The Ailing Turkish Democracy

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The Transformation and Perpetuation of a Hybrid Competitive System

By

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Edited by Magdalene Antreou

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To Dr Magdalene Antreou who edited this book,
and to my fellow citizens who envision a 'different',
democratic future for the entire Eastern Mediterranean.

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INTRODUCTION

THE HYBRID MAJORITARIAN SYSTEM
OF MODERN TURKEY

"[...] The assemblies are the guarantors of the rights of the community. Why then should our assemblies be made the instruments of the whims of one or two men?... When the rights of millions of people are given in trust to such [corrupt] assemblies, how can one expect the security of the people not to be frittered away? [...] Do all members of the government believe themselves to be free of responsibility [...]? If any of them harbour such beliefs, they are mistaken. To provide justice is the greatest, the first duty of government, for it is the very reason for its establishment and a pledge of its continuation.[1]"

The above quote discussing the problematic liberal and democratic principles in Turkey belongs to Ali Suavi, a Young Ottoman who left his mark on Turkey's modern political thought. Suavi belonged to a group of intellectuals and activists with modernist and liberal tendencies who, almost a hundred and fifty years ago when the ailing Ottoman Empire was near its end, expressed their dissatisfaction regarding the state of the socio-political affairs in their country.

In modern Turkey, the majoritarian attributes of the country's ruling party overshadow the basic principles of modern democracies while the liberal values and institutions remain weak and problematic. Against the background of the socio-economic and political challenges Turkey is experiencing today, Suavi's remarks are more relevant than ever.

The root of Turkey's problems in the fields of liberalism and democracy dates back to the 20th century. In 1923, the Turkish ruling elites and the country's military forces established the Republic of Turkey in the former Ottoman territories of Eastern Thrace, Anatolia and Kurdistan. The first governments of the new Republic introduced a process of westernisation with mixed results. Turkey has since been facing serious and perplexing problems in its social, political and economic development throughout the last century. The three military coups (1960, 1971 and 1980), the hybrid

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[1] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Syracuse University Press, 2000).

political system created through the close collaboration of the military junta and the established elites, during the era of radical economic liberalisation, did not solve the country's significant problems. The radical westernisation attempts, the alliance with the West and the adoption of structures and practices similar to those of the progressive liberal democracies did not stop the political, economic and social problems from accumulating. Thus, Turkey continued to experience a deficit in democratic values, and the socio-political difficulties in the citizens' daily lives persisted. As a result, Turkey is today a socially divided and politically and economically unstable country. Moreover, recent developments such as the Gezi protests, the government's clash with the Gülen Movement and the failed coup of 2016 have intensified Turkey's instability.

The socio-economic underdevelopment, the weak middle class and the ethnic clash

In discussing the hybrid majoritarian system of Turkey, we must utilise a multi-dimensional approach. From both the socio-economic and political aspects, the current hybrid majoritarian system of Turkey is the direct result or, more accurately, the 'heritage' of the developments of the 20th century. Thus, an examination of the socio-political turbulence Turkey experienced during the 20th century because of the unresolved national issues and the economic underdevelopment is necessary.

As Fareed Zakaria highlights in 'The Future of Freedom', "First, avoid major ethnic or religious strife. In almost any 'divided' society, elections can exacerbate group tensions unless there is a strong effort to make a deal between the groups, getting all to buy into the new order[2]". In the same spirit, Larry Diamond argues that "The one precondition for democracy to work is a consensus among major ethnic, regional, or religious groups"[3].

From a theoretical point of view, Zakaria's remark sheds light to the first leg of the socio-political underdevelopment of Turkey, during the 20th century. The Republic of Turkey was established on the remaining territories of the collapsed Ottoman Empire during the age of nationalism. The nation-building strategy implemented in Turkey did not avoid major ethnic conflict with the Kurdish minority of the Republic. Starting from the 1920s and continuing throughout the last century, the Kurdish Issue divided Turkish society. The Turkification policies of the Republic's first governments

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[2] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad (Revised Edition)* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).
[3] Zakaria.

exacerbated the problem. In the 1960s and 1970s, a small group of political activists with Marxist tendencies coming from the Turkish Left moved to establish a new Kurdish movement which has been in open conflict with the Turkish state ever since. The movement's operations cover territories both within Turkey and the broader area of Mesopotamia. Discussing illiberal democracies, Kanishka Jayasuriya makes a compelling argument which is also relevant to modern Turkey and the Kurdish Issue. "[...] Effective political management lies in the coordination and regulation of these different elite groups and arenas.[4]"

In the case of Turkey, the Republic did not achieve to regulate the state's relations with both its biggest ethnic minority and other segments of the society. The Turkish governments have failed to "transfer power to the citizens[5]" because of the unitary nature of the Turkish state. The said failure is more than clear in those regions where most of the local population is of Kurdish origin. Under these circumstances, the Kurdish Autonomy Movement and the Turkish state chose the 'costly' option[6] of armed struggle instead of the path of power-sharing and concession policies.

The perpetuation of the Kurdish Issue overshadows the rule of law in modern Turkey and intensifies the citizens' feelings of uncertainty regarding the country's future. As Maravall and Przeworski argue, 'predictability' in compliance with the rule of law is a paragon of the orderly function of modern societies:

> "[...] Laws inform people what to expect from others. Even if it were to deviate from the announced course of action, the state announces what it plans to do, including what it intends to punish. Such announcements provide safety for individuals. At the same time, they facilitate coordination of sanctions against a government that deviates from its announcements. In this sense, publicly promulgated rules provide an equilibrium manual. Moreover, because of citizens value predictability, and the security it affords, they may care that the government would not violate laws even if they do not care about the actions that constitute violations.[7]"

Contrary to the above, unpredictability towards the abidance to the rule of law in the Kurdish Issue is the norm in modern Turkey. The Kurdish Autonomous Movement, as mentioned above, moves outside the rule of

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[4] D. Bell et al., *Towards Illiberal Democracy* (Springer, 1995), 128.
[5] Professor Daron Acemoglu, Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 26.
[6] Acemoglu and Robinson, 26.
[7] Adam Przeworski and José María Maravall, *Democracy and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), 5.

law, while the Turkish governments deviate from the democratic principles. Within this framework, the governments' actions often remain 'unchecked'. As a result, the political protagonists' unpredictability towards the rule of law and the absence of common understanding regarding the solution of the Kurdish Issue create an explosive mixture which brings the country face to face with enormous challenges. The clash of opponent nationalist policies only gives new dimensions to the said challenges.

The economic problems and the shortcomings of the weak and dependent middle classes constitute the second leg of Turkey's socio-political underdevelopment. Zakaria underlines the importance of economic development and the existence of a 'non–oil-based economy and government' as a precondition for the emergence of a robust liberal democracy[8]. In the modern world, the creation of 'non-oil-based economy' is accompanied by the accumulation of wealth, technological advancement, and radical structural changes in the countries' social fabric. One of these structural changes is the emergence of a strong and independent middle class. As Acemoglu and Robinson argue, the emergence of a robust middle class is of particular importance for the advancement of liberal democracies:

> "[...] A relatively large and affluent middle-class acts as a buffer between the rich and the poor and limits redistribution. By ensuring that policies are not too far from those preferred by the rich, it discourages the rich from using repression and makes democracy more likely.[9]"

The developments of the 20th century did not allow the emergence of a strong and independent middle class in modern Turkey. The Sunni Turk economic elites of the new Republic with the active support of the state replaced Turkey's minorities, which were the driving force of the economy. This historical process saw, as a result, the emergence of a dependent and weak middle class. Therefore, modern Turkey has never had an independent and strong middle class. Such a class could take on the role of mediator between the economic elites and the government itself. Furthermore, it could assume the same role towards those sizeable segments of the society which remained excluded from the political and economic forefront of the country up until the governance of Justice and Development Party (Ak Party) offered them a way out of the margins. With other countries (e.g. European democracies after the Second World War), the active participation of the middle classes in both their economic and political life had a significant role in their development and had paved the way for democratisation. Zakaria argues that the:

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[8] Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*.
[9] Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 258.

"Development favours the expansion of an educated middle class; it engenders a "pluralistic infrastructure" a ramifying civil society ever more challenging to manage from above. The authoritarian state may opt at this juncture to relax its grip on public life. The decision is a fatal one, for into the openings created by liberalisation pour accumulated discontents that, now articulated, take on the character of outright opposition.[10]"

The lack of development slowed the expansion of the Turkish middle class and facilitated the management of society from above. As a result, the political establishment, the military, the autocratically inclined governments, and their allies kept the country's public life in their strong grip throughout the 20th century.

Analysing Turkey's social, economic, and political underdevelopment, we also need to discuss the emergence of a 'new type' middle class, which had surfaced by the mid-20th century in Anatolia. Conservatism and nationalism were well embedded in the mentality of the new type of Anatolian middle classes, which, when given the opportunity, moved to dominate the economic and political circles of modern Turkey. In the period of rapid urbanisation and migration from Anatolia to the major urban centres of western Turkey, the conservative and nationalist segments of Turkish society used their emerging social and political networks to rise to power. The above mentioned social and economic networks were exploited to the maximum in disseminating the group's cultural codes. Activism policies were employed in propagating nationalism and conservatism to the greater public and translating the group's economic strength to political power. As Yavuz mentions:

"By utilising new opportunity spaces, these Turkish Islamic movements are making new actors of intellectuals, businessmen, scholars, and artists and creating new sites of sociability. One of the major impacts of these opportunity spaces has been facilitating the emergence of private identities, commitments, and lifestyles in the public sphere. These new public spaces, along with new actors, have brought Islam to the forefront of public discussion"[11].

The new conservative networks powered by the emerging middle class of Anatolia, took a similar political path as the conservative movements of the Arab and Sunni Muslim world. Facing the dilemma 'Islamic law versus democracy', the Anatolian middle classes placed greater emphasis on democracy, with the ultimate aim of strengthening their position in the

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[10] Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom*.
[11] M. Hakan Yavuz, *Islamic Political Identity in Turkey* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 9.

political scene of the country. Discussing the above dilemma, Hamid argues that:

> "Democracy, by opening up political space for the opposition and allowing them greater opportunities to interact and learn from each other, is usually thought to encourage cooperation and compromise. [...] The shared experience of repression [...] encourages opposition groups to focus on what they have in common. [...] So they agree to prioritise the fight for basic freedoms and democracy. Ideological divisions are put to the side.[12]"

Turkey's emerging conservative Anatolian middle class chose the path of moderation and focused on cultivating political cooperation and concession. Within this framework, the establishment of an Islamic state was postponed, and a process of democratisation was initiated instead. Hamid mentions that:

> "[...] Repression can "force" the moderation of Islamist parties—and often did, particularly during the 1990s and 2000s. Under repression, Islamists put aside and postponed their dream of an "Islamic state," which they had little use for when their fundamental liberties were being denied. In such a context, Islamists democratized their internal organizational structures, opened new channels of cooperation with secular parties, and moderated their policies—on sharia law, democracy, political pluralism, and minority and women's rights—in the hope of forestalling repression or at least mitigating its negative effects"[13].

The inclination to recognise the role of women and other ethnic, religious, and socio-economic identities in the political and social life of the country followed the strategic choice of political moderation. The above process was similar to other Islamist movements in the area. According to Hamid:

> "As regimes grew increasingly repressive, these groups —most of which are affiliated with or inspired by the Muslim Brotherhood—accepted many of the foundational tenets of democracy, including popular sovereignty and alternation of power. Across the region, they adopted increasingly moderate positions on political pluralism and women's and minority rights"[14].

During the same time, the conservative political forces of modern Turkey updated their internal organising procedures. Within the framework

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[12] Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East* (OUP USA, 2014), 54-55.
[13] Hamid, 4–5.
[14] Hamid, 38.

of democratisation, the political forces opened the doors of their movements to include other social groups from outside the conservative segments of Turkish society[15].

The emergence of the new middle class of Anatolia was slow and did not solve the multiple problems of Turkey's society, economy, and politics. Regardless, the new protagonist of modern Turkey's political scene played a crucial role in the country's development.

The weak liberal values and institutions: The attempts of reforms

"We demanded law and justice. [...] They wanted to prevent it [...]. Despite all the oppression, despite all the power of the state, all the bureaucrats that they used, the people of this country preferred democracy rather than oppression [...]. When we crown the Republic with democracy, it will make sense. We are now crowning the Republic with democracy, and we will strengthen it. We will declare to the whole world our resolve to democracy.[16]"

The leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP) made the above speech on the night of their candidate's historic victory in the 2019 municipal elections in Istanbul. Despite the gradual rise in the opposition's electoral percentages and the increase of urban centres that are now under its control, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu underlined how important it is to frame the country's republican regime with democratic principles, after seventeen years of a continuous conservative governance. In this spirit, ninety-six years after the establishment of the Republic, the leader of the CHP, the party responsible for its emergence with all of its institutions and structures, called for the urgent need to bring democracy back to Turkey.

Approximately a century since the defeat of Turkey's external enemies, the end of the monarchy and the establishment of the Republic, many aspects of the country's constitution still contradict modern democratic principles. The socio-economic turmoil, the dependent middle class and the perpetuation of the Kurdish Issue play a leading role in the problematic political system of modern Turkey, which lays at the epicentre of this study.

In modern Turkey, as we have mentioned above, the rise of the Anatolian middle class occurred in a period in which many segments of

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[15] Hamid, 38.

[16] "Chp Genel Başkanı Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu'nun Yenilenen İstanbul Seçimi Sonrası Genel Merkezde Yaptığı Konuşma (23 Haziran 2019)," accessed June 25, 2019, https://chp.org.tr/haberler/chp-genel-baskan-kemal-kilicdaroglunun-genel-merkezde-yaptigi-konusma-23-haziran-2019.

Turkish society remained hidden in the margins of political power. The country's weak liberal values blocked the access of these sections of society to the decision-making mechanisms. In this respect, during the period in question, Turkey was a problematic democracy.

Within this framework, the socio-economic underdevelopment of Turkey paved the way for the emergence of a new political system following the military coup of 1980. The new system that emerged had both many similarities and major differences with the liberal competitive political system without tutelage, on which modern literature focuses. To understand the said system, we must first analyse its main characteristics and highlight the differences in Turkey's case, with special focus to the weak liberal values and the difference between the element of the competition and the majoritarianism.

With the term liberal competitive political system without tutelage, we refer to a political system in which the ruling class implements a power-sharing strategy. The ruling class follows the principles of modern liberalism and includes large portions of society in the decision-making process. This system has no tutelage - king, religious authority or military - and is characterised by a kind of political equilibrium, in which no political group or party dominates or monopolises the political forefront. Przeworski and Maravall mention in this regard that:

> "The rule of law emerges when, following Machiavelli's advice, self-interested rulers willingly restrain themselves and make their behaviour predictable in order to obtain sustained, voluntary cooperation of well-organised groups commanding valuable resources. In exchange for such cooperation, rulers will protect the interests of these groups by legal means. The difference between rule by law and the rule of law lies then in the distribution of power, the dispersion of material resources, the multiplication of organized interests; in societies that approximate the rule of law, no group becomes so strong as to dominate the others [...]. [17]"

Apart from the rule of law, in the liberal competitive political system without tutelage, power-sharing strategies are of equal importance. Acemoglu and Robinson underline that the 'transfer of political power' is at the epicentre of this system:

> "What can the elite do to prevent an imminent and, for itself, extremely costly revolution? Well, it can promise the same policies tomorrow. [...] Yet, these promises may not be credible. [...] If it wants to save its skin, the elite

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[17] Przeworski and Maravall, *Democracy and the Rule of Law*, 3–4.

has to make a credible promise [...]. A credible promise, [...] means that it has to change the future allocation of political power. [18]"

In liberal competitive systems without tutelage, transferring power opens the way for the regularisation of politics. Thus, an environment of democratic stability which safeguards the fundamental rights and stakes of the citizens is created. In this political system, internal conflicts may be resolved without violence. As Diamond discusses:

> "In consolidated democracies [...], there may be intense conflict, but no significant political or social actors attempt to achieve their objectives by illegal, unconstitutional, or anti-democratic means. [...] Regularisation of politics promotes democratic stability by safeguarding the rights of political oppositions and minorities, containing conflict within institutional channels, and thus reducing the intensity of the conflict.[19]"

The process of the 'regularisation of politics', which constitutes the first pillar of the modern liberal democracies, is accompanied by principles such as the freedom of expression, information and organisation, the absence of any discrimination, and the bureaucratic integrity and accountability[20]. The process of democratisation is the second pillar of said system. Within this framework, democracy requires the elites to compete for power in free and fair elections. As Acemoglu and Robinson mention, the elites in a democracy must implement a 'power transfer' and 'cost avoiding' strategy. In this context, they argue that:

> "[...] Democratisation happens when the elites decide to "extend the franchise" and include wider segments of society in the decision-making process. [...] Why would they do so? The answer is that the temporary de facto political power of the citizens in nondemocracy comes from actions they can take that are costly to the system, such as revolution or significant social unrest. The elites would like to prevent this, and they are willing to make concessions in order to do so.[21]"

Hardin underlines that "liberalism, constitutionalism, democracy and liberal constitutional democracy, all work when they do because they serve

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[18] Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 26.
[19] Larry Diamond et al., *Consolidating the Third Wave Democracies* (JHU Press, 1997), 17.
[20] Mikael Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes': Regime Types and Concepts in Comparative Politics," *Democratization* 15, no. 2 (April 1, 2008): 230–50, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510340701846319.
[21] Acemoglu and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*, 175.

the mutual advantage of the politically effective groups in the society"[22]. Serving the 'mutual advantage', democracy in modern and developed liberal environments is based on a series of principles such as the fair, free, inclusive, and competitive elections, the empowerment of the winner of the elections, and the absence of, or at least limited, election violations[23].

Based on the arguments of the scholars mentioned above, this book will examine the different, unique political experience of Turkey during the late 20th and early 21st century. This study will attempt to answer the following questions using a multi-dimensional analysis of the historical developments in modern Turkey. What are the main differences between the 'liberal competitive system without tutelage' and the 'Turkish model'? What are the main characteristics of the said model, and what does the future hold for it? How do we approach the weak liberal values of the Turkish system, and how do we analyse its majoritarian attributes? Furthermore, how do these majoritarian features contribute to the differentiation of the said system as a whole, from other regime examples of liberal competitive systems without tutelage?

Modern Turkish political history can be divided roughly into three periods - the authoritarian one-party rule period of the Kemalist era, the transition to the multi-party rule period of the 1950s, and the period after the military coup of the 1980s which is the focus point of this study. The 1980 coup allowed the military to create a hybrid majoritarian system with tutelage, in close cooperation with the established elites. With the term 'hybrid' we refer to a system which borrows elements from both liberal and autocratic systems without being a hundred per cent liberal or autocratic. With the term of 'majoritarian' we refer to a system in which a segment of the political spectrum, a political group with the mindset that it constitutes a simple majority, imposes its own decisions, preferences, strategies across the nation.

In this hybrid system, whilst free competition for executive power exists it is problematic. Levitsky and Way, in discussing the issue, mention that:

> "Competitive authoritarian regimes are distinguished from full authoritarianism in that constitutional channels exist through which opposition groups compete in a meaningful way for executive power. Elections are held regularly, and opposition parties are not legally barred from contesting them. [...] What distinguishes competitive authoritarianism from democracy, [...] is the fact that incumbent abuse of the state violates at

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[22] Russell Hardin, *Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2003).
[23] Wigell, "Mapping 'Hybrid Regimes.' "

least one of three defining attributes of democracy: (1) free elections, (2) broad protection of civil liberties, and (3) a reasonably level playing field.[24]"

As Morlino argues, the hybrid system may include all those political systems which are under the active guardianship, control, or tutelage of the military:

"The term 'hybrid' can thus be applied to all those regimes preceded by a period of authoritarian or traditional rule, followed by the beginnings of higher tolerance, liberalization, and a partial relaxation of the restrictions on pluralism; or, all those regimes which, following a period of minimal democracy in the sense indicated above, are subject to the intervention of non-elected bodies – the military, above all – that place restrictions on competitive pluralism without, however, creating a more or less stable authoritarian regime.[25]"

From the end of the Cold War and until the post 9/11 era, military tutelage in Turkey was successful in excluding large segments of society from political power. As a result, the emerging middle class of Anatolia could not rise to executive power and implement its conservative political agenda. However, at the end of the 1990s, the deteriorating Turkish economy caused a shift in the established hybrid majoritarian system with tutelage and allowed for the conservative bourgeois groups to claim their place in modern Turkish politics. Within this framework, in 2002, the Ak Party claimed political power in Turkey. Based on political alliances within and outside Turkey, the Ak Party inaugurated a transition period during which the military tutelage gradually gave way to the establishment of liberal principles. The constitutional reforms of 2010 marked the beginning of the end for the military tutelage and the gradual stabilisation of the new hybrid competitive system without tutelage. Regardless of the above shift toward the liberal democratic principles, Turkey's socio-economic underdevelopment and problematic political system persisted. As a result, a period of major socio-political turbulence occurred, leading to yet another military coup attempt in 2016.

The starting point of Turkey's hybrid political system is the absence of two key elements of liberal democracies; the power-sharing culture and the political equilibrium philosophy. In modern Turkey's case, large segments of the society were blocked from the decision-making mechanisms, first by

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[24] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 7.
[25] Leonardo Morlino, "Are There Hybrid Regimes? Or Are They Just an Optical Illusion?," *European Political Science Review* 1, no. 2 (July 2009): 281, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773909000198.

the military and its allies and then by the Ak Party and its coalition of political parties. Against this background, the 'allocation of political power' remains problematic. The same applies to liberal principles such as the bureaucratic integrity and accountability, the absence of discrimination, and the freedoms of expression, information, and organisation.

Furthermore, in modern Turkey, the 'judicialization of politics', is the norm. The ruling party implores defamation practices in silencing the opposition and imposing its political agenda. Large religious and ethnic groups, such as the Kurds and the Alevites, have their rights systematically violated and their expectations from the state crushed. Freedom of information also faces serious shortcomings in modern Turkey. Beginning with the Gezi protest, moving to the 'war' with the Gülen Movement, and then on to the failed coup of 2016, each new period in Turkey's recent history has seen the journalists persecuted and imprisoned. As for the freedom of organisation, the rights of the Turkish people to organise parties or movements have diminished since the 1980s coup. The only thing that has changed since is the lift of the ban to organise in conservative parties and movements. Other than that, leaders of the opposition and individual activists are still being persecuted in Turkey today. Aside from all of the above, Turkey faces a double infringement of the liberal principle of bureaucratic integrity and accountability. First, the role of the established institutions is overshadowed by creating informal institutions and second, partisan approaches toward the country's bureaucratic personnel infringe the institutions' neutrality. After seventeen years of Ak Party governments, the country's bureaucratic personnel have turned into a big pool of voters faithful to the party and the leader.

Majoritarianism in modern Turkey

The second pillar upon which the modern Turkish hybrid political system lays is majoritarianism. As O'Donnell discusses, delegative democracies are majoritarian, meaning that a majority empowers a person to become the embodiment of the nation for a specific period. O'Donnell mentions that:

> "Delegative democracies rest on the premise that whoever wins the election to the presidency is thereby entitled to govern as he or she sees fit, constrained only by the hard facts of existing power relations and by a constitutionally limited term of office. [...] DD is strongly majoritarian."[26]

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[26] Guillermo A. O'Donnell, "Delegative Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 5, no. 1 (1994): 59–60, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1994.0010.

Majoritarianism imposes to the citizens the assumption of a 'passive political role', except for election periods. During electoral periods, citizens are called to fulfil their principal civic obligation by supporting, with their votes, the dominant political party. In this system, the citizens have no control over the government after its ascendance to power. The government is free to complete its term in office with its actions and decisions unscrutinised. Modern theory defines the majoritarianism and the hybrid majoritarian system as "authoritarianism behind the facade of the representative democracy". As Schedler mentions, these regimes have turned into the most common sort of undemocratic rule. Schedler also argues that:

> "Electoral authoritarian regimes practice authoritarianism behind the institutional facades of representative democracy. They hold regular multi-party elections at the national level yet violate liberal-democratic minimum standards in systematic and profound ways."[27]

In modern Turkey "authoritarianism behind the facade of the representative democracy" changes the principle elements of democracy, and of the electoral process[28]. The ten per cent electoral threshold, which overshadows the fundamental democratic principle of 'inclusiveness', is the most important obstacle opposition parties have to overcome to enter the Turkish parliament. Modern Turkey has an 'unfair playing field', dominated by a strong conservative and nationalist alliance. The government alliance enters the electoral process from an advantage point, while the weak and under-organised opposition parties compete for the second place.

Also, 'competitiveness', a principal element of democratic elections according to Levitsky and Way, is violated because of the vast gap of resources[29] available for the ruling party and the opposition forces respectively. The two failed coup attempts of 2007 and 2016 overshadowed the principle of 'empowerment', which, as Morlino argues, is necessary for the democratic electoral process[30]. Within this problematic framework, Turkey's ruling party understood the electoral process as a useful 'tool' for changing the system. Driven by a decision-making frenzy and fuelled by the dynamics of succession politics, the Ak Party has ignored the wishes of significant portions of the Turkish society and moved to change the country's political system. The electoral violations observed during said

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[27] Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Competition* (Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2006).
[28] Morlino, "Are There Hybrid Regimes?"
[29] Levitsky and Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism*, 66.
[30] Morlino, "Are There Hybrid Regimes?"

period are indications of the political system's democratic default. Regardless of the above violations of democratic principles, the electoral competition in modern Turkey remains meaningful despite the different limitations in 'spaces' such as local elections, legislature, judiciary and media.

The roadmap of the book

This book aims to cover a significant gap in contemporary political science by drawing on theories discussing the hybrid political systems, which borrow elements from both liberalism and authoritarianism, and examining the case of the modern Turkish political system. This book seeks to follow a multi-dimensional approach by connecting the socio-economic underdevelopment of the 20th century with the 'hybrid', 'competitive', and 'majoritarian' aspects of modern Turkey's political system.

In the first part, the book provides a fresh approach to the socio-economic underdevelopment of Turkey. In this part, we will focus on the aspects of Turkey's modern socio-economic reality, by discussing the impact the lack of capital has on the country's problematic economic development. Within this framework, we will document Turkey's slow industrialisation, the perpetuation of the socio-political inequalities, and the successive socio-economic and political crises. Then we will turn our attention to the absence of a strong and independent middle class. In this spirit, we will discuss the developments and the results of the emergence of the conservative middle class of Anatolia to power. At this point, we will seek to answer a series of questions such as why is Turkey's middle class still weak and dependent and how does this contribute to the establishment of the Turkish hybrid competitive system? Moreover, we will discuss the ethnic, religious, and class aspects of the Kurdish Issue regarding the hybrid competitive system of modern Turkey. Questions such as how the Kurdish Issue contributed to the socio-economic division of Turkish society and why this division persists, will be examined in the first part of this book.

In the second part of the book, we will analyse the hybrid character and the majoritarian aspect of Turkey's modern political system. Within this framework, questions such as what the main characteristics of the Turkish political system are, and why liberal values and institutions remain weak in modern Turkey, will be answered in the second part of the book. Here we will also focus on the fact that Turkey followed the post-cold war trend of the developing world in establishing a hybrid majoritarian political system rooted in socio-political weaknesses (socio-political turmoil, dependent middle class, weak civil society, the Kurdish Issue and military tutelage).

From here, we intend to examine how Turkey's hybrid and majoritarian system made up the conservative response of the ruling elites to the country's socio-political changes during the 21st century.

In the third part, the book will examine the perpetuation of the hybrid majoritarian system and the main characteristics of the Ak Party's majoritarianism. The strengths and weaknesses of Turkey's opposition powers will also be examined. In the last section of our book, we will look for answers to several questions, such as *who is the political protagonist of the Turkish hybrid majoritarian system? Which political forces play a leading role in Turkey's system? What factors favour the perpetuation of the system's dominance? How do these factors limit the impact of the opposition activists on the contemporary Turkish political scene? What are the weaknesses of the opposition in modern Turkey? How do we explain the 'auxiliary role' of the opposition?* These questions are of particular importance, as contemporary studies tend to avoid discussing the interaction between the protagonists of the Turkish political scene. In their majority, current studies on Turkey's political history focus on the case of the ruling party. Only a small section of these studies attaches some importance to the case of the opposition. This study seeks to follow a different path by approaching all of the paragons. As we will see below, the factors that help strengthen and weaken the position of the ruling, and the opposition parties are interdependent. Thus, we cannot analyse the ruling Ak Party's, case and appreciate its powerful 'card' without focusing on the main weaknesses of the opposition.

The book seeks to provide a comprehensive, multi-dimensional and thorough examination of Turkey's contemporary history and political system. Additionally, the book intends to help fill in the gap between the theory and the practical field, which is observed in modern political science discussing the hybrid systems. Taking Turkey as a case study, the social divisions and different political dynamics will be examined thoroughly. One of the book's most significant contributions to modern political science is the clarification of the fundamental historical driving forces of these hybrid systems, using Turkey as a case study.

CHAPTER 1

UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND CONFLICT
IN MODERN TURKEY:
NO FERTILE GROUND FOR CONSTITUTIONAL
LIBERALISM

1.1. Socio-economic and political underdevelopment

1.1.1. The new Turkish nation-state. The nationalist, centrist's patrimonial regime with army tutelage (1919-1945)

In February 2001, seventy-eight years after the founding of the Turkish Republic, Ankara experienced one of its most historic moments. Ahmet Çakmak, the father of two children, approached the entrance of the Prime Minister's Office. He patiently waited for the Prime Minister to exit the building. When the Prime Minister left, Mr Çakmak threw a cash register towards him. With this symbolic action, the father of two wished to complain about the economic crisis, the poverty, and the financial dead end which threatened his family[31].

The desperate father's act indicates the criticality of the period which contemporary Turkey is experiencing even now. The current major systemic, political and economic crisis which Turkey is facing today is one of the many experienced during the 20th century. These socio-political crises, which are the product of Turkey's economic and political underdevelopment, combined with the ethnic conflict (the Kurdish Issue) bring forth the hybrid majoritarian system of the modern Turkish Republic. The analysis of this system is at the heart of this study.

Contemporary political science argues that the political systems of the modern world are the 'product' of the interaction between its social actors. On the one hand, there are the elites with the de jure power, and on the other

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[31] "Ecevit'e yazarkasa attılar," accessed February 5, 2019,
http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/ecevite-yazarkasa-attilar-39235859.

hand, there is the majority of the society with the de facto power. The key element of the struggle between the two social actors is a successful agreement regarding the distribution of power. The elites are struggling against the majority of the society, the workers and other capitalists to increase productivity and secure socio-economic power while minimising the cost[32]. Thus, the elites face the majority of society which has the de facto power but remains unsure about the future[33]. Strong enough to make the prospect of social revolution look real, but too weak to do more than frighten its enemies[34], the majority seeks a political compromise with the elites. The political system of modern nations is judged based on the content of this compromise. Modern developed, industrialised, and liberal nations have chosen, during the past two centuries, compromise solutions that do not contain elements of oppression, extortion and authoritarianism[35]:

> "The rule of law emerges when, following Machiavelli's advice, self-interested rulers willingly restrain themselves and make their behaviour predictable to obtain continued, voluntary cooperation of well-organised groups commanding valuable resources. In exchange for such cooperation, rulers will protect the interests of these groups by legal means.[36]"

For modern political science and the liberal school of thought, there are two major liberalising transitions that non-liberal systems may make:

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[32] Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2006); Brian Staples Roper, *The History of Democracy: A Marxist Interpretation* (Pluto Press, 2013).

[33] Acemoglu, and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Adam Przeworski and José María Maravall, *Democracy and the Rule of Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[34] Roper, *The History of Democracy*.

[35] Acemoglu, and Robinson, *Economic Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy*; Przeworski and Maravall, *Democracy and the Rule of Law*, 2003.

[36] Przeworski and Maravall, *Democracy and the Rule of Law*, 2003, 3. The Marxist school of thought, without ignoring the importance of the above strategic choice, focuses to the limitations of the bourgeois democracy. According to the Marxist school of thought, the "capitalist exploitation which generates class inequality, fosters and sustains other related forms of oppression based on gender and ethnicity, creates serious social problems, and is central to economic dynamics which culminate in economic and environmental crises". Roper, *The History of Democracy*.

"They may become politically liberal, and they may become economically liberal. It is possible that eventually, a society must be both politically and economically liberal.[37]"

In this context, modern nations have two options. The first option is the constitutional liberalism with the liberal economy, electoral democracy, the rule of law and secured liberties and rights. The second option includes all other political models, which present many problems in the fields of economy, constitutional liberalism and electoral democracy. In these cases, the allocation of power between the ruling elites and the majority of society remains highly problematic. The final choice of modern nations is judged by several factors, such as social income[38], socio-economic inequalities[39], the historical changes and socio-political crises (e.g. the Industrial Revolution), the wars, the technological innovations, the imperialism[40], and the social and political institutions[41]

In the case of modern Turkey, the allocation of power is challenging, constitutional liberalism is weak, electoral democracy is problematic, and economic turmoil is repeating itself. The lack of capital for the industrialisation and rapid development of the country's economy, the perpetuation of socio-political inequalities, the successive socio-economic and political crises, and the weak democratic institutions and culture contributed, along with the ongoing internal ethnic conflict, to the socio-political underdevelopment of Turkey and, hence, the creation of the hybrid majoritarian political system.

To understand Turkey's hybrid majoritarian political system, we must look back to the establishment of the Turkish Republic. In 1923, modern Turkey had a population of thirteen million. Ninety-two per cent of the Republic's young population was illiterate. Eighty-six per cent of the population spoke Turkish and nine per cent Kurdish[42]. A comparatively

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[37] Russell Hardin, *Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy* (Oxford University Press, 2003), 184.
[38] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad (Revised Edition)* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2007); Roper, *The History of Democracy*.
[39] Roper, *The History of Democracy*.
[40] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, *Competitive Authoritarianism: Hybrid Regimes after the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010); Roper, *The History of Democracy*.
[41] Roper, *The History of Democracy*; Shadi Hamid, *Temptations of Power: Islamists and Illiberal Democracy in a New Middle East* (OUP USA, 2014).
[42] Kate Fleet, Suraiya Faroqhi, and Reşat Kasaba, eds., *The Cambridge History of Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 159.

small class of officers and civil servants, who were thought in Western-style schools, ruled the peasant population of the new Turkish state. During the War of Independence, the father of the modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal and his associates mobilised the people's support by appealing to Islamic religious solidarity. Because of the Palaic mobilisation, the War of Independence had a positive outcome for Turkish nationalists. Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish nationalists, having secured most of their territorial claims moved to concentrate on the country's development. Kemal was convinced that the Turks were as capable of civilisation as anyone else; what they lacked was material resources and knowledge of 'positive science'[43]. With this viewpoint, relying on the prestige secured by the victory in the liberation war and despite the limited financial resources at his disposal, Mustafa Kemal launched, in the 1920s, a westernisation program. Within this framework, efforts were made to limit the influence of non-Muslim capital on the Turkish economy[44].

On the political level, the program for the westernisation of Turkey remained illiberal, as the society continued to be organised around the patrimonial state[45]. Consequently, Turkey's modern political scene formed certain characteristics which have been perpetuated throughout the country's history, up until the 21st century. From its establishment, modern Turkey has had strong leaders, inside and outside of political parties, who aspired to leave their mark in the political system[46]. Another feature of the modern Turkish political scene is the role of the armed forces. Since the founding of the modern Turkish state, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) have assumed the self-ordained role of guardian to the Republic. Within this framework, the TAF's role transcended the exclusive focus on external defence[47]. Thus, Turkey's multi-party political system has, since 1946, been overshadowed by the military's capacity to control the fundamental content of the political agenda:

> "By internalising this role as a central 'mission of belief', the military has interpreted internal 'political' conflicts in the language of internal security threats and reduce 'national security' to a military-dominated concept. On

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[43] Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba, 147–72.

[44] Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba, 147–72.

[45] Eren Duzgun, "Class, State and Property: Modernity and Capitalism in Turkey," *European Journal of Sociology* 53, no. 02 (August 2012): 119–48, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003975612000070.

[46] Orçun Selçuk, "Strong Presidents and Weak Institutions: Populism in Turkey, Venezuela and Ecuador," *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 16, no. 4 (October 2016): 571–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/14683857.2016.1242893.

[47] Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba, *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 301.

four occasions (1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997), the military intervened in and reshaped Turkish politics, although it always returned control to civilians after a short time. [...] Together with the irtica (religious reaction), the Kurdish question has made up the most important challenge to the Turkish Republic since its foundation in 1923. [...] The tutelary powers and institutional prerogatives of the TAF also depend on its self-conscious attempts to steer civilian policies in a direction that will not challenge the military's special position in politics and society.[48]"

Furthermore, the underdeveloped economy is also a feature of the Turkish political scene. Under the tutelage of charismatic leaders and the military, Turkey's economy has been crisis-prone since the establishment of the Republic in 1923[49]. Due to its turmoil, Turkey grew faster than the average of other developing countries from the nineteenth century until the 1970s. However, it has been lagging in comparison to other developing countries since the 1980s. Turkey has not witnessed sustained rates of capital growth since the 1980s, this was especially the case during the period of political and macroeconomic instability in the 1990s. Moreover, the country's capital growth rates have been declining during this period. At the same time, the process of structural transformation in Turkey remained incomplete, with thirty-four per cent of the labour force still employed in agriculture as of 2005[50].

The economic underdevelopment of Turkey is related to the late appearance of the Turkish middle classes at the forefront of history. Because of this delay and the lack of adequate private capital for industrialisation and economic development, the state has assumed a leading role in the economy during the years of the westernisation program. As Ali Arslan argues[51],

"Agriculture and trade were the major economic sectors in the early years of the Republic. The conditions for developing industry in those years were not present: there was not enough capital, there was not the technology, there was not enough accumulation of knowledge, and there was not the infrastructure. [...] Ataturk and his associates made enormous efforts to

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[48] Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba, 301.
[49] Zülküf Aydın, "Global Crisis, Turkey and the Regulation of Economic Crisis," *Capital & Class* 37, no. 1 (February 2013): 95–109, https://doi.org/10.1177/0309816812473957.
[50] S. Altug, A. Filiztekin, and S. Pamuk, "Sources of Long-Term Economic Growth for Turkey, 1880-2005," *European Review of Economic History* 12, no. 3 (December 1, 2008): 393–430, https://doi.org/10.1017/S1361491608002293.
[51] Ali Arslan, "Emergence of the Turkish Bourgeoisie and Business-Political Relations in Turkey," *Journal of Human Sciences* 1, no. 1 (2006).

create the conditions to develop the Turkish industry. The state provided the financial resources to the KITs (Kamu Iktisadi Teşekkülleri-The State Enterprises) to achieve strategic but unprofitable investments (such as sub-structure investments) which were essential for industrialisation. This was the most characteristic peculiarity of Etatism (the policy of state control) in the Turkish economy."

The effort for the creation of the Muslim Turkish middle classes and economic development was tested when the shock waves of the 1929 Wall Street crash hit Turkey. At the time, the political leadership of the new state came to the bitter conclusion that the centrist patrimonial regime with army tutelage had limited options regarding the economy. In the first major economic crisis of the young Republic, the state had no other choice than to intensify its role in the economic field. In line with existing realities that paved the way for the establishment of the regime, the Republic chose not to endanger the allocation of power between the elites and the majority of the population. Therefore, as Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba mention, statism was seen as a suitable solution for the country's new economic problems:

> "The country's foreign earnings, which derived almost entirely from the export of farm produce, collapsed; so too did farm incomes. Domestic private capital was scarce; foreign capital was not available; commercial and technical skills were inadequate. In these conditions of scarcity and hardship, the government had little choice but to take direct responsibility for keeping the country fed and supplied with essential manufactures [...].[52]"

1.1.2. The first steps for liberal democracy and economy accompanied by socio-political turbulences (1945-1980)

The founding elites of the young Republic had transformed the country by reforming its legal and institutional structure under the guardianship of Mustafa Kemal and the Turkish military. Despite the efforts to encourage economic progress, industrialisation and the creation of a Turkish middle class, Turkey did not emerge from the shadows of the great difficulties which arose during the Second World War. Since the establishment of the new Republic, little progress has been made for the majority of society, although people's expectations had risen sharply. Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba argue that the Turkish people,

> "They had suffered under the wartime regime that was imposed upon them, marked by widespread corruption and the rule of the gendarme. They

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[52] Fleet, Faroqhi, and Kasaba, *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, 167.