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Research Article

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE KEMALIST MODERNIZATION FOR MODERNIZATION THEORY\*

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### ABSTRACT

*Modernization theory, which dominated academic studies from the early 1950s until the late 1970s, attributed a “special place” to the Turkish case among many other non-Western countries, with a special emphasis on the Kemalist modernization of the Early Republican Period. This paper seeks to explore the reasons for Turkey’s special place and the ways Kemalist modernization is positioned vis-a-vis other non-Western countries by tracking the scholarly works by Walt Rostow, Dankwart Rustow, Daniel Lerner, Bernard Lewis and Shmuel Eisenstadt. Without ignoring the particular reflections of disciplinary perspectives they have, their analyses of the Turkish case are investigated with a focus on a number of common themes. Thus, this study does not only shed light on the historical origins of the so-called “Turkish model”, it also seeks to provide a basis for future studies in making a more empirically grounded critique of modernization theory’s analysis of the Turkish case.*

**Key words:** *modernization theory, Kemalist modernization, Turkish model, development, developing countries*

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## Kemalist Modernleşmenin Modernleşme Kuramı Açısından Önemi

### ÖZET

*Modernleşme Kuramı akademik çalışmaları 1950'lerin başından, 1970'lerin sonuna kadar derinden etkilemiş ve diğer Batılı olmayan ülkeler arasında Türkiye örneğine "özel bir yer" vermiştir. Bunu yaparken de Erken Cumhuriyet dönemi Kemalist modernleşmesinin önemini özellikle vurgulamıştır. Bu çalışma, Modernleşme Kuramı'nın başlıca temsilcileri arasında yer alan Walt Rostow, Dankwart Rustow, Daniel Lerner, Bernard Lewis and Shmuel Eisenstadt'ın akademik eserlerini inceleyerek, modernleşme kuramının Türkiye'ye neden özel bir yer verdiğini ve Kemalist modernleşmeyi diğer Batılı olmayan örneklerden farklı şekillerde nasıl konumlandığını araştırmaktadır. Adı geçen kuramcıların dâhil oldukları akademik disiplinlerin özgül etkilerini göz ardı etmeden, Türkiye örneği üzerine yaptıkları analizler bir dizi ortak tema çerçevesinde incelenmektedir. Sonuç olarak, bu çalışma "Türk modeli" tezinin tarihsel köklerine ışık tutmanın yanı sıra, Modernleşme Kuramı'nın Türkiye örneği analizinin daha ampirik temelli bir eleştirisini yapma yolunda gelecekteki araştırmalara da bir zemin sunmaktadır.*

**Anahtar kelimeler:** *modernleşme kuramı, Kemalist modernleşme, Türkiye modeli, kalkınma, gelişmekte olan ülkeler*

### Introduction

Classical modernization theory, hereinafter referred to as modernization theory, developed a paradigmatic understanding of modernity that dominated academic studies on modernization from the early 1950s until the late 1970s. Combining a strong belief in the idea of an evolutionary and progressive social change, it envisaged the processes of industrialization, democratization and secularization that created Western modern society as universal, inevitable and irreversible (Gilman, 2003). Largely conditioned by the US geopolitical concerns in the Cold-War hegemonic rivalry, this theory asserted that the West, particularly the USA, as the representative of modernity would guide non-Western societies on their journey to modernization. In close cooperation with the US administration, modernizationists as "Cold

Warriors” at the same time sought to justify external intervention in the name of “development” in different parts of the world (Citino, 2008). Although it gradually lost intellectual dominance in the 1970s, modernization theory as an idea system, a structure of knowledge or a at least a theoretical orientation, had a lasting impact on social sciences in terms of grasping social reality and social change.

Turkey was not an exception in this sense since main theses of modernization theory have inspired many scholars of Turkish studies for years<sup>1</sup>. The impact of this theory on the development of social sciences in Turkey has therefore become a much-discussed topic. Parallel to growing challenges to modernization theory in the academic world, various flaws of the theory have come into question, especially with references to its universalist, essentialist and deterministic implications. However, although Turkey was once “darling of modernizationists” (Kubicek, 2013: 68), the significance of the Turkish case for modernization theory in its formative years for the verification of its main hypotheses has largely remained a neglected issue.<sup>2</sup>

This paper seeks to explore the significance of Kemalist modernization for modernization theory through a detailed analysis of published scholarship of modernizationists. For this purpose, the references to the Turkish case in the scholarly works of five prominent representatives of the theory, namely, Walt Rostow, Dankwart Rustow, Daniel Lerner, Bernard Lewis and Shmuel Eisenstadt are scrutinized. These names were chosen due to their deep impact on the literature of modernization. Moreover, each of them drew on a particular scholarly discipline in providing their accounts of modernization. Rostow as an economist and one of the early representatives of the theory which

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<sup>1</sup> Among others, one can see Berkes, 1964; Tunaya, 1960; Kongar, 1978; Toprak, 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Örnek (2015) and Altun (2017) in their works indirectly point to the significance of the Turkish case for modernization theory.

prioritized economic processes over others put economic development at the center of his phase-model modernization. Adopting a behavioralist stance, Lerner developed a “psychosocial theory of modernization” which saw the development of “empathic personality” central to modernist transformation. In his historically-informed comparative and case studies, Rustow sought to discover political aspect of modernization with a particular emphasis on the development of political institutions. While Rustow was like a bridge between Political Science and Ottoman-Turkish Studies which emerged as part of the Middle East Studies, Lewis as a specialist of Ottoman-Turkish Studies explored historical development of modernity in Turkey since the late Ottoman period. In addition, Eisenstadt in the early stage of his academic career gave a sociological account of the nature and dynamics of modernization with a particular emphasis on the vital role of cultural transformation.

In their references to the Turkish case, all of these names are seen to have necessarily dealt with some critical questions such as the beginnings of modernization in Turkey, the nature and major characteristics of the Kemalist experience, the role of elites in social change, secularism in a Muslim-majority society, the role of foreign aid, and the level of development in comparison mostly with the Middle Eastern countries. Depending on the scholarly discipline and applied methodology, their emphases in their explanations varied. Furthermore, they revised some of their views on the Turkish case, which may be partly explained by rapid political transformations in Turkey during the decades they published their works. However, it is remarkable to note that they all saw Turkey as an exemplary case to affirm their modernizationist theses. Considering as a relatively successful and promising case, they featured Turkey a pioneer country in the non-western world and more particularly as a model for Muslim Middle East and North African countries.

Within this context, following a brief introduction about the historical and political background conditions that urged modernizationists to launch such an intellectual undertaking, this paper first elaborates on the main theses of the theory. Then, the reasons for the special place given to Turkish modernization, with a particular emphasis on the Kemalist reforms in the early republican period, and the ways Kemalist modernization was positioned vis-a-vis other non-Western countries are examined through a detailed analysis of published scholarship. In doing this, while the abovementioned critical questions provide the analytical framework for this investigation, common and particular points in the works of these scholars regarding the Kemalist modernization and its significance for modernization theory are specified.

Thus, the authors seek to make a contribution to the field by shedding more light on the historical origins of the so-called “Turkish model”, a concept that became quite popular in political and academic circles in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to that, the revealed significance of the Kemalist modernization is hoped to help to make a more empirically grounded critique of modernization theory by allowing to detect false causalities, anachronisms, and neglect of backtracks, disruptions and “roads not taken” in the references of the pioneers of the modernization theory to the Turkish case.

## **1. Modernization Theory: Development for All in the Mirror of the Western Model**

Modernization theory was the response of American political elites and intellectuals to the postwar international setting (Tipps, 1973: 200). While decolonization had led to the establishment of many newly independent states in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, promotion of American interests and foiling the spread of communism in these areas became an urgent issue on American political agenda. Correspondingly, American social scientists not only aimed at a comprehensive theory to

understand/explain main characteristics and major problems of these societies, but also worked for a policy initiative designed to orient these societies toward the American side amidst the Cold War rivalry for hegemony in world politics. In this sense, modernization theory which was produced at such a particular historical moment was more than a theory. Its theoretical linkages, conceptual frameworks had specific policy implications including provision of foreign aid and military intervention by the USA (Shah, 2011: 9). As Rostow's "The Stages of Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto" symbolically signifies the ideological motivations of the theory, an anti-communist and pro-American international policy was aimed to take root in developing countries (Abid, 2004: 598). Equally importantly, this ideological aspect had an "image-making" dimension. Supported with the notions of "complacency and self-satisfaction" attributed to American society inside (Tipps, 1973: 209), this theory at the same time contributed to intellectual efforts aimed at building an image of American society outside the country as the most developed, stable and prosperous society at the outset of "the American century" (Gilman, 2003: 3).

Modernization theorists, namely, Edward Shills, Gabriel Almond, Lucian Pye, David Apter, Cyril Black, Karl Deutsch, Clifford Geertz, Daniel Lerner, Walt Rustow, Danwart Rustow, Samuel Huntington<sup>3</sup> and some other important names did not constitute a homogenous group of intellectuals. Most of them worked and produced in American academia (especially in the universities of Harvard, Columbia, University of California-Berkeley, and MIT) in close cooperation with the American policy makers. Their research programs

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<sup>3</sup> Although Gilman (2003: 230) disagrees with it, Huntington is often classified as a modernizationist due to his emphasis on the universal traits of modernization in his early works. On the other hand, there is no doubt that Huntington was at the same time one of the early revisionists who questioned unilinearity thesis of modernization theory by arguing that rapid modernization in developing countries produces not political development but political decay. See Huntington, 1968.

and projects were usually financed either by the American state or private funds such as Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Rockefeller Foundation (Gilman, 2003). These social scientists saw their efforts both as a patriotic duty to American nation and a “noble obligation” to developing nations<sup>4</sup>.

Modernizationist theses were descriptive but assertive. The starting point of the theory was based on the idea that modernity referred to the highest level of economic, political, social, cultural, technological and military development. Western countries were modern countries. Any nation could become modern and the Western experience provided a universal model. Especially the USA among other Western nations was the model country for the development of non-western societies. Nevertheless, modernizationists were particularly careful about the terminology. Instead of Westernization which pointed to a particular geography and Western forceful impositions through colonization, modernization was intentionally coined as a “global referent” for a progressive, irreversible and universal process (Lerner, 1968: 386-387). Such a term was indeed very useful in skillfully replacing the “superior” colonizer - “inferior” colonized hierarchy with modern-traditional continuum which offered the prospect of bright future for all nations of the world on an equal footing (Gilman, 2003).

The intellectual engagement with the issue of underdevelopment or backwardness of non-Western countries necessarily came along with the question of how Western societies could have become developed. Drawing upon the Enlightenment tradition, modernization theorists

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<sup>4</sup> The Executive Committee of American Political Science Association in 1969 announced the purpose of political science is “to serve the poor, oppressed and underdeveloped people at home and abroad against the established hierarchies and elite institutions of manipulations; ...to know the urgent problems and to protect human values of civilisation. The role of an intellectual is to determine the goal of society and to divert it in that direction” (cited in Abid 2004: 598-599).

explained development through a particular philosophy of history which had a strong belief in the idea of progress. As a result of dynamics of social forces, according to this understanding, history inevitably and irreversibly moves in the direction of progress in all aspects of social life as it is best exemplified by the Western experience. As development is defined by progress in technology, military and bureaucratic institutions and the political and social structure (Gilman, 2003: 3), the Western experience also constitutes the reference point about how social change occurs. Benefiting from 19<sup>th</sup> century sociology, modernizationists argue that all these developments gave rise to modern society that replaced the traditional one. A set of factors and processes altogether ignited a great transformation in the old social structure and the western societies underwent a gradual transition to modern society as of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. This evolutionary, linear and transformative process of development that created modernity is called modernization. Modernity is characterized by “urbanization, widespread literacy, a high degree of usage of inanimate power, rising per capita income, the widespread participation of the populace in political affairs, and the increasingly rational and secular orientation of the individual in his environment” (Garon, 1994: 347). As well as Enlightenment tradition and 19<sup>th</sup> century sociology, Parsons’ structural functionalism constituted the third component of modernization theory. Influenced by Durkheim’s functionalism and Weber’s social theory, Parsons (1991) views society as a system that is composed of interdependent and functionally differentiated parts. According to him, a society is based on four functional imperatives (or, “pattern variables”), relating to economy, politics, value system and motivation. It is possible to classify societies according to the degree of institutional specialization around each of these functions. Such a classification also explains his evolutionary approach to social change. Parsons (1982) claims that social institutions such as market, democracy and the rule of law had an



evolutionary advantage over their alternative forms in meeting social functions.

Thus, combining a strong belief in the idea of an evolutionary and progressive social change inherited from the Enlightenment tradition and 19<sup>th</sup> century sociology with Talcott Parsons' structural functionalism, modernization theorists thought that modernization comprised of economic, social and political development as the three inter-related, mutually reinforcing processes of societal transformation. While "economic development" referred to industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, "social development" meant the gradual elimination of the influence of traditional and religious belief systems and their replacement via secularization process by the rule of logic and science. "Political development" required the formation of centralized state structures with efficient decision-making mechanisms as well as democratization with the growing participation of citizens into political life (Apter, 1965; Lerner, 1958a; Rustow, 1970; Huntington, 1968). Considering these processes as inevitable, irreversible and universal, modernization theorists described the Western experience of modernity which is characterized by industrialization, democratization and secularization as the model for non-Western countries. As a corollary, modernization theorists put forward "a model of societal transformation" according to which non-Western societies would embrace "Western manufacturing technology, political structures, values, and systems of mass communication" to enter the modern world (Shah, 2011: 1).

According to modernizationists, societal transformation would take place through phases or stages. For instance, Rostow (1960) who equated development with economic growth claimed that all countries pass through five stages on the road to economic development, which are "the traditional society", "the preconditions for take-off", "the take-off", "the drive to maturity" and "the age of high mass consumption".

He claimed that the USA was the first country to reach the fifth and final stage of development in the 1920s. Lerner's "phase model" of modernization is another typical example how modernization would occur in non-Western societies by looking at the Western experience. According to him, "the secular evolution of a participant society" develops out of a regular sequence of particular stages. The historical development of modernity in the West shows that urbanization referring to a broad process including industrialization paves the way to two interdependently linked phases of literacy and mass communication, and they altogether finally extend to political participation (Lerner, 1958a: 42-75).

As seen, modernizationists were sure about the direction of change all over the world. However, in practice, due to universalism in their conceptualization of social change through stages and towards a certain goal, modernization theorists chronically suffered from a set of methodological and empirical constraints. For instance, criticizing modernization theory on various grounds, Tipps (1973: 222) claims that rather than being empirically-backed, this theory was normative as it just adopted an evolutionary cognitive line that had been produced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Moreover, inclusiveness of the concept of modernization led to vagueness in its meaning and critical difficulties in terms of operational utility of the concept. Finally, comparative method employed to explore dynamics and patterns of social change in non-Western countries was distressed by the tension between the presupposed universalistic claims of the theory and particularities of each case. Methodological difficulties in comparing non-Western countries with each other or these countries with Western countries unavoidably crippled reliability of the research<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> As Tipps (1973: 218) rightfully argues that since modernization was goal-oriented, similarities rather than differences attracted attention in comparative studies sometimes at the expense of reaching meaningless tautologies.

Therefore, modernization theory gradually became subject to revisions “from within” as of the late 1960s, creating neo-modernization theory stressing the role of historically shaped cultural particularities in terms of modernization experiences in different parts of the world. Revisionism of some neo-modernists like Eisenstadt was radicalized as a part of cultural relativism of postmodernism as of the late-1970s and led to “multiple modernities” approach that obviously differed from the main premises of classical version of modernization theory. In the meantime, modernization theory also had to face much more severe criticisms “from outside”, especially from Dependency Theory and World-System Analysis<sup>6</sup>.

The significance of Turkish experience of modernization for modernization theory and problematic aspects of modernizationist analyses can be understood within this broad framework. Now, we can explore first the reasons for Turkey’s special place and then analyze the references to Kemalist modernization in the works of Walt Rostow, Dankwart Rustow, Daniel Lerner, Bernard Lewis<sup>7</sup> and Shmuel Eisenstadt.

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<sup>6</sup> For example see Frank, 1967; Wallerstein, 1976.

<sup>7</sup> At first glance Lewis, a British Orientalist, seems like an outsider to the modernization theory. However, various direct and indirect contacts and exchanges are visible. According to Citino, Orientalist belief in Western superiority and subsequent historical analyses provided an important source for the modernization theory, especially after famous Orientalist Sir Hamilton A.R. Gibb relocated to Harvard in the mid-1950s and contributed to the work of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). *Islamic Society and the West*, co-authored by Gibb, was referred a lot “in the modernization literature as the definitive depiction of ‘traditional’ Islamic society”. Lewis himself was also known to Modernization theorists as early as late 1950s. Dankwart A. Rustow was the one who corrected the proofs of Lewis’ *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, long before Lewis moved to the US in the 1970s and was involved in the CFR (Citino 2008).

## **2. Why Did Turkey Become “Darling of Modernizationists”?**

One can observe that Turkey was given a “special place” in the literature of modernization theory, which can be explained on several grounds. Considering the fact that this theory emerged in a particular international setting, geopolitical concerns uttered in the Truman Doctrine motivated American policy makers to assist Turkey and Greece to prevent any potential spread of Soviet influence upon these “unstable nations” (Shah, 2011: 13). In addition to that, Turkey was geographically, historically and culturally a part of the Middle East, and as Citino (2008: 586) states, Turkey was at the center of Americans’ Middle East map during the early Cold War. There were obvious contrasts between Turkey and recently independent Arab states in terms of their relations with the Western world. Compared to Arab countries in the region which had at that time mostly nationalist and pro-Soviet political stances, anti-communist Turkish governments did not only show readiness to take US aid and loans but also eagerness to politically and military cooperate with the West, which was now led by the USA. Therefore, Turkey’s growing political importance for the USA after the WWII urged a group of American scholars to make research on economic, social and political development in Turkey.

The second reason was the fact that Turkish modernization experience which was viewed as an early and successful example of modernization of a non-Western society could provide empirical evidence to support theoretical claims of modernizationists. While modernization theory made development a political goal for non-Western countries, Turkey had already taken modernization as a political goal. More importantly, it could cover a remarkable distance on this way. Following a long and toilsome period of societal transformation, it made a transition to multi-party system and free market capitalism in the wake of the WWII. Therefore, the success of the Turkish case was worthwhile for the verification of modernist

theses. Modernizationists thought that the Ottoman-Turkish past contained lessons for US policy toward the Third World (Citino, 2008: 580). Modern, secular Turkey in the Muslim world could be an inspiration for the other Middle Eastern countries. The claim to universalism also made the Turkish case subject to a number of comparative studies, including Ward and Rustow's (1964) well-known comparison of modernization in Japan and Turkey.

Last but not the least, ideological compatibility between modernization theory and Kemalism -the set of ideas and policies lying the base of modern Turkey- was another factor that made Turkey significant for modernization theorists. Indeed, Atatürk, the founding leader of Modern Turkey, was the first person who popularized modernization as a political program that aimed at a total transformation in a non-Western society in the interwar period (Gilman, 2003: 30). While the belief in progress collapsed in the West with the rise of the dark side of modernity, showing itself through the Great Depression, fascism and mounting nationalist strife, Kemalist Turkey heartedly adopted a modernization program that was intellectually and politically inspired by the Western experience. Turkish modernization had its roots in the late Ottoman period and Kemalism culminated as a radical interpretation of social change that equated modernization with Westernization. Atatürk thought that there was only one civilization that was Western modernity in the contemporary world. In order to be politically powerful, economically prosperous, socially stable, the "new Turkey" had to follow the Western model on its journey to modernity. Such a journey necessarily meant a relentless struggle against "the traditional" which was equal to backward, feeble and superstitious (Dumont, 1984). Thus, Kemalist modernization aimed at a radical transformation in the existing social, political and economic structure. While state-led economic development programs would lead to form a capitalist market economy, "cultural revolution" would reshape the society in line with rational/scientific thinking and secular morality.

Cultural revolution meant radical secularism supported with a nationwide educational campaign to replace traditional Islamic values which were viewed as an obstacle before progress. Civil and military bureaucracy would lead this assertive program in an authoritarian manner until the society became mature enough to reach a democratic regime and keep it alive (Ahmad, 1993).

### **3. The Turkish Case in the Works of Modernizationists**

For the abovementioned reasons, the Turkish experience of modernization with a special emphasis on the Kemalist modernization of the early republican period has been subject to close examination of modernization theorists. While analyzing the Turkish experience, they often cooperated with scholars of Turkish-Ottoman Studies whose growing efforts would gradually shed more light on the Ottoman legacy in the following years. The five scholars whose works have been chosen for this study have necessarily dealt with some critical questions as analyzed below.

#### **3.1. The Beginnings of Modernization in Turkey**

While appreciating Kemalist reforms in the early republican period, modernizationists were well aware of the importance of the Ottoman legacy in terms of Turkish modernization. This awareness grew as much as Ottoman-Turkish Studies contributed to accumulated knowledge on the multi-dimensional connections between the late Ottoman and early republican periods.

These theoretical tendencies are even visible in the works of Walt Rostow who, compared to other scholars examined in this study, had a narrower economic focus and preferred generalizations over empirically grounded case studies. In *The Stages of Economic Growth* published in 1960, he simply stated in passing that the take-off stage in Turkey started in 1937, following an inauguration of industrialization measures in the mid-1930s. He also praised the Democratic Party rule

in the 1950s by referring to a remarkable momentum observed in the rapid increase in agricultural income and productivity (Rostow, 1960: 38). Upon a set of critiques from within the modernization theory regarding this book's weak empirical basis and neglect of social and political factors (Menzel, 2006: 214), he paid greater attention to domestic and external political factors in economic modernization in *Politics and the Stages of Growth* published in 1971. In this book, he also made references to the Ottoman past; explaining how the pre-conditions for take-off started with the political reforms of Selim III in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to close the gap between the very efficient military machine of the West and the incapable Ottoman army (Rostow, 1971).

Dankwart Rustow, on the other hand, completely shifted the focus toward political institutions and the continuity in their evolution. His description of modernization put particular emphasis on the need for a territorial state with a new optimum-size unit, and popular identification with and involvement in the political system. Accordingly, Turkish-Ottoman modernization which started as a "defensive modernization" in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century; i.e., a form of modernization in which indigenous ruler(s) initiated modernization in an attempt to respond to the military threat from the West (Rustow & Ward, 1964: 3-11), reached its climax with the establishment of democratic nation-state in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rustow argued that Turkish political evolution seemed quite gradual but one must not ignore decisive moments of change. For instance, he defined the 20-year period between 1908 and 1928 as the phase of political "take-off" for modernity (Ward & Rustow, 1964: 435-36).

Bernard Lewis, who was among the first ones to study the Ottoman archives when they have been opened to foreign scholars, also considers that Kemalist modernization was a logical consequence of two-century-old Ottoman-Turkish modernization. In *The Emergence of*

*Modern Turkey*, published in 1961, he made a detailed analysis of the long continuous tradition of modernization that began with the deliberate attempts at Westernization in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this narrative, each successive step seems to prepare the path for others. Military educational reforms of Selim III had given way to Mahmud II's bolder reform program which included establishing a new army, diverting *timar* (feudal fiefs) and *evkaf* (religious endowments) revenues to the use of centralized institutions, developments in military and civilian education, clothing reform etc. Then came the long Tanzimat (Reorganization) Era which, despite certain moments of restoration under the reactionaries, deepened the process of reform. To depict the momentum that modernization gained in this period, he stated that Turkey "could move fast or slowly, straight or deviously; she could not go back." Even the autocratic Sultan Abdulhamid II was a "modernizer", especially in the field of education, in the reign of whom Tanzimat movement "reached its fruition and its climax". Young Turk Revolution of 1908 too, despite at times degenerating into a reign of terror, was vital for the emergence of modern Turkey (Lewis, 1968: 128, 179, 226).

The historical roots of the Turkish case became a specific research question in Eisenstadt's works as well especially after he revised his views on modernization. He examined the Turkish revolution (or, Kemalist revolution as he uses interchangeably) as an example of classical or real revolution in his comparative historical sociological studies on revolutions and post-revolutionary regimes. Comparing it with the great "classical" revolutions in England and Russia, Eisenstadt located the Turkish revolution between these two revolutions on the basis of continuities and discontinuities with the imperial period. According to him, Ottoman Empire truly gained an imperial character in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of modernizing reforms through which imperial character of the state could eventually dominate its centuries-old patrimonialism. It was this historical background that



increased the potentiality of the Kemalist revolution and then its post-revolutionary institutionalization (Eisenstadt, 1997: 133; Eisenstadt, 1984).

In general sense, it is possible to conclude that the extent of the impact of Ottoman legacy on the early republican period is a contentious issue. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the Ottoman legacy matters in terms of Kemalist modernization, and Kemalist reforms refer to a “decisive moment” in Turkish modernization.

### **3.2. The Role of Elites in Modernization**

Universality and irreversibility of modernization did not eliminate the role of agency in societal transformation. Modernizationists particularly discussed the roles assumed by elites in the initiation and continuation of modernization in developing countries. This discussion inevitably brought up the question of authoritarianism, leading to ambivalent, yet usually supportive positions about Kemalist authoritarianism.

Eisenstadt, as a sociologist, put forward that modernization was fundamentally characterized by social mobilization and social differentiation (Eisenstadt, 1964a: 580; 1966: 1-19; 2002). Modernization was not just a type of change but also a response to change. Therefore, modern political system needed to assure a balance between political demands and policies, but at the same time, it had to maintain such a balance in a dynamic structure. The need to meet these conditions expectedly oriented Eisenstadt to analyze the role of elites (“charismatic groups or personalities”) in modernization process (Eisenstadt, 1964a: 591). According to him, while the Western experience had the advantage of facilitating conditions for “sustained growth”, modernizing elites in non-Western contexts had similar and troublesome missions of imposing their policies on the wider social groups, drawing them into the more differentiated institutional

framework, and finally regulating their integration within this framework (Eisenstadt, 1964b: 363).

Lerner considers Turkey an early example among developing countries that realized the fact that the Western experience gave the picture of the future. As a non-Western, developing country, it then set on devising its own policies to hasten the social change by rational planning. Kemalist modernization as a revolutionary period in Turkey's history sought to catch up with the Western countries by accelerating the pace of social change by "stateways" (bureaucratic-military elites) in an authoritarian way (Lerner, 1958a: 111-113).

Thus, not only the Cold War security concerns but also the course of development as conceptualized by their theory brought modernizationists to embrace elite authority. The Western model pointed to industrialization, secularization and liberal democracy as the ultimate goal of modernization process. Elites would be expectedly to lead their peoples in this goal-oriented, historically irreversible journey. If needed, they could force their people for the sake of the common goal. Political authoritarianism was thus legitimized as a transitory phenomenon in the early stages of political development. Lerner (1958a) typically reflects this understanding. According to him, industrialization, urbanization, mass literacy and secularization would ultimately lead to social cohesion around national identity and a civic culture. Until then, a relationship of tutelage between the elites as the leaders of modernization and the immature mass would continue. In other words, this phase-model explanation of development implied that democracy as the ultimate goal of political development could be postponed until a certain level of development was achieved.

Rostow, in *The Stages of Economic Growth*, mentioned the Kemalist phase of Turkish modernization as a case in which civil servants played the role of leading elite in economic growth, and a coalition of soldiers, merchants and intellectuals successfully created a

modern state. When certain members of such coalitions that had been initially built against the foreign intruder puts the state at the service of modernization, the preconditions for take-off are completed. Kemalist cadres correspond to this new generation of nationalists. He described Atatürk's Turkey "as one peculiarly inhumane form of political organization capable of launching and sustaining the growth process in societies where the preconditions period did not yield a substantial and enterprising commercial middle class and an adequate political consensus among the leaders of the society." (Rostow, 1960: 28-30, 51, 163-164) In a later study, he tracked how the traditionalists turned against the military and civilian modernizers since the political reforms of Selim III, a further justification for strong leadership. Analyzing the leadership role of Atatürk in passing to the stage of take-off, Rostow argued that Atatürk was a better "optimizer" than his forerunners and he consolidated political and social modernization in a compelling authoritarian framework (Rostow, 1971).

Rustow also emphasized the groundbreaking role of this authoritarian modernization, especially in earlier studies. He praised Kemalist revolution for creating a stable foundation for a new Turkey at a time when other Near Eastern countries were in a painful search for directions. He regarded Turkey as an example of "self-directed and rapid westernization" and spoke of Atatürk as a farsighted leader. He also defined him as "the greatest and most ruthless of Westernizers" and used the term "benevolent dictatorship" for his rule (Rustow, 1956a). After a series of extensive historical-institutional research, Rustow later started to focus on the "continuity" in the role of elites, by highlighting how modern Turkey inherited ingredients of a modern nation state from the institutional structure of the Ottoman Empire. Compared to colonized nations, Turkish modernizers had an advantage of having change been led by an indigenous elite. The army and civilian bureaucracy, with a more or less steady mindset and spirit, linked the traditional and the modern (Rustow, 1965; Rustow, 1967: 119-120).

Thanks to the continuity of institutions and diffused sense of political responsibility among the state elite, despite a series of coups, the latest being in 1960, “there have been no outbreaks of endemic uncontrolled violence and no sudden social revolution”. He paralleled this gradual and steady modernization that combined progressivism and conservatism with the unique experiences in Britain and Japan (Rustow, 1965: 197-198).

A continuity in the role of modernist elites is also implied in the narrative of long history of modernization of Lewis. According to him, a new elite, educated in the schools established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with a new spirit and perception, has slowly evolved. “The value of that elite to Turkey is strikingly confirmed by the penalties of its absence in other countries with a similar legacy and similar problems.” (Lewis, 1968: 127) Lewis nevertheless gave much credit to Mustafa Kemal regarding his role in the creation of modern Turkey (1951: 331):

*It was the political framework of the Kemalist State which made possible the orderly march towards parliamentary government. It was the economic and social reforms of Atatürk that lifted Turkey out of the vicious circle of misery and corruption, enabled her to rebuild her economy and her society without falling under foreign control, and thus to produce a liberal bourgeoisie and an educated public opinion which, though still limited if judged by Western standards, were nevertheless capable of carrying out the historic tasks that devolved on them.*

As other modernization theorists, Lewis admitted that Mustafa Kemal was a dictator but quite different from other leaders for whom the same term has been used. His dictatorship did not involve police surveillance and state terror. Use of force was limited to the aim and phase of making and maintaining revolutionary changes. Thanks to his rule and to the political maturing of the Turkish people under this regime, his party unprecedentedly gave up political power through free and peaceful elections in 1950 (Lewis, 1968: 290-292, 303). In other

words, “Kemal Atatürk was a dictator in order that there might never again be a dictator in Turkey” (Lewis, 1951: 331).

### **3.3. The Role of the Military**

Due to its structural functionalism, modernization theory was always in favor of finding a balance between the pace of change and social stability. Even when modernizationists labelled modernization as a revolutionary change, they equally emphasized the concepts of change and order. Therefore, when military bureaucratic elites intervened in politics in Turkey through a military coup in 1960, their attitude was generally positive.

The article authored by Lerner and Robinson in 1960, just after the military coup, is highly illustrative in this sense. According to Lerner and Robinson (1960: 39-42), the military coup in Turkey was a response to rising political instability which resulted from a “revolution of rising frustration”<sup>8</sup>. Turkey urbanized too rapidly; urbanization ignited expectations for a better life. Turkey failed to meet these rapidly increasing expectations and the military had to intervene. According to them, the problem was not about the unilinear phase model of modernization, the problem resulted from the pace of social change<sup>9</sup>. Lerner had actually pointed to possible consequences of deviations from the phase-based development in his classical work of “The Passing of Traditional Society”. He had argued there that due to the systemic character of modernization, the various sectors of modernizing society had to be balanced. If modernization in a country went “out of

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<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis on this issue, see Lerner, 1973-1974.

<sup>9</sup> In giving another example for the ‘out of phase’ situation, Lerner (1958: 221) criticizes Nasser’s policies and his use of radio for propaganda rather than just broadcasting news. According Lerner, Egypt under Nasser gave radio propaganda primacy over economic development and education, which in turn leads to ‘apocalyptic politics of illiterate and impoverished pseudo-participants’ (Lerner, 1958b).

phase”, or in Lerner’s terminology, if there was an “over-production of Transitionals”, that country would probably face political instability (Lerner, 1958a: 398-399). However, that possibility had now become the reality itself.

This article by Lerner and Robinson was also noticeable due to their specific arguments about the positive role attributed to the military in modernization. By looking at the Turkish case, Lerner and Robinson (1960: 33-35) argued that the military could be a modernizing force. Turkish military as one of the most professionalized armed forces in the region would serve modernization in two ways. First, it would restabilize the country and put modernization into its normal course. Second, the military in Turkey could instill soldiers recruited from rural areas with modern ideas and provide them with new knowledge of organization, punctuality, and rational problem solving. Briefly, the military could play the role of functional elite capable of mobilizing new symbols and providing guidance to the masses (Gilman, 2003: 174).

Rustow was also among the modernizationists who emphasized the role of soldiers in founding modern institutions and restoring them when necessary. He defined the Kemalist regime established in 1919 as an example of “military revolution” or “revolution under military aegis”. Such revolutions soon carry out a separation of military and politics, and execute an all-encompassing modernization program through the agency of a political party and a charismatic leader that mobilize popular support (Rustow, 1967: 199-203). The coup in 1960, on the other hand, was a “restorative revolution,” in which the army chose to disobey the orders of a civilian superior that systematically violated the constitution, betrayed reformism, and politicized the army. Rustow advised the politicians of post-coup era that “such Kemalist goals as the secularization of education, the withdrawal of the military from politics, and an independent foreign policy combined with a firm

cultural orientation to the West must be vigorously reasserted”, supported with policies of social justice and rapid economic development that would fix the gulf between educated rulers and peasant masses (Rustow, 1965: 171, 186-87, 198; Rustow, 1968b: 824).

Another support for the consolidation of the road to modernization in the 1960s came from Rostow. He argued that the excessive political response of PM Menderes to an acute problem of growth led to a constitutional crisis in the late 1950s, which was resolved by the 1960 coup d'état. He stated that “Turkey found in the 1960s at least transient reconciliation between a policy consonant with rapid movement towards industrial maturity and a competitive democratic political system”. According to him, the 1960s witnessed the movement of Turkey into a more diversified stage of growth, a greater degree of economic liberalism, and the birth of a new generation of politicians engaged in growth rather than cultural conflicts (Rostow, 1971: 137-138). Lewis who, in his masterpiece about Turkey, preferred to end his analysis of modern Turkey in 1950, was rather silent on the coup d'état and its aftermath. The intention of not to undermine the exemplary democratic character of Turkey that he often highlighted might explain that silence. Nevertheless, one may find indirect justifications, such as his accusation of ousted leader Adnan Menderes for “pandering to” the religious reactionaries that campaign against Kemalist revolution (Lewis, 1964:113).

### **3.4. Secularism in a Muslim-Majority Society**

Modernizationists grasped modernization as a comprehensive and holistic transformation of all aspects of social life. Just as seen in economic and political transformation, homogenizing tendencies were expected to give a certain direction to cultural change in developing countries. The more or less successful constitution of a secular and national identity in contrast to a primordial and traditional one in Turkey was extensively analyzed by modernizationists.

Even Rostow, who equated development with economic growth, discussed the significance of eliminating political and social structures that hindered economic development. According to him, Turkish people had to create “a new vision of who they were and what their destiny should be - an escape to conventional secular nationhood from the role of imperial masters of a large and complex domain, linked to a religious mission.” Furthermore, one major reason for the delay in modernization was the dominance of conservative religious institutions, including religious schools. It was the secular and republican reforms under Atatürk such as abolishing the sultanate and the caliphate or the new westernized laws, calendar and dress, that consolidated political and social modernization and thus provided the preconditions for economic take-off (Rostow, 1971: 74-75, 81).

Among others, Eisenstadt was particularly interested in the role of culture in modernization. Following Weber’s thesis on the vital role of Protestant ethics in the development of modern culture, Eisenstadt thought the development of secular and rational values was of critical importance in terms of cultural development (Eisenstadt, 1966). In this sense, his view of radical Kemalist cultural reforms in the early republican period was affirmative. Identifying some parallels with the Tunisian experience, Eisenstadt thought that the Turkish case was a very different example in the Muslim world since Turkish modernizationists (Kemalists) completely negated the Islamic tradition at central political and symbolic levels (Eisenstadt, 1965: 664). Compared to other non-western examples, Turkish modernizing elites as well as those of Mexico and Japan were relatively more successful in creating new symbols and political frameworks and to effect far-reaching structural transformations in their society, which would facilitate sustained growth (Eisenstadt, 1964a: 592). Thus, Turkey attracted attention of Eisenstadt in the early 1960s since it provided a remarkable and daring attempt of modernization in the Muslim world at the expense of liquidating crucial elements of Islamic institutional and



ideational framework in order to become a member of the modern world.

Lewis has traditionally been considered as one of the leading figures of a very powerful paradigm in approaching recent Turkish history, together with such social scientists as Tarık Zafer Tunaya and Niyazi Berkes. This paradigm perceives late Ottoman-Turkish history as a struggle between traditionalist and progressive forces, and identifies assertive secularization as an indispensable element of modernization (Göksel, 2015: 26). According to Lewis, Mustafa Kemal gave a final and definitive answer to a question that started to be discussed in the Second Constitutional Period: whether the social entity to be saved was a Muslim community or Turkish nation. It was a question of choosing between Islamic and Western civilization. Moreover, Mustafa Kemal was determined to prevent the traditional groups from hindering reforms like they had done many times in the past. To these aims, he did not only deliver major blows into the institutional structure of religious establishment in Turkey but also made great symbolic revolutions that forcibly transferred the Turks from one civilization to another: prohibiting wearing fez, adapting Swiss civil code, and replacing Arabic script by Latin alphabet (Lewis, 1968: 265-272).

Lewis' studies on Turkey, however, also bear the imprint of his ambivalence towards the conservative but pro-Western Democratic Party rule of the 1950s. He highlighted the importance of democratic procedures and culture since 1950, and claimed that the limited return to religion might have arisen "from the revolt of a profoundly religious people against the coldness and emptiness of the secularist creed, which, in the words of Adnan Adıvar, had made Turkey into a 'positivistic mausoleum'" (Lewis, 1955: 311-327). He argued that a synthesis between acquired modern values and inherited Islamic values was necessary in order to reach a balance after many years of

revolutionary changes and to set an example for other Islamic countries; however, he had doubts about a non-reactionary Islamic revival that would continue the process of modernization (Lewis, 1951: 329).

Rustow's focus on continuity resulted in some unique arguments about how traditional elements were integrated into modern culture. For him traditional society is not a "*tabula rasa*, an inert and plastic mass ready to be activated and shaped by the modernizing impact of the West." (Rustow & Ward, 1964: 7, 12) He talked about a cultural "amalgamation" of modern and traditional elements. Nevertheless, he also argued that Westernization acquired an independent momentum at some point, thanks to massive cultural and political changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Rustow, 1956a; 1965). The Young Turk officers converted to nationalist and constitutionalist ideas engaged in the goal of establishing a modern state capable of resisting European powers' intrusion and a new civic allegiance for that state. Upon this background, a more radical movement was born at a moment of total defeat and invasion, and Mustafa Kemal implemented an unprecedented, extensive and resolute program of Westernization in education, law and culture, which strengthened social cohesion (Rustow, 1959). Mustafa Kemal's charismatic authority, supplemented by a legal-rational bureaucracy was indispensable; however, he also used traditional Ottoman-Islamic symbols to speed up modernization. This latter appeal to traditions with the aim of modernization, e.g. Kemal's use of the traditional title Ghazi, is a case of "reinforcing dualism" according to Rustow (1968b: 793-94, 822, 827).

### **3.5. Foreign Aid**

The elite-driven character of modernization in the Third World did not only legitimize elite authority at home but also external intervention for the sake of development in the countries in question. Lerner was the most outspoken scholar in this respect. According to him (1958a: ix), compared to other Middle Eastern countries which

suffered from a set of technical difficulties and social hindrances, Turkey was relatively successful in achieving a balance between rapid change and social stability. Nevertheless, considering the amount of change needed in such a still largely rural and illiterate country, internal dynamics had to be assisted. In the same study, Lerner also made a general assessment on the attitudes of Middle Eastern countries regarding foreign aid, Lerner here either blamed the post-colonial Middle Eastern countries with ethnocentrism, leading them to the rejection of every appearance of foreign tutelage and/or reminded them of the extent and complexity of the process. In any case, Lerner stressed the importance of foreign (you can read it as “American”) aid and guidance on their journey to modernity.

Like Lerner, Rustow and Ward (1964: 11) stressed the importance of foreign assistance in the form of financial aid and/or technical assistance in order to direct and shorten the process of modernization. Regarding Turkey, Rustow also focused on how foreign assistance could help fixing the gap between urban educated classes and the rural areas in terms of their adoption of modern values. He expected that the US-sponsored “revolution” in agriculture and light industry would incorporate peasants into market economy and persuade them about how cultural modernization comes with material benefits. As peasants were further exposed to the impact of westernization, a moderate and pragmatic accommodation between the Islamic character of the society and Turkey’s place in the Western family of nations could continue (Rustow, 1956b: 1965).

Rostow was from the very beginning an earnest believer and practitioner<sup>10</sup> of the policy of promoting economic modernization

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<sup>10</sup> He had the chance to put his ideas into practice thanks to his government posts under presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Such projects and institutions as USAID, the Peace Corps, OECD and World Bank financial aid for development etc. bear his signature as deputy national security adviser (Menzel 2006: 215-16).

through Western capital and technical know-how as the cure to all ills in the third world (Engerman & Unger, 2009: 375). For him, increase in agricultural productivity and supply of foreign finances were usually vital for a successful take-off (Rostow, 1960). He listed Turkey among “success stories” in the assisted developing world, with special emphasis on the economic leap of the 1960s -the early phase of the drive to technological maturity. Rather than highlighting direct external influence, he chose to refer to domestic leadership. He particularly praised president Demirel, a figure known in Turkish political history for pursuing firm and stable relations with the US, for shifting the focus of politics from reformers-conservatives conflict to economic growth (Rostow, 1971: 135-38, 316).

Lewis too made less pretentious arguments about the role of American loans and advisors in modernization, possibly not to further irritate the developing world about American influence. Regarding the Turkish case, he admitted that there has been a strong American pressure against etatism in economic policies but denied any direct action for political change. Instead, American action indirectly helped to create a favorable atmosphere for political change as the Turkish government decided that promoting private enterprise would be the only way to effectively employ Marshall Aid and other grants and loans (Lewis, 1951: 323, 328; Lewis, 1968: 315). According to him, this welcoming attitude towards American aid was also shared by Persia, another old sovereign state. Both had foreign policies based on a rational calculation of national interest while Arab states’ anti-Western foreign policy bore the memories of colonization and was made on the basis of primordial collective identities and hatreds (Lewis, 1964: 130-35).

### **3.6. Turkish Modernization as an Exemplary Case**

Within the light of abovementioned elements, the most distinctive argument of modernizationists about the Turkish case was

probably about its exemplary character. The historical roots of the so-called Turkish model mainly result from this argument. As seen, the growing academic interest on non-western countries triggered by geopolitical concerns of the USA, the need for empirical evidence to support theoretical claims on the field, and ideological compatibility with Kemalism, made Turkish modernization a significant example for modernization theory. Modernizationists appreciated the Turkish experience and commonly defended that the net result of Kemalist reforms was a success. It was true that Turkey still had a long way to become a modern society, but it could establish institutions it needed.

In Rostow's *The Stages of Economic Growth* (1960) a detailed description of Turkey was missing and there were frozen comparisons in which one country simply lags behind another in a universal trajectory of development. Yet, Turkey was mentioned as the only Middle Eastern country that started its take-off for growth in the 1930s and experienced another surge in the 1950s. When Rostow made detailed country studies and dynamic comparisons between countries in later studies, Turkey was more under the spotlights. In *Politics and The Stages of Growth* (1971), Turkish case was specifically analyzed alongside six developed countries and Mexico, as an exemplary story of success in economic and social modernization, rapidly moving towards the stage of maturity.

Compared to other Middle Eastern countries, Lerner saw Turkey as the one of the most developed countries of the region. According to his development-based classification, Turkey was a transitional country (a third category between traditional and modern) undergoing a huge transformation in economic, political and social fields. The "special place" given to Turkish modernization is probably the most obvious in Lerner's classical work, *The Passing of Traditional Society*. Reflecting universalist claims of the theory *par excellence*, this book starts with the story of "the grocer and the chief", which is, Lerner suggests, like a

parable full of lessons. The characters, “the grocer and the chief”, symbolize strained dynamics of modernization process in which tradition decomposes in the face of progressive modernizing forces. The picture of Balgat as portrayed by Lerner, he argues, represents the story of the modernization in the Middle East in general (Lerner, 1958a: 44). Lerner then compared his field study observations about Balgat made in 1950 and 1954. Within the light of these observations about the “amount and tempo of social change” in the picture of Balgat, Lerner seemed to be making the conclusion below with the satisfaction of affirming the validity of his theory: “The ancient village I had known for what now seemed only four short years was passing, had passed. The Grocer was dead. The Chief -“the last Muhtar of Balgat”- had reincarnated the Grocer in the flesh of his sons.” (Lerner, 1958a: 42).

In various studies, Lewis referred to a contrast between Turkey and other Muslim Middle Eastern countries (Lewis, 1955; 1958a; 1964) and did not hide his anger at the other countries, which disliked the “liberal and retreating” Western imperialism but ignored the “ruthless and advancing” Russian imperialism (Lewis, 1956). He mentioned Turkey’s friendly attitude towards West in foreign policy, its relatively strong democratic institutions, people’s orientation towards national solidarity rather than a communal and religious one, growing individualist and secular inclinations among the masses etc. (Lewis, 1955: 311). This was particularly unique considering the predominantly Muslim population of Turkey unlike the other democratic exceptions in the region such as Israel or Lebanon. In order to explain this striking contrast, on the one hand, he employed some essentialist arguments like “the greater realism, responsibility and practical approach of the Turks” or geographical factors like immediate threat from Russia. Nevertheless, he paid greater attention to the great socio-cultural transformations brought by “secularist revolutions” as well as economic and social policies leading to advances like a relatively high income,

mileage of railways and rate of literacy (Lewis, 1958a: 45, 57-58; Lewis, 1964: 56, 60).

Rustow might be considered in the revisionist group within the modernization theory, as he called for a refinement in the assumption of a unilinear change from traditional-patrimonial societies to modern bureaucratic complex societies and for a more sophisticated use of historical data so that variations in modernization could be understood (Rustow, 1968a). He admitted that there were back and forth movements between different regimes in a single country, and some traditional traits indifferent to modernity survived or were even intentionally retained by modernizers to stabilize and reinforce the process. However, he argued that this margin of choice within the great uniformity of modernity made the intellectual task of finding plausible models of political development for late modernizers even more important than before (Rustow, 1967: 10-18, 204-206, 241-49). In line with that task, he paid a special attention to Turkey. In the interregional comparison he co-edited with Ward, *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, he depicted Turkey as a society of Asian background but one that fulfils “such essential criteria of political modernization as secularization, functional differentiation of governmental organization, or the creation of a professionalized, achievement-oriented bureaucracy” (Rustow & Ward, 1964: 9). Atatürk, heir to a long and piecemeal Westernization process, was behind the Turk’s quite unique anti-communist foreign policy and successful modernization. Rustow appreciated Atatürk’s “benign and transitory dictatorship”, which did not involve a doctrine, purges or concentration camps, rapidly transformed the society. In Citino’s words, Rustow regarded Turkey as a model for achieving “security and economic stability through a process that began with a revolution from above and that later permitted dictatorship to give way to democracy” (Citino, 2008: 587-89).

The success of Turkey on the way to modernization led modernization theorists to offer Turkey as a model country especially for Muslim Middle Eastern countries<sup>11</sup>. According to modernization theorists, Turkey as a non-Western country offered a model for Middle Eastern countries since a poor, rural country in the region was having a successful transition to modern society. Since modernization referred to a set of interrelated, mutually reinforcing, gradual and painful processes, the “elite authoritarian pattern” was understandably followed in developing Turkey to achieve major objectives of modernization. However, they also stated that the parliamentary nature of the political regime prevented extremism and paved the way to a democratic multi-party system. Since political modernization developed in stages, it was the logical course of expected gradual transition to democracy (Turner, 1976: 11). Briefly, Turkey as a Muslim-majority country was definitely on the right side in the clash between modernity and tradition. Therefore, prospects for Turkey were so good and its successful reforms including radical secularism could inspire other Muslim countries as well.

## **Conclusion**

Modernization theory was a politically motivated intellectual creation shaped by the US interests in the early years of the Cold War. In this period, development was made a political issue, and American academia provided a particular model of development based on the Western experience for the Third World countries. Industrial capitalism, secularization and liberal democracy were fundamental components of this model which defined modernization as a universal, irreversible and inevitable process. In other words, Third World countries most of which had recently gained their independence were delivered a political

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<sup>11</sup> As we have recently witnessed, the Turkish model has once more become an issue but in a different manner at the turn of century around the question whether Islam and democracy have been compatible.



invitation. They were called to take side with the USA which was democratic and prosperous unlike the Communist Russia and its allies.

Within this historical context, capitalist, secular, anti-communist Turkey with its multi-party parliamentary political system attracted attention of modernization theorists who were in need of empirical evidence for their theses. Turkey had already defined modernization as a political goal before the advent of modernization theory and it also proved to be keen to cooperate with the West. According to modernizationists, Turkey's past provided a model and its future a test for developing countries (Lerner & Robinson, 1963: 44), especially Muslim countries of the Middle East. Each scholar examined in this study agreed on the legacy of late Ottoman modernization, the significance of Kemalist revolution for rapid economic, political and cultural change, a justification for Kemalist political authoritarianism and enforced secularism as well as for later military correction of deviations from modernization, the role of foreign assistance in shortening the path to modernity, and the exemplary character of the Turkish case that set a model for other Middle Eastern countries.

Modernizationist theses began to erode gradually starting from the mid-1960s. Meanwhile, Turkey's position as an exemplary case in the theory has lost its significance for some particular reasons. Contrary to deterministic claims about modernization expressed as "the more developed, the more similar", scholarly studies which expected to find out similarities between modernizing countries unintentionally undermined the theory. It gradually became clear that "the specific changes in various societies or institutional constellations within them" might led to different outcomes (Eisenstadt, 1984: 5). While modernization theory originally considered modernity and tradition being mutually exclusive, some significant names of the theory now began to speak of the successful combinations of the traditional and modern. For instance, according to Eisenstadt (1973), Japan and the UK

were good examples for such a marriage. However, anomalies of social change in the non-Western context rather than successful examples weakened the theory. Political, economic and social instabilities in the form of military coup, financial crisis and social upheavals brought about the circulation of new concepts like “breakdowns” of modernization and “political decay”. Resonating Huntington’s thesis, Rustow (1968a: 50) stated that “where there can be development, there can also be decay.”

In this context, while the 1960 military coup was not yet enough to discredit the Turkish model of modernization, particularities of the Ottoman-Turkish case became more visible and accentuated due to the growing interaction between modernizationists and Ottomanists like Halil İnalçık, Kemal Karpat and Bernard Lewis. Moreover, Turkey’s relations with the USA was negatively influenced by the Cyprus Issue in the mid-1960s. Consequently, just as the universalist modernization theory lost its intellectual hegemony, the arguments in favor of Turkey’s exemplary character for developing countries were gradually abandoned. Nevertheless, modernization theory left a quite controversial but still highly influential legacy behind, especially in the form of a certain way of reading Ottoman-Turkish history.

### **Information Note**

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

*Modernization theory developed a paradigmatic understanding of modernity that dominated academic studies on modernization from the early 1950s until the late 1970s. Combining a strong belief in the idea of an evolutionary and progressive social change, it envisaged the processes of industrialization, democratization and secularization that created Western modern society as universal, inevitable and irreversible (Gilman, 2003). Largely conditioned by the US geopolitical concerns in the Cold-War hegemonic rivalry, this theory asserted that the West, particularly the USA, as the representative of modernity would guide non-Western societies on their journey to modernization. In close cooperation with the US administration, modernizationists as “Cold Warriors” at the same time sought to justify external intervention in the name of “development” in different parts of the world (Citino, 2008). Although it gradually lost intellectual dominance in the 1970s, modernization theory as an idea system, a structure of knowledge or a at least a theoretical orientation, had a lasting impact on social sciences in terms of grasping social reality and social change.*

*Modernization theory attributed a “special place” to the Turkish case among many other non-Western countries, with a special emphasis on the Kemalist modernization of the early republican period. However, although Turkey was once “darling of modernizationists” (Kubicek, 2013: 68), the significance of the Turkish case for modernization theory in its formative years for the verification of its main hypotheses has largely remained a neglected issue.*

*This paper seeks to explore the reasons for Turkey’s special place and the ways Kemalist modernization is positioned vis-a-vis other non-western countries through a detailed analysis of published scholarship of modernizationists. For this purpose, the references to the Turkish case in the scholarly works of five prominent representatives of the theory, namely, Walt Rostow, Dankwart Rustow, Daniel Lerner, Bernard Lewis and Shmuel Eisenstadt are scrutinized. Without ignoring the particular reflections of disciplinary perspectives they have, their analyses of the Turkish case are investigated with a focus on such common themes as the beginnings of modernization in Turkey, the nature and major characteristics of the Kemalist experience, the role of elites in social change, secularism in a Muslim-majority society, the role of foreign aid, and the level of development in comparison mostly with Middle Eastern countries.*

*Within this context, following a brief introduction about the historical and political background conditions that urged modernizationists to launch such an*



*intellectual undertaking, this paper first elaborates on the main theses of the theory. Then, the reasons for the special place given to Turkish modernization, with a particular emphasis on the Kemalist reforms in the early republican period, and the ways Kemalist modernization was positioned vis-a-vis other non-Western countries are examined through a detailed analysis of published scholarship. In doing this, while the abovementioned critical questions provide the analytical framework for this investigation, common and particular points in the works of these scholars regarding the Kemalist modernization and its significance for modernization theory are specified.*

*Our study shows that, depending on the scholarly discipline and applied methodology, modernizationists' emphases on the Turkish experience of modernization in their explanations vary. Furthermore, it is seen that they revised some of their views on the Turkish case, which may be partly explained by rapid political transformations in Turkey during the decades they published their works. Nevertheless, this research reveals that each scholar examined in this study agrees on the positive legacy of late Ottoman modernization, the significance of Kemalist revolution for rapid economic, political and cultural change, a justification for Kemalist political authoritarianism and enforced secularism as well as for the 1960 coup d'état, the role of foreign assistance in shortening the path to modernity, and the exemplary character of the Turkish case that set a model for other Middle Eastern countries.*

*This study sheds light on the historical origins of the so-called "Turkish model", a concept that became quite popular in political and academic circles in the first decade of the 21st century. In addition to that, the revealed significance of the Kemalist modernization is hoped to help to make a more empirically grounded critique of modernization theory by allowing to detect false causalities, anachronisms, and neglect of backtracks, disruptions and "roads not taken" in the references of the pioneers of the modernization theory to the Turkish case.*