe-bienali-acilisindan-yansiyan-kareleri/8. "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, tepeden inmeci, baskıcı, jakoben anlayışın bugün de bazı sanat çevrelerinde devam ettiğine şahit olduklarını" vurguladı.

8 "AK Parti'den komedyen Cem Yılmaz'a sert tepki: Kimse senden para istemiyor," *Yeni Akit*, December 10, 2019. www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/ak-partiden-komedyen-cem-yilmaza-sert-tepki-kimse-senden-para-istemiyor-943083.html.

9 www.yeniakit.com.tr/haber/islama-en-buyuk-zarari-kemal-sunal-verdi-191144.html.

10 Dücane Cündioğlu, "Çamlıca İçin Yakarış," *Yeni Şafak*, November 22, 2012. www.yenisafak.com/aktuel/camlica-icin-yakaris-425453. In this newspaper column, "An Outcry for Çamlıca," conservative thinker Cündioğlu protests the Çamlıca mosque project for its excessive size, vanity, and imitative style.

11 www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/film-cekmemizi-istemiyorlar-671680.

12 www.sabah.com.tr/magazin/2016/08/11/silanin-konserleri-iptal-edildi.

13 www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/trt-klasik-muzikten-sogudu-1461482.

14 www.trthaber.com/haber/kultur-sanat/trt-2-yayin-hayatina-basladi-406074.html.

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34

MEDIA AS HYPER-SOCIAL AND ACTIVISTS AS CRITICAL GENERATORS IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

Asli Telli Aydemir

Introduction

"How do you throw a brick through the window of a bank if you can't get out of bed?" This question, formulated by Johanna Hedva in "Sick Woman Theory" (2018), has been boggling my mind for quite some time now. The resurgent neoliberal times and the pursuit of media in/of these times have been a research agenda for colleagues in diverse fields. The "hyper-social" media as indicated in the title of this chapter have been a significant part of these pessimistic, worn-out, at times depressed minds that hold activist bodies from moving out of bed to break the windows of a bank or stand aloof for days beside state institutions, voicing their rights.

Digital activism as well as its evolution is an important aspect of this chapter. A retrospective overview of the field would be a good way to start. Gerbaudo (2014) points out that his understanding of the evolution of digital activism and of the presence of two distinct waves comes close to the view of Karatzogianni, a media scholar who has been working on digital activism since the early 2000s. Gerbaudo focuses on two waves in the history of digital activism as reflected in the abstract of this chapter: The anti-globalisation movement and the movement of the squares that began in 2011. The anti-globalization movement is a Web 1.0-based turning point with protests during the World Trade Organization Summit in Seattle in 1999. Back then, this massive protest created a lot of international traction in the mainstream media, with a stress on how globalization, if continued with such rhythm, would widen inequality gaps, unemployment rates and inevitably poverty on the planet. With an estimation of 40,000 protesters, this demonstration dwarfed any previous ones against economic globalization. The movement of the squares, according to Gerbaudo (2014), encompasses the indignados in Spain and Greece and Occupy Wall Street in the US, manifesting a resurgence of the discourse of the "sovereign people" and of "popular identities" in protest movements.

Karatzogianni (2015) is more keen on thinner taxonomies and proposes the existence of four waves of digital activism. The first one, from 1994 to 2001,coincides with the early phase of the anti-globalisation movement, from the Zapatista uprising in Mexico in 1994, to the protests in Genoa in 2001 which were violently crushed by police. The second phase from 2001 to 2007

comprises the second phase of the anti-globalisation movement, and its rise to prominence in the world. The third phase, which she describes as the "spread of digital activism", refers to the migration of digital activism to Brazil, Russia, India, China and other countries of the Global South beyond Europe and the US where digital activism first developed. The fourth phase finally is when digital activism invades mainstream politics, with its rise as significant phenomena, that is, no longer a marginal phenomenon but one that is at the very centre of political conflicts. This chapter will question the contemporary semiologies of digital activism as varying phenomena of the last decades and dissect its evolution in the form of capillaries diffusing through primarily Turkey's, on a second tier, world's contemporary media ecosystem.

Digital activism

Scholars have shown that technologies can be associated with very different meanings depending on the social and cultural contexts in which they are deployed as well as the values and beliefs of the groups that utilise them. As Kavada (2013) has demonstrated, digital activism does not only reflect the properties of the internet as a set of technical devices, but also of the internet cultures that have emerged within it, such as hacker culture. This approach saves one from approaching digital activism through a techno-deterministic and/or ideological focus. Furthermore, it creates a panacea for the recent historical lens towards cyber-autonomous and cyber-populist movements. When media are added on top of that as a catalyst for the various technologies in question, other social factors in the digital realm are to be considered.

The 2011 Freedom for Internet March in Istanbul (11 May 2011) can be taken as a cyber-autonomous precursor of the Gezi movement in many respects: According to Saka (2019), more than 30,000 protesters joined the peaceful march that took place in Taksim Istiklal Street to protest government-imposed centralized Internet filtering. Most of the protesters joined in their very first street demonstration, and all mobilization and coordination took place online. Here are a few examples of coordinating platforms fully based online: *Sansüre Sansür*, *Netdaş* and *Korsan Parti Türkiye* along with *Ekşi Sözlük* and *İnci Sözlük* are among those platforms. Most of the slogans were created online and did not have traditional radical political discourses that are frequently found in street activism. The most prominent slogans that have been earmarked in related literature are, "Don't touch my internet!" ("Internetime Dokunma" in Turkish), "Yes we Ban!" (This slogan was written in English on the day of the protest as a twisted version of Obama's slogan "Yes we can!") and "Censoring Censor!" ("Sansüre Sansür" in Turkish). *Censoring Censor* became a collective right after the demonstration with the support of initiatives advocating internet freedom in Turkey. This was indeed in line with global developments that internet usage initiated: From the 1999 World Trade Organization Seattle protests (Eagleton-Pierce 2001) to Occupy movements (Gitlin 2012), the internet has been not only functional in mobilization but also essential in the discursive construction of protests.

This discursive construction of protests by depicted actors in the media as well as newly emerging stakeholders such as citizen journalists, video activists and celebrity tweeps (a.k.a Twitter phenomenal figures) and new community media initiatives are reflected in this chapter. The process of the actual construction of discourse and how that process feeds upon the urban "spirit of the times" without any geographical constraints is our main inquiry.

Method of approach

The author regards discourse analysis and digital media analysis including case-based visual analysis as the best means to lay out the digital media ecosystem in the last few decades in Turkey.

To supplement this methodological approach, case studies of initiatives, activist reporter groups and journalist collectives that have emerged due to the exercise of freedom of expression and information activism are reflected upon. Related literature, archival work and digital diaries as well as participant observation are tools for analysis and reflection. The media monitoring work done diligently by experienced reporters who used to work in senior positions in established media channels must also be underlined here. It is with great regret that a high percentage of these reporters have been sacked or dismissed from their jobs. That is, in fact, also an important factor facilitating the creation of alternative public spheres through individual accounts in digital platforms and/or social media since 2011. Repression enforces dissidence in its diverging forms: These public spheres of action and expression have played a significant role in framing *media as hyper-social* and *activists as critical generators* in contemporary Turkey; clearly reflected as such in the title of this chapter.

Academic reflections into the future of digital activism

An extensive literature has been produced recently on social movements worldwide, their coverage in not only mainstream media but also through citizen efforts and collectives as well as the resistance overall on the streets, complemented by social media and/or digital platforms of action: A noteworthy example is Springer's work, entitled "Neoliberalism and Anti-establishment Movements", published by Open Media. The prominent claim of this work is as follows: Defiance of neoliberalism comes in the form of large-scale protests that capture global media attention, but equally, and arguably more importantly, in everyday acts of resistance (Purcell 2016), where people continue to organize their lives in ways that break with market logic, bringing light back into the world (White and Williams 2014). It is further mentioned in Springer's work that the intersection between mundanity and spectacle marks the current moment of protest, where people are illuminating their struggles and enlightening their opposition in a variety of spaces and encounters. According to Springer, during the opposition with supporters of neoliberalism, this struggle brings into exigence commitment for solidarity as well as proclivity for fellowship and conviviality.

In order to provide a peek into the history of citizen journalism or independent activist news-making, one must go back to the academic literature of the early 2000s. The most comprehensive chapter regarding the emergence and the sustaining of such journalism practices is in Stuart Allan and Einar Thorsen's edited collection *Citizen Journalism: Global Perspectives Vol. 1*. In this book, Allan refers to the tsunami outbreak in South Asia in December 2004 as the landmark in the first independent recording in place and mass distribution to mainstream broadcast channels as the natural disaster was happening. Despite its ambiguities, the term "citizen journalism" appeared to capture something of the countervailing ethos of the ordinary person's capacity to bear witness, thereby providing commentators with a useful label to characterize an ostensibly new genre of reporting. In the years since the tsunami, the term has secured its place in journalism's vocabulary, more often than not associated with a particular crisis event. It is described variously as "grass-roots journalism", "open-source journalism", "distributed journalism", or "networked journalism" (as well as user-generated content), among other terms, but there is little doubt that it is recasting crisis reporting's priorities and protocols in profound ways (Allan and Thorsen 2009).

Therefore, activist citizen journalists who act with the desire to defend and empower democracy emerge as an oasis of journalism. They subscribe to both alternative traditional and alternative new media and widen the information sphere. Based on this perspective,

it can be claimed that citizen journalism should be regarded as a vital journalism practice that supports the bond between the media and democracy, and that it is becoming more than just an entity aiming to strengthen such relations. In this regard, alternative traditional media refer to those print, visual and audio media that do not belong to media conglomerates, controlled by wealthy individuals with strong governmental ties. Even though these types of media are scarce in number and outreach in the last two decades, the minority media, for instance, play a significant role in bearing out the inequalities and zero tolerance for diversity of opinion in Turkey. Alternative new media, as a second category, elaborate new media channels, mostly digital means, and function on a decentralized basis with subsistent local networks to deliver fresh news via social media platforms, autonomous multimedia channels and a distinct audience with specific interests and lifestyles. Most of the practitioners of alternative new media in Turkey are former journalists who have lost their jobs due to, first, the financial crisis in 2008–2009 and secondly, the political surge in the country in 2012–2016. Their content is mostly based on transmedia forms, which utilize state-of-the-art production and broadcasting techniques that appeal to audiences with high media literacy levels. The third category is citizen journalism, which Tüfekci (2016) refers to as

> not coming from a journalistic background or having as an ideal a career in journalism, a bunch of college kids claimed the citizens' right to know about what is going on in their countries, four and a half years ago with the first – but unfortunately late – realisation that media did not function the way it had promised to do so.

Contrary to this claim, "the not-so-idealistic" and spontaneous career shifts to journalism produced valuable outcomes. With the Gezi uprising, citizen journalists became the main source of information for people from all walks of life and new subcategories such as video activists, who stream live footage of social movements, demonstrations, flash mobs and strikes, emerged.

Such practices and their outreach tactics are not only taking place in Turkey but also in all similar democracies that are under the threat of neoliberal authoritarianism. Therefore, in such countries, where violence has become an ordinary part of daily life, the safety of alternative (new) media and citizen journalists against threats, pressures, censorship, layoffs, being taken into custody and arrested, kidnapping, physical attacks, torture, and murder are important issues to consider in relation to the future of the democratic media-sphere (Coban and Ataman 2017a: 281).

The state of media and the different forms they take at times of crisis or at the peak times of social movements is also an important paradigm to reflect on. As with the Gezi protests in Turkey in 2013, diverse terminologies have emerged, thanks to authoritarian powers and their assemblages. In the case of the leading political authority in Turkey at the time of Gezi, the term *capulcu*, a pejorative term for "looter" matched well with activists' efforts to construct a common identity and self-definition. Chapulling (Turkish: *Çapuling*) is a neologism originating in the Gezi Park protests, coined from Prime Minister Erdoğan's use of the term *Çapulcu* (roughly translated as "marauders") to describe the protesters. *Çapulcu* was rapidly reappropriated by the protesters, both in its original form and as the anglicized *chapuller*, and additionally verbified *chapulling*, associated with "fighting for your rights".

It is at this point that new media, with its tools, gadgets and flexibility, acts as a catalyst for all responsible citizens on the net, netizens, so to speak. Coban and Ataman (2017b: 3) refer to "Çapulcu" media as

> born online at the very spatial center of the occupation as the media of the resistance and as an alternative to the holding media that have become known as "the penguins" in reference to CNN Turk broadcasting a penguin documentary instead of reporting on nationwide protests during the Gezi Resistance.

Case Studies

From morality to political censorship

The media ecosystem changed substantially in 2011, when the Turkish government – perhaps fearing their own "Arab Spring" – introduced proposals for a "voluntary filtering" of Turkish internet service providers (ISPs). This proposal was ostensibly to prevent users from viewing pornographic material involving children and minors, and more generally to "protect" the Turkish population from pornography. While the level of filtering was meant to be voluntary for users, the installation of the filters themselves was made mandatory for ISPs in Turkey.

The regulatory proposals met with stark opposition by civil society groups, which were able to postpone but not prevent the introduction of the filtering system. Civil society saw the proposals by the Turkish government as the first step towards the creation of a wider filtering and censorship regime. This is how an assembly of civil society organizations aiming for digital advocacy organized thousands of masses and walked on Istiklal Street, in Istanbul, for the sake of internet freedom on 15 May 2011. The period between 2011 and 2013, until the Gezi uprising, was a transition towards a period of top-down media governance and authoritarianism. As Gezi broke out, the dissident people were more explicit in their demands for freedom and democracy, and the brutal surge of the government was bluntly in view. In 2013–2016, sanctions against alternative new media, blockages of social media platforms, censorship of most media outlets, takeover of 60–80% of media control by the government forced an inevitable shrinking of the civic sphere in Turkey. Finally, the failed coup attempt in July 2016 created a domino effect of dismissals of over 100,000 civil servants, academics and journalists as well as the prosecution of public intellectuals and journalists. These unscalable human rights violations along with the erosion of executive and judicial powers created a devastating picture for a once quasi-democratic country.

Turkey was under a state of emergency until July 2018 after the failed coup attempt, in which 248 people were killed and hundreds injured. It has generally helped the ruling party to gradually strengthen its control over the media. In 2018, the independent watchdog Freedom House classified Turkey as "not free" for the first time. Media freedom in the country has deteriorated since then with further intimidation of journalists, the sale of a leading media group to a pro-government businessman, and new laws to restrict internet broadcasts. In the meantime, there have been several blackouts in social media with internet throttling (slowing down) in effect at times of political crises. As a concrete case, the blocking of *Wikipedia* from 29 April 2017 to 15 January 2020 (a time span of 33 months) due to an English-language article on state-sponsored terrorism[1] deserves more than a red flag in international terms.

In the parts to follow, the evolution of citizen journalism and alternative new media in Turkey in the post-2011 period will be presented. To create a seamless portrayal of such practices, case studies and exemplary tactics will be discussed that mark certain peak times in near history. The

case studies have been compiled in three categories: the first category refers to emerging citizen journalism and alternative new media practices including technical-artistic-ecological communities; the second category covers election and fact-checking initiatives; and the third category refers to alternative infrastructures, also bringing forth distributed-autonomous collectives and platforms the media eco-system has transformed into.

Elements of a citizen journalism success story

The mechanics of citizen journalism are vital in understanding its rationale and context. Citizen journalists (and collectives) start out by mapping a network of trusted users all over the country but particularly in crisis points. In case the citizen journalists, themselves cannot be at the point of crisis, they rely on these trusted users. In cases of breaking news, there are always new social media users who begin to provide news. These are carefully investigated and it is decided whether they can be trusted or not. Investigation includes focusing on users' available social media accounts and on who follows each user. Even after deciding that one is trusted, some citizen journalists still prefer to get in touch with the first-time newsmaker (not yet a trusted user) before using his/her news. *140Journos*[2] was particularly sensitive about this. Most of its members were in Istanbul, and they needed urgently to secure trusted newsmakers from other cities. Most members of *Ötekilerin Postası*,[3] on the other hand, were not from Istanbul but generally from Kurdish-populated cities. They could get information directly from their own members, or they could find out the credibility of a newsmaker by getting in touch with their own local members, who would in turn get in touch with that newsmaker.

Twitter was the dominant social media tool during the protests, but streaming services like Ustream were other winners (Güneş 2013). The founder of streaming service Periscope, which would be eventually bought by Twitter, claims that he was inspired by the Gezi Park protests. A group of students inside Gezi Park started Çapul TV (capul.tv), a project that totally depended on streaming. At the time of the protests, Twitter had another video production and sharing tool, Vine. Users could make six-second videos. Twitter eventually added new functionalities to Vine (and recently closed it down totally), but at the time of the protests, Vine's affordances were limited and this limitedness would actually be helpful for verification efforts. Users could not upload existing videos to Vine. They could only produce videos by streaming in real time. Although manipulation is still possible in live streaming, the latter helped citizen journalists considerably.

In the aftermath of Gezi, *140Journos* collective has made its reputation as a resilient network. The collective continues its quest in adding data visualization and verification functionalities to its output on its Twitter account: https://twitter.com/140journos. In their nomination for the BOBS Award via Deutsche Welle, it is described as a collective that uses social media to report on issues underreported in Turkish mainstream media. Their central tool of dissemination is Twitter and their short interviews are uploaded on Soundcloud. What is most significant about *140Journos collective* is their insistence on news verification and accuracy. They have become a reliable source of information during and after the Gezi protests. With their trusted network all over Turkey, they provide a good example of citizen journalism and alternative new media from Turkey.

A less visible but ongoing project is Çapul TV (http://capul.tv/). This site appeared during the Gezi Park protests, and as an online streaming channel, the volunteers provided citizens live streaming from inside Gezi Park. Volunteers paid for the streaming costs and gradually it turned into a regular web television channel that focuses on activism-related news all over Turkey.

A project that started with reporting from the hunger strikes of leftist and Kurdish prisoners in 2012, Ötekilerin Postası (http://otekilerinpostasi.org/), remained another resilient network: This is a project that merges activism and citizen journalism. It relies on its Twitter and Facebook pages. Its Facebook pages are continuously shut down with no explicit reason given, but new pages appear with thousands of fans. With at least 20 volunteers at the editorial desk, Ötekilerin Postası informs the public on dissident news.

Finally, a kind of rival of 140Journos' prominence is the citizenship journalism collective; *Dokuz8Haber*, which was established just after the Gezi protests; it is not very active today. At the outset, *Ötekilerin Postası* and many other smaller and local groups joined forces to create a more powerful collective under the umbrella framework of Dokuz8Haber. It was featured in an MTV documentary on Turkey titled *Rebel Music: Flowers of Gezi Park*. However, in 2017, there was an unfortunate dissolution of this collective due to rights violation claims by some independent journalists in the network. Dokuz8Haber stills exists today, but with less impact and outreach due to concerns regarding professional ethics and integrity.

Citizen journalism has also had an impact on more professional online news sites. The following news sites benefit from the digital vitality, and in some situations report what citizens produce. *T24* is one of the ongoing news sites that claim to be building an alternative media environment in Turkey. The founder is a former professional journalist, Doğan Akin. The site is known for its in-depth interviews with public figures, and it is a host for many columnists who were fired from mainstream media channels. A relatively well-funded site, *Diken* is more left-leaning in the political spectrum than T24, and it has editors who are quick to create stories out of social media conversations. Another professional journalist, Nurcan Akad, started one of Turkey's first tablet-based news sites, *Zete*, which would later be open to all Web communications and which has also close relations with citizen journalists.

Recently, another website emerged whose focus is to fund professional journalists, but it has good ties with citizen journalism practices as well: Platform for Independent Journalism (P24) (platform24.org) has become a resource for journalism in Turkey on several levels by mobilizing online and offline sources. Independent journalists are given grants for particular news stories, and the grant providers are clearly described on the website. The platform also organizes workshops all over Turkey to educate journalists and journalism students about topics ranging from social media–based journalism to legal issues.

A plethora of digital resources appeared or become publicly more visible after the Gezi protests died out. Mülksüzleştirme Ağları (Networks of Dispossesion)[4] appeared as a digital resource. This site is developed on a graph commons interface. Graph commons software was developed by the founders of this site and is open to suggestions for other mapping projects. This site offers a sophisticated mapping of actor networks involved in Turkey's massive gentrification projects. During the corruption investigations, the site was extremely helpful for ordinary citizens to understand the networks behind the corrupt gentrification processes.

Focusing on digital literacy and data privacy, a collaborative project, Kem Gözlere Şiş (https://alternatifbilisim.org/kem-gozlere-sis/) appeared just before Gezi protests and became more visible and receptive after the protests. This is a collaborative project that aims to educate users to protect their personal data and maintain the privacy of their digital communications. The site offers tutorials for independent, open-source software at a beginner-level. It also introduces basic security practices to ordinary users. A group of committed activists update the site in relation to ongoing developments. "Kem Gözlere Şiş" is a Turkish phrase against possible damage of evil thought or spirit. This project is named after that phrase and although it looks like similar

projects in other countries, this is the first advanced one in Turkish. This collaborative project offers online tools for secure and sometimes anonymous communication for ordinary citizens. It uses a very simple language so that any citizen with no technical expertise can still understand and begin to use these tools. The team behind the project intends to develop the site continuously with new tools and fields, and form a community that is conscious of web security issues.

As environmental conflicts have become more public, a mapping project, #DirenÇevre,[5] has emerged. This site relies on crowd-sourcing and online mapping technologies to document environmental conflicts in Turkey. There are 11 categories in which citizens can name environmental conflict with specifics. It does not present all the problems but only those in which several actors have a conflict of interest. The project is supported and coordinated by a group of academics and civic activists who are interested in political ecology. On the same ecological standing, *Yeşil Gazete*[6] is an online daily newspaper with an environmentalist and participatory political perspective. It promises to use sustainable and open-source technology as much as possible. It has proven to be a long-term project, having been online for more than two years. It contains sections about woman rights, environment protection, homosexual rights, animal rights, NGOs and more.

A collective blog, 5 Harfliler,[7] is a site that provides quality content with a critical perspective on women's issues. There can be content in any field as long as it is related to women's lives and meaningful for women's rights struggles. It has a particularly good touch on popular cultural themes. The site has a good traffic, good coverage among social media users and some of its content reaches to traditional media.

Açık Bilim [Open Science][8] is an open-access site that focuses on scientific issues. There are very few popular science magazines in Turkey. This website aims to provide in-depth and free content on current scientific developments in fields that may be overlooked under Turkey's conservative rules. The fact that fake news and the rise of the new right are important impairments for scientific studies and their dissemination, must not be ignored. With that thought, initiatives such as Acik Bilim for public research outreach are significant; the team uses podcasts and Twitter feeds for creating traction and public debate.

Election cases and fact-checking

Digital cases with civic responsibilities that were vitalized with the Gezi protests did lead to an empowered state of mind among the people to focus on elections. Emergence of a participatory culture facilitated by new media (Jenkins 2006) would persuade citizens' entities to meet their demands for more transparency and accountability. As the scepticism towards authorities grew, existing citizen entities were assisted by new ones that particularly focused on elections.

Oy ve Ötesi (Vote and Beyond in English)[9] collective proved to be one of the most successful attempts. Several other projects emerged to provide more transparency and accountability for the election results. These efforts cannot be ignored for the end of a 13-year one-party government after the elections. The Gezi resistance could not be translated into a homogeneous political movement, but its spirit and participants were gradually involved in projects that were to serve in monitoring democratic processes like elections. Erkan Saka writes about an interview (2019:74) with a representative of Oy ve Ötesi:

> It was stated that this platform was founded after Gezi Resistance as a call for ordinary citizens to be more responsible for the state of democratic system in Turkey. The platform made a call for election volunteers in order to experience a more transparent

local election in Turkey. The project chose Istanbul as the pilot city in local elections to take place in March 2014, and extended its operations to four other regions in parliamentary elections of June 2015.

The platform mobilized nearly 30,000 citizens (Korkmaz 2015) and it became a showcase of merging online and offline activism. The project organized workshops to train volunteers and created a database so that they could tally election results to compare them with official records. The volunteers stayed all day at the voting rooms in order to observe if the election process worked smoothly. A specific mobile application, video tutorials and the like were gradually integrated into the project. According to a survey (Korkmaz 2015) conducted by Ali Çarkoğlu and S. Erdem Aytaç in early 2015, the rate of Turkish citizens who believe "the elections will not be fair" increased from 28 per cent in 2007 to 43 per cent in 2015. Accordingly, an Oy ve Ötesi spokesperson stated three targets: "The first objective was to increase voter turnout. The second objective was to facilitate the link between candidates and voters, and the third objective was election monitoring" (Korkmaz 2015).

Transformed media sphere as an independent-activist-distributed ecosystem

The case of Medyascope

According to the Turkey supplementary report of the Reuters Institute of Digital News (Yanatma 2018), with the suggestion of the ruling party, a law on internet broadcasting was introduced, requiring online video-streaming services to apply for a licence from the regulator, RTUK. Without a permit, access can be blocked. RTUK checks the content and has the power to issue fines. Opponents say the government is tightening controls with powers to block and remove content from news sites and that social media already being used. As five of the nine members on RTUK's governing council are appointed by the ruling party, critics argue that the licensing mechanism itself is likely to be abused by the government. This could possibly affect alternative news providers, since most of the dissident news outlets are online, with the internet being the main news source for people. Live streaming through Periscope and YouTube has increasingly become popular for free media such as Medyascope TV and Özgürüz. DW Turkish also increased its content on YouTube by hiring several experienced Turkish journalists. Some independent journalists stream regular live news shows as well. The YouTube broadcasting of prominent journalists reaches large audiences. Perhaps as a result, the news share of YouTube (9%) and Twitter (10%) have risen significantly in the past year.

Platforms like Medyascope (for online streaming and broadcasting) and their generic sisters Spotify and Medyapod (for audio streaming online) enable dissident media collectives and individual entrepreneurs with a consciousness for the common good to work on media projects and reach interested audiences. Their audience clusters are in direct interaction with the content through social media accounts, and thus the feedback mechanism functions well and the communication is seamless. One must add the intermittent role of such platforms for disseminating information via extended borders; that is, the extraordinary struggle of displaced journalists and knowledge workers, originating from Turkey, enriches dissident voices from within via extended borders. The censored news, or in some cases auto-censored news-making practices, are shared with exile peer networks and communicated through paths of information unfamiliar

to default agglomerates with authority. The sustainability of these platforms is a commons call; it works directly through do-it-yourself audience segmentation by crowdfunding, fund-raising or donations. Third-party funding also helps realize specific projects, but the main sustainability is through audience segmentation. This is exactly what is underlined as "Media as Hyper-social" in the title of this chapter.

Concluding remarks

Let us go back to the aim of this chapter and refresh memories after elaborating on the state and the transformation of the digital media-sphere in the last two decades in Turkey, and retroactively in other parts of the world. Cyber-autonomism elaborated with its contextual grounding at the beginning of this chapter may be long overdue, but the countercultural politics outside the mainstream is still a legitimate concern. With the rise of the new right, fringe opinions on cultural politics have been becoming mainstream and creating a considerable impact on indecisive masses. The way it has been addressed by democratic cyber-populism advocates since 2011 is doubly important in the sense that there is an urgent call for human rights action. Netizens of the last two decades have come to terms with the fact that slacktivism, mobile mobbing or keyboard pitching on their own create nothing more than concentric bubbles with booming algorithmic potential. The more these concentric bubbles seem to expand, the less open they are to diversity and dissidence.

It is clear that algorithmic capitalism works in favour of the neoliberal authoritarian regimes leading nations today. To clarify further how algorithmic capitalism has such an impact, we had better go back to Hedva's Sick Woman Theory, introduced in the beginning of this chapter. Hedva definitely has a feminist grasp for how the suppressed people in a given community, mostly women, people of colour or people with other demographic vulnerabilities, are forced to face the worst due to the surge of capitalism in essential parts of life. This forces such vulnerable people to stay at the level of survival. Such devastation, added on top of the fact that algorithms of the twenty-first century work in favour of austerity measures, force them to stay silent and ignored in the abyss of attention filters and concentric bubbles.

However, one must not lose all hope. Citizen journalism and rights activists are two embracing concepts that have been penetrating the soft glitches of the worn-out post-capitalism for quite a long time, given the compressed timelines of netizens in the twenty-first century. We have been witness to how this penetration may play an incredible role in redefining the public sphere in favour of social justice. As a side note, the author would like to clarify that the case studies elaborated in this chapter are not exhaustive, but more humbly, aim to propose a framework for studying and learning from the evolution of media during the last decade in a young, but increasingly authoritarian state such as Turkey. The author, further, suggests that this could have a multiplier effect on citizen action against the rising authoritarianism and rights violations all over the world.

On one side, our lives are recorded 24/7, our faces are virtually recognized and democratic channels are being exploited or blocked by default authorities. On the other side, netizens discover the power of sousveillance,[10] track the net-blocks, maintain their own digital mapping architectures[11] and learn to counter-hack the system for the sake of the common good. This distributive potential not only recognizes media as an established fourth power but also expands on their emancipatory potential for democratic rights, equality and social justice.

Notes

1 For further information, see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Block_of_Wikipedia_in_Turkey
2 For further information, see: https://140journos.com/
3 https://twitter.com/otekilerpostasi
4 For further information, see: http://mulksuzlestirme.org/
5 For further information, see: http://direncevre.org/
6 For further information, see: https://yesilgazete.org
7 For further information, see: www.5harfliler.com
8 For further information, see: www.acikbilim.com
9 For further information, see: www.oyveotesi.org
10 Sousveillance is the recording of an activity by a participant in the activity, typically by way of small wearable or portable personal technologies. The term "sousveillance", coined by Steve Mann, stems from the contrasting French words *sur*, meaning "above", and *sous*, meaning "below", i.e., "surveillance" denotes "eye-in-the-sky" watching from above, whereas "sousveillance" denotes bringing a camera or other means of observation down to human level, either physically (mounting cameras on people rather than on buildings), or hierarchically (ordinary people doing the watching, rather than higher authorities or architectures doing the watching).
11 The author refers to the *Open Street Map* initiative, which emerged as a socio-technical response to Google Maps, Apple Maps and all the other privacy-violating corporate GIS. For further info: www.openstreetmap.org

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35

TURKEY'S RESPONSES TO REFUGEES

Past and present

Ahmet İçduygu and Damla B. Aksel

Introduction

There are many points at which one could begin the history of refugees in Turkey. One might begin with the fact that the earliest refugee flows in the early twentieth century to Turkey had been a by-product of the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into nation states. Then, in particular, the arrival of Turkish-origin refugees have been seen as very instrumental in shaping the Turkish nation in the Republican period. The last decade pushed Turkey's refugee population to become the largest in the world. This chapter examines Turkey's response to asylum seekers and refugees over the past nine decades, including policies for receiving refugees, mechanisms for refugee status determination and humanitarian resettlement. The history of the country's refugee policy has been shaped by the political priorities of successive national governments, developments in international and domestic refugee law and the evolving nature of forced migration around the world.

In the first half of the twenty century, with the exception of the arrival of Jewish refugee scholars from Germany, Turkey was mostly generous only in providing refugee status to people with Turkish origin and descent, which was aimed at creating a homogenous nation state. In the Cold War period, as a signatory of the 1951 Convention, Turkey also carefully and cautiously extended its protection to a small number of non-Turkish refugees mostly escaping from communist regimes. After the Cold War period, however, with the arrival of increasing numbers of refugees originating from politically fragile countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq, refugee movement gained notable momentum that affected the country's economic, social, political, cultural and demographic spheres considerably. Most recently, with the mass arrival of Syrian refugees, this impact became even more remarkable in all spheres of life in Turkey. Currently in the early 2020s, hosting nearly four million people under international or temporary protection mainly from Syria, but also from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and other countries, Turkey stands as the country with the largest refugee population in the world. Consequently, the related debates over the refugee-related reality and policies in Turkey are intense. For instance, the questions of whether the earlier government responses to refugees in the country were different from the current ones, or whether Turkey's responses to Syrian refugees are different compared to those

of other countries, are vigorously contested. There is no doubt that history allows us to better understand the present in a new light. It is within this context that the purpose of this chapter is twofold: to reflect a historical synopsis of the main refugee flows to Turkey over time, and to elaborate the most recent and most drastic case of refugees, Syrians, in the country, relating it to the larger historical context of the Turkey's responses to refugees.

Early twentieth century: refugees and nation-building

It has been well documented that the Turkish Republic and its predecessor, the Ottoman Empire, have had a long tradition of receiving refugees, especially from its close neighbourhood (Akgündüz 1998; Kirişci 1996: 293, 2000; İçduygu and Kirişci 2009). The Ottoman Empire was home to many groups of refugees, particularly Muslims fleeing the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as non-Muslim populations, including Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews who escaped from various parts in Europe throughout the fifteenth century, Hungarians and Poles in the nineteenth century, and white émigrés who escaped from Russia after the Bolshevik Revolution (Kirişci 1996, 2000; Kasaba 2011). Many of these populations were given the opportunity to integrate and become subjects of the Ottoman Empire, which already had a multicultural and ethnic nature (Kirişci 2000: 3). In contrast to this inclusive approach during the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish Republic adopted a stricter policy vis-à-vis the migrant and refugee populations, focusing on their integration and naturalization processes in the context of its nation-building project.

For the founders of the Republic, the migration and refugee flows during the 1920s and 1930s served as a solution to the drastic decline of the population of Anatolia by 30 per cent during the First World War. It also directly contributed to the creation of a nation state that differed from the multicultural Empire, because the entry and integration of the newcomers were judged by ethnic and linguistic preferences. This policy was implemented based on a number of laws that were enacted throughout the 1920s (Ülker 2007), and was finally consolidated by the 1934 Law on Settlement (Law 2510), which did not only refer to the issue of migration but also to the ethnic and religious composition of the Turkish state (İçduygu and Aksel 2013). Indeed, the law established the "image of the ideal citizen" (Kirişci 2000: 5) of the newly established Republic, which was constructed around the homogenization of the populations based on "common culture and descent". While the text did not provide any clear criteria on who could be considered as a part of the Turkish ethnicity and culture, the decision was given to the authority of the Council of Ministers (Kirişci 2000; 1995). Moreover, the law designated the settlement conditions of the newcomers based on the demographic composition of different ethnic and religious populations within the country. Until the early 1990s, the Law on Settlement was the only legal text that the migration and asylum system in Turkey relied on.

From the foundation of the Republic to the beginning of the Second World War, more than 815,000 Turkish-speaking and/or Muslim people forcibly migrated to Turkey, especially from Bulgaria, Greece, Romania and Yugoslavia (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009: 10). These included Turkish-speaking Muslims from Greece, who were settled in areas vacated by the Greeks in Turkey as a result of the Great Population Exchange between Turkey and Greece in 1923; Muslims and Pomaks (Bulgarian Muslims) who moved during the 1920s and 1930s; Turks, Tatars and Circassians from Romania; and finally Turks, Bosnians and Albanians from Yugoslavia (Kirişci 1995: 63). A smaller group of migrants also arrived from the east, including Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Uzbeks and Uyghurs (Kirişci 2001: 74). According to Akgündüz (1998: 112), political instability in the countries of origin, mistrust and implicit and explicit

discriminatory policies of the home governments in the Balkans were among the push factors for these early migrants. In return, migrants were motivated to move to Turkey largely due to religious, cultural and linguistic affinity, and very often due to already existing ties of kinship and family. Turkey's generous admission policy (Akgündüz 1998) and the government's promotion of immigration via its embassies overseas (in Romania and Bulgaria) (Ülker 2007) also acted as pull factors.

An exceptional case that did not fully fit the dominant migration and asylum policies in the early Republican period was the migration of more than 100 German-speaking émigré scholars, who were recruited by the Turkish Ministry of Education as a result of a contract in 1933 between the Turkish government and the Emergency Association of German Science. According to the existing research (Bahar 2014; Ergin 2009), the scholars were mostly of Jewish origin, with a smaller group of scholars who were obliged to leave Nazi Germany for their political views. Named as stateless (*haymatlos*) in Turkey, the émigré scholars remained a distinctive and small segregated community that neither mixed socially with Muslim society nor with the Jewish community, and mostly returned to Germany (Bahar 2010: 58)[1]. However, the enabling perspective towards Jews in general did not continue before and during the Second World War, and their entry and settlement in Turkey were limited with the Passport Law (1938) and other legal texts (Dinçşahin and Goodwin 2011). In 1941, the passenger ship *Struma* carrying more than 700 Romanian Jews, aiming to go to the British Colonial Administration in Palestine, was not allowed to dock and was towed out of Turkish territorial waters. This incident resulted in catastrophe, as the ship sank due to unidentified causes in the Black Sea and all but a few passengers died (Dinçşahin and Goodwin 2011; Kirişci 2000).

Refugee flows from the Balkans continued after the Second World War, especially as a result of the establishment of communist regimes in the region (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009: 10). Between 1950 and 1951, more than 150,000 Bulgarian Turks were forced by the Bulgarian government to migrate to Turkey. The Bulgarian Turks were initially housed in temporary settlements and refugee camps. Later, they were resettled to state lands that fit either with their prior communal modes of living or in relatively familiar physical environments with their former settlements, to facilitate the continuity of agricultural production (Kirişci 1995: 66; Kostanick 1955: 52). Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Turks and Muslims living in Yugoslavia and Bosnia also sought refuge in Turkey, to escape the insecurity caused by the authorities in their countries (Kirişci 1995). Some 20,000 Turks from Greece are estimated to have settled in Turkey between 1960 and 1980, as a result of the repression and persecution of the Turkish population in the West Thrace region (Kirişci 2000: 9). Other smaller waves of forced migrants took place from outside of the Balkans: after 1944, some 15,000 Meshketian (Ahıska) Turks from Central Asia entered Turkey with old Soviet passports and settled with their families (Kirişci 2001: 76); after 1952, Uyghurs and other asylum seekers from China started to enter and settle in Turkey, oftentimes via resettlement programmes supported by the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) (Beydulla 2019: 181); and after 1959, forced migrants of Turkmen origin from northern Iraq arrived and were given the opportunity to settle and naturalize in the country. Some of these migrations that took place in the aftermath of the Second World War continued with subsequent migrations that took place under family reunification (Kirişci 1995; 2000; 2001; Beydulla 2019).

Towards an internationalization of the refugee regime

The 1951 Geneva Convention that defined the term "refugee" in international law was the second main text adopted in Turkey after the Law on Settlement of 1934. Turkey was among

the drafters and original signatories of the convention and incorporated it into its national law in 1961. Since the asylum issue was considered from the perspective of national security in the Cold War period, Turkey signed the convention with a geographical limitation, which meant that asylum seekers coming from outside of Europe would not be provided with refugee status in the country (Kirişci 2001: 71). In practice, even many individuals who migrated from countries that were considered to be part of Europe and within the 1951 Convention (such as the Azeris, Ahıska Turks and Uzbeks) were also not given refugee status and were allowed to stay in the country as part of Turkish descent and culture (Kirişci 2001: 75). Hence, very few individuals were granted long-term protection in the country, and the exact number of those who were given "convention refugee" status remains unclear. According to a recent report published by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, the number of people who are granted convention-based refugee status is estimated to be 70 (TGNA 2018).

Although Turkey granted convention refugee status to a limited number of people, many asylum seekers benefited from the protection on a temporary basis as a result of the 1951 Convention.[2] For these individuals who do not fit the criteria to become convention refugees, the UNHCR has been cooperating with the Turkish Ministry of Interior to arrange refugee status determination and the temporary settlement of the majority of asylum applicants, until their cases are finalized, and they can be resettled to a third country. This temporary setting was initially used for asylum seekers from neighbouring Soviet Bloc countries escaping the communist regimes (around 13,500 between 1970 and 1989) (Ihlamur-Öner 2013: 194), and later for asylum seekers from the Middle East, Asia and Africa, when periods of political turmoil and unrest became more widespread and protracted. Since the late 1980s, increasing numbers of asylum seekers from Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan and Palestine have come to Turkey and remained in the country temporarily. Especially after the mid-1990s, the general recognition rate for refugees in Turkey, by the UNHCR, was high (reaching as high as 85% in 2007), in comparison to the recognition rates in many European countries. As a result, many asylum seekers who were given protection under the UN mandate were resettled to a third country, particularly to the United States, European countries (mainly Germany, France, the Netherlands, the UK, Finland, Sweden and Belgium), Canada and Australia. However, as refugee status that was defined by the 1951 Convention was on case-by-case basis, no legal framework existed on the issue of mass influx until the Law on Foreigners and International Protection that was enacted in 2014.

Beginning with the 1980s, Turkey became a highly notable country of asylum and transit, as many people coming especially from the neighbouring countries applied to the UN mandate or continued their journey until reaching a safe third country in Europe (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009). Among these populations are some hundred thousands of Iranians (particularly Bahais, Jews, Kurds, opponents of the regime and LGBTI) who escaped Iran during the period that followed the Revolution of 1979 and the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988) and stayed temporarily in Turkey as a result of its open-door policy. According to Kirişci (2001: 77), while the majority used Turkey as a transit country, only a small proportion approached the UNHCR to be resettled to a third country. In 1988, the conflict between the Iraqi Kurds and the Iraqi government resulted in a brutal military campaign, in which more than 100,000 Kurds were killed, and more than 70,000 Kurds were forced out of Iraq to Turkish and Iranian borders. Turkey initially closed its borders, but later agreed to temporarily accept these refugees on humanitarian grounds, without granting them refugee status (Ihlamur-Öner 2013: 194–195). As a result of the change in policy, more than 100,000 Iraqis of Kurdish origin entered Turkey, and some 30,000 remained in the country between 1988 and 1991 (Kaynak 1992, cited in Danış 2011).

Other asylum movements from non-neighbouring regions also peaked in the 1980s. In 1982, Turkey accepted and assisted the movement of several thousand refugees of Turkish origin from Afghanistan who had been living in camps in Pakistan. These groups were settled in Central and south-eastern Turkey, and provided with housing, agricultural land and job opportunities (İçduygu and Karadağ 2018: 490). The migration of Afghans (not only of Turkish origin) as refugees and irregular migrants continued throughout the 1980s, peaked after the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, and the withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan in 2012 (İçduygu and Karadağ 2018: 493). In 1982, Turkey also accepted the migration of several thousand Uyghurs of Turkish descent, who had come from Afghanistan and Pakistan (Beydulla 2019: 181). In 1992, some 20,000 Bosnian Muslims from Yugoslavia sought asylum in Turkey: these Bosnian refugees were given temporary protection and were settled in camps until returning back in the aftermath of the Dayton Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1995. Similar patterns of forced migration were originated from Kosovo and Macedonia in 1999, as Turkey received refugees of Albanian and Turkish origin as part of the Humanitarian Evacuation Program. These groups were temporarily settled in the same refugee camps where Bosnians had stayed before and later returned to their countries of origin (Kirişci 2001: 76).

Another mass influx from the neighbouring countries was originated from Bulgaria in 1989, as a result of the Bulgarian government's repression and assimilation campaigns towards the ethnic Turks. Within a few months, Turkey's response had changed from not opening the borders to allowing the entry of Bulgarian Turks and announcing that it would accept Turks living in Bulgaria (although their total number was around 1.5 million). Yet, as the number of refugees surpassed 350,000, the Turkish government closed its borders to those of Bulgarian origin (Parla 2003; İçduygu et al. 2018). Among these refugees, some 150,000 people returned to Bulgaria until the end of 1990. For the remaining population, Turkey provided houses for settlement using state funding and granted citizenship (Ihlamur-Öner 2013). Even though the migration from Bulgaria continued sporadically during the 1990s, the newcomers were not given similar treatment and only a small percentage received citizenship rights from Turkey (Danış and Parla 2009; İçduygu et al. 2018).

Asylum movement from neighbouring Iraq to Turkey reached its highest point after the Gulf War of 1991 (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009: 16). Nearly 500,000 Iraqis entered Turkey during this period, including mainly the Kurds, and smaller numbers of Iraqi Turkmen, Arabs and Chaldeans. Once again, the initial response by the Turkish government was to close the border, due to security concerns regarding Turkey's internal Kurdish problem. However, it finally opened the border and placed the Iraqis in temporary settlements on the border, as a result of domestic and international pressure. This movement of Iraqi refugees was resolved by the creation of a 'safe haven' in northern Iraq protected by the United States and Britain. Over the course of a few months, most of the Iraqi refugees in Turkey were repatriated to nearly 20 transit camps along the Turkish–Iraqi border. Among the remaining groups, those of Turkish origin received residence and citizenship, and some 6,000 Iraqis were resettled to the West (mainly the United States and Australia) (Kirişci 1996: 20; Danış 2011; Ihlamur-Öner 2013). While the Iraqi migration continued throughout the 1990s at a slower pace, the number of asylum seekers increased gradually from 2006 onwards, after the UNHCR's decision of 2006 that Iraqis should be given de facto refugee status due to raising concerns about an environment of insecurity in the aftermath of the 2003 US invasion of Iraq (Danış 2011: 204).

Throughout the 1990s, while faced with the increasing trends in asylum applications, Turkey tended to adopt a stricter asylum regime both due to the changes in the international system on international protection in the aftermath of the Cold War and as a result of its own national

concerns. In the global arena, the end of the Cold War was coupled with changes in the composition of asylum seekers, as well as with increases in the number of asylum applications. One must note that this was a period when the destination countries in the developed world moved away from a system that worked in favour of asylum applicants, to a new one that was more in line with the strict interpretations of the 1951 Convention (Keely 2001: 213). As a country positioned in between the developing countries and the developed Europe in the West, Turkey also went through dramatic changes in the nature and size of asylum demands over the course of the 1980s and 1990s (Kirişci 2001). Moreover, the 1991 experience with mass flows of Kurdish-origin Iraqi refugees and the state's anxieties over Kurdish fighters who often acted in a cross-border pattern raised concerns over national security in the management of asylum. As a result, Turkey adopted the Regulation on Asylum in 1994. The regulation replicated the refugee definition of the 1951 Geneva Convention in establishing who could benefit from temporary asylum protection and also allowed significant room for administrative discretion. This regulation established the conditions for applying for asylum and temporary settlement in Turkey; it provided for the management of asylum seekers and refugees in the country on a limited basis; and over the course of the 1990s and 2000s, Turkey was regularly criticized by the international arena and human rights activists due to human rights violations against asylum seekers, particularly in relation to the violation of the *non-refoulement* principle, arbitrary detentions and treatment of asylum seekers in "foreigner guesthouses" (Levitan et al. 2009). In addition to these issues, the UNHCR's lengthy procedures for resettlement created precarious conditions for asylum seekers who lived in Turkey with very limited access to healthcare and social services, and no rights to participate in the regular labour force.

Turkish government statistics show that there were nearly 4,000 asylum applications filed per year between 1995 and 2007, indicating both an increasing trend in the numbers and the diversifying national composition of the arrivals. During this period, a total of more than 50,000 asylum applications were received, and about a half of them were recognized as refugees: an overwhelming majority of these refugees were from Iran and Iraq, but there were also others from diverse countries, including Afghanistan and various African countries. As noted earlier, based on the country's geographical limitation in the 1951 Convention, almost all these recognized refugees were subject to be resettled out of Turkey. Those rejected cases were supposed to be deported to their countries of origin, but it is known that many went underground and stayed in the country or tried to move on irregularly to European countries (İçduygu and Kirişci 2009: 17)

A critical impact of the changing nature, size and origin of asylum movements, which has increasingly become a hot political issue, was part of the bilateral relations between the European Union (EU) and Turkey, even well before the Turkey's candidacy for membership in 1999. In an attempt to rehabilitate its asylum system, Turkey entered into increased contact with the EU and the UNHCR after 1997, via trainings, projects, external visits and translation of international documents that were often funded by the European Commission or the EU member states.[3] These efforts shifted towards a more systematic process for harmonization with the EU acquis after the Helsinki Summit of 1999. In 2005, Turkey adopted the National Action Plan for the Adoption of the EU Acquis in the Field of Asylum and Migration (NAP), laying out the necessary tasks and timetable for the development of a migration and asylum management system (İçduygu and Aksel 2014). The NAP also included an article on the possibilities of lifting the geographical limitation, but this has never been realized up to now. Despite the setbacks in mid-2000s due to political challenges between Turkey and the EU, asylum reform once again picked up speed after 2007, resulting in the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (LFIP) that was adopted in 2013 and enacted in 2014. The LFIP introduced some

landmark improvements, covering both migration, asylum and mass influx, as well as the establishment of the Directorate General for Migration Management, which would act as the main coordinative civil authority.[4]

When Syria's refugee flows started in 2011, Turkey was in the midst of fixing its asylum and reception system to meet international – and, particularly, EU – standards, mainly as part of its long-standing but slow-processing EU harmonization procedure. As noted above, although this process resulted in the adoption of a new law, a much older policy remained unchanged. Turkey's immigration and asylum policies still favoured people of "Turkish descent and culture", and asylum policies continued to set geographic restrictions: only asylum seekers from Europe are eligible for recognition as refugees, while non-Europeans receive temporary protection status and are expected at some point to resettle in a third country. Indeed, these main elements of Turkish asylum and refugee policies were not practically effective when the county was faced with the influx of Syrian refugees who were neither European nor (with the exception of Turkmen Syrians) people of "Turkish descent and culture".

Turkey's response to the arrivals of Syrian refugees

In 2011, the Syrian crisis had quickly grown into chaotic clashes that caused a mass exodus to Turkey and other neighbouring countries. Initially, the influx of Syrian refugees entering Turkey was relatively small. At the end of 2011, there were only 8,000 Syrian refugees in Turkey. In the early years of the crisis, Turkey maintained a positive response to the refugee flows from Syria, perceived as a humanitarian issue. An official discourse centring around the notion of "guests" prevailed. Authorities were quick to assume that the crisis would end soon and enable the displaced to return home – as had happened with the Kurdish refugees from Iraq in 1991. They therefore did not envisage the possibility of long-term or permanent stay, and instead focused on providing aid and assistance to refugees in camps. Until early 2013, almost all Syrian refugees lived in camps, but changing conditions and greater flows increased the number outside camps. At the start of 2014, almost half of Syrian refugees lived outside formal camps, and by late 2014 the vast majority (almost four out of five) found shelter in towns and cities. In fact, the number of Syrian refugees had risen from less than a quarter million to 1.5 million during 2014. As the Syrians' exile was prolonged, with the enactment of LFIP in 2013, the government extended the status of Syrian refugees to "temporary protection". The scope and benefits of the temporary protection status were expanded and better outlined by the Regulation on Temporary Protection (TP) passed in October 2014, which further strengthened humanitarian aid by providing those granted temporary protection with some possibilities of access to health and education systems, labour markets, social assistance, interpretation and other similar services (İçduygu and Millet 2016).

In 2015, while Turkey was hosting nearly 2.5 million refugees, the EU countries were overwhelmingly alarmed by the mass arrivals of refugees, most of whom were coming through Turkey. This development immediately raised the question of "responsibility sharing versus responsibility shifting" to the shared agendas of the EU member states and Turkey. Consequently, both parties went into a lengthy and controversial negotiation process, and then agreed to support refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria and their host country, Turkey: the result was an agreement, which is known as the EU–Turkey Statement, or the EU–Turkey Deal. This agreement referred to various issues: the return of irregular migrants crossing from Turkey to the Greek islands; the establishment of a scheme in which for every Syrian being returned to Turkey from the Greek islands, another Syrian would be resettled from Turkey to the EU; the prevention of new routes opening for illegal migration from Turkey to the EU; the activation

of a voluntary readmission scheme to which the EU member states would contribute on a voluntary basis; the acceleration of a visa liberalisation process with a view to lifting the visa requirements for Turkish citizens; the disbursement of "3+3" billion euros to support various projects on refugees (Aksel and İçduygu 2019). As an outcome of this agreement, in 2016, EU-funded initiatives were introduced to facilitate refugee access to education and employment. In addition, the Turkish government tended to develop various strategies to integrate refugees, especially those with university education and capital. It also began offering citizenship status to selected skilled migrants with economic and cultural capital, to retain them. All these developments indicate that Turkish authorities circuitously accepted the likelihood of the long-term settlement of Syrians and tended to take certain concrete steps towards their integration.

One must emphasize here, together with two major factors, the arrival of Syrian refugees and the country's EU affairs, various ideological elements embedded in the agendas of the political party in power, the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP[5]), over nearly the last two decades, have had an enormous impact on Turkey's responses to refugees, particularly Syrian refugees, in Turkey. The AKP's approach to migration and refugee issues has been very instrumental, frequently using them as an item for bargaining in domestic and foreign politics (Cantek and Soykan 2019). While the AKP's related policies and discourses have created a positive environment for incoming migrants, particularly the Syrian refugees, these have evolved through a hegemonic civilizationist populist style and an understanding of religious nationhood and Ottoman heritage (Yanaşmayan et.al. 2019). As a result, while this period witnessed some modernizing efforts in the governing of migration and refugee issues in the country, it also saw the persistence of some nationalistic and traditionalist lines in the country's policies and practices, but with a shift to a more religious (Islamic) perspective from an ethnic (Turkish nationalist) one that implied a sort of change from the established Republican perspective.

Starting in 2017, when the size of the Syrian refugee community reached over three million, it appeared that the state and the society in Turkey began to feel the increasing weight of hosting large numbers of refugees. The solidarity of the society with Syrian refugees slowly faded, especially as the government progressively took steps to provide social services, employment rights and citizenship, and the public perceived Syrians as competing for the same resources. The public rhetoric gradually worsened, and xenophobic tendencies and discrimination were perceived to be on the rise. In 2019, parallel to the worsening public opinion, and with the narrowing conditions of integration of refugees and of resettlement to third countries, the government adopted a return discourse and suggested concrete mechanisms for return (İçduygu and Nimer 2019). This constituted a type of U-turn that possibly matched Turkey's changing public opinion, the tensions between native populations and Syrians, and the country's degrading economy. It seemed that the government realized that Syrians staying in Turkey would have a political and social cost, and consequently changed its rhetoric. In parallel, Turkey's military incursions into northern Syria, which were framed as anti-terror missions, had implications for a return. Government officials repeatedly mentioned the possibility of creating a safe zone in northern Syria and returning the refugees.

It was striking that Turkey's political and military involvement in the Syrian war went hand in hand with its instrumental use of the refugee issue for its domestic and foreign affairs. After facing a deadly attack on Turkish troops by Syrian government forces in northern Syria in the late February 2020, which Turkey blamed on the persistent ignorance of the European states regarding Turkey's demand that they share responsibility for the Syrian refugee question and Turkey's plan for a safe zone, Turkey declared that it could no longer deal with the number of people fleeing Syria's civil war, and would open its borders to facilitate the refugees who wished

to leave the country for Europe. This was a strategic attempt to weaponize refugees against the European countries. Consequently, mobilized by the announcement of the Turkish authorities, thousands of refugees and irregular migrants with diverse national background rushed to the country's borders with Europe, mainly to Greek and Bulgarian land boards, and coastal areas of the Aegean Sea to move to Greek islands. In early March 2020, just before the COVID-19 crisis hit Turkey, some Syrian refugees, together with a large number of asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants from many other countries, managed to cross the borders to Europe, but a vast majority of them, first, squeezed between the so-called open border of Turkey and the closed border of Europe, and then had to leave the border zone and go back to their accommodations in various parts of Turkey by their own choice or were forced by government authorities to go into quarantine camps due to COVID-19 preventive measures (DW 2020; Fıstık 2020).

When the presence of Syrian refugees in Turkey entered its ninth year in 2020, under the circumstances of the COVID-19 crisis, only less than two percent of them were living in camps, with the majority of them residing in urban areas throughout the country, with an extraordinarily uneven distribution across regions, provinces and even districts. While 3.6 million Syrians were under temporary protection status, over 100,000 have residence permits, an estimated 100,000 are unregistered, and nearly 120,000 have already become naturalized Turkish citizens, bringing the total number of Syrians in Turkey to over four million. The Syrian population in Turkey is very young, with the age group 0–18 making up more than two-fifths of the total, and over 620,000 Syrian babies being born in Turkey. While nearly two million Syrians are of working age (15–64), only half of them are in workforce, and a vast majority working unregistered: fewer than 50,000 Syrians have a work permit. There are more than 20,000 small businesses owned by Syrians. Moreover, nearly 700,000 Syrian children are integrated into the formal educational system in Turkey, making only two-thirds of the Syrian children of school age (5–18). Over 30, 000 students are registered at Turkish universities (DGMM 2020a). All these figures reveal that, although a spontaneous integration process has been undertaken over the last nine years, Syrian refugees still face harsh difficulties incorporating themselves into very basic settings of the socio-economic sphere, mainly education and employment.

Although Syrian refugees dominated refugee-related issues of Turkey in 2020, there are other refugee groups or refugee-like populations such as stranded transit migrants or irregular ones, who make the overall picture of refugees in the country more complex and multifaceted. Here one must refer this issue briefly. As noted earlier, Turkey had faced flows of refugees and irregular migrants since the early 1990s; however, this flow has gained an extraordinary momentum particularly in the past five years: for instance, the total number of non-Syrian international protection holders and applicants rose from just over 100,000 in 2015 to nearly 400,000 in 2020, mainly composed of people from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and various African countries (DGMM 2020b). Similarly, mostly coming from these mentioned countries, are also thousands of irregular migrants, some of whom have the intention of going to third countries (mainly to Europe), and the others tend to sell their labour power in the informal market in Turkey. Before the enactment of LFIP in 2013, asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey had no or very limited formal rights of access to the labour market, to education and to health services. Over the last few years, there have been some positive changes which provide certain rights to asylum seekers and refugees to obtain these services. Today, while non-Syrian international protection holders and applicants, and their family members, have certain formal rights to access to education,[6] the labour market[7] and health services,[8] irregular migrants still form the most vulnerable group, having no or little formal right to access any of these services.

Concluding remarks

An overview of Turkey's responses to refugee flows over the decades shows that the country's refugee policy has not been driven only by humanitarian concerns, but mostly by national interests. Therefore, one must not underestimate the instrumental elements in it, which are historically embedded in the country's existentialist dilemma. In this context, however, the national interest must be, sometimes more broadly and sometimes more narrowly, viewed, depending in part on the degree to which the country's interests are understood to be dependent on a variety of domestic reasons and on foreign affairs. This chapter, firstly, traced the types and numbers of refugees to Turkey since the early twentieth century, and then, linking this history to the present day, it also elaborated the most recent case of Syrian refugees in the country during the 2010s. As policies and practices have evolved considerably in that period, a brief review of key developments also centres the discussion of Turkey's responses on the recent refugee situation. That related discussion also refers to the adequacy of the recent system to meet the challenges ahead.

Turkey's ancient policies of refugee intake that were formulated and nourished by the ideology of nationalism and the country's nation-building process have been challenged mainly by *three* factors in the last three decades since the 1990s. *Firstly*, various sociopolitical developments in the country's near geography spontaneously started bringing non-Turkish and non-Muslim immigrants and refugees to the country, contrary to Turkey's long-established preferences to attract only those migrants and refugees with "Turkish culture and descent". *Secondly*, Turkey's EU membership required serious Europeanization efforts to modernize the country's immigration and refugee regulations. *Thirdly*, particularly starting with the arrival of Syrian refugees, the AKP government's refugee-related discourse and actions, which are based on a hegemonic civilizationist populist style and an understanding of religious nationhood and Ottoman heritage, instrumentalized the refugee and other migration issues against the "West", particularly the EU, as a part of its foreign policy, and they also used these issues as Islamic populist tools in the country's domestics affairs. In fact, the first two of these factors interacted together during 1990s and 2000s, preparing the climate for radical changes in the field. Subsequently, the Law of Foreigners and International Protection of 2013 was enacted, which tends to bring Turkey's legislation in the field of migration and asylum in line with global modern standards. Indeed, Syrian refugees had begun arriving in Turkey in the midst of these remarkable changes in the country's migration and refugee legislation.

There is no doubt that the arrival of Syrian refugees and the developments of the AKP's instrumentalist approach on refugees, which is blended with its hegemonic civilizationist and Islamic populist styles, marked a period which represents both rupture and continuity in Turkey's refugee policies and practices. This indicates both continuities and discontinuities between the old and the new, the previous and the current refugee of Turkey. For instance, in addition to the earliest Republican national interest in having a refugee regime based on kinship ties with people of Turkish origin, the AKP government added another element to this regime that also aims at maintaining kinship ties with Muslim populations in the old Ottoman territories. This tendency, which implies both continuities and discontinuities in the country's refugee regime, became obvious when Turkey became home to millions of Syrian refugees. In this period, its commitment to refugee protection has been severely put to the test: as has happened elsewhere, the refugee question in Turkey emerged as a conflict between refugee rights and national interest. The experiences of the last three decades indicate that while refugee-related policies and practices in Turkey have evolved, the direction is more towards refugee rights, but it takes one step forward, and two steps back, so it makes some progress, but then it experiences events

that cause it to be further behind than it was when it made progress. It seems that Turkey's responses to refugee issues will live with this dilemma in the coming years.

Notes

1 The émigré scholars had a crucial place in the Turkish University Reform, acting as an instrument in Turkish reformers' project of "importing a universal science to address local concerns" (Ergin 2009: 107).
2 Since the Law on Foreigners and International Protection of 2014, the concepts of "conditional refugees" and "subsidiary protection" status are used to denote the treatment of those arriving from non-European states.
3 Interview with Metin Çorabatır, 13 August 2018, Ankara.
4 Ibid.
5 Justice and Development Party, Turkish Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP), also called AK Party or Turkish AK Parti, is the political party that came to power in Turkey in the general elections of 2002.
6 See www.unicef.org/turkey/%C5%9Fartl%C4%B1-e%C4%9Fitim-yard%C4%B1m%C4%B1-program%C4%B1-%C5%9Fey
7 See www.mhd.org.tr/images/yayinlar/MHM-31.pdf
8 See www.goc.gov.tr/uluslararasi-koruma-kapsamindaki-yabancilarin-genel-saglik-sigortalari-hakkinda

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"TURKEY IS BIGGER THAN TURKEY"

Diaspora-building and the transnational politics of the Turkish state

Banu Şenay

Introduction

Burgeoning research on political transnationalism and diaspora politics has revealed the growing concern of origin states to reach out to their emigrant populations in an attempt to build stronger ties with them (Gamlen et al. 2019; Ragazzi 2014; Adamson 2018). The Turkish state has been no exception. Indeed, it has been an innovator in diaspora mobilisation. From the late 1970s onwards, when state authorities realised that most "guest workers" were now permanent settlers in the destination countries, a shift in policy occurred, encouraging Turkey-born emigrants abroad not to return home but to integrate into the receiving countries and to contribute to the political and economic affairs of their "homeland" from their new places of residence. Much more recently, under the ruling Justice and Development Party (hereinafter AKP), the state elites have invested themselves further in diaspora-building efforts. Not only has the term "diaspora" become a well-established idiom in their language over the last decade, but a fully-fledged and generously funded "Diaspora Policy" has been put in place. Its aim is to produce a "high-quality (*kaliteli*) diaspora".[1]

In this short contribution, I sketch out the key features of this new diaspora policy, examining the kind of affective ties that it strives to build with a cluster of groups that have been selectively nominated and interpolated by the AKP-led government bureaucracies as members of a "Turkish diaspora". What are the ideological driving forces and political objectives fuelling the state's outreach projects, which have expanded and diversified remarkably in recent years? And what continuities and/or ruptures (if any) exist with the transnational politics pursued by state institutions in the 1990s and early 2000s, when the AKP had not yet established its hegemonic power over the state apparatus? Let me explore these issues by considering the last question first as a way of offering a brief overview of the transnational politics of the Turkish state addressing its citizens abroad.

Diaspora-building in historical perspective

When I first began doing fieldwork in Australia in 2007 examining the conditions that enabled and sustained the creation of a Turkish politico-religious transnational sphere there, the state-sponsored diaspora policy had not yet attained its current formalised shape and explicit character. This was just before the founding in 2010 of the Presidency of the Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı, YTB hereafter), the primary bureaucratic organ charged with the coordination and management of Turkey's diaspora-engagement activities. Yet as I briefly discuss below, even in a place like Australia, so distant from Turkey's region, the Republic still regularly addressed, politicised, and mobilised Turkish migrants. The dual efforts to inculcate a nationalist subjectivity in Turkish emigrants, while seeking to manufacture Islam (as the state does in Turkey) into an instrument legitimising the Turkish state's nationalist and laic enterprises were central to its transnational political strategy vis-à-vis its emigrant population in Australia in the post-1980 period. In my previous work I used the term "trans-Kemalism" to capture these core dimensions of the state-endorsed ideology and political project seeking to configure Turkish civil society abroad (Şenay 2012; 2013).

The shifting priorities in the Turkish state's approach to international migration and its emigrants abroad since the beginning of large-scale labour emigration to Europe in the 1960s have already been analysed in a number of studies (Aydın 2014; İçduygu and Aksel 2013; Adamson 2018; Aksel 2014; Mencutek and Baser 2018). Economic concerns heavily determined the state's labour-exporting policies of the 1960s and 1970s when Turkey signed a series of bilateral agreements with the governments of labour-demanding countries in Western Europe (Germany, France, Austria, and the Netherlands were key destination places for immigrants from Turkey), and with Australia. Immigration of the unskilled was encouraged as a "safety valve" that would help alleviate high levels of unemployment in Turkey. The overall policy in these years also promoted the return of migrant workers, even as it put in place a number of mechanisms to attract the flow of investments and remittances. Indeed, the incoming remittances were a major source of foreign currency, contributing significantly to Turkey's economy in the 1970s and 1980s.[2]

While national economic development objectives prevailed in the first two decades of mass migration from Turkey, in the post-1980 era, political concerns directed towards monitoring and mobilising Turkish migrants were foregrounded, on the basis of a new realism concerning the non-return of Turkish migrants. In the 1980s and 1990s, the state's politicisation of its emigrants involved its policing activities, which, in the main, targeted left-wing political activists and the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, PKK), as well as its explicit supporting of right-wing, nationalist groups as a lobby force against those "dissident" Turkish and Kurdish nationals who threatened the "national interests" of Turkey. For example, Østergaard-Nielsen notes that in Germany the state established "coordination councils" for these purposes (2003: 118). Financed through the Turkish consulates, these quasi-official umbrella organisations comprised right-wing political associations set up by Turkish migrants, including the ultranationalist Idealist Associations, closely aligned to the Nationalist Movement Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi, MHP) (Aydın 2014: 8). Following the 1980 military coup, the consular institutions' politicisation of Turkish emigrants intensified. In 1981, the junta made a legal change in the citizenship law, announcing that those Turkish citizens abroad involved in "hostile activities" against the state were to be expelled from Turkish citizenship if they failed to return back to Turkey.[3] The year 1982 marked another important event in Turkish "diaspora policy", the legal permission of dual citizenship, which further revealed the change in political

consciousness that "guest workers" had now become "our residents abroad". Following this, the state's obligations towards its nationals abroad were laid down in the junta-devised 1982 constitution, holding the government responsible for ensuring the family unity, social security, cultural, and educational needs of Turkish citizens abroad.

The Turkish state's interpolation of its emigrant population continued in the 1990s. According to Aydın (2014: 9), two intentions lay at the heart of the diaspora policy in this decade: "the successful integration of all people from Turkey in the countries that received them, and support of migrants in their demands for cultural rights". Yet, as Aydın adds, state officials' take on the conception of "integration" was rather limited. Not only was migrants' socialisation into the traditions and culture of the countries they resided in to be rejected (Aydın 2014: 9) but, at the same time, there was growing stress in the official rhetoric on migrants' preservation of "national values" and "national culture", as well as on the protection of "reciprocal interests", imagined to tie migrants with their homeland. As one Turkish ambassador in Australia remarked in 1993, "Every Turkish community outside Turkey is an extension of Turkey in so much as they are representatives of Turkey. What makes them both strong is relationships based on reciprocal interests" (Şenay 2013: 97). This entreating of people of Turkish origin living abroad to become "an extension of Turkey" continues to inform the current diaspora policy, revealed in the motto of the Turkish state's long arm, the YTB: "Wherever we have our citizen, kin and relative, we are there."

What were the key institutional sites and producers of the diaspora policy during the 1990s and 2000s prior to the setting up of the YTB? As I discuss in my book *Beyond Turkey's Borders* (2013), the consular institutions formed one cluster of sites engaged in diaspora management and collective identity construction. This was carried out via the sponsoring of a range of events (for example, commemorative rituals, award ceremonies, festivals, and talks) aiming to produce pride in a shared ethnic Turkism, and via the regular dissemination of information about issues of national significance through their electronic networks. This took the form of press releases by the Turkish army and state departments in Ankara, policy documents, declarations, and speeches made by Turkish state officials on days marked on the national calendar. Another stream of circulated material involved the petitions and protest letters that the consulate wanted Turks to send out to local or national politicians, or to media organisations in Australia. At the time of my fieldwork (2007–2009), a good portion of these petitions and complaint letters urging Turkish citizens to act in the name of the nation were directed against the political initiatives of Armenian, Greek and Assyrian civil society groups, and the PKK, including organized protest against any mention of the Armenian genocide in public discourse.

The State's reconfiguring of its transnational constituency has also been channelled through the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*), a key institutional innovation made by the Kemalist establishment in 1924 to serve its project of governing religion and incorporating Sunni Islam (while ignoring other heterodox expressions of the religion) into the state machinery. The instrumental role of the *Diyanet* in the instituting of a Turkish-style "secularism" – or, for an alternative expression, in the creation of an *anthropocratic* political order (see Houston 2019)[4] – has been discussed by a large number of scholars (Gözaydın 2009; Seufert 1999; Dressler 2013). Although in official discourse the need for the *Diyanet* was justified on the grounds of separating "religious affairs" from "state affairs", in reality its practices "reinscribed Islam within Kemalism" (Sayyid 1997: 63), even as the Republic specified what Islamic doctrine it (*Diyanet*) was to preach.

From the early 1970s onwards, the *Diyanet*'s management of Islam began to expand beyond Turkey's borders, first, with its exporting of religious personnel to Europe, and then with the subsequent opening up of *Diyanet*-franchised offices in those countries with substantial

Turkish emigrants. Its transnational mission was directed not only to the "spiritual needs" of the diaspora. As Çitak notes, in the early 1980s (and thereafter), under the official ideology of the "Turkish–Islamic Synthesis", a "concern with the rise of many political and religious movements deemed as dangerous by the Turkish state and the corollary aim of combating the influence of those groups" was central to the overseas expansion of the *Diyanet* (2011: 226). This intention to use the religious sphere as a tool for political scrutinising and control continues to guide the extra-territorial activities of the *Diyanet* today. This is evident in the recent mobilisation of the *Diyanet* offices abroad as part of the government's efforts to purge the influence of the Gülen movement (now labelled as Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü, FETÖ) following the failed coup attempt of 15 June 2016. In a speech made in March 2019, Turkey's vice president, Fuat Oktay, called upon all *Diyanet* posts in and outside Turkey to take action against "terror organisations like the PKK and FETÖ", urging the *Diyanet* staff "to take ownership (*sahip çıkmak*) of its neighbourhoods, cities, and mosques".[5] Similarly, the message calling the diaspora to unite against terrorist organisations reverberated in the speech that the *Diyanet*'s current president, Ali Erbaş, delivered at the Gallipoli Mosque during his visit to Sydney in April 2019. According to Erbaş, an effective fight against the terrorists required consciousness-raising work, especially of Turkish children abroad. Stressing the urgent responsibility to protect "our homeland, nation, *ezan* (call to prayer), and our flag", the president's address connected the obligations extracted of external citizens to the sacrifices of the nation's "martyrs" in places like Gallipoli and Sarıkamış in Eastern Turkey.[6]

Here we find another deep-seated continuity in the ways in which a narrative of martyrdom and of militaristic sentiment feeds into the state-produced speech economy directed at Islam and Turkish Muslims abroad, seeking to mobilise a community of sentiment. The funeral prayers in absentia held in Turkish mosques abroad for "martyred" Turkish soldiers killed in fighting against the PKK is a powerful illustration of this (Şenay 2012). An empty coffin placed at eye level in front of the prayer line becomes a powerful ritual device, facilitating an experience of mourning and grief for the unknown Turkish soldier. The launching of fundraising campaigns by the *Diyanet* and the Mehmetçik Foundation of the Turkish Armed Forces in order to mobilise support for the families of martyred Turkish soldiers who died fighting against the PKK, is yet another example of the militaristic overtones of the long-distance nationalism manufactured by the self-declared "secular" state. To these, Mutluer (2018) adds the sermons that the *Diyanet* issues on those days marked on the government's national calendar. "The frequent themes that come up in these sermons", she notes, are "the loftiness of military service, the virtue of defending the homeland, and the happiness of reaching the rank of a martyr". These efforts to nationalise Islam while utilising it as a tool for legitimising the political intentions of the state are not separate from the *Diyanet*'s broader ambition of "preserving national unity and solidarity", as set out in its mission statement.[7]

"Strong diaspora, strong Turkey": the rise of new diasporic institutions

Under the "new diaspora policy" of the conservative centre-right AKP government, the consular institutions and the *Diyanet* are not alone in managing diaspora affairs. Established in April 2010, the YTB has now championed this role, tasked with engineering a "diaspora strategy" and strengthening Turkey's ties with its diaspora(s). This institutional innovation is, in itself, a testimony to how diaspora affairs have become a major concern and policy agenda item for the AKP government since the early 2000s. As Ankara has taken concerted action by mobilising its budgetary resources and institutional infrastructure to this end – note also the opening up of Yunus Emre Cultural Centres after 2007 to promote Turkish language and culture to the

outside world (Kaya and Tecmen 2011)[8] – a much more enlarged, yet also diffused, political imaginary of a "Turkish diaspora" emerged. It posits three constituencies as the object of state-sponsored policy: Turkish citizens abroad; kin and co-ethnic communities in the Balkans, Middle East, Caucasus, and Central Asia; and foreign students studying at Turkish universities on YTB scholarships.

But why is there such intense enthusiasm for diaspora-building in the first instance? As several studies have discussed, one relevant context of the AKP government's self-investment in a more assertive diaspora policy is its broader foreign policy activism (Aydın 2014; Mencutek and Baser 2018; Akçapar and Aksel 2017; Yanaşmayan and Kaşlı 2019). This has been particularly evident in the Balkans, the Middle East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia where the government has sought to play a more influential geopolitical role and bolster Turkey's international stature. The state's incorporation of "kin and relatives" from this vast region and of those YTB-sponsored foreign students into its "diaspora strategy" cannot be separated from its ambition to create the image of a "strong" and "new" Turkey. If one side of this image-making involves projecting Turkey as a powerful homeland that, after decades of "benign neglect", now cares for its emigrants and their descendants abroad, its other side concerns fashioning Turkey as a resilient global actor that takes an active interest and responsibility in the well-being of its region. In line with this vision, the instrumental role that the YTB carries as part of the broader foreign policy is to enhance Turkey's "soft power". As the minister of foreign affairs, Mevlüt Cavuşoğlu declared in a recent speech: "In the sphere of our foreign policy our soft powers are working in full capacity and YTB is at the forefront of these. With YTB we are manifesting Turkey's soft power to the whole world".[9] From this perspective the government identified a role for its expanded diaspora as a public diplomacy asset in the international arena.

Secondly, in keeping with earlier forms of transnational policy, the domestic political situation continues to shape the contours of the state's diaspora engagement practices. Two recent examples will suffice. First, it has been no secret that following amendments to electoral laws in 2012, which hugely expanded overseas voting,[10] the ruling government has utilised the YTB and consular institutions abroad as a means for mobilising support for the AKP (Turkish citizens abroad have now voted in four elections and one constitutional referendum) (Yanaşmayan and Kaşlı 2019: 29–30; Öktem 2014: 24). Prior to the June 2018 presidential and parliamentary elections, the YTB became the long-distance mouthpiece of the government, disseminating President Tayyip Erdoğan's speech performances as he called upon "European Turks" to vote for his party.

Another example pertains to the mission taken up by the YTB in the ongoing political mobilisation following the failed coup attempt of July 15 (2016), involving its dissemination of the government's dominant narrative about the insurrection. Immediately after the event, the YTB issued a press release and publicity material titled "15th July, The Glorious Resistance of the Nation", targeting external members of the nation about the real intentions of the coup's perpetuators, and prescribing the collective actions to be undertaken against the plotters. In addition to its narrative work, the YTB was also active in approaching Turkish civil society organisations abroad, especially those in the USA (where exiled Fethullah Gülen continues to live today), calling them to take up a unified position against the enemy. In February 2019, the YTB's president, Abdullah Eren, announced that the projects and budgetary resources directed at civil society groups in the USA would be increased so as to build stronger ties with them.[11] Alongside this, the YTB has also participated in the government's "ceaseless sponsoring of symbolic events and crafted commemorative processes" (Houston 2018: 3) aimed at "develop[ing] in citizens certain desired affective feelings about the plotters and the martyrs" (ibid: 10). The series of ritual–symbolic initiatives incorporating foreign students in Turkey illustrates this

point. For example, not long after the failed coup, the YTB published "The Epic of 15th July through the Eyes of International Students", a compilation of testimonies by students reporting how they showed solidarity with the Turkish nation in the face of the unfolding events.[12] A year later, a "martyrs vigil" was held in Ankara where foreign students offered their public prayers for those who died, represented as faithful members of the nation and the Islamic ummah. A panel, inviting students to discuss the potential "FETÖ threat" in their own countries, followed. As we see below, similar government-orchestrated initiatives aimed at constituting meaning and affective sentiments about the attempted coup continued thereafter.

To take stock, both the foreign policy aspirations and the domestic political concerns of the AKP government have been crystallised in its diaspora policy, which generously sponsors a huge repertoire of activities – pedagogical, affective, legal, policy oriented – directed at cultivating certain ties with each selected diaspora group.[13] In the words of YTB's president, Abdullah Eren, these are "ties of citizenship" with citizens abroad; "ties of culture" with kin and co-ethnics; and "ties of sympathy" with foreign students undertaking tertiary education in Turkey. What exactly do Turkish diaspora-builders mean by these? And what strategies do they put in place to achieve their aims? I turn to these questions in the following three sections.

i. A quality generation: crafting national consciousness

An examination of the YTB's modes of operation in this first field of activity reveals that underlying its efforts is a desire to create a certain type of diasporic subject: one who strongly identifies with and remains loyal to the "homeland Turkey" while, at the same time, playing an active role in pursuing its interests in their country of residence. A significant amount of policy programmes tied into this diasporic subject-formation is youth oriented. The YTB's president explains why: "Upon raising up a high quality generation, a high quality Turkish diaspora will, too, emerge in politics, education, and culture"[14] (5 June 2019). Yet a mood of anxiety, too, pervades this urge to reach out to the children of Turkish nationals abroad. "We know that the continuity of Turkish presence and Turkish cultural identity in Europe depends on our children", stated one state minister, prescribing that "investing in our youth" should be the main strategy if "our goal is to enhance the quality and the prestige of our diaspora".[15]

This discourse interpolating youth as "our most vital investment [*yatırım*]" circulates widely in the state's youth-directed transnational practices. While these present a wide spectrum of activities and policy programmes, three modes of engagement with diaspora youth especially stand out: (i) pedagogical activities aimed at knowledge production and infilling; (ii) politics of affect that seeks to instil in citizens a sense of belonging to the homeland; and (iii) transnational practices tailored towards fostering active citizenship. In demarcating these modes of operation, my intention is not to treat them as separate domains of activity – each intersects with and spills over the other. Here I am only artificially separating them in order to sketch out an extensive array of practices taken up by Turkey's diaspora builders.

The pedagogical intent and design of transnational activities aiming at identity formation and maintenance is remarkable. A substantial number of these activities are reserved for Turkish language training, and other educative practices through which young people abroad can be inculcated with the so-called values of their ancestral country. To mention a few, the "Weekend School Programme" socialises children and young people across different age groups (6–18) into the Turkish language and official history. Language training also extends to preschool groups through YTB-initiated bilingual playgroups. To further encourage children's exposure to the language of their real homeland, the state has also began to establish mini-libraries under its "Anatolia Reading Houses" programme (the YTB aims to increase their number to 1,001

by 2023). Further, in order to equip Turkish language teachers with appropriate skills, the Turkish state runs special training programmes from afar, and by way of inviting teachers to take up training in Turkey. These transnational activities of the pedagogical state are accompanied with a stream of prize competitions (for example, Turkish Language Awards, Gallipoli Project Awards, etc.) as well as with a cluster of scholarship schemes (Scholarships for Citizens Abroad) offered specifically to emigrant children so as to help "raise role models and good quality generations" (*kaliteli nesil*).

Further, under the vigorous diaspora policy of the AKP, Turkey itself has become the spatial focus of a large number of transnational activities assembled by the state. Each year the YTB-organised "Diaspora Youth Academy" brings together selected members of the youth diaspora in Turkey for two weeks, initiating them into the fundamentals of the language, history, and culture of their ancestral home (In 2018, 47 people from ten different countries attended). The programme's mission is described as "consciousness raising".[16] Another initiative, "Turkey Internships", socialises university students into the bureaucratic structures of the "home" country, setting up for them a month-long internship at a state institution in Ankara during which participants are also exposed to educational seminars on history learning and various extracurricular activities. These fully state-funded transnational practices do not merely seek to infill emigrant youth with official history and knowledge, they also endeavour to instil in them certain affective feelings and moods, and can thus be usefully understood also as *affective* practices. The discourse surrounding the cultural mobility projects that the YTB runs emphasise the urgent need to boost young people's identification with and loyalty to the homeland chosen for them. Take, for example, the "Youth Camps" project through which the YTB (together with the Ministry of Youth and Sports) brings hundreds of young Turkish citizens from abroad to Turkey so as to "strengthen their cultural identity and a sense of belonging to the motherland." Annually held heritage tours also partake in this affective transnational field that the state strives to build. "Evliya Çelebi cultural tours", "Journey to Our History with Our Youth", the "Ottoman Civilisation Project through Bursa, Edirne and Istanbul", and "The Canadian Youth Is Meeting Its Ancestors" are just a few examples. The diaspora-builders recognise that there is no substitute for cultivating cultural intimacy with the homeland through embodied familiarity with its landmark places, as they also take the "Turkishness" of young participants for granted.

A final major cluster of outreach programmes directed at citizens abroad endeavour to craft active citizens. Active citizenship is understood here to build up a capacity to advocate for issues that concern the well-being of local Turkish communities abroad, as well as a willingness to take action to defend Turkish national interests. To this end, the YTB has been actively building relations with those "acceptable" Turkish civil society groups abroad, not only through sending delegations from Ankara but also through its setting up of diaspora forums. In the meantime, it has introduced a number of "awareness-raising" programmes and financial support schemes that cater specifically for young professionals abroad. Amongst them are the "Human Rights Education Programme", first introduced in 2012, that provides leadership training in human rights, international law, anti-Islamism, and discrimination, and the "Struggle against Discrimination and Islamophobia" funding programme (introduced in 2018), which seeks to raise legal experts who can take leadership in combating racism and right-wing populism directed at Islam in the West. Other policy initiatives along this line involve the "Civil Society Education Programme and the "Diaspora Communication Academy", both of which seek to manufacture the human capital necessary for using media effectively. A language of "consciousness-raising", "network-building", "capacity enhancement", and "human capital formation" resonates strongly in the state discourse on the mission of these youth-focused programmes.

ii. Geography of the heart: building kinship

A second core dimension of the Turkish state's diaspora-building strategy under the AKP regime has been the proliferation of kinship-building efforts. Although the state's engineering of a pan-Turkist public diplomacy to reconnect with the "ethnic Turks" in its surrounding regions is not new,[17] the incorporation of these transborder co-ethnic communities into the state's diasporic imaginary is a recent phenomenon. Grounded in an ethnocultural definition of nationhood, and fuelled by a synthesis of pan-Turkist, pan-Islamist, and neo-Ottomanist political affect and intentions, the state-led transnational politics now prioritises also the mobilisation of cross-border political identifications across a vast region from the Balkans, to Africa, to the Middle East, to Central Asia, which the YTB maps as its "geography of the heart" (*gönül coğrafyası*).

Political officials refer frequently to the myth of "common descent", "shared blood", and "common heritage" often expressed in terms of kinship and family imagery. In a striking rhetorical flourish, one government official refers to the people of the Central Asian Turkic states as "the children born from the same mother and the same father yet who grew up in different cradle".[18] As Eriksen reminds us, kinship "is not merely about descent and blood lines; it is also about alliances and affinality" (2004: 59). A quick glance at the rich repertoire of ritualistic events assembled by the YTB, and occasionally by other Turkish state institutions, over the last five years reveals this. Take, for example, the celebration of Abdullah Kadiri, the first Uzbek novelist, at a YTB-organised conference in Ankara, as well as the series of commemorative events dedicated to remembering the forced deportation of the Meskhetian Turks and the ethnic cleansing and exile of Crimean Tatars under the Soviet regime.

These YTB-sponsored "strategic memory projects" (Juan 2009) are often accompanied by various pedagogical programmes such as cultural mobility, language training, and oral history projects to document the "Turkish presence and heritage" in the so-called geography of the heart. In a recent initiative the YTB equipped kindergartens and preschool education centres in the Gagauzia region of Moldova with Turkish language material. The efforts to expand Turkish language learning among "siblings and relatives" also involve sponsoring them to visit the "kin-state", as in the case of the Iraqi Turkmen teachers brought to Ankara for Turkish language education. A larger YTB initiative offers scholarships to academics and bureaucrats from kin communities to attend a ten-month Turkish learning course in Turkey.

As with the transnational practices of the state directed at Turkish emigrants abroad, a substantial amount of effort that goes into fostering affective ties and loyalties with ethnic "Turks" is youth oriented. Since 2016, the YTB has devised a number of cultural mobility programmes so that kin-youth can build intimacy and embodied familiarity with the heritage of Turkey by being there (e.g. the Balkan Youth School, the Academy Rumeli project, the Ottoman World Spring School). Assembling a series of seminars on Turkish history and culture, art lessons, and trips to nationally significant sites, these transnational educational package tours integrate young members of kin communities into a single national community in an attempt to instil in them a sense of belonging to a transborder Turkish nation.[19]

Another pragmatic intention, too, drives this "kin state" enthusiasm of the current government, and that is, to mobilise effective ties with kin and relatives for political action. The official discourse of "shared descent", "shared civilisation", and "shared identity" goes hand in hand with the rhetoric of "finding unified solutions to [our] shared problems", which the YTB representations stress frequently. Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslim diasporas are constituted by the YTB as a shared frame of reference around which collective solidarity can be built. To this end, there has been a remarkable increase over the last five years in the institutional cooperation platforms and transborder exchanges between the diasporic

institutions of Turkey and kin societies. A strategic action plan was signed between Turkey, Azerbaijan, Kirgizstan, and Kazakhstan in March 2019 to enhance "kin solidarity". The plan underlined the strategic importance of fostering solidarity and collective identities through the holding of joint commemorative events (*Nevruz* was especially flagged), transnational educational activities, and capacity-building projects directed at "kin diasporas", an ethno-linguistic and ethno-religious category which comprises all Turkish-speaking and Muslim diasporas around the world.[20]

iii. Islamist third worldism: ties of friendship

The third and even more interesting project of the YTB is their attempt to incorporate citizens of a huge range of other countries as advocates and friends of the Turkish Republic (and of the AKP government). Under its "Türkiye Scholarship" scheme (first introduced in 1992 under the presidency of Turgut Özal, and relaunched in 2012), the Turkish government offers financial support to international students wishing to pursue higher education at all academic levels in Turkey including both undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. The scholarship covers tuition fees, a monthly stipend, a once-off return flight ticket, accommodation, and a default one-year Turkish language course, which all awardees must take up. Since 2012, more than 27,000 students have received the scholarship, the majority of whom came from less developed Muslim-majority countries – or from Muslim minorities in non-Muslim countries such as India or Bulgaria. At the 2019 graduation ceremony, the President Erdoğan said with pride that their target was to increase the number of international students in Turkey to 200,000 by 2024, adding that "the fact that the majority of the applications to the scholarships came from places that struggle with hardships such as Syria, Palestine, Afghanistan, Yemen, Iraq, Somalia and Myanmar proved that the program has attained its original purpose".[21]

What is the purpose of the programme then? Although Erdoğan does not explicitly communicate the programme's mission, the metaphorical language that he uses in addressing the graduands give us clues about what kind of moral relationship is imagined with foreign students:

> In this hall, I see the *soldiers of the heart* (*gönül neferleri*) who, with their good work, shall serve both their home countries and the whole humanity. I see each one of our international students and graduates as a member of the greater *Turkish family*, and at the same time as *representatives* of their home countries. The heart of our nation and the doors of our state are always open to them. We shall never forget you and I believe you shall always keep us in your hearts. (emphasis mine)

The president continued his address by reminding the graduands that Turkish was now their "shared language", and that "they [could] communicate, run their businesses, and live their lives in Turkish in a wide geography from North Africa to Middle East, from Eastern Europe to South Asia." "Being in such a great network of relationship is a priceless treasure in the contemporary world", he concluded.

The state's imagining of foreign students as kindred spirits taps into the broader goal of the AKP government to expand Turkey's hinterland and to create proxy groups that can be mobilised as soft power. Students are constantly referred to as "a bridge between their home countries and Turkey", reminded that it is their duty to stand for Turkey's interests as much as they are expected to serve their own countries. Loyalty is emphasised. Back at the graduation ceremony, the YTB's president declares that "our graduates are now entrusted with a greater responsibility […] Allah willing, as our voluntary ambassadors, you shall continue our vision

that Turkey is greater than Turkey and Turkey is the hope of the world". In the eyes of the state officials, then, the "gift" of scholarship establishes a moral economy of exchange in which foreign students are expected to grow a sense of gratefulness to their surrogate parent and reciprocate by contributing to Turkey's affairs once they are back in their own countries.

To facilitate this, the YTB has been active in setting up alumni networks of foreign students around its "geography of the heart", from Senegal, Sudan, Pakistan, and Djibouti to Nigeria. Clearly, transnational engagement with these alumni groups serves the government's internal political purposes. Following the "15 July" event, the YTB's president declared that these "civil society" groups "carry a crucial role in the battle against FETÖ", likening them to a "safety valve" against this terrorist organisation.[22] The alumni clubs – currently there are 25 of them around the world – are charged with consciousness-raising and political lobbying in the countries in which they are based, as they also become extended spaces for government-endorsed ritual-symbolic events. On July 15, 2019, the martyrs who died fighting against the coup plotters were not only remembered and prayed for by the foreign students on YTB scholarships in Turkey, but commemorations expanded also to the alumni associations, addressed by the Turkish state as members of the greater family of Turks.

Conclusion

The brief analysis offered in this chapter reveals that the Turkish state has long extended its historic social-engineering project beyond its own territory. In the 1960s and 1970s migrants abroad were addressed as sources of hard currency, their remittances an invaluable source in developing the national economy. After the 1980 military coup, the Turkish state initiated a new transnational politics, driven by an intention to ensure emigrants' preservation of the "correct" national culture. A more activist political practice directed at collective identity construction and mobilisation for the defence of national interests marked the state policy in the 1990s and beyond. This continues to be a salient strategy informing Turkey's diaspora policy under the AKP regime.

However, the AKP's diaspora policy in the more recent present has also taken on new dimensions. Here we can identify at least three developments. First, there is the government's manufacturing for the first time of the "diaspora" label, an image that not only encompasses those abroad whose origins are in Turkey, but two other selected constituencies, now also charged with an obligation to stand for Turkey"s national interests and even to act *for* the state: (pan-Turkist) kin and relatives, and foreign (second- and third-world) students. A second added dimension is the reform of the diaspora policy to become a central strategic element in the government's foreign policy agenda, including its expansionist and ambitious desires to enlarge Turkey's hinterland and to bolster its sphere of influence in its surrounding region ("Turkey is bigger than Turkey"). In this sense, the pragmatic calculations that undergird the state's cross-border politicisation and attempted mobilisation of diasporic groups no longer derive from domestic political interests only. More, the foreign policy goals of the AKP government have fuelled its dual strategies of kin-building and mobilisation of selected diasporic groups as public diplomacy assets. Thirdly, while earlier policies were directed at emigrants as an economic remittance source and then to punish dissident political groups amongst them, the new diaspora policy pursues a different kind of affective politics in which the state aims to establish gift exchange relationships with its designated diasporic groups through a myriad range of emotional, symbolic, and pedagogical activities as described above. Obligation, responsibility, reciprocity, and belonging appear to be the keywords constituting the moral economy of this state-sponsored diasporic public sphere.

Do these new developments herald a true change in the policy of Turkish state institutions, and in Turkey's long-distance Kemalism? Do they signal a halt in their nationalising of the Turkish diaspora, and of the manufacturing of Islam as an instrument that legitimises their nationalist enterprises? My assessment is that the new diaspora policy manifests no fundamental clash with the transnational state policies of the pre-AKP era. Yet, unlike before, what we see today is a systematically formulated and institutionally empowered diaspora policy that is much more assertive in its vision and ambitious in scope. Its political practices can be described as an *enlarged* tran-Kemalism, amalgamating ethnic-Turkism with the ideology of the Turkish-Islam synthesis, alongside Islamic third-worldism.

This "new" diaspora policy is far from inclusive. Its plethora of activities has almost nothing to offer Turkey's Kurdish, Alevi, Christian, and Jewish minorities, abroad or at home. Accordingly, while this chapter has focused on the strategies utilised by political elites to construct an imagined "Turkish diaspora", a more comprehensive way of examining it would also include study of the interaction between state discourses and the experiences and ways of organising themselves of all those "from Turkey" (*Türkiyeli*) abroad. As the analysis here shows, a diaspora is not something that is just out "there", something that naturally occurs as an outcome of the movement of migrants. By contrast, it is a claim made by the state authorities, and a project to constitute a certain kind of consciousness in subjects whom they address as members of a diaspora. The task of fully assessing the force and effectiveness of such consciousness-raising work requires us to examine subjects' own responses to such efforts.

Notes

1 See the interview with Abdullah Eren, president of the Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) in the daily *Yenişafak*, www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/ytb-baskani-abdullah-eren-kurumumuzun-calismalarini-anlatti

2 Since 1960, Turkey has received over US $75 billion from remittances (İçduygu and Aksel 2013: 174).

3 The "Call to Return Home" was made to 29,000 people. See www.turkiyehukuk.org/9-maddede-12-eylul-darbesinin-ic-yuzu/

4 According to Houston, what distinguishes anthropocratic political projects like Kemalism from more secular ones, is their establishing of religio-political apparatuses whereby God and/or revealed law is co-opted and mobilised to facilitate and legitimise the rule of [some] humans over others, most often in the form of religious institutions, education and urban ceremonies" (2019: 7).

5 The full speech is available at: www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/diyanete-cagri-gerekli-tum-onlemleri-almalidir-41136441

6 www.haberler.com/diyanet-isleri-baskani-erbas-sidney-de-gurbetciler-11951348-haberi/

7 The *Diyanet*'s principles are stated on its website: https://dinhizmetleri.diyanet.gov.tr/sayfa/51/ilkeler-ve-hedefler

8 Named after the fourteenth-century Sufi mystic Yunus Emre, the Yunus Emre Foundation was established in 2007 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Law 5653 identifies its mission: "to promote Turkey, its cultural heritage, the Turkish language, Turkish culture and art, to enhance Turkey's friendship and cultural exchange with other countries, […] to serve those abroad who wish to receive education in Turkish language, culture and arts".

9 The full speech, dated May 15, 2019, is available at: www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/bakan-cavusoglu-turkiyedeki-uluslararasi-ogrencilere-hitap-etti

10 External electoral participation was first introduced in 1987, but this allowed voting only at polling stations at the borders.

11 www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/ytb-olarak-abdye-ayri-bir-sayfa-aciyoruz

12 This material is available at: www.ytb.gov.tr/guncel/uluslararasi-ogrencilerin-gozunden-15-temmuz-destani

13 The funding allocated to the YTB in 2019 was around US $60 million. Its budget is estimated to double in the next four years, reaching $116 million by 2023. See YTB Strategic Plan Document (2019º2023) www.ytb.gov.tr/kurumsal/stratejik-plan

14 www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/ytb-baskani-abdullah-eren-kurumumuzun-calismalarini-anlatti
15 See the speech made by the Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Ersoy, in December 2018: www.milliyet.com.tr/genclik-ve-spor-bakani-mehmet-kasapoglu-ankara-yerelhaber-3188868/
16 www.aa.com.tr/tr/kultur-sanat/diaspora-genclik-akademisi-2018-programi-basladi/1217809
17 In 1992, the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) was established to pioneer Turkish public diplomacy by way of implementing development projects in Central Asia, Caucasus, and the Balkans. Since the AKP has taken office, the TIKA-sponsored projects have expanded to other regions including the Middle East and Africa.
18 See the speech by Yalçın Topçu, a special adviser to President Erdoğan: www.turksoy.org/tr/news/2019/03/15/turk-dunyasi-nin-onculeri-14-dogumunun-125-yilinda-ozbek-cagdas-romanciliginin-kurucusu-a
19 Sometimes state-sponsored heritage tours are reciprocated among kin. For example, following the YTB's sponsoring in 2016 of a trip by a young Azeri group to the martyrs' cemeteries in Çanakkale, a selected group of Turkish youth were taken to Azerbaijan to visit the graves of Ottoman martyrs (known as the Islamic Army of the Caucasus) who died there during the First World War.
20 See the YTB's Strategic Plan (2019–2023) document: www.ytb.gov.tr/kurumsal/stratejik-plan
21 https://turkiyeburslari.gov.tr/en/new/8th-international-students-graduation-ceremony-organized
22 www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/ytb-baskani-abdullah-eren-kurumumuzun-calismalarini-anlatti

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37

TURKEY AND THE WEST

Dealignment in contemporary times

Sinan Ciddi

Introduction

Turkey's aim to join the so-called West after the end of World War II was largely born out of necessity. Throughout the Cold War, Turkey's relationship with NATO and the United States was fraught with complications; however, both sides implicitly valued the relationship from the perspective of collective security. For Turkey, a Western anchor – mainly typified by its strategic partnership with the United States and membership in NATO – was by and large an elite-driven and supported policy, often lacking widespread public confidence. Since coming to power in 2022, the governing Justice and Development Party has gradually come to question the value of the country's bedrock pro-Western orientation. Since the beginning of the Arab uprisings in 2010, Turkey has increasingly grown at odds with NATO and US interests. How can this be explained? Additionally, since 2013, there has also been visible discord between Turkey and its Western partners. What explanations can be offered to explain Turkey's de-anchoring from Western policies and what are likely to be its lasting consequences? Turkey today is distrusted by the majority of its partners and allies for the trajectory of authoritarianism pursued by President Tayyip Erdogan and the de-institutionalized manner in which the country is being run.

Alignment with the West

Turkey's desire to join NATO was born out of strategic necessity and represents the single highest-yielding foreign policy investment that it has made as a republic, deriving far-reaching returns. The Republic, led by Ismet Inonu throughout World War II, went to immeasurable lengths to avoid becoming a belligerent actor (Hale 2012). Turkey's military was obsolete, with equipment dating back to World War I. More importantly, however, Turkey's governing elite had made a conscious choice since 1923 to focus on the goal of modernizing the country so that it could achieve a comparable level of development and industrialization that would allow it to become a developed (European) state. This led Inonu to conclude that taking a combatant stance on either the Allied or Axis side in World War II brought Turkey nothing except ruin. Inonu and his colleagues were the first and last generation of the country's rulers who were present during its formation and who had witnessed the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Other

than adventurism, it was fearfully assumed that joining the war carried with it the strong possibility of ruin and loss of statehood, which the Kemalist elites had worked hard to achieve. Both the Allied and the Axis powers surmised that Turkey would not be strong asset, no matter which side it joined. From the perspective of the Allies, countries such as the United States and Great Britain implicitly understood that Turkey would, at best, prove to be a distraction against Germany. From the other side, Germany appreciated Turkey more as a resource from which essential raw materials could be sourced, rather than a capable and effective fighting force.

The calculation to maintain what Selim Deringil referred to as an "active neutrality" during World War II began to quickly dissipate, following the beginning of the Allied ascendency in 1943 (Deringil 1989). The prospect of an Allied victory in Europe brought with it a new and dangerous reality: the emergence of an expansionist Soviet Union. Beginning in 1943 and until Turkey joined NATO in 1952, Joseph Stalin made overt threats that rang alarm bells in the minds of Turkey's leaders. This included Soviet territorial aspirations towards two Turkish provinces: Kars and Ardahan, in addition to a proposal to jointly administer the Bosphorus and Dardanelle straits. Had both of these initiatives succeeded in favour of Soviet aspirations, President Inonu feared that Turkey would likely be "liberated" along the lines of other Central and East European countries, bringing Turkey firmly into the fold of the Iron Curtain countries (Deringil 1989).

From 1944 to 1952, the country's political elite came to the stark realization that in a rapidly evolving bipolar global order, Turkey no longer had the luxury and privilege of being non-aligned. Its very survival as a fragile and nascent state would depend on its ability to be aligned to a robust patron and/or enter into a formidable alliance. It is for this very reason that Turkey declared war on Germany and Japan in August 1944: to demonstrate to the Western alliance that it would identify with their cause, and, hopefully, they would stand with Turkey. By declaring war and not actually firing a shot in combat, Turkey assured itself a seat at the founding of the United Nations and declared its intentions to align its security interests with the West, resulting in its formal application to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1948. This was initially rejected by the Truman administration along with Greece, as the United States felt that its priorities lay in the economic and social reconstruction of Western Europe, and that including Turkey and Greece in the alliance would prove to be a net resource drain. This initial opinion against Turkish and Greek membership changed during the onset of the Korean War in 1950. The emerging Eisenhower administration became convinced that in order to contain the spread of global communism, the membership of Greece and Turkey was essential. This was predicated upon two calculations. First, for the Eastern Mediterranean to not be dominated by the Soviet Union, both countries would have to come under the NATO umbrella. Secondly, both Greece and Turkey had demonstrated their willingness to commit to NATO and the Western alliance, as demonstrated when both countries voluntarily committed combat troops to the Korean War. Their admission to NATO in 1952 was an explicit recognition by the United States and the NATO Council that both countries were "indispensable" in the fight against communism (Hale 2012).

Gains during the Cold War

It can be argued that NATO membership has brought an immeasurable number of security gains to Turkey (Kirisci 2018). Throughout the Cold War and up to the present day, Turkey's membership in the alliance has allowed it to punch above its military and economic weight. During the Cold War, inclusion in NATO resulted in a measurable pacification of the threat posed by the Soviet Union to Turkey's sovereignty. Following the death of Stalin in 1953,

the Soviet Union dropped its territorial claims on Turkey that it had previously demanded. Moreover, Turkey's military became the recipient of vast amounts of American military aid in the form of hardware and infrastructure (Hale 2012). This had the net impact of transforming Turkey's obsolete military into a modern fighting force, equipped with modern equipment, beginning in the 1950s. Most importantly, Turkey's credentials as a NATO member have spared the country from outside attack by would-be aggressors, based on a nominal understanding that to attack a NATO member carries the risk of retaliation by all NATO members, as outlined in the alliance's infamous Article five. In return for Turkey's inclusion in NATO, the United States and its allies obtained a pivotal geostrategic location on the south-eastern border of the Soviet Union. The United States and NATO erected a vast network of intelligence-gathering capabilities on Turkey's border with the USSR, allowing for, among a number of valuable gains, signals intelligence. Investing in Turkey's military infrastructure has allowed NATO and the United States to reap benefits both during and after the end of the Cold War, whether it has been to contain the Islamic Republic of Iran, to serve as a logistical base for coalition troops in both gulf wars, or to help escalate effective combat operations against the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS). Additionally, it must be stated that Turkey's role within NATO has historically been hailed as that of a responsible state actor, often contributing troops and resources to NATO operations in a variety of theatres. This includes Turkey's contribution of peace-keeping troops to Kosovo and of providing security forces to US coalition forces in Afghanistan.

This, however, does not mean that Turkey–NATO relations have been trouble free. In the courtroom of Turkish public opinion, Turkey's relationship with NATO has largely been equated with that of the United States and elite driven. This bilateral relationship suffered two notable setbacks during the 1960s and 1970s, resulting in reduced confidence on the part of Turkey towards the United States, and by association, NATO (Hale 2012). The Cuban Missile Crisis of 1963 was overcome with an eleventh-hour deal, whereby the Soviet Union agreed to dismantle its missiles in Cuba in return for the United States removing its Jupiter missiles from Turkey. The optics could not have been worse, signalling that the United States was willing to sell out its NATO ally under duress. This was exacerbated in 1964, when the Johnson administration took what appeared to be an adversarial position towards Turkey using military options in Cyprus to defend the Turkish Cypriot minority from violence. Following Turkey's military intervention on the island in July 1974, the United States imposed a strict military embargo, crippling the Turkish Armed Forces' (TAF) ability to source vital parts and upgrades to its military hardware (Hale 2012). It was also during these decades that popular sentiment towards NATO and the United States was typified by negativity. This was particularly visible in Turkey's left-wing political movements – both centrist and extremist left – which accused the United States and NATO of making Turkey its puppet to further America's imperial interests in the region. More than just rhetoric, this resulted in periodic acts of hostility towards US serviceman on shore leave in Turkey from the Sixth Fleet and the assassination of the Israeli ambassador. Following the imposition of the US arms embargo on Turkey, the centre-left Ecevit government initiated talks with the Soviet Union to explore the possibility of reducing Turkey's exclusive alignment with the United States and NATO, resulting in a modest amount of state loans being extended to Turkey (Hale 2012). More significantly, however, the embargo motivated Turkey to initiate a domestic defence industry, capable of producing weapons that would reduce its dependence on outside sources.

Despite these setbacks, Turkey's ruling elites have valued its membership in NATO. In the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, Turkey, in a bid to reinvent its value to the West during the emergence of the so-called 'New World Order', highlighted its importance as a reliable and responsible actor within NATO. This became increasingly relevant as the 1990s wore on and

the changing nature of conflict began to nullify the twin narratives that the world would see less armed conflict and that the spread of democratic governance was assured. The ensuing gulf war (1990), the Bosnian civil war, and the Kosovo war demonstrated that *interstate* conflict was increasingly being replaced by the onset of *intrastate* conflict. Additionally, in the cases of the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts, it became clear that the European Union (EU) lacked the resolve and ability to act in order to prevent mass atrocities and future conflicts, necessitating NATO action, which Turkey played a pivotal role in supporting. Following September 11, the emergence of non-state violent actors such as Al-Qaeda and ISIS once again underscored the value of Turkey's geostrategic location. In the case of combat operations against ISIS, the opening of Incirlik airbase to coalition fighter jets in 2015 contributed to the significant degradation of ISIS' territorial holdings in Syria and Iraq.

Strained relations

Since 2010, and specifically since the onset of the Arab uprisings, Turkey's relationship with the West has visibly deteriorated. In turn, Turkey's relationship with NATO has also declined. The net sum of this decline has resulted in a fundamental loss of trust between Turkey and NATO, and Turkey and its Western partners (the United States and the EU). Two overarching reasons account for this state of affairs: Turkey's continued slide into authoritarian governance and a process of deinstitutionalization pursued by Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Democratic backsliding under Justice and Development Party (AKP) rule in Turkey is a well documented by existing scholarship (Esen & Gumuscu 2020, Esen & Gumuscu 2018, Esen & Gumuscu 2016) . It manifests itself in a pronounced effort by Erdogan to centralize power and decision-making under his persona and that of the presidency which he has occupied since 2014. Since ascending to the top position in the Turkish state, Erdogan, in the aftermath of the July 2016 coup attempt, has transitioned Turkey from a parliamentary to an executive presidency with near total power to govern, with very few constraints preventing one-person rule. The desire to do this was motivated by Erdogan's strong desire for self-preservation and unimpeded rule. Since coming to power in 2003, Erdogan and the AKP have faced numerous challenges targeted at ousting him from power: an attempt by the high courts to shut down the AKP in 2007; a power struggle with the Gülen movement (which Erdogan had partnered with) resulting in a corruption probe to bring down Erdogan; and the actual 2016 coup attempt which sought to overthrow Erdogan and bring down the AKP. To meet these threats to his power, Erdogan has resorted to extraordinary measures to curtail political opposition and eliminate sources of power that are perceived as challengers to his rule. This includes, but is not limited to, building a loyal judiciary and national law enforcement, purges from the ranks of the civil service and the military, and imprisonment of numerous dissidents, mainly from the press and academia.

As much as Erdogan has battled with these internal dynamics seeking his removal, what is common to all these challenges is his belief that the West was and is complicit in the attempt to bring him down (Ignatius 2019). Following the coup attempt in 2016, Erdogan rebuked the seeming lack of solidarity extended to him by the EU and the United States. In a public statement, Erdogan reproached European leaders, claiming that "the West is supporting terrorism and taking sides with coups […] those we considered friends are siding with coup-plotters and terrorists" (Withnall & Osborne 2016). In comparison, both Russia and Iran condemned the putsch as the event was unfolding. Distrust, compounded by loathing of the West, is a constant narrative of Erdogan – one that has existed throughout his political career, but much more visible during the 2010s. This is not entirely absent of justification: the first Erdogan-led AKP

government (2003–2007) invested a considerable amount of political capital in adhering to the conditions laid out by the EU to begin accession negotiations in 2005. This included a plethora of democratization packages to harmonize Turkey's laws to comply with EU norms (Ozbudun 2007). Despite this, the EU has given Turkey the cold shoulder by not providing an actual process and timeline that would have resulted in full EU membership, and rewarded the Republic of Cyprus' recalcitrant behaviour in excluding Turkey from key initiatives such as the emerging European Defence Agency (EDA).

Certainty that Turkey will not be permitted to join the EU altered Erdogan's calculations about Europe and the West. The approach to dealing with Europe has shifted from one of cooperation to a transactional relationship, where Turkey tries to leverage/maximize its interests and, where it can, punish and undermine the EU. In the latter case, it is no exaggeration to say that Turkey is playing a leading role in undermining NATO and EU collaboration, thereby significantly reducing the West's defensive capabilities. As Cyprus is a full member of the EU, it has a say in which non-EU countries can participate in decision-making within the EDA (Dursun-Ozkanca 2019). For example, while Norway is permitted to be present by Cyprus during deliberations, Turkey, which has observer status, is asked to leave the room. In return, Turkey actively works to prevent Cyprus' participation in NATO, both in terms of gaining membership and in allowing the EU as a whole to coordinate policy with NATO. It goes without saying that the ability of NATO and the EU to forge an effective defensive strategy in the years to come rests on the ability to overcome the Cyprus quagmire (Dursun-Ozkanca 2019). This could lead one to observe that this is a zero-sum game for all sides concerned; however, it would be inaccurate, as this is effective leverage which Erdogan wields in order to ensure that Turkey is not completely sidelined in all European affairs, as members are fully aware that Erdogan stands in the way of the EU's ability to prevent a closer relationship with NATO.

Turkey's adversarial posture towards the EU, and thereby NATO is perceived by Erdogan as an effective strategy – one that also yields positive results (Hintz 2016). The Syrian civil war has helped Turkey identify a weakness of the EU, one which it has been happy to exploit to its full advantage. Both individual European states and the EU as a whole have insisted on a pronounced effort to keep Syrian refugees out of Europe at any cost, mainly motivated by European public sentiment. Turkey was identified as the pivotal country which could ensure this, which Erdogan has been willing to satisfy at a cost. In return for preventing refugees travelling to Europe, Turkey demanded monetary compensation from the EU, made a request to renegotiate the terms of the existing Customs Union (CU), and asked for visa-free travel for Turkish citizens to the EU. Although the last two conditions have not been achieved, since 2017, the EU, fearing waves of Syrian refugees entering Europe, has not only compensated Turkey monetarily, but also remained largely uncritical of Erdogan's domestic abuses of power and growing authoritarian grip on his country (Dursun-Ozkanca 2019).

A feeling of malcontent towards the West has been matched by an equally warm posture adopted towards Russia, much to the chagrin of the United States and NATO. On the one hand, Turkey has given a green light to the Russian-backed energy pipeline that will bypass Ukraine and provide natural gas to south-eastern Europe. This has the intent of making Europe more dependent on Russian energy sources, in addition to increasing Turkey's value to Russia, by being the main transit country for the proposed 'Turkish Stream' pipeline (Dursun-Ozkanca 2019). Of more immediate concern for Turkey's Western partners, however, is Turkey's growing defence procurement interests from non-NATO sources. The first instance of this was seen between 2013 and 2015, when Turkey attempted to purchase the Chinese-manufactured HQ-9 missile defence system. After significant diplomatic pressure brought on by the US and NATO, Turkey finally cancelled the deal, largely out of concern that it could be

marginalized within NATO and the West. It also raised questions in the minds of analysts and Western defence personnel of whether Turkey was engaged in a strategic move to cosy up to the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and leave NATO.

In December 2017, Turkey signed a deal with the Russian Federation to purchase the S-400 missile defence system, in place of the US-made Patriot system – one of the most commonly purchased systems by NATO countries (Suchkov 2019). Both systems are designed to bolster a country's air defence systems, and Turkey's desire to acquire such a system stems from the fact that its air defences disproportionately rely on the air force. Since the rise of ISIS and the worsening civil war conditions in Syria, Turkey has been increasingly worried about missile attacks that could be launched into its territory. Whilst the necessity to purchase a missile defence system is clear, the reason to procure it from Russia is not, and it is concerning to all NATO members (Karako 2019). Turkey has cited an unconvincing rationale that states that in addition to the Patriot system being too expensive as compared to the S-400, it also does not approve of the US denials to allow technology transfer and joint production capability. These are unconvincing reasons simply because Turkey and every other NATO member which has purchased the Patriot system is aware that technology transfer and joint production are not options. On the issue of price, the US has been willing to work with Turkey to find a compromise. The actual reasons are more disconcerting. One should also be clear on this point: the world of defence procurement is not an open marketplace where countries act as free consumers to purchase whatever items they choose, similar to individuals trying to decide between buying a PC or a MAC. If you are a member of NATO, there are agreed-upon rules and norms, one of which is not purchasing weapon systems from adversaries such as Russia. The reason for this is simple. Technology acquired from adversaries cannot be integrated into NATO operating systems, and worse, is able to collect sensitive information about allied aircraft and pass it along to Russian intelligence and military entities.

Turkey has insisted on going ahead with the S-400 purchase and started taking delivery in April 2019 for two reasons: first, to punish the United States for refusing to extradite Fetullah Gülen and for militarily backing the Syrian Kurds in the continuing war on ISIS. Second, following the coup attempt of 2016, Erdogan has been fixated on acquiring a weapon system that can shoot down F-16 fighter jets (currently used by the TAF, mainly as a personal guarantee that he himself and his presidential plane cannot be targeted, as was attempted on the night of the July 15 coup (Karako 2019). An autonomous S-400 system guarantees this. In other words, the personal preferences of one person (albeit the head of state) were able to override the likely recommendation of the country's national security interests with little to no consultation. To be clear, the decision to purchase and take delivery of the S-400 system was directed by the presidency and not deliberated over by the TAF and/or the National Security Council. Turkey's identification of Fetullah Gülen of the mastermind of the coup attempt of 2016 and the United States' subsequent decision not to extradite him have resonated badly with Erdogan. Gülen has been equated with Osama Bin Laden, and the refusal to hand him over to Turkey has resulted in Turkish authorities arbitrarily detaining and imprisoning various persons, including an evangelical pastor and several Turkish employees of US diplomatic missions throughout the country.

The detrimental implications of the choice to acquire the S-400 become clearer when we consider the impact it has had on the proposed acquisition by Turkey of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter. The TAF was in line to take delivery of approximately 100 units of the F-35, which would modernize its air force capabilities into the 2050s and beyond. Furthermore, as a member of the production consortium, Turkey was also in line to make the acquisition of these fighter jets cost neutral by Turkey establishing the regional servicing base for the F-35's engines that countries such as Israel would have utilized. The United States, as well

as all NATO members implored Turkey not to proceed with the purchase of the Russian S-400 purchase. The US secretary of defense informed his Turkish counterpart, Hulusi Akar, that there was only one course of action, stating, 'you can either have the S-400 or you can have the F-35, you cannot have both' (Reuters 2019). In continuing to press ahead with the acquisition, Turkey has thus far been suspended from the F-35 programme, not only losing a considerable amount of money paid for the F-35s on order, but more importantly prioritizing a tactical weapon system (the S-400) over acquiring a strategic advantage (the F-35). Turkey at this stage will likely be expelled from the F-35 programme, and while Erdogan will have acquired a missile defence system of his own choosing, the country's air force will be left with ageing and increasingly obsolete combat capability. Furthermore, it is also likely that Turkey will be marginalized within NATO. Member states will be reluctant to share information and intelligence with Turkey as well as permit Turkey to participate in any operational capacity. On the US side, the looming possibility of congressional sanctions may also come to pass. From the perspective of security studies, the stand-off between Turkey and NATO over the S-400 issue presents a new study challenge. Military alliances like NATO are accustomed to designing contingencies towards external threats, whether presented by state actors such as the Soviet Union during the Cold War, Russia in present times, or non-state actors such as ISIS. However, NATO has never had to contend with the problem of a member state becoming a security threat. Many observers of Turkey, including this author, incorrectly assumed that Turkey was playing for time and trying to get the United States to back down from working with Kurdish forces in Syria and, like the cancellation of the Chinese HQ-9 deal, Erdogan would walk away from the S-400 deal. As this has not happened yet, a looming question remains: what can be done with a NATO member state which presents an ongoing and increasing security threat to the alliance? It is not an easy question to answer, which Erdogan is very much aware of, as there is no institutional mechanism for expelling an existing member from NATO. This then raises a fundamental question: why is Erdogan straining Turkey's relationship with the Western alliance to its breaking point, and with the looming S-400 purchase, to what extent is the country reorienting itself towards an alliance with Russia?

Pivoting away from the West?

Despite appearances, Turkey is not strategically pivoting towards Russia. However, its relationship with Russia is asymmetric (Kostem 2018). Despite being on opposite sides of the Cold War and a historical relationship determined by rivalry and ambivalence, Turkey's relationship took a vast turn towards the pragmatic following the fall of the Iron Curtain. President Turgut Ozal initiated a lucrative bilateral trading relationship in the early 1990s – a relationship that has now grown to positioning Russia as Turkey's second-largest trading partner after the EU. Turkish exports to Russia are dominated by consumer goods, textiles and agricultural produce. The last is of critical importance, because under the terms of the existing CU between Turkey and the EU, agricultural goods (with very few exceptions) cannot be exported to the EU. As a result, the ability of Turkish farmers to export goods such as tomatoes and citrus fruits to Russia presents an almost unique revenue source. Additionally, out of the approximate $40 billion of tourism revenue generated by Turkey, a vast proportion of this is derived from Russian tourists flocking to the Mediterranean coast during the summer months. The relationship is asymmetrical, however, due to the fact that Turkey is heavily dependent upon Russia. Despite its consumer exports, Turkey expends more funds on importing natural gas from Russia for a premium price. Close to 60 per cent of Turkey's natural gas is supplied by Russia via the Black Sea pipeline: Blue Stream (Ersen & Celikpala 2019). Furthermore, in its determination to acquire

nuclear power generation capability, Turkey has awarded to Russia at least one contract to build a nuclear power station.

At face value, one might be tempted to perceive these dependencies as the outcome of an imbalanced economic relationship. In reality, however, these are levers that can be pulled for political reasons to induce desired actions by Russia. In November 2015, Turkey shot down a Russian bomber jet operating in Syria for violating Turkish air space. This was during the early years of the Syrian civil war when Russia and Turkey appeared to be on opposite sides of the conflict. For this brazen action, Russian president Vladimir Putin took unprecedented measures: It terminated all agricultural imports from Turkey, ended all tourism contracts and cancelled visa-free travel to Russia by Turkish citizens, which is heavily utilized and relied upon by the business community. This resulted in a massive loss of revenue for Turkey, lasting approximately eight months and costing close to a percentage point loss of GDP activity (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development 2015). This prompted a written apology relayed to Putin by Erdogan confirming Turkey's weak hand in relation to Russia. Since the end of this short-lived diplomatic trade war, Turkey's relationship with Russia has improved markedly (Recknagel 2016).

Since the beginning of the Arab uprisings, and particularly in the case of Syria, the United States and NATO have been reluctant to play a leading role (Parsi & Wertheim 2019). While, initially favouring the downfall – even removal – of the Bashar Al-Assad rule, the United States shifted its focus to eliminate the threat posed to regional stability by ISIS. This infuriated the Erdogan government, particularly after the Obama administration chose to back Syrian Kurds as the main fighting force to eliminate ISIS. This resulted in a fundamental breach of trust between Turkey and the United States, one that will be extremely hard to re-establish. The People's Protection Units (YPG) is considered a terrorist organization by Turkey, as it represents the Syrian offshoot of the separatist Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which is based in Turkey and has waged a violent separatist campaign since the 1980s. The United States' singular focus on ISIS and its partnering up with the YPG signalled not only a loss of confidence by Turkey but also a fundamental difference in threat perception by the two allies (Sloat 2019). Sensing the tension in the relationship, Putin was quick to react and exploit the possibility of driving a further wedge between Turkey and the United States. The S-400 deal has achieved just this. Additionally, although Russia is opposed to Assad's removal, it has offered Turkey the opportunity to satisfy other objectives, namely to carry out cross-border military operations in Syria (Lukyanov 2020). As Russia is the main external power involved in the Syrian conflict, it has given Turkey a series of limited opportunities to carry out military missions to undercut the operational capacity of the YPG. Whilst in reality, the nature of operations (named Operation Euphrates Shield and Operation Olive Branch) has been extremely limited, Russia's acquiescence has let Erdogan achieve several objectives not offered by its traditional allies: to show Turkish domestic public opinion that Turkey has a voice in Syria and will not succumb to the US insistence on aiding and abetting a terrorist entity; that Turkey is actually a regional player that can and will have a voice in regional affairs that impact its security concerns.

Putin's willingness both to accommodate Erdogan in a limited fashion and sell Turkey the S-400 missile system has paid off strategically. Turkey has never been more doubted by its partners and allies than it is today. A breach of trust between Turkey and the United States is a wound between the two that Putin has managed to pour salt on. This is far from saying that Turkey and Russia will become strategic partners. In one sense, were Turkey to become a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (an alliance of Eurasian states established to shield members from international criticism for lack of democratic governance), in which it gained the status of 'dialogue partner' in 2012, Erdogan's life could be easier in some respects. For

one thing, he would not be joining an organization/alliance that requires satisfying a rule that requires member states to demonstrate a commitment to the rule of law and substantive adherence to democratic norms. In fact, there would be little in terms of democratic accountability and transparency as required by many of the other entities that Turkey belongs to. But Erdogan is unlikely to take this step. For one thing, no matter how bad the relationship with the United States, the EU and NATO gets, Erdogan would not be the one that cuts ties and ends the relationship. Were Turkey's EU process formally to be abolished, or were there an unprecedented move to expel Turkey from NATO, Erdogan would want to derive political capital out of the hypothetical situation. From the perspective of a world outlook, it is no secret that Russia and Turkey share very little by way of commonalities. Turkey is opposed to the build-up and domination of the Black Sea by Russia. Despite a modicum of cooperation, the two powers do not share similar outcome desires in Syria: Erdogan is still opposed to Assad's continuity and believes he will have a say in the resettlement of refugees. In North Africa, both countries are on opposite sides of the Libya conflict. In fact, it can be said with certainty that there is little on the geopolitical landscape where Turkey's and Russia's outlooks coincide. Last but not least, Turkey will likely continue to nominally remain in the Western camp, because it thinks it can derive more tangible benefits. Since 2018, the country's economy has been bedevilled by a serious contraction of growth, a seriously weakened national currency and bloated national debt. All this has been exacerbated by the ongoing global pandemic, further contracting the possibility of growth. Turkey will require significant injections of foreign currency in order to service its debt obligations. The ability to source significant loans can only realistically come from Western institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank – no matter how forcefully Erdogan rejects wanting to knock on their doors. Russia, China – even the sum of all member states in the SCO – are not capable of providing the type of economic support that Turkey requires. On the geostrategic landscape, Erdogan will likely continue to smear the United States and strain NATO and EU defence capabilities, but he will not take the step of cutting ties. When the TAF shot down a Russian jet in 2015, Putin would have thought seriously before deciding on retaliating against a member of NATO. Although Turkey convened the NATO council under Article 4 over the incident, the alliance did not rush to say it had Turkey's back. That being said, continuing as a member of NATO is what prevents actors such as Russia from confronting Turkey militarily. Erdogan is aware of this advantage and is not likely to give it up.

Conclusion

Turkey's worsening relationship with NATO is part of a wider deterioration of its foreign policy and affiliation with the West in general. The conditions under which Turkey allied itself to the West during the Cold War are no longer present. The country is no longer threatened by the Soviet Union. In conjunction, Tayyip Erdogan believes that he can chart a foreign policy that is more independent and not wholly committed to the Western alliance than his predecessors. This is based in part on commercial interests that Turkey has engaged in, necessitating closer ties with the Russian Federation. It is also, however, motivated by achieving policy objectives independent of its traditional Western partners. Neither NATO nor the United States has congruent interests in Syria. Moreover, in order to defeat ISIS, the United States has chosen to partner with an entity that is unacceptable to Turkey. Additionally, it must not be forgotten that Erdogan's suspicion of the West, whilst always present in his own personal world view, has grown since he came to power in 2003. This is due to the perception that the EU has treated Turkey unfairly, and that continued political capital invested in full membership is a pipe dream

that will not yield results for Erdogan. An audibly anti-Western rhetoric and suspicion towards Turkey's traditional strategic allies has made Erdogan appear headstrong and steadfast in front of his domestic constituency.

Although a rational explanation can be offered for why Erdogan browbeats and weakens Turkey's position in the Western alliance, it must also be pointed out that Erdogan and the AKP have not replaced this strategic grand narrative with an alternate vision of where Turkey is situated in the world. The Kemalist vision unambiguously positioned Turkey as a member of the liberal international order, and employed policy measures to ensure that Turkey was a predictable and aspiring member of the West. The Kemalist vision, having been chipped away at, has only been replaced by the desires and momentary whims of a jingoistic Erdogan. There is little to no institutional input as to what Turkey stands for and whether it can be identified as a steadfast member of any alliance or set of international values. It is very much the case that the arena of foreign policy has been weaponized by Erdogan to achieve a confluence of both personal interests, which visibly supplant the national interest of Turkey.

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TURKEY AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Michael M. Gunter

Introduction

As recently as World War I, the Middle East was still largely the Ottoman Empire. Thus, an analysis of Turkey's relations with it would have been a study of domestic, not regional or international politics. However, Turkey's defeat in World War I resulted in the loss of its Arab possessions and their eventual independence as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Israel/Palestine, Yemen, and Jordan, among others. Egypt had been lost to Britain several decades earlier, and Libya seized by Italy two years before World War I. Non-Arab Iran, on the other hand, had always been and continues today to be a great, independent rival.

In addition, the Turkish base itself almost ceased to exist, as the victors of World War I sought also to carve up Anatolia. Only the rise of Ataturk's[1] Turkish Nationalists saved the heartland by defeating the invading Greeks and their half-hearted European allies in 1922. Born upon this trying heritage, the modern Republic of Turkey was established and then recognized by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923. Ataturk's isolationist dictum "Peace at home; Peace Abroad" became Turkey's new mantra. In other words, there would be no new foreign adventures. Turkey accepted the loss of its former Arab possessions and for many years largely ignored them as it sought to modernize along the lines of "contemporary civilization," that is, Europe.[2]

However, despite turning its back on the Middle East, imperial residues remained. For example, Turkey's defeat in World War I notwithstanding, imperial Russia's demise in 1917 actually allowed Turkey to regain the provinces of Kars and Ardahan in eastern Anatolia that had been lost to Russia in the War of 1877–78. This little-remembered event stands as perhaps the only territorial gain made by any defeated power in World War I. In addition, until finally settled definitely by the Council of the League of Nations in 1926, Ataturk's new Turkey seriously challenged Britain for control of Mosul or northern Iraq. More successfully, modern Turkey forced France to cede its mandate of Syria's Hatay (Alexandretta) province in 1939, an encroachment Arab Syria still does not accept. In 1964, Turkey also occupied approximately 40 percent of Cyprus in reaction to the Greek Cypriot attempt to unite (*enosis*) with the Greek mainland.

Despite pressures from both sides, Turkey remained neutral until the end of World War II, only declaring war against Nazi Germany on February 23, 1945, so it would be invited to attend the San Francisco conference in April 1945 to establish the United Nations.[3] Only

Soviet pressures for significant concessions in the Dardanelles and eastern Anatolia led Turkey to turn to the West. The US Truman Doctrine in 1947 brought significant military support for Turkey to withstand the Soviet demands. Turkey joined the US-led alliance in the Korean War and then the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. Turkey's international persona had definitely turned to the West, a stance that only significantly began to alter with the end of the Cold War in 1990.[4]

This paradigmatic alteration allowed Turkey to begin thinking of its place in foreign affairs in strikingly new ways. No longer did it see itself as mainly the eastern flank of the Western, anti-communist NATO alliance. Indeed, with the end of the Soviet threat, the very rationale or *raison foederis* (reason of the alliance) began to disappear. Increasingly, Turkey started viewing itself as part of the Middle East and even the much larger Eurasian geopolitical space. No doubt, Turkey's earlier Ottoman roots, Russia's relative decline, and now China's imaginative Belt and Road Initiative have aided this geostrategic reorientation.

Finally, the rise of the Kurdish issue after 1978, US-led wars against Saddam Hussein's Iraq in 1991 and 2003, and since March 2011, the Syrian civil war and its multifaceted problems that have exacerbated US/NATO relations have played a major role in the partial Turkish reorientation toward Russia. The rise to power of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's (1954–) Justice and Development Party (AKP) in November 2002 has complemented these developments. The main purpose of this chapter is to analyze Turkey and its relationships of crisis with the autonomous Kurdish administrations in Iraq and Syria, largely during the tenure of Ahmet Davutoglu.

Ahmet Davutoglu and the strategic-depth/zero-problems policy

Ahmet Davutoglu (1959–2001), a former professor of international politics—in a manner somewhat similar to the rise of Henry Kissinger—became Erdogan's chief adviser from 2003 to 2009, his minister of foreign affairs from 2009 to 2014, and then (exceeding even Kissinger) prime minister from August 2014 to May 2016. (Indeed, from the perspective of this chapter, Davutoglu came to exceed in influence even Abdullah Gul, who served under Erdogan as foreign minister from 2003 to 2007 and president from 2007 to 2014.) The scholarly Davutoglu was born in Konya, graduated from a German-language secondary school in Istanbul, and then earned a master's degree in public administration and a PhD, in international relations from the prestigious University of the Bosphorus (Bogazici University) in Istanbul. From 1993 to 1996, he taught political science and chaired the political science department at the International Islamic University in Malaysia. These years abroad probably provided important intellectual experiences concerning different geopolitical insights. For four years, he then served at the Turkish Military Academy and the War Academy in Istanbul where the Kemalist military culture still prevailed. By this time, he was developing broad-ranging theoretical concepts regarding history and geopolitics, a view of the Muslim place in international affairs, and a sense of historical relationships among varying cultures.

Like Kissinger, Davutoglu also wrote scholarly analyses concerning his world view, *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic depth) (Davutoglu 2001)[5] being his most famous. This 648-page tome set out his sweeping vision regarding Turkey's central position in the Middle East and led to the famous phrase "zero problems with neighbors." With this axiom, Davutoglu questioned the entire course of Turkish foreign policy since Ataturk's death and indeed the traditional realist or power school of international politics originally so famously adumbrated by Hans J. Morgenthau, that states are mainly driven by their interests and the threats presented by their enemies, that is, the struggle for power (Morgenthau 1967).[6]

In truth, the Ottoman Empire and then Turkey's foreign policy had long been challenged by real threats from Russian and European enemies. In addition, the Turkish military had always been the ultimate guarantee of Turkish national security and thus the driver of modern, threat-obsessive Turkish foreign policy. Even in Davutoglu's view, Turkey constituted a "heavyweight wrestler," dealing with "middleweight wrestlers" in the Middle East (Davutoglu 2001: 147),[7] a conception that might be likened, although denied by Davutoglu, to "neo-Ottoman" aspirations. Nevertheless, Davutoglu railed against the West for trying to impose its values and political system on the rest of the world. On the other hand, he still supported the deeply problematic Turkish candidacy for membership in the European Union (EU).[8]

However, the manner in which a relationship is defined can change how it is interpreted. For example, if the Kurds are described as an existential threat to Turkish territorial integrity, they are more likely to become that very threat. Indeed, the Turkish state creates its own self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus, refusing to view the Kurdish situation as anything other than an existential threat does not necessarily constitute realism, but a possible denial of it. This unrealistic "realism" then demands the unimaginative security-obsessed power's retort. In addition, emphasis upon foreign and domestic threats allows authoritarian governments a control mechanism to keep their population obedient and docile. As Davutoglu saw it, the philosophy and assumptions that underlay policies were as important as the policies themselves. To implement his policies of strategic depth or zero problems, Turkey would no longer assume that threats and hostile forces surrounded it. Rather, it would now strive to deal with or even eliminate problems through goodwill and diplomacy.

Although one might debate some of his interpretations, Davutoglu's *Weltanschauung* impresses as pioneering and bold, presenting Turkey in such a broad and influential manner as a central state with historical depth of experience in various geopolitical areas including the Middle East, the Balkans, Europe, the Mediterranean, North Africa, the Caucasus, and Central Asia. In painting such a broad canvas for Turkey, Davutoglu demands its acceptance as a major player on the world as well as the regional scene, rejecting the traditional, lesser view of Turkey as a mere bridge between Europe and Asia. Indeed, Davutoglu's vision stretches well beyond the bounds of the old Ottoman Empire; it sees a new globalizing mission in facilitating Eastern aspirations and concerns against those of the demanding West.

Davutoglu's policy of zero problems also views history's long series of regional wars, conflicts, and confrontations as acutely destabilizing and hazardous to almost all the regional states, a situation seldom admitted by the West. For example, in recent years the United States has haphazardly used military means or implied threats to confront foreign problems and achieve its foreign policy goals against such perceived enemies as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Hamas, Hizbullah, Libya, Russia, China, and Islamists everywhere. Turkey's new policies of zero problems would oppose the US position by negotiating with these others. Turkey would eschew pressure, boycotts, sanctions, threats, and war as part of a "proactive peace effort," or exercise of Turkish soft power. Although these imaginative, new policies were to enjoy only mixed initial success and eventually sink into a quagmire of failure due to monumental problems that could not be wished away,[9] we must first also mention the role of the Diyanet and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in seeking to implement them.

Despite being constitutionally a secular state, Turkey has an important state institution that interprets and supervises official state-approved Islam domestically, the Directorate of Religious Affairs or Diyanet. Under AKP rule, the Diyanet has not only taken a much more favorable view of religion than before under Kemalist control, but also has been developing an important foreign role in presenting Turkey's view of Islam to other Muslim states (Southeast European and Black Sea Studies) The Diyanet's Hadith Project, for example, seeks to analyze the origin

and validity of thousands of Hadith or the enormous number of historical accounts that purport to transmit the Prophet Mohammed's activities. As such, the Hadith are second only to the Quran itself in importance, but in many cases need to be authenticated.

Dr. Mehmet Gormez, the former head of the Diyanet and the Hadith Project (2010–2017), in effect, has declared a new principle of Turkish foreign policy complementing Davutoglu's world view that the Diyanet would "act on the principle of service to all the world's Muslims, all the oppressed nations of the globe, all Muslim minorities" (Fuller 2014: 119). The Diyanet's credibility among non-Turkish Muslims has grown due to the AKP's Islamic background, in contrast to its earlier function as an arm of the secular Kemalist state and the AKP's perceived accomplishments while in power since 2002. However, in an extremely critical interpretation, one astute observer recently concluded that "under Erdogan, the Diyanet has been turned into a 'baptizing' entity for his policies," and that "Erdogan's kleptocratic regime is authoritarian and nepotistic. [. . .] Turkey is more corrupt, authoritarian, and Islamist than ever" (Yavuz 2019: 19–20).

Turkey also has taken a new, active role in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). With its 57 members, the OIC constitutes after the United Nations (UN) the second-largest international organization in the world. This Islamic organization seeks to build Islamic solidarity and promote economic development among its members. Testifying to Turkey's new, influential role in the OIC, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, a Turkish academic, politician, and diplomat, served as its secretary-general from 2004 to 2014.

However, as already noted, Turkey has had a long history of fraught relations with its Middle Eastern Arab neighbors who were seen as having stabbed the Ottoman Empire in the back when they allied with the British Empire during World War I. The Davutoglu years of zero problems proved short-lived, and Turkish foreign policy soon returned to its previous path of multiple problems that often suggested perilous military solutions. What happened?

Soon after it broke out in December 2010, the initially peaceful Arab Spring metastasized into civil wars in Libya, Yemen, and most of all Syria, where at times Turkey seemed more attuned with Russia than its supposed NATO ally, the United States (D'Alema 2017). The Muslim Brotherhood's,[10] Turkish-supported government in Egypt was quickly overthrown by a military coup on July 3, 2013, that dimmed the vision of democratic Islam and its supposed Turkish model. Islamic jihadism and extreme, even genocidal violence in the form of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) added to the toxic brew. In pursuit of his goals, Erdogan himself seemingly turned from a democratic reformer to a populist autocrat. In 2016, the *Pelican Files* detailed 27 different sources of disagreements between the newly constitutionally anointed executive president Erdogan and Davutoglu, his now weakened and beleaguered prime minister.[11] Chief among these disagreements were Erdogan's assumption of new presidential powers and his turn to a military-only solution for the Kurdish issue, among numerous other points of contention. Behind these, of course, were Davutoglu's failed zero-problems policies. Erdogan forced Davutoglu to resign effective on May 22, 2016. Thus, this analysis of Turkey and the Middle East must now turn to these renewed problems.

In regard to Syria, for example, the Turkish seizure of the former Syrian province of Alexandretta (now called Hatay) in 1939, as mentioned above, had poisoned mutual relations for years. In retaliation, Syrian support for the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) since at least 1979, as well as continuing crises over Turkey's control of Syria's upstream water sources before they reached Syria, also continued to complicate the relations of the two.

The relationship began to change when the Adana agreement between Turkey and Syria in October 1998 obligated Syria to drop its highly visible, but supposedly covert support for the PKK after Turkey had finally threatened war. Syria expelled Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader,

from his long-time Syrian sanctuary, which eventually led to his sensational capture by Turkish commandos in Kenya in February 1999. Erdogan began to court Syria's leader, Bashar al-Assad, to the point of the two leaders' families even vacationing together. Cooperation between Turkey and Syria developed in security, political, economic, water, and energy policies, among others.

Nevertheless, Turkey quickly turned on Syria when its horrific civil war began in March 2011[12] because Assad refused to follow Erdogan's advice to reform. As the Turkish leader saw it, to continue supporting the Syrian dictator would negatively affect Turkish prestige on the Arab street Erdogan was seeking to win. Soon Sunni Turkey, influenced by Erdogan's Muslim Brotherhood orientation, called for Assad's resignation and greater Sunni representation in Alawite-ruled (an extreme form of Shiism) Syria (Taspinar 2012).

A convoluted policy toward ISIS, where at times Turkey actually seemed to be working with it, was another ironic policy Turkey used to try to implement its anti-Assad policy (Samaan 2013: 66; Hinnebusch 2015: 18). This quickly led to Turkish opposition against Russia and Iran, arguably the two main reasons Assad managed to remain in power. Yet at the same time, Turkey paradoxically sought to achieve its new anti-Assad Middle East goals by working closely with Russia and Iran.

In addition, once Turkey faced Rojava, the Syrian Kurds' semi-autonomous region that rose as Assad was largely forced to withdraw from northeastern Syria to defend his Syrian heartland in the west (Gunter 2014), Turkey ran up against its supposed NATO ally, the United States, which had forged a de facto alliance with the Syrian Kurds to battle ISIS. Suddenly, Turkish troops with their jihadist allies were actually battling Kurdish militants first along its central border with Syria in August 2016 and then more to the west in Kurdish-dominated Afrin province in January–March 2018. The two NATO allies barely avoided clashes around Manbij in 2018 when Turkey attempted to prevent the Syrian Kurds from uniting their territorial gains along the southern Turkish border and in the eyes of Turkey threatened its territorial integrity.

The Kurdish issue

With the exception of the interminable Arab–Israeli struggle, no other imbroglio in the Middle East has become so important, complicated, and long lasting as the Kurdish struggle.[13] The Kurdish struggle not only involves the Kurds against the four states in which they live as a large minority (Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria), but also now entangles other regional and even international actors such as the United States, Russia, and the European Union (EU), among others. In its essence, the Kurdish problem involves the demand of many (but certainly not all) Kurds for meaningful self-determination or even independence, but the counter insistence of the states in which the Kurds live is for the preservation of their territorial integrity, which these states feel demands challenge. In addition, as already indicated, the broader scope of the Kurdish struggle recently has come to include the interests of other regional and even international powers who calculate that the Kurdish struggle now involves their interests.

The Iran–Iraq War in the 1980s, the two gulf wars against Saddam Hussein in 1991 and 2003, and the Syrian civil war that began in 2011 are the main reasons the Kurdish struggle has come to play such an increasingly important role in Middle Eastern and even international affairs. In addition, the rise of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in Iraq and Rojava (now supposedly broadened into the Federation of Northern Syria to include the many other ethnic and sectarian groups that live there) has given the Kurds additional de facto institutional recognition and existence.

Furthermore, the continuing insurgency of the PKK in Turkey and its spillover into neighboring Iraq and Syria, its peace talks with Ankara from 2009 to 2015, and its de facto alliance with the United States to defeat ISIS have given the PKK an importance inconceivable a mere decade ago. For example, the PKK played an important role on the ground in Sinjar, Iraq, to help rescue the embattled Yezidis from the genocidal ISIS jihadis in 2014. Even more so, the PKK, through its Syrian affiliate Syrian Democratic Forces/Democratic Union Party/ Peoples Defense Units (SDF/PYD/YPG) proved the indispensable boots on the ground that defeated ISIS in such dramatic battles as Kobane (2014–2015) and Raqqa (2017), among others. US air and advisory support, of course, were imperative in these battles, which also brought Turkey, Iran, Russia, Iraq, and Syria, among others, into the equation. Thus, the Kurdish issue has been used repeatedly as a weapon against Turkey and others.

As for Iraq, Turkey began to face what it perceived as new, existential threats from the rise of the KRG, a proto-Kurdish state on Turkey's southeastern borders, which, as already noted, had resulted from the US defeat of Saddam Hussein in 1991 and 2003. Similar in perceived threat to the situation with Rojava in Syria, the Kurdish problem, in general, also gave such potential Middle Eastern rivals of Turkey as Syria, Iran, and Iraq, among others, a tool to employ against Turkey.

However, the Kurdish threat was nothing new. As far back as 1937, the Treaty of Saadabad between Turkey, Iran, and Iraq had had as its main implied rationale to harmonize the policies of these three states on the potentially volatile Kurdish issue that overlapped their borders and tempted each to use the Kurds against the others. Thus, the Treaty of Saadabad adumbrated the Baghdad Pact of 1955, which had obligated its members, including Turkey, to cooperate against the Soviet Union during the Cold War. Formally known as the Middle East Treaty Organization (METO), the Baghdad Pact had become increasingly unpopular in the Middle East because it was seen as a tool of Western imperialism. After Iraq withdrew from it in 1958, its name was changed to the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO); it was finally disbanded in 1979 following the Iranian revolution.

Despite the US–Turkish joint memberships in NATO, the Kurdish problem has increasingly strained their relations. For example, in March 2003, Turkey shocked the United States by declining to support its invasion of Iraq. The Iraqi Kurds quickly became the main US ally on the northern front, much to the dismay of Turkey. In July 2003, the United States even arrested 11 Turkish special-forces troops operating in northern Iraq and accused them of trying to destabilize the region (Howard and Goldenberg 2003). At the time, this affair caused an unprecedented crisis in US–Turkish relations, and the US approval rate in Turkey fell to single digits. In retrospect, however, this affair was a mere prelude to repeated crises between the two, often resulting from the Kurdish issue.

Once Saddam Hussein was overthrown, Turkey sought to play its part in the fortunes of the new Iraq. Supporting the Turkmen claims over ownership of Kirkuk proved one useful entry. However, Baghdad's Arab and Irbil's Kurdish claims to Kirkuk proved weightier given their much greater populations on the ground. Even more problematic for Turkey in Iraq was Iran's entry into its former enemy of the infamous Iranian–Iraqi war of 1980–1988. The US defeat of Saddam Hussein stripped the long-ruling Sunnis of their control of Iraq and handed it to the majority Shiites, who in many (but not all) cases tended to identify with their sectarian Shiite Iranian co-religionists. When Tareq al-Hashemi, an Iraqi Sunni leader, ran afoul of Iraqi Shiite prime minister Nuri al-Maliki in 2012 and was sentenced to death, Turkey gave him sanctuary. Maliki quickly excoriated Turkey for interference in Iraq's internal affairs. In addition, when ISIS attacked Iraq and quickly captured the city of Mosul, new opportunities arose for both

Turkey, the KRG, and the PKK within Iraqi borders. Only painstakingly did Baghdad claw its way back from what long appeared to be its final death knell.

The KRG and Its Failed Independence Referendum. The Kurdish struggle and its impact upon Turkish foreign policy entered a new crisis when some 93 percent of the more than 70 percent of KRG voters who participated, supported what was only an advisory, nonbinding referendum on independence held on September 25, 2017.[14] However, the hopes for an independent Kurdistan aborning in the guise of the KRG proved premature because of the strong opposition the combined odd gathering of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and the United States gave it. Furthermore, on October 16, 2017, Iraqi forces with the strong support of the pro-Iranian, Shiite *Hashd al-Shaabi*, or popular mobilizations units (PMUs) (Hawramy 2017; Goran 2018), as well as Turkish and US acquiescence, occupied Kirkuk and other disputed territories, after already closing the KRG's two international airports in Irbil and Sulaymaniya and taking over the KRG's border crossings. The KRG lost approximately one-third of the territory and half of the oil that it had been controlling. Massoud Barzani resigned as KRG president, and the Kurdish region was thrown from the heights of ambition to the depths of failure. When Baghdad finally got around to reinstating the KRG budget that had been suspended since 2014, it reduced it from 17 to 12.5 percent (Sattar 2018).

Despite its denunciations of the United States and others for this disaster,[15] surely the KRG was partially to blame. It had overreached and badly miscalculated in including Kirkuk and other disputed territories in the referendum in an overly ambitious attempt to unilaterally implement Iraqi Constitution Article 140 on the future of the disputed city.[16] The failure to put up even a fight for Kirkuk also illustrated continuing Kurdish disunity despite the KRG's existence since 1992 and further that the Kurds had grossly overexaggerated their military power.[17] Despite the appearance of military strength based on its success against ISIS, the KRG Peshmerga remained divided between Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). It also lacked heavy weapons since Baghdad controlled what material Irbil received from foreign states, and had achieved its recent victories only because of indispensable US air support, which was lacking when Baghdad reclaimed Kirkuk.

Turkish Opposition. The virulent degree of Turkish opposition to the referendum came as a disappointing surprise because the KRG had seemingly managed to create what was practically a de facto alliance with their powerful neighbor to the north. Indeed, as early as 2005, the peaceful, stable situation in the KRG began increasingly to attract Turkish business interests.[18] Turkish firms became heavily involved in such projects as building modern, international airports in Irbil and Sulaymaniya as well as cement plants, among other projects. On March 11, 2010, to cap Davutoglu's policies of strategic depth in the case of the KRG, Turkey, in its own words, even opened a consul in the KRG capital of Irbil "towards bolstering and advancing the friendly ties and cooperation between Turkey and KRG in every field."[19] Turkish soft power seemed to promise a better life for both Turkey and the KRG.[20]

Economic cooperation inevitably began to lead to political cooperation. In 2013, then-Turkish prime minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan invited Massoud Barzani, the president of the KRG, to Diyarbakir, Turkey's de facto Kurdish capital. There Barzani was addressed as the president of the KRG, instead of being a mere warlord from northern Iraq as previously described. Twice Erdogan also used the heretofore forbidden term "Kurdistan" while addressing his audience. Erdogan and Barzani appeared hand in hand on the podium before hundreds of thousands to declare "the brotherhood of Turks and Kurds" (Necef 2013)· while Erdogan proclaimed: "'We are building a new Turkey,' dedicated to all ethnicities and faiths" (Aydintasbas 2017).

What at the time seemed a historic rapprochement made the KRG one of Turkey's closest regional allies as well as its third-largest export market after Germany and the United Kingdom. At the same time, the Turkish–PKK peace process that had begun the previous March emphasized the concept of Turkey as the joint homeland of both Turks and Kurds. Turkey had become one of the main states supporting the KRG's economic independence, serving to facilitate the KRG's selling oil and gas to the world market by evading Baghdad. Erdogan even went so far as to declare that KRG independence was an internal Iraqi affair.[21]

However, Erdogan's support for Barzani proved, in part, a mere tactic to win conservative ethnic Kurdish support in Turkey against the PKK, not a full-blown backing of the KRG. A caveat that Erdogan was not fully on board with all this seeming new thinking concerning the KRG also came when the Turkish leader failed to send military aid to the KRG after ISIS suddenly attacked it in August 2014. Indeed, only timely U.S air support stopped the genocidal jihadists who had driven within 20 miles of Irbil. Earlier, as noted above, Erdogan also had allowed ISIS recruits to traverse Turkey to Syria to join ISIS (Marks 2016).[22] Apparently, the Turkish leader saw ISIS as a tool to combat the PKK and its affiliate, the PYD/YPG's Rojava in the Syrian civil war as well as a means to help bring down the Assad regime.

Despite Barzani's strong opposition to it, the Syrian Kurds' campaign to establish Rojava as a new, de facto Kurdish state on Turkey's border with northeastern Syria possibly conflated Erdogan's inherent fear of any Kurdish state with the KRG.[23] Thus, it only remained for the pro-Kurdish Peoples Democratic Party (HDP) to help deny his AKP a ruling majority by entering the Turkish parliament in the elections of June 7, 2015, for Erdogan to feel it necessary to take up a strong Turkish nationalist role against the Kurds to regain his ruling majority. Internal Kurdish politics in Turkey and Syria had spilled over to Turkish foreign policy to oppose the KRG when it announced its intention to hold the referendum on independence on September 25, 2017.

Although Barzani had long made his intentions clear about eventually seeking KRG independence, his announcement in June 2017 that an advisory referendum would be held at the end of September brought outrage on Erdogan's part as well as from many others including Baghdad and Tehran. Even the United States voiced its opposition, largely because it might splinter the alliance against ISIS.[24]

Thus, Erdogan accused Barzani of committing a "betrayal" (Gurbuz 2017) threatened to starve the KRG's population, and even found Israel's hand in the matter:

> Once we put our sanctions in place, you'll be out in the cold. […] If we turn off the [crude oil] valve, it's over. If trucks do not take stuff to northern Iraq, they won't find food or clothing. How will then Israel send them anything?
>
> *(Aydintasbas 2017)*

Feisal al-Istrabadi, the former Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations, identified the ancient Turkish fear of the Kurds dividing and destroying their state when he added that, particularly for Turkey, the KRG referendum was "an existential threat" because "how Turkey will deal with an independent […] Iraqi Kurdistan, but deny their own Kurds independence is a problem requiring Solomonic wisdom" (Aydintasbas 2017). Since Turkey was the KRG's largest trade partner as well as the transit country for the oil pumped out of the areas controlled by the Kurdish authorities to the international market, Erdogan's threats were paramount.

Turkey's Renewed Syrian Crisis. As the Kurdish crisis in Iraq gradually abated, the one in Syria suddenly exploded, threatening to actually pit US troops against those of Turkey,

its supposed ally in NATO. This was because the United States had armed and continued to support the Syrian Kurdish-led and PKK-affiliated SDF/PYD/YPG forces against ISIS, Kurdish forces, which Turkey viewed as an existential terrorist threat to its territorial integrity. With the victory of these US-supported Kurdish forces over ISIS by the end of 2017, the United States drew further Turkish ire by announcing it would train and support some 30,000 SDF troops as border guards (al-Tamimi 2018).

On January 20, 2018, Turkish troops with their Syrian-opposition allies (the Free Syrian Army) under the ironically named Operation Olive Branch, entered Afrin, the isolated third Syrian Kurdish canton on its border in northwestern Syria and quickly occupied the region. No better illustration of Turkey's increasingly problematic policies in Syria could be given than the spectacle of Turkey, a US NATO ally, needing permission from Russia, NATO's main adversary, before acting. This was because Russia controlled the skies over the Kurdish enclave and in effect had been partially protecting it as part of its goal of preserving Syrian unity under its dictator, Hafez al-Assad. However, now Russia decided not to oppose the Turkish incursion in support for Turkish backing for Russia's larger, overall aims in Syria such as weakening US influence in Syria, pushing the Kurds to negotiate with Damascus, and strengthening Russian-Turkish cooperation to the detriment of NATO.[25]

Of course, Turkish animus toward the Syrian Kurds was nothing new, as earlier on August 26, 2016, Turkish troops had entered Syria to the east of Afrin to prevent the Syrian Kurds from crossing the Euphrates River and driving to the west of that waterway to unite with Afrin. At that time, Operation Euphrates Shield managed to prevent these Kurdish ambitions. However, despite US promises to its supposed NATO ally Turkey, the Syrian Kurds did not retreat to the east of the river. The SDF continued to hold the city of Manbij on the west side with US troops as advisers, whom the United States said would stand their ground against any Turkish offensive (Peker and Barnes 2018).

Therefore, this time, US troops could find themselves under direct attack from their NATO ally if Erdogan actually carried out his promise to "strangle […] before it is born" the US-backed SDF border security force.[26] The Turkish president even threatened that "we will rid Manbij of terrorists, as was promised to us before. Our battles will continue until no terrorist is left right up to our border with Iraq."[27] Exuding outrage in reference to the US support for the SDF, the Turkish president also asked rhetorically, "How can a strategic partner do such a thing to its strategic partner?"[28] He even threatened to give the US troops "an Ottoman slap,"[29] employing a Turkish saying for a deadly or incapacitating blow.

Erdogan, of course, did not actually want to attack US forces. His real aim was probably to end US support for the SDF, collect the weapons the group had received from the United States, and force the Kurds to withdraw east of the Euphrates River. Probably even more importantly, his bellicose attitude was intended for domestic consumption to boost his support in Turkey for the snap presidential and parliamentary elections he suddenly called and won on June 24, 2018.

While the worst had so far been averted, it was obvious that the two largest NATO armies were playing with fire in this game of outrage and bluff. In addition, the US–Turkish standoff threatened to allow ISIS to begin reviving as well as emboldening such US and NATO adversaries as Russia, Iran, and Syria, among others. Adding further uncertainty to the issue, at the end of March 2018, US president Donald J. Trump suddenly declared that the United States might soon pull all its approximately 2,000 troops out of Syria and ordered the State Department to suspend more than $200 million in civilian infrastructure and stabilization recovery funds for eastern (largely Kurdish) Syria (Schmitt et al. 2018). This, of course, completely contradicted and confused the president's top advisers—both fired and newly hired—as well as US allies.

Eventually, Brett McGurk, the special presidential envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIS, tried to clarify the situation when he told reporters on August 17, 2018: "We're remaining in Syria" (Wright 2018).

Furthermore, in June 2018 the United States and Turkey reached an understanding for the SDF/YPG forces to begin pulling out of Manbij and be replaced by separate, coordinated US and Turkish patrols on the western side of the area.[30] This agreement temporarily alleviated the possibility of a military clash between the two NATO allies. Of course, this would only be a beginning settlement as Turkey declared that the Manbij model eventually would also be applied to Syria's Raqqa, Kobane, and other important areas controlled by the Syrian Kurdish PYD/YPG, a proposed road map certain to be opposed and rejected by the Syrian Kurds. Thus, the onus would again fall upon the United States to decide whether to support its de facto Syrian Kurdish ally or de jure Turkish NATO ally. The long-term possibility of a US-Turkish military clash remained.

Moreover, Trump compounded all this confusion when he suddenly announced on December 19, 2018, that he had decided to withdraw from Syria (Hubbard 2018), apparently leaving the door open for Turkey, Syria, Russia, and Iran to move in to the detriment of the Syrian Kurds. On the other hand, there was immediate pushback in the United States against Trump's decision (McGurk 2019). Secretary of Defense James Mattis and special envoy to counter ISIS Brett McGurk both resigned in protest. The mercurial Trump soon partially reversed himself and decided to keep a residual force of 400 US troops and possibly as many as 1,000 other NATO troops in Syria "for a period of time" (Detsch 2019).

During the summer of 2019, the United States and Turkey continued to dicker over creating a safe zone in northeastern Syria that would allow Turkey to protect its borders from the perceived threat of Syrian Kurdish SDF/YPG forces and provide a secure place for some of the increasingly problematic 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey to return (Gall 2019). On September 8, 2019, Turkey and the United States finally initiated their first joint ground patrol in an apparently emerging safe zone on the Syrian side of the border east of the Euphrates River near Tel Abyad (Deeb 2019). The SDF forces had withdrawn some nine miles from the border and removed their defensive positions. However, the extent of the safe zone was uncertain. Erdogan also remained dissatisfied, declaring, "It is clear that our ally [the United States] is trying to create a safe zone for the terrorist organization [the SDF/YPG], not for us" (Deeb 2019). Further complicating the situation, the Syrian government condemned the joint patrol as "aggression."

However, Trump's new announcement of a US troop withdrawal from Syria on October 7, 2019 (Baker and Jakes 2019), has led to a major change in the situation by allowing Turkey finally to establish a small safety zone stretching approximately 75 miles along the Syrian–Turkish border between the cities of Tel Abyad and Ras al-Ayn and maybe 20 miles deep (Yacoubian 2019). This has resulted in Moscow, Ankara, and the Assad regime apparently achieving strategic gains, while the Syrian Kurds have experienced significant losses. In the short run, Erdogan's popularity in Turkey has soared, and he has regained strength after his losses in the local elections held in March and June 2019. However, it seems unlikely that Russia will permit Turkey to extend its safety zone much farther against the wishes of its Syrian ally who, of course, wants to regain all its lost territory. Indeed, Turkey has only managed to enter Syria with the permission of Russia. Thus, Turkey's perceived gains from the US withdrawal are only partial and may well be only temporary.

For its part, the United States also apparently has suffered potentially negative effects (Schmitt and Cooper 2019). 1.) By deserting its Syrian Kurdish ally, the United States questions the value for others supporting it in the future. Thus, the United States weakens itself. 2.)

Hundreds of imprisoned ISIS fighters escaped their Syrian Kurdish guards who instead had to fight for their own survival. The result might be an ISIS resurgence much as occurred earlier in Iraq when the United States withdrew from that state at the end of 2011. 3.) The US actions have also further hurt the NATO alliance by pushing Turkey into greater reliance on Russia, NATO's perceived foe. 4.) Trump's erratic behavior has also encouraged Iran to solidify its position in Syria, where previously US troops had partially checked the Islamic Republic's move toward the Mediterranean. Of course, only time will tell what the long-term results of the US withdrawal will bring. Thus, as of this writing in October 2020, it remains unclear which direction Turkish foreign policy in Syria, with all its new significant manifestations discussed in this chapter, will eventually turn.

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed recent Turkish foreign policy toward the Middle East since Ahmet Davutoglu—a professor of international politics who served the AKP of Recep Tayyip Erdogan first as his chief adviser, then foreign minister, and finally prime minister—first broached his strategic-depth/zero-problems policies in the early 2000s. Given the magnitude of the subject, this author largely chose to limit his analysis to the Kurdish issue and the Syrian civil war. The main conclusion reached was that Davutoglu's imaginative policies proved unable to deal with the huge new and continuing intractable problems of the Middle East. Erdogan's increasingly populist authoritarianism also helped lead to this failure. The result was that instead of zero problems buffered by a strategic depth, Turkey found itself mired in a deep quagmire teeming with a multitude of problems.

Notes

1 For background, see Mango, A. (2000). *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*. Woodstock & New York: The Overlook Press. For a fascinating view of Ataturk's nationalists as they began their quest in 1921, see Streit, C. K. (1921). *The Unknown Turks: Mustafa Kemal Pasa, Nationalist Ankara & Daily Life in Anatolia*, revised, edited and annotated by Heath W. Lowry, Istanbul: Bahcesehir University Press, 2011.

2 For background, see Zürcher, E. J. (2009). *Turkey: A Modern History* (3rd ed). London: I. B. Taurus; Hale, W. (2013). *Turkish Foreign Policy since 1774*. London and New York, Routledge.

3 For background, see Deringil, S. (1989). *Turkish Foreign Policy during the Second World War*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

4 The lack of US support when Turkey intervened in Cyprus in 1964 was an important exception. For background on this and other earlier problems, see Harris, G. S. (1972). *Troubled Alliance: Turkish-American Problems in Historical Perspective, 1945–1971*. Washington DC, AEI-Hoover Policy Studies; Gunter, M. M. (2005). "The U.S.-Turkish Alliance in Disarray." *World Affairs* 16.

5 However, most unflatteringly, Aaron Stein, a resident senior fellow at the Atlantic Council think tank in Washington, DC, called Davutoglu's magnum opus "entirely incoherent," adding that his earlier PhD dissertation was "also incoherent. I don't know how it passed dissertation review, but it did." Lisel Hintz, an assistant professor of international relations at Johns Hopkins University (SAIS), piled on, adding that *Strategic Depth* was also "factually inaccurate." Symposium on "Turkey's Emerging Role in the Middle East," *Middle East Policy* 25 (Summer 2018), p. 22. For a much more positive appraisal of Davutoglu's writings, see Fuller, G. E. (2014). *Turkey and the Arab Spring: Leadership in the Middle East*. N.p., Bozorg Press. Fuller, of course, is a highly respected former CIA official and Rand scholar with deep knowledge on Turkey and the Middle East. My following analysis of Davutoglu owes a great deal to Fuller.

6 Hans J. Morgenthau (1967). *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4th ed. New York, Alfred A. Knopf, was first published in 1948 and went through five editions during Morgenthau's lifetime.

7 For further background, see Murinson, A. (2006). "The Strategic Depth Doctrine of Turkish Foreign Policy." *Middle Eastern Studies* **41**(November 2006): pp. 945–964; Davutoglu, A. (2008). "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007." *Insight Turkey* 10 (Winter 2008): pp. 77–96; Davutoglu, A. (2012). "Principles of Turkish Foreign Policy and Regional Political Structuring." *SAM Vision Papers*, No. 3, April 2012.

8 On Turkey's troubled EU candidacy, see Joseph, J. S. (ed.) (2006). *Turkey and the European Union: Internal Dynamics and External Challenges*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan; Gunter, M. M. (2007). "Turkey's Floundering EU Candidacy and Its Kurdish Problem." *Middle East Policy* **14**(Spring): pp. 117–123. A case might be made that Erdogan turned to the Middle East only after being rejected by the EU.

9 For further background, see Kouskouvelis, I. I. (2013). "The Problem with Turkey's 'Zero Problems." *Middle East Quarterly* **20**(Winter): pp. 47–56.

10 The Muslim Brotherhood is a transnational Sunni Islamist organization founded in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna in 1928. It has influenced many throughout the Middle East with its model of political activism and Islamic charity work. Its ultimate goal is to liberate the Arab states from foreign imperialism and establish Islamic government. Over the years, it has suffered from various government crackdowns for alleged terrorist activities. As of 2019, Russia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, among others, considered it a terrorist organization. On the other hand, Erdogan's Turkey saw the Muslim Brotherhood as a model and vehicle for implementing its goals.

11 See Akyol, M. (2016). "How Mysterious New Turkish Blog Exposed Erdogan-Davutoglu Rift." *Al-Monitor*, May 3. The term "Pelican Files" may have been inspired by John Grisham's legal thriller *The Pelican Brief* that was made into a Hollywood movie in 1993.

12 For a solid study of this complicated event that has come to involve Turkey under Erdogan's leadership so much, see Phillips, C. (2018). *The Battle for Syria: International Rivalry in the New Middle East*. New Haven, Yale University Press.

13 For background to the Kurdish struggle, see McDowall, D. (2004). *A Modern History of the Kurds*. London, I. B. Taurus. For more recent events, see Gunter, M. M. (2019). *The Kurds: A Divided Nation in Search of a State*. Princeton, Markus Wiener Publishers.

14 "92.7% 'Yes' for Independence: Preliminary Official Results." (2017). *Rudaw*, September 27, www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/270920174, accessed October 1, 2017.

15 See, for example, "Barzani: No US 'Support' for Kurdish Referendum if Postponed." (2017). *Rudaw*, November 11, www.rudaw.net/english/kurdistan/11112017, accessed November 15, 2017.

16 For background on Kirkuk—which is both a city of some 1 million shared by Kurds (45 percent), Arabs (38 percent), Turkmens (15 percent), and Christians (2 percent), and also the surrounding governorate (province)—see Anderson, L. and G. Stansfield (2009). *Crisis in Kirkuk: The Ethnopolitics of Conflict and Compromise*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press. The recent "rough" population percentages were taken from Zucchino, David. (2017). "Iraqi Forces Retake All Oil Fields in Disputed Areas as Kurds Retreat," *New York Times*, October 17, www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/world/middleeast/iraq-kurds-kirkuk.html, accessed November 2, 2017.

17 For further thoughts on the KRG's miscalculations, see Natali, Denise. (2017). "Iraqi Kurdistan Was Never Ready for Statehood." *Foreignpolicy.com*, October 31. http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/10/31/iraqi-kurdistan-was-never-ready-for-statehood, accessed November 15, 2017, among numerous other sources.

18 For background to this situation, see Gunter, M. M. and M. H. Yavuz. (2005). "The Continuing Crisis in Iraqi Kurdistan," *Middle East Policy* **12**(Spring): pp. 122–133.

19 Cited in "Erbil Turkish Consulate," http://erbil.co/listing/erbil-turkish-consulate, accessed October 5, 2017.

20 For background, see Yegen, M. (2011). The Kurdish Question in Turkey: Denial to Recognition. *Nationalisms and Politics in Turkey: Political Islam, Kemalism and the Kurdish Issue*. M. Casier and J. Jongerden, eds. London and New York, Routedge: pp. 67–94.

21 Galip Dalai. (2017). "After the Kurdish Independence Referendum: How to Prevent a Crisis in Iraq." *Foreign Affairs*, October 2. www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2017-10-02/after-kurdish-independence-referendum?cid=int-now&pgtype=qss, accessed October 2, 2017.

22 See also the comments of Marc Pierini, the former EU ambassador to Turkey, and John Kerry, the former US secretary of state, in Vandiver, John (2014). "Europe's Fear: Turkey's Porous Border Serves as Gateway for ISIS's Spread," *Stars and Stripes*, July 5.

23 See, for example, Hande Firat (2017). "We Will Not Allow a Kurdish State on Our Borders: Erdogan," *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 24. www.hurriyetdailynews.com/we-will-not-allow-a-kurdish-state-on-our-borders erdogan.aspx?pageID=517&nID=117059&NewsCatID=352, accessed August 30, 2017, where Erdogan also belligerently declared that the term "Kurdish state" is an "insult to my Kurdish brothers. […] We will send those who want to break this nation [Turkey] apart to the grave."
24 US Department of State (2017). "Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government's Planned Referendum." September 20. www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2017/09/274324.htm, accessed October 8, 2017.
25 For background to the evolving Turkish relationship with Russia, see Shlapentokh, D. (2019). "The Ankara-Moscow Relationship: The Role of Turkish Stream." *Middle East Policy* **26**(Summer): pp. 72–84.
26 Cited in "An Unhappy Marriage." (2018). *The Economist*, February 3, p. 43.
27 Cited in "Turkish Operations in Syria to Reach up to Manbij and Iraqi Border: Erdogan." (2016). *Hurriyet Daily News*, January 26. www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-operations-in-syria-to-reach-up-to-manbij-and-iraqi-border-erdogan-126331, accessed January 28, 2018.
28 Cited in ibid.
29 Cited in "Muzzling the Fourth Estate." (2018). *The Economist*, March 3, p. 45. Some 16 Turkish newspapers featured this warning on their front pages the next day! Ibid. "While unlikely, it is no longer inconceivable that Turkey and the United States would one day be shooting at each other," speculated one close observer. Rubin, Michael. (2018). "The US and Turkey Could Go to War," *Washington Examiner*, April 17. www.washingtonexaminer.com/opinion/the-us-and-turkey-could-go-to-war, accessed April 15, 2018.
30 "YPG Confirms Withdrawal from Syria's Manbij after Turkey–US Deal." (2015). *Aljazeera*, June 5. https:///aljazeera.com/news/2018/06/ypg-confirms-wthdrawal-syria-manbij-turkey-deal-180605142952090.html, accessed June 7, 2018.

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TURKEY'S 'NOVEL' ENTERPRISING AND HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND AFRICA

Pınar Akpınar

Introduction

On May 25, 2020, Africa Day, Turkish foreign minister Mevlut Çavuşoğlu made a statement commemorating the 57th anniversary of the founding of the Organisation of African Unity (later African Union), in which he outlined the contours of Turkey's foreign policy towards Africa. He touched upon Turkey's 'win-win' approach towards the continent based on 'mutual respect'; the dimensions of its policy such as economic relations, development and humanitarian aid; educational activism; and the connecting of Africa with the rest of the world via Turkish Airlines flights. He even drew a parallel between Africa's struggle for independence and Turkey's War of Independence by referring to official documents and news stories published during the war. Çavuşoğlu concluded that Turkey will continue to defend and promote Africa's rights on international platforms such as that of the United Nations (UN) (Çavuşoğlu 2020). His statement has been published on numerous African media outlets (Çavuşoğlu 2020a; Çavuşoğlu 2020b; Çavuşoğlu 2020c).

Çavuşoğlu's speech is a snapshot of Turkey's growing activism in Africa with its objectives, principles, mechanisms and justifications. Africa has become an important component of Turkish foreign policy in recent years, and Turkey's Africa policy has proved to be resilient against a number of crises such as the Arab Spring, the 2016 failed coup d'état in Turkey, the change of administration from a parliamentary to presidential system in Turkey, and recently the global coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Turkish foreign policymakers underline that Africa constitutes one of the main orientations of Turkey's new 'enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy', a concept that was first introduced in 2018 by the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and foreign minister, Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, during the tenth Ambassadors' Conference entitled, 'Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy in the Presidential System of Government' (Çavuşoğlu 2018).

This chapter aims to illuminate Turkey's policy towards Africa, a region it had remained distant from for several decades until its recent rapprochement. Why is Turkey in Africa? What are

the main tenets in Turkey's Africa policy? What role does Africa play in Turkey's new 'enterprising and humanitarian' foreign policy?

To shed light on these questions, the chapter will first investigate Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy and discuss whether this is a novel policy or merely a rebranding of Turkey's existing foreign policy. It will then examine the rising interest in Africa by international regional powers, followed by the main contours of Turkey's Africa policy including the history of Turkey's relations with Africa as well as its economic, humanitarian and security dimensions with a particular focus on East Africa.

Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy

The concept of 'enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy' was first introduced in 2018 by Erdoğan, and Çavuşoğlu during the tenth Ambassadors' Conference entitled, 'Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy in the Presidential System of Government' (Çavuşoğlu 2018). The policy underlines the proactive and dynamic nature of Turkish foreign policy that combines elements of hard and soft power. It also draws significant attention to the peace and development nexus of Turkey's foreign policy by promoting it as a humanitarian state. Turkey is currently home to the largest number of refugees in the world with almost four million (UNHCR 2020).

According to Erdoğan, the policy 'reflects the enterprising spirit and humanitarian values' of the Turkish nation (MFA 2018). Similarly, Çavuşoğlu defines the policy as 'action-oriented, innovative and principled' (Çavuşoğlu 2018). He further elaborates,

> We call it enterprising foreign policy because we pursue a Realist, Independent, Peaceful, Creative and Effective foreign policy. A foreign policy able to employ various elements of power at the same time in a rational way. A foreign policy not hesitant of taking initiatives. A foreign policy that takes into account peace and development nexus.
>
> Our foreign policy is at the same time humanitarian and virtuous because we are the representatives of a fair national culture that sees humanity as a whole and loves the Created for the sake of the Creator. This culture envisages that all policies must serve humanity and life. It sees serving peace, harmony, security and prosperity of all humanity as serving its own.

Despite the fact that the enterprising and humanitarian identity was introduced as a 'novel' concept of Turkey's Presidential foreign policy, this study argues that it is merely a continuation or rebranding of its existing foreign policy. 'Dynamism', 'proactivism', 'multi-dimensionalism' and 'humanitarianism' are hardly novel concepts in Turkish foreign policy and have been around for about a decade. For instance, the concept of 'enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy' somewhat echoes the concept of Turkey's 'humanitarian diplomacy', which was first introduced into Turkish foreign policy literature by former Turkish foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu in 2013, during the fifth Ambassadors Conference held in Ankara (Davutoğlu 2013a).

Similarly, concepts such as 'rhythmic diplomacy', 'multi-dimensional foreign policy', 'zero problems with neighbours', 'order instituting actor', 'international cooperation', and 'proactive foreign policy' were introduced by Davutoğlu in 2008 (Davutoğlu 2008a; 2012). Back then, these concepts were introduced as 'novel' concepts and were used as a means to signal a breaking away from Turkey's traditional foreign policy which had been based on threat perception, and

was introverted, Western oriented and preferred to remain distant from 'conflict zones' such as the Middle East and Africa. In an attempt to lift the shadow of the Kemalist tutelage existing over Turkey's primary institutions such as the military and the Foreign Ministry, the AK Party cadres needed to craft a 'novel' foreign policy based on counter concepts and a vision which promoted collaboration, peace and boosted relations with non-Western regions such as the Middle East, East Asia and Africa.

This study maintains that the enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy was introduced by Turkish policymakers in an effort to signal a shift from the Davutoğlu legacy and open a new chapter in Turkish foreign policy through the transition to the presidential system under Erdoğan. Yet, the components of the overall concept are far from being novel.[1] It is rather a 'rebranding' of Turkey's existing foreign policy with a hard power twist. The following sections will attempt to portray the role Africa plays in Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy by examining the history of Turkish–African relations, the economic relations between Turkey and Africa, and also analysing Turkey as a humanitarian agent and as a security provider in the continent.

Africa's rise in the international arena

There have been shifts in the policies of various countries towards Africa in recent years due to rising interest in the continent. Once a popular destination for external powers, interest in Africa had relatively declined following its decolonization after World War II (Clapham 1996). Although traditional external powers continued their presence in the continent to a certain extent, their interest has surged visibly in the last decade. While emerging powers such as China, India, Turkey or Brazil are becoming increasingly present in Africa, traditional powers are looking for ways to accentuate their existing influence (Tjønneland 2014; Tull 2006). This is understandable since Africa has immense natural and human resources; vast, fertile agricultural lands; the youngest and fastest growing population in the world as well as rich oil and gas resources. According to data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Africa has the highest entrepreneurial activity in the world, a rapidly increasing growth rate and largely untapped markets (OECD 2017: 3).

The strategic importance of Africa has also increased in recent years. Contrary to waning US interest in the region and President Donald Trump's pledge to cut down on aid to Africa, other actors are taking steps to enhance their presence in the region politically, economically and security-wise. The Yemen crisis has been particularly influential in fuelling the rivalry as a result of which regional powers lined up to open bases in the Horn of Africa or support the existing machinery of their allies. Turkey's base in Somalia or Saudi Arabia's in Yemen are examples of such a kind. For instance, while Saudi Arabia is preparing to open a base in Djibouti and has formed a council consisting of states bordering the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, including Jordan, Djibouti, Sudan, Somalia, Egypt and Yemen (The National 2020), the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a base in Eritrea and is funding Puntland's Maritime Police Force on anti-piracy trainings (The Economist 2017). Furthermore, China has also opened its first ever forward base in Djibouti following suit with the US, France and Japan (Braude 2016). Assuming roles as security providers is a way of increasing their leverage in the region for these aspiring powers.

The increasing presence of emerging powers has also motivated traditional powers to revise their existing policies in order to consolidate their leverage. Europe is likely to increase its engagement with Africa as part of the recently launched 'Marshall Plan with Africa' initiated by Germany (Marshall Plan Project Group 2017). Reminiscent of the European Recovery

Program financed by the United States after World War II, the plan was drafted by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and was first presented by Chancellor Angela Merkel in July 2017 at the twelfth G20 Summit. As president of the G20, Germany called for a 'paradigm shift' in the existing Africa policies of itself and the EU through German leadership (Marshall Plan Project Group 2017). With the UK leaving the EU as the former leading actor of its Africa policy, Germany and France, which historically have considered Africa to be their backyard, may now have greater potential to lead the EU's Africa policy (Hackenesch & Keijzer 2019).

History of Turkey's relations with Africa

Turkey's Africa policy has raised noteworthy attention in recent years. Once considered a distant continent by Turkish policymakers, Africa now constitutes one of the prime orientations of Turkey's foreign policy. Turkish activism in Africa has sparked attention as a result of its robust humanitarian, development, trade and military initiatives in countries such as Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia in recent years. Turkey has historical and cultural ties with the continent dating back to the Ottoman Empire since Africa was one of the three continents that the Empire's territory had stretched to (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs N/Aa).

The Turkish presence in Africa was first established in North Africa through the conquest of Egypt from the Mamluk in 1517. Later in the sixteenth century, the Empire expanded its territory in North Africa by conquering Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. Following the conquest of Iraq during the reign of Selim I, the Empire included East Africa on its agenda, resulting in the conquest of Aden by the Ottoman navy. The expansion continued during the reign of Süleyman I who added parts of today's Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia to the Empire's map through annexation or dependence (Hazar 2011, 110–119).

The Ottoman presence in sub-Saharan Africa was unable to expand further and be solidified mainly due to the fact that the Empire lacked naval power strong enough to cope with the harsh climate of the ocean, since it was tailored more for the Mediterranean Sea, and therefore was unable to maintain its presence against opponents such as the Portuguese, the British and the French. There was, nevertheless, a strong will to increase the Empire's leverage in these lands. For instance, Abdul Hamid II promoted the Empire's identity as the caliphate through ideology of pan-Islamism to unite the Islamic world against the European colonial powers. Although, pan-Islamism achieved a certain level of influence in Muslim geographies including Africa, it remained insufficient against the rise of European powers (Hazar 2011, 183; Karpat 2001, 238–239). Subsequently, the Empire went into a period of decline and was unable to sustain its lands in sub-Saharan Africa and later on in North Africa as a result of the developments that took place before and during World War I (Karpat 2001, 275).

When the Turkish Republic was founded as the successor of the Ottoman Empire in 1923, Turkey had lost all of its territory in Africa and, until recently, it pursued a low-profile policy towards the continent, especially towards sub-Saharan Africa. This is rather understandable given that when the Republic was founded, it had just come out of war and had to rely on limited resources. Consequently, it followed a policy of international isolation and remained rather introverted, to be able to heal its wounds. Turkey sided with the West during the Cold War by entering NATO in 1952 and developed strong relations with the USA and Europe. As such, Turkey prioritised its relations with the West and pursued low-level relations with distant regions such as Asia or Africa.

The end of the Cold War and the emergence of new nation states triggered an interest in Turkey towards post-Soviet territories, especially those that are of Turkic origin or that

used to be part of the Ottoman Empire. Turkey even established Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) in 1992 with the sole intention to leverage its presence in these nations by delivering aid and running development projects (TIKA N/A). The Agency would later become one of the primary institutions of Turkey's Africa policy. Turkish policy in post-Soviet lands proved somewhat unsuccessful due to existing Russian and surging US interests in these geographies as well as Turkey's domestic problems such as economic crises (Aras & Fidan 2009).

Turkey had only 12 embassies in Africa when the Africa Action Plan was initiated in 1998. Following the initiation of Turkey's Action Plan for Africa in 1998, the Undersecretariat for Foreign Trade designed a strategy on the Development of the Economic Relations with African Countries in 2003. The declaration of 2005 as the 'Year of Africa' in Turkey, the accordance of Turkey of observer status by the African Union, the declaration of Turkey as a strategic partner by the Union and the execution of the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in 2008 in Istanbul further added to the relations. Subsequently, the number of Turkish missions on the continent has increased from 12 in 2009 to 42 in 2020 (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs N/Aa).

Turkey has intensified relations with the African continent from its traditional ties in the north to go deeper into sub-Saharan Africa. Trade and diplomatic ties have improved significantly, and Turkey has turned itself into a major player in the region through humanitarian-development aid, public-private partnerships and, lately, military presence. Today, Africa is cited as one of the prime orientations of Turkey's enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy by policymakers with 22 TIKA coordination offices and 42 embassies in the continent (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs N/Aa), reaching out approximately to 96 per cent of the total population of Africa (Çavuşoğlu 2018).

Turkey's economic relations with Africa

Between 2015 and 2019, more than 500 mutual high-level visits took place between Turkey and African countries, and the bilateral trade volume increased by sixfold in the last 18 years (Çavuşoğlu 2020). In a statement made by Turkey's trade minister, Ruhsar Pekcan, 2020 was foreseen as the 'Africa Year' for Turkey. Despite the fact that bilateral trade rose from $5.5 billion in 2003 to $23.8 billion in 2018 and exports rose by more than fivefold to $14.4 billion during the same years, Pekcan argued that these numbers are insufficient and are much below the actual potential (Ergocun 2019).

Operating in 45 African countries through bilateral business council mechanisms, the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK [Dış Ekonomik İlişkiler Kurulu]) plays a key role in Turkey's relations with Africa. DEİK also fulfils the role of a liaison between Turkey and investment promotion agencies and regional institutions such as the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Development Bank, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (with which Turkey is planning to sign an economic and trade cooperation agreement) and The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in coordination with the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DEİK N/A).

The business councils organize multilateral business forums, trade missions, B2B meetings, workshops, seminars and panels. For instance, while the third Turkey–Africa Economic and Business Forum was planned to be organized by DEIK in Istanbul in October 2020 (Çakır 2020), due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was held in an online format on October 8–9, 2020. About 1,500 businessmen from Africa and Turkey in addition to several African heads of states and regional organizations participated in the forum (Turkey–Africa Forum Website 2020).

Turkey has so far signed trade and economic cooperation agreements with 38 African countries, health cooperation agreements with 20, free trade agreements with 4, reciprocal protection of investment agreements with 26, and prevention of double taxation agreements with 11. While Africa's share in the overall international business volume of Turkish contractors is 21 per cent, 19 per cent of this goes to North Africa (DEİK N/A).

According to 2018 estimates, the countries that have the highest trade volume with Turkey in North Africa are Egypt ($5.2 billion), Algeria ($3.1 billion), Morocco ($2.7 billion), Libya ($1.8 billion), and Tunisia ($1 billion). In sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa ($1.9 billion) leads, followed by Nigeria ($489 million), Sudan ($434 million), Senegal ($401 million), Cote d'Ivoire ($377 million), Ethiopia ($355 million), and Ghana ($353 million). In 2019, while 56 per cent of Turkish exports by value were sold to Europe and 25.9 per cent were sold to Asia, about 9.3 per cent were sold to Africa (DEİK N/A). As such, while there is a growing trend in Turkey's economic relations with the continent, Africa still lags way behind Turkey's traditional partners in terms of business relations.

Turkey as a 'humanitarian agent' in Africa

Turkey has hit the headlines recently by becoming the third-biggest provider of aid during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak through its 'pandemic diplomacy'. It has extended medical supplies to 157 countries across the world including developed countries and big donors such as the UK, the USA and China (Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı 2021, 11). Turkey's quick international response to the pandemic was partially the consequence of the experience it has gained as a humanitarian agent. Turkey has risen as one of the biggest donors in the world in recent years mainly as a result of the ongoing crisis in Syria, the country that Turkey has its longest border with (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs N/Ab).

Out of the 157 countries to which Turkey has delivered medical supplies during the pandemic, 44 are located in Africa, the highest number of all regions (Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı 2021, 11; Sarı 2020; Dhaysane 2020). Although there have been variations regarding the swiftness and efficiency of the measures, Africa has proven to compete relatively well against COVID-19 as a result of the early and decisive action taken. Africa's competence also comes from its experience in coping with communicable diseases such as AIDS or Ebola. For instance, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, which was founded in 2017, played a major role in the prevention of COVID-19's spread (World Bank 2020).

The COVID-19 crisis is not the first time that Turkey has hit the headlines with its humanitarian diplomacy. Despite the fact that it has been engaging in vigorous humanitarian activism vis-à-vis the Syrian crisis, a rather surprising initiative took place during the deadly East Africa famine in 2011. During the famine, Erdoğan visited Somalia despite poor security measures in an attempt to carry Somalia to the international agenda and to open up a gateway for Turkey into East Africa. The fact that he was the first non-African leader to visit Somalia in 20 years paid off by attracting significant media attention (Akpınar 2013). Consequently, Somalia became one of the two pillars of Turkey's humanitarian diplomacy alongside Syria (Davutoğlu 2013b; Akpınar 2013) and it now hosts Turkey's largest embassy as well as its largest forward base (Dhaysane 2017). Turkey is also a mediator in the dispute between Somalia and Somaliland.

Turkish foreign policymakers had even labelled Turkey an 'Afro-Eurasian state', which signalled an 'upgrade' from 'Eurasian state' that Turkey had been labelled for decades. The concept of Turkey being an Afro-Eurasian state was used by Davutoğlu in his renowned book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position*, which positioned Turkey as a 'central country' in

an Afro-Eurasian geography that used to be the Ottoman hinterland (Davutoğlu 2008b, 163). While the concept attributed an Afro-Eurasian identity to Turkey based on a historical construct, it lacked a solid political justification for the present day since Turkey no longer possesses any landmass in Africa. Surely, it could serve to make a historical and cultural claim in the region to develop friendly ties and seek new markets and investments.

However, while Turkey could rightfully be called a Eurasian state due to its possession of lands in these continents and its having strong, solid political, economic and cultural links thereof, 'Afro-Eurasia' as a geopolitical region is yet to be established in the Turkish mindset. Although Africa is within the frontiers of the 'geopolitical imagination' (Aras & Polat 2008) of Turkish foreign policymakers, one would doubt that the concept has any relevance within the mindset of an ordinary Turkish citizen. As also underlined by a senior Turkish foreign policymaker, 'it would take Turkey a long time to combine all three continents' (Anonymous senior bureaucrat 2020). As such, the present study argues that the concept was used more as a means of justification for Turkey's current ambitions in Africa through the construction of a historical legitimacy. It is, therefore, not surprising that the concept has been removed from Turkey's 'novel' foreign policy which, inter alia, seeks a diversion from Davutoğlu's foreign policy.

While in 2015, Somalia was the second-largest beneficiary of Turkey's bilateral official development assistance (ODA) after Syria (TIKA 2016), it was the fifth in 2018. Sudan and Libya were other African countries that shared the list of the first ten in 2018 (TIKA 2019, 19). In terms of regional distribution, while the Middle East ($7.1 billion), and especially Syria ($6.7 billion), is the largest recipient of Turkish aid, Europe (especially the Balkans) is the second largest with $217 million, and Africa is the third with $134 million. In Africa, while Somalia is still the largest recipient with $29 million, Libya is the second with $18.7, and Djibouti is the third with $14 million (TIKA 2019, 29). Turkey's approach to humanitarianism is multitrack, which is also evident in its Africa policy. As such, Turkey is active on the continent not only with its official bodies but also through its civilian elements such as its non-governmental organizations and businesses. Turkish humanitarian non-governmental organizations are active in a number of countries in Africa including Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Chad, Mali, Tanzania, Kenya and Ethiopia, among others (TIKA 2019; Aras & Akpınar 2015; Akpınar 2017a; Akpınar 2017b). Education, administrative and civil infrastructure and health come to the fore as the main categories of Turkey's ODA (TIKA 2019, 33).

Turkey as a 'security provider' in Africa[2]

In addition to being a political, economic and humanitarian actor in Africa, Turkey has also drawn attention by ramping up its military engagement on the continent. The opening of a Turkish military training base in Mogadishu by Somali prime minister Hassan Ali Khyare and Turkish chief of staff General Hulusi Akar on September 30, 2017, sparked discussions as to whether Turkey is now set to assume a more ambitious role in Somalia. Being its largest forward base in the world, at a cost of 50 million USD and the initial goal of training more than 10,000 soldiers, the base was a solid indication of Turkey's enduring support for its lead partner in the Horn of Africa (Al Jazeera 2017). It was also a step forward from the benign donor role that Turkey has been capitalizing on in Somalia into a self-assured security provider role.

Turkey's military endeavour in Somalia should also be examined within the context of surging rivalries in the Horn of Africa. In contrast to waning US interest and President Donald Trump's pledge to cut down on aid to Africa, other actors are taking steps to enhance their

presence in the region, of which opening forward operating bases is an important part. These bases serve as instruments for these actors both to ensure their own security by containing the conflicts existing in these countries and to increase their existing leverage. While instability in Somalia does not pose a direct security threat to Turkey, the fact that it has invested heavily in the country in the last six years makes opening a military base a worthwhile act. Opening a military base in Somalia should also be seen as part of Turkey's wider policy of instituting a military stronghold from the Arabian Gulf to the Gulf of Aden, as has been signalled from the recent opening of its military base in Qatar (Aras & Akpınar 2017). The Yemen crisis has been particularly influential in fuelling regional rivalries. As a result, regional powers are lining up to open bases in the Horn or support existing machineries (Economist 2017). The Africa policies of these powers bear similarities with those of Turkey, which relies on military bases, aid and ports as main instruments (Gambrell 2017).

Turkey, currently, has military bases in two African countries including Somalia and a de facto one in Libya, and has another one in Qatar. It is also, allegedly, planning to open one in Sudan's Suakin Island as a naval base. In December 2017, Turkey announced a deal which saw the Ottoman-era port of Suakin leased to Turkey for 99 years to be revived as a tourism hub for Hajj-bound pilgrims. The deal has raised significant controversy and rumours that Turkey would open a military base in the island to step up its military presence in the region. Despite statements by Irfan Neziroglu, Turkey's ambassador in Khartoum, that Turkey has no such intentions to construct a military base in Sudan, the rumours as well as the visits of the Turkish defense minister and army generals to Sudan are seen as reflections of Turkey's military ambitions in Sudan (Amin 2018).

Beyond this, Turkey has had close relations with Sudan and Omer al-Bashir since early 2000s. Bashir has visited Turkey many times despite international ban on his travel. The pictures of Turkish president Erdogan shaking hands with Bashir have aroused both criticism and curiosity among various circles regarding a deepened relationship between the two countries. Sudan has hosted a number of high-level Turkish officials in the last years who visited the north-east African country to sign various cooperation agreements on political, economic, social and military issues.

The project in Suakin Island is basically a commercial venture to resuscitate an old Ottoman port. Erdogan said the island would become a point of embarkation for Turkish pilgrims making their way to Mecca. 'Imagine, people from Turkey wishing to go on pilgrimage will come and visit the historical areas on Suakin Island', he remarked. The island used to function as a port during the Ottoman era, and its revival by Turkey also has a symbolic value (Amin 2018).

Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize Sudan upon its independence in 1956. Despite the existence of a certain level of interactions, the relations have thrived significantly in recent years as a result of Turkey's new policies in Africa and the Gulf region. Erdogan's visit to Sudan on December 24–26, 2017, resulted in the signing of 12 agreements, including the establishment of a high-level strategic cooperation mechanism between Turkey and Sudan. Turkey's economic initiatives in Sudan focus mainly on infrastructure projects and direct investments, which have so far amounted to 650 million US dollars. According to an anonymous Turkish diplomat, the change of regime in Sudan will not change Turkey's existing agreements with Sudan (Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs N/Ac).

Turkey's military manoeuvres have disturbed some powers in the region such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Egypt, which have their own regional ambitions. Africa, and especially the Red Sea area, is important for these countries since 4.8 million barrels of Gulf oil are transferred every day through the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the Mediterranean into Europe

(Reuters 2020). Accordingly, the two allies are increasing their presence in the area by opening military bases and ports. Despite the fact that Turkey tries to assume a confrontational attitude against the Saudis and to a lesser extent the Emiratis, its rather bold moves create anxiety among the ambitious players.

Egypt is another state that has been concerned about Turkish entry into its traditional sphere of influence. The Sisi government has been disturbed by the support of Turkey and Qatar for the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, Egypt is among the countries that have imposed a blockade on Qatar as a result of its insistence on following an independent foreign policy. Sudan's rapprochement with Turkey has even been despised by some Egyptian media outlets as a move that could hamper its ties with Egypt (Hassan 2020).

Turkey's alliance with Qatar has created contention with the Saudis and Emiratis as well. Turkey and Qatar have faced tremendous geostrategic pressure from the Saudi–Emirati line, also supported by Egypt, due to their divergent visions on regional order in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. In any case, Turkey's strategic cooperation with Qatar, and Doha's willingness to financially support the project in Suakin, is quite telling about the tacit geostrategic background.

Somali prime minister Hassan Ali Khaire's statement during the opening ceremony of the base in Somalia claimed that Turkey is contributing to the reconstruction of Somalia's organized 'national' force and therefore helping it overcome clan-based division, which is often seen as one of the main drivers of conflict in Somalia. Such speech indicates that Turkey's initiative is seen as an extension of its peacemaker role in the country (Hussein & Coşkun 2017). It is, however, important for the Somali government itself to also ensure meritocracy during the enlargement process of the military and avoid clan-based recruitment.

The establishment of a Turkish military base in Somalia may have various implications for Turkey, for Somalia and for regional politics. On the optimistic side, the base could serve to solidify Turkey's commitments in the country. Until the base, Turkey had mainly utilized its soft power tools in Somalia and enjoyed the role of a benign donor. The base, however, would carry Turkey a step forward by positioning it as a security provider and thus an influential player in the country. Moreover, the Turkish military also has a clear history unlike, for instance, the African Union mission, which lacks a very positive image in Somalia (Kasapoğlu 2017; Human Rights Watch 2014).

The growing competition among different external powers in the Horn of Africa is proof of the region's rising prominence. However, it also demonstrates that Turkey needs to carry out a prudent and cautious policy in order to secure a long-standing role in Somalia. There is already evidence that the area is turning into a zone in which rival regional powers exert their influence. For Turkey, opening forward operating bases is also a means of bringing in success stories from outside and fixing the image of the Turkish military, which has been notably tarnished in recent years. As such, the failure of such a policy could further damage the military's image and generate criticism at home for wasting Turkey's financial and human resources. It could be difficult for the Turkish government to justify similar losses within the context of distant places like Somalia, Libya or Suakin.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to shed light on Turkey's Africa policy and what role Africa plays in its 'novel' enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy. Although the Ottoman Empire had a historical presence in Africa, Turkey had been relatively distant from the continent as a result of different priorities. Its recent return has been a rather aspiring one that began with aid,

peace-making and investment projects and continued with ambitious security partnerships. Turkey is becoming more active in East Africa due to its geographical proximity and its geopolitical position that serves its interests in the broader region – Africa, the Gulf and the Middle East.

This study maintains that an enterprising and humanitarian foreign policy is not a completely novel conception in Turkey's foreign policy but rather a rebranding of Davutoğlu's foreign policy, particularly in terms of its similarity with his concept of 'humanitarian diplomacy'. The difference between the two policies is that, unlike Davutoğlu's policy which emphasized concepts such as soft power and zero-problems with neighbours, the new policy has a hard power dimension as well as is based on running forward military campaigns or opening forward bases, which are indications of Turkey's rising regional ambitions.

The study also argues that in addition to its various interests on the continent, Africa constitutes a perfect arena for Turkey's imposition of itself as an 'enterprising and humanitarian state' through its soft power and as a regional military power through its hard power capabilities. However, this is a rather perceived role and is yet to be fulfilled against Turkey's actual priorities, competence, as well as against the more traditional foreign actors existing in Africa. As such, while there is a clear rising interest by Turkish actors towards Africa, the continent still lags significantly behind Europe or Asia in terms of Turkey's political, economic, humanitarian and military relations. The fact that Turkish foreign policymakers ceased to call Turkey an 'Afro-Eurasian state' could be an indication of such a realisation.

Africa also serves Turkish policymakers as a venue to draw a parallel between their own domestic discourse on victimization, namely their preceding Kemalist tutelage, and the oppressed peoples in Africa by Western colonizers. The AKP often depicts its followers as people who were 'oppressed', 'discriminated' against, and whose 'rights were violated' by previous administrations.

While Europe and Asia constitute Turkey's main trade partners, they are also (especially the Middle East and the Balkans) the main recipients of Turkish development and humanitarian assistance. In terms of security, while Somalia hosts Turkey's largest forward base, it is rather a training base which hosts 200 personnel unlike, for instance, Turkey's bases in Northern Cyprus, which host 30,000 armed forces, or Iraq, which hosts 2,000 personnel and 20 military and intelligence bases.

The study also argues that, although it still yearns to meet Turkey's ambitious goals, Turkey's Africa policy has proved to be rather resilient against various crises such as the Arab Spring, the failed coup d'état in Turkey, the change of administration from a parliamentary to a presidential system in Turkey, and recently the global COVID-19 pandemic. In fact, these crises have somewhat solidified Turkey's policy towards Africa since they have played a role in terms of diversifying its foreign policy choices, diverting attention from the Middle East or domestic problems, and offering an arena for promoting Turkey as an 'enterprising and humanitarian' agent on the international platform.

Notes

1 In fact, it is even possible to trace parallel concepts and approaches in Turkey's former foreign minister Ismail Cem's policy who was in favour of following a similar policy. Cem favoured the diversification of Turkey's foreign policy through cooperation and collaboration with multiple regions such as Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

2 Parts of this section were previously published in (Akpınar 2017b).

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