

Dilemmas of Democratization in Turkey with Special Reference to “Modernization From Above”

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Abstract: *The social and political structure of the Ottoman Empire and the basic principles upon which the Turkish modernization was established are to be strictly scrutinized in order to understand the problems concerning the institutionalization of democracy in Turkey. In this article, which covers the period from the establishment of the new state to 1980s, it is argued that the implementation of the “modernization from above” has undermined the consolidation of democratic institutions. That the politics in Turkey has a narrow social base exaggerated the question of institutionalization and widened the controversy between the political/bureaucratic/military elite and the people. The populist policies which were favored especially by Democrat Party and its heirs could not surmount the issue. On the contrary, reproducing patrimonial relations, it prevented the formation of a civil and political society which might be regarded as a constituting part of democracy.*

Keywords: *Democracy, political culture, civil society, modernization from above, Turkey*

Introduction

Modernity in general refers to the process of economic, cultural, social, political and administrative centralization, disintegration of traditions, secularism, and nationalism. Apparently, modernity has a variety of dimensions. One aspect of modernity is economic; e.g., economic transformation, industrialism and affluence. Second aspect of modernity is socio-cultural; e.g., mass communication, disintegration of traditions, social mobility, secularism, and mass education. Third, modernity has political and administrative aspects; e.g., building of centralized nation state, professionalized bureaucracy, and development of and consolidation of democracy. Here what deserves great attention is that the constant and essential concept lying in the core of Turkish modernization is the building and maintenance of a nation state. Apparently, that may be evaluated on the political aspect of modernity; but what is ignored or under-emphasized is that democratization may also constitute an integral part of modernity. It is actually related not only to political and administrative aspect but also to socio-cultural aspect.

The process of modernization in Turkey was not conceptualized as the attainment of modernity as a whole; but it was based upon the building of a nation state. Hence, one may define the Turkish modernization as “a nationalist modernization from above”. Although modernity had brought about radical changes in above mentioned spheres in western countries and achieved the transformation of state and society structure largely; nationalist

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modernization of Turkey focused especially on the creation and security of a nation state. In this regard political and administrative modernization, that is, the establishment of a centralized state, was pursued; but social, cultural, and economic aspects of modernity were given a secondary importance.

We can comprehend why Turkish bureaucratic elite initially insisted on the creation of a strong or independent state as far as the root of the conflict in society and the nature of state-society relations are taken into account. As Joel S. Migdal remarks, nation state is primarily after the control of social and political spheres, and it mainly pursues such policies to gain its autonomy vis-à-vis other social organizations:

Indeed, the central political and social drama of recent history has been the battle between the state and other social organizations. The dispute is over who makes the rules, who grants the property rights that define the use of assets and resources in the society [...] The state's battle may be with families over the rules of education and socialization; they may be with ethnic groups over territoriality; they may be with religious organizations over daily habits (Migdal, 1991: 51).

The Turkish experience reflects main characteristics of those battles. Furthermore, the conflict extended and the cleavages between the center and periphery sharpened because of modernization from above. Hence, although Migdal opposes the center-periphery model, we can not analyze Turkish case unless we consider the tension between ruling elite and masses, which increased as a result of bureaucratic elite's modernization mission: Transformation of society, consolidation of new rules.

The political elite of nationalist modernization rejected pluralist society structure, denied the class conflicts of modern societies in practice and theory, and appealed to solidarist mechanisms. The effects of such an understanding were the suppression of socio-cultural and political differences, and the attempts to create uniformity in all spheres of the society.

Actually, the problem of democratization is comprehensible when not only the state-society relations but also societal structure and the society-individual relations are considered. Although the elite of the "modernization from above" aimed at breaking the ties between the individual and community, they collaborated with community leaders; so, the primordial relations between the community leaders, notables, and people maintained. This was an unexpected and unanticipated result of the cooperation in the 'National Struggle Movement'. After the liberation movement, the elite of nationalist modernization found themselves in a controversial situation; on the one hand they recognized and strengthened the local notables, mainly to control society, on the other hand they followed a policy which aimed at controlling those local entities and ensuring their loyalty to the center, and moreover "rural areas in particular experienced more control than transformation" (Sunar, 1994: 6). That paradox constituted the background of the tension between state-society relations. So the question of democratization strongly related to both "modernization from above" and to the "lack of civil society"; those two components, which may be regarded as two sides of a coin, constituted the weaknesses of democracy in Turkey. In this essay, which covers the period from the establishment of the new state to the 1980s, I will analyze one side of the coin: The relation between the "modernization from above" and its effects on democratization with special reference to formation of nation-state.

Turkish Modernization during One Party Period and the Effects of Ottoman Heritage

In this section, I will focus on those questions: How did Turkish elite conceptualize and legitimize the “nation building from above”? How did they define state and society, and to what extent did they take the western states and western politics as a model? These questions lead us to the Atatürk Revolution, its aims and consequences in terms of modernization -nation building, democratization- and of tradition. To comprehend the bureaucratic elite’s conception of modernization in the Republican era, it is of great importance to consider the Ottoman military defeats, which were the main force of the Ottoman modernization, during the 18th and 19th centuries and the aim and weakness of Ottoman modernization process.

After great military defeats, Ottoman rulers had recognized that they could save the state as long as they could adopt new military techniques from the western world; hence, they had turned to the west. What is apparent is that modernization/westernization was initially a response to the military defeats; moreover it meant the admission of the superiority of the western world (Giritli, 1969: 46; Turan, [n.d]: 448). Taking that fact into account one can speculate that if Ottoman Empire had been challenged by a force other than Europeans, then the Empire would have responded accordingly. This speculation may be meaningful to depict the mentality of Ottoman and later Republican elite’s conception of modernization/westernization. So, modernization process in late Ottoman period had been initiated to mitigate the European military challenges. In the same way, the question of westernization laid at the core of the formation of Republic of Turkey. The National Struggle Movement gives an illustrating example of how the West and westernization were perceived by the bureaucratic elite as the attainment of a strong state; that movement was based upon the principle of “fighting against western imperialist to attain westernization”. That maintaining a strong state had been the ultimate aim of Ottomans was transferred to the Republic as the establishing and maintaining a strong security state in the thoughts of Republican elite. Ellen Kay Trimberger mentions that “... the goal of elite revolutionaries is to redistribute power between nations rather than redistribute resources between social strata within the society...” (Trimberger, 1972: 205). That may be taken as a key to comprehend the Republican elite’s conception of nation state and its relation to society; because the Kemalist Revolution was initiated, before all else, to achieve such an end.

“To investigate why Republican modernization/westernization process was not paralleled with democratization we may take not only the priorities but also origins of bureaucratic elite into consideration. At this point the reply to that question may be that the political and bureaucratic elite of the Republic who had been grown up and trained in the Ottoman state tradition had a notion of westernization and modernization from above but no clear concept of modernization together with democratization. That the political and bureaucratic elite who played the dominant role in the establishment of the Republic of Turkey were previously ‘Ottoman Pashas determined the form of and priorities of new state, which based upon the concept of national security and uniformity, and her principles which designed to safeguard the state from internal and external enemies (Sunar and Sayarı, 1986)¹.

Turkish bureaucratic elite, to consolidate the new state/ regime appealed to neo-patrimonial mechanisms. This constituted an important dilemma/obstacle for the consolidation of

¹ İlkey Sunar and Sabri Sayarı analyze the process of democratization and its weaknesses in their comprehensive article. Similarly, M. Kemal’s *Address to Turkish Youth* illustrates the priorities of the elite. See, Atatürk’s *Nutuk* (1938).

modernization and democratization. Since the consolidation of the state was given priority, the conflicts (real or potential) in all spheres economic, societal, political, and ethnic ignored. Hence the bureaucratic elite denied the classes; it was assumed that among the peasants, merchants, artisans, laborers, and military and bureaucratic officials there was not, and had not to be an incompatibility of interest, on the contrary there was, and had to be, uniformity of interest. In this regard, instead of development of individualism in social sphere, and democratic and liberal government in political sphere, the focus was on the creation of a strong, sovereign and unitarian state. According to Metin Heper:

The founders of the republic (established in 1923) wished to put an end to what they conceived as the personal rule of the Ottoman sultans. They aimed at establishing a moderate transcendentalist state that would not smother Turkish society, but rather help it to realize “its potential for reaching Western civilization, and even surpassing it” (1985: 93-94).

One may not accept Heper’s argument entirely but that the Republic was a transcendentalist state is obvious. The principle of modernization from above with strong authoritarian characteristics applied until the mid-1940s. Both Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of Republic, and İsmet İnönü, the second president, attempted to bring about radical changes in political, societal and economic arena. On the contrary to the Heper’s argument, they strengthened their personal rule and position to a great extent; so, they mixed modernization up with tradition and neo-patrimonialism in the sense that Clapham describes it:

“a form of organization in which relationships of a broadly patrimonial type pervade a political and administrative system which is formally constructed on rational legal lines” (Clapham, 1985: 48).

Turkish case after Atatürk Revolution reflected neo-patrimonial characteristics; for instance after the prohibition of the usage of societal titles like *sheikh*, *aga*, *bey* and *pasha*, and enactment of surname law, this is the part of modernization westernization, Mustafa Kemal took the surname Atatürk, “father of Turks”, this is the part of tradition and patrimonialism. Immediately after the death of Atatürk, İnönü took the official title of *Milli Şef*, National Chief. Those applications illustrate dramatically how tradition and patrimonialism were profoundly embedded in the process of modernization of Turkey.

One of Ergun Özbudun’s works, which may be regarded as an apology for Republican era to some extent, exhibits bureaucratic and military elite’s lack of complicated and complex set of beliefs and principles concerning democracy:

Culturally most Turks, elite and nonelite, seem to be committed to a democratic regime; yet this commitment does not always seem to be based on a set of profoundly felt concomitant democratic values, such as tolerance, compromise, and respect for individuality. The military shares the society’s commitment to democracy, yet it also displays certain elitist attitudes and a tendency to see itself as the true guardian of the national interest [...] This consolidation of single-party rule [1925-1945], however, did not involve a doctrinal repudiation of liberal democracy or of liberal values. Extraordinary measures were justified by temporary needs to protect the state and the regime against counterrevolutionaries [...] Authoritarian practices and policies were defeated not on doctrinal, but on purely pragmatic and temporary grounds. A liberal democratic state remained the officially sanctioned ideal [...] The forms, if not the substance, of constitutional government were

carefully maintained... (Özbudun, 1989: 187, 196).

Even in Ottoman period, after 1876, there were a constitutional government, a parliament, and semi-elected representatives. However, that can not prove that the establishment of a democratic state had been the main consideration of neither the Ottoman nor the Republican elite. Furthermore attempting to legitimize the authoritarian single party period through such claims does not seem to have a strong ground:

Indeed political institutionalization under the aegis of a single party provided a kind of “democratic infrastructure” that eventually facilitated the transition to democratic politics... (Özbudun, 1989: 197).

Political institutionalization, which can be taken as a strong indicator of political stability, may contribute to the consolidation of regime; but it may not require democratization. Meanwhile, although “the institutionalization under the aegis of a single party” is regarded as a facilitator for transition to democratic politics, it is ignored that it inherited and developed anti democratic and anti liberal attitudes, and prevented or weakened the institutionalization of democracy². Perhaps, a “rationalist-relativistic” concept of politics may be considered a precondition of democracy, but to what extent it was achieved in that period is vague. The failure of the consolidation of democracy can be related to the question of nation-state building from above and neo-patrimonialism in Turkey.

While Kemalist elite endeavored to surmount the problems of Ottoman period, and to some extent made considerable breakthrough, they could not break their ties on personal, societal, and administrative and governmental level with Ottoman heritage totally; lack of civil society facilitated the expansion of authoritarian rule.

Transition to Democracy and the Question of Institutionalization

After the transition to multi-party politics, the political system could not achieve democratic institutionalization entirely. The contention between the guardian of the regime, namely military, Republican People's Party (RPP) and intelligentsia, and populist parties has determined the path of political course. Especially in the Democrat Party (DP) era, the cleavages between DP and the coalition formed by military, bureaucracy, and RPP were sharpened. The mode of transition to democracy itself played important role in shaping the content of political competition and in inviting the military interventions into the politics.

As Huntington states, “exclusionary one-party systems change when they fail...” (Huntington, 1970: 23), the political elite of RPP abandoned the policies which were based upon the exacerbation of cleavages leading bifurcation in society and oriented towards the inclusionary policies; hence, despite their anti democratic elitism, they obliged to leave their monopoly over political system and accepted the transition to democratization mainly because of external pressures.

Military, civil bureaucracy and RPP thought that a change in regime would not challenge

² Samuel P. Huntington (1984: 201-202) emphasizes that “economic development compels the modification or abandonment of traditional political institutions; it does not determine what political system will replace them. That will be shaped by other factors, such as the underlying culture of the society, the values of the elites, and external influences”. Here one can replace “economic development” with “political institutionalization”, or “modernization”. Then what can be deduced is that political institutionalization under the aegis of single party compels the modification of traditional political institutions, but it does not necessitate institutionalization of or development of democratization

their position and Kemalist reforms. Hence, a liberalization process was initiated “from above” (Sunar and Sayarı, 1986: 172). In this regard, establishment of political parties was allowed and electoral law was amended after 1945.

After transition to democracy, the main issue was, on the one hand, to maintain political regime and its premises, on the other hand, to gain political and electoral support. Hence, in İlkey Sunar’s words:

The transition to democracy was [...] premised on a set of compromises: the guardian elite would allow an area for discretion to the political class of party leadership in return for allegiance to the ideological core of Kemalism... (Sunar, 1994: 13).

That situation lay at the heart of political process in Turkey, and constituted the basis of political party system, of party competition, and determined the causes of military interventions in politics; because, although once a compromise was arrived, that has not led to a consensus.

DP Era in Turkish Politics and the Nature of Political Contention

After 1945, Turkey entered into multi-party politics. The change in political system does not mean that the effects of one party period totally disappeared, but political institutionalization under one-party rule continued to play determining role in the system, e.g., the rule of DP resembled its predecessor RPP’s policies, but the one difference which takes attention was the loosening of economic statism.

Transition to democratic rule apparently was a development in Turkish politics; for instance, general and direct suffrage and political competition changed the outlook of the authorities to the people, gendarmerie suppression lessened, politicians began to visit rural areas villages and peasants to gain their votes; so masses tasted the feeling of being citizen; but local notables like *sheikhs*, *aghas*, usurers affecting the direction of attitudes and votes of citizens on whom they had implicit and explicit domination began to influence and control the political parties and their policies (Avcıoğlu, 1995: 531-532)³.

The reason behind those developments that unfortunately weakened the process of democratization was the populism of DP. DP was established as a faction of RPP. Hence DP developed its ties with a wide-ranging electorate, e.g., urban, rural, religious and many other groups, in order to achieve political authority. Because of under institutionalization, DP appealed to patron client relations, which were conceived as a method to unite people and gain their support.

The policies of government toward the military to some extent facilitated the conditions for the military intervention. Especially after 1954, civilian intelligentsia and military began to think “their places in the power structure [were] taken by representatives of the emerging middle classes, who were beginning to monopolize wealth and status in society” (Harris, 1965: 170; Tachau and Heper, 1983: 21).

The attitude of the DP leaders towards the officers and intelligentsia, as it mentioned above, as a whole was not friendly, and the government policies which were put into effect

³ In an essay, determining the effects of those policies on present problems Çağlar Keyder, in parallel with Doğan Avcıoğlu, argues that political elites bargaining with aghas and sheiks to gain the block votes used state opportunities to maintain feudal structure, as a result poor peasants opposed state. For detailed argument, see, Keyder 1995).

to render the military officers and the opposition of DP administration accelerated the political and bureaucratic polarization between the two blocks (Harris, 1965: 170). The amendment of press code to tighten the leash on journalists, exposition of university professors to government harassment, the derogatory speech⁴ of Prime Minister Adnan Menderes against military officials increased the tension between the government and the coalition which was composed of RPP, intelligentsia, bureaucracy, and military officials. Hence DP, meanwhile, instead of changing the centralized institutions of single party regime and accommodating democratic form of politics, followed previous mode of politics. In this regard, DP, restricting the political arena, suppressed the opposition, but contrary to the previous period, strengthened religious sentiments, regional entities, and kinship ties with populist policies (Sunar and Sayarı, 1986: 173).

RPP, on the other hand, remained in opposition, maintained its alliance with bureaucracy and intelligentsia, and preserved its relations with military throughout 1950s. Bureaucracy, military and RPP did not welcome the populist policies of DP, which was seen as a threat to the regime. Hence there was no room for the compromise and consensus on the dynamics of politics among the actors of politics and bureaucracy, but the only reality was that neither DP nor RPP and its coalition wing -military- could trust each other.

Although DP RPP conflict affected the Turkish political life profoundly, there were few ideological and programmatic policy differences between those parties (Helm, 1954: 435). H. Z. Ülken argues that the party politics in Turkey developed as a way of capturing authoritative power rather than program and social view differences; hence, the competition did not develop further rather than as a form of presidential competition (Ülken, 1963: 63). In the same way İsmet Bozdağ (1975: 44) insists that DP can be separated from RPP on grounds of form, not on great ideological lines⁵. Despite those arguments, there was a sufficient difference in terms of their conceptualization of periphery. What can be cited is that DP-RPP conflict and competition played an important role in shaping the Turkish politics; and their competition can be regarded as an indicator of how Turkish politics has developed since then; it constituted the evident model of political party competition. Hence, DP RPP conflict paved the way for acute problems in terms of under institutionalization of democratic politics. That conflict also paved the way for military intervention into the politics in 1960.

Actually, one of the components of democracy may be the ability to tolerate differences, and opinions of other parties and loyalty to democratic means for getting and leaving political power; but Turkish case after 1950 has not scored well on this point. The elite confrontation played an important role in the under institutionalization of democracy; so, the primordial relations embedded in the structure of society. That the transformation of community into society structure was failed to a great extent exacerbated those political conflicts; for instance after 1950 parliamentary election, as Bernard Lewis illustrates the atmosphere well, some

⁴ For a rumor, Menderes claimed that he could run the army with reserve officers if he chose. That rumor which has not been confirmed whether it was true or false, was considered a serious factor increasing the suspicion of the military officers about the government and it was generally seen one of the main factors which paved the way for the military coup. For more information see, *Milliyet*, 28 May, 1962.

⁵ Necmeddin Sadak for this subject, on 11th of March 1947 in a daily newspaper, *Akşam*, under the title of "Tek Parti, Tek Şef Sistemini Deviren Demokrat Partisi....", reports that Nadir Nadi labels DP as "second RPP" because there is no significant difference in the programs of those two parties. For detailed information, see, Sadak (1947: 17-18).

peasants were, in the name of democracy, plundering lands; taxi drivers were violating traffic rules and turning their noses up at traffic policemen; and peddlers were selling “democratic lemonade” (Lewis, 1996: 317). That situation proved the underdevelopment of democratic attitudes and of citizenship consciousness; it also unraveled the lack of civic culture in that period.

In short, the political polarization especially increased as a result of DP’s populist policies and RPP’s elitist attitudes. In their quest for votes, the DP leaders offered paradoxical treatments to minority groups; they at the same time relaxed the restrictions on religious practices. On the other hand, mob attacks against Greek minorities in İstanbul, known as “Events of September 6–7” was also organized while DP was in rule in 1955. The concessions made by DP leaders because of patron client relations, which appeared to disturbed the armed forces. Elite confrontation the primordial relations in society level, patron-client relations as a result of DP’s populist policies in political level, and the alliance between RPP, bureaucracy and military strongly determined the destiny of that confrontation led to the military coup in 1960.

The Problems of Democracy between 1960-1980

The military was in power in May 1960, and as a result of the increasing tension in politics and bureaucracy, the armed forces enjoyed widespread acceptance and approval for their intervention into the politics. The justification and legitimization of the military coup as the guardian of the regime set a precedent for later interventions.

After the military coup, radical changes were made in political and legal system. The rule of DP had unraveled the weaknesses of political system; DP had benefited from the centralization of power and relying on its majority based electoral support had violated the rule of law. The electoral law that favored majority party led DP to feel itself very strong to challenge the bureaucracy and military.

The changes in political and legal spheres can be summarized as follows: A new constitution which brought check-and-balance mechanisms was put into effect, it was constructed mainly to prevent the concentration and centralization of power; organization of parties at the village and district level was banned; Senate to balance the Assembly, Constitutional Court to review legislation, and National Security Council to serve as an advisory organ to the government on security issues were established; and electoral law was amended (Sunar and Sayarı, 1986: 174-175).

The 1961 Constitution brought about radical changes, but especially rapid socio-economic change and social mobilization increased the extent of political participation. After the second transition to democratic rule, RPP and Justice Party (JP) emerged as the main political parties in the system JP was to a great extent the successor of DP. Unlike DP’s outlook, JP pursued a conciliatory politics between its electorate, the bureaucracy and military.

RPP on the other hand experienced great transformation especially after the contention between Bülent Ecevit and İsmet İnönü was resolved on behalf of Ecevit. RPP tried to redefine its location and objectives in political system after the change in political leadership. RPP applied the concept of “left of center” to define its location on political spectrum. As a result, the ties between old guardian elite of party and its new politicians loosened, at the same time the ideological ties between RPP and military was weakened and RPP became

more radical in terms of its ideology and policy priorities (Sunar and Sayarı, 1986: 176).

What one witnesses primarily as characteristics of political system after late 1960s and 1970s were the fragmentation and polarization of political system. Political parties in that period partially broke their linkages with bureaucracy and gained to some degree of autonomy. Nevertheless, new determining concept resorted by political parties to identify themselves was the “leftist-rightist” dichotomy. The sub categories under the rightist wing were nationalist, conservative and religious. On the other hand, there were a variety of Marxist and leftist parties in political life. Hence, development of new ideological orientation in terms of right-left wings, to a great extent under the strong effect of the Cold War confrontation on the global level, led to the political fragmentation in political parties. Hence, political party leaders, in order to identify themselves or to gain elections, emphasized and even exaggerated their minor differences. This fragmentation, which paved the way for political polarization among political elite, later on resulted in the politicization of masses in terms of right and left wings in 1970s. Despite the superficially slight differences between the parties’ avowed programs the extreme party loyalty prevailed in Turkish political life (Frey, 1965: 303). Establishment of stable governments failed due to weak coalitions; the political system encountered with a new crisis, which brought about the second direct military intervention into the Turkish politics.

The 1980 Military Coup and Re-Shaping of Political System

The beginning of 1960s under the auspices of the military surveillance ironically witnessed the expansion of the liberties, but after a while, restriction of rights in terms of political, legal and economic spheres was put into practice in 1970s by the pressure of the military. And after the military intervention in 1980, almost all political activities restricted. The ties between political, societal and economic groups and bodies cut off. The main emphasis was on the economic development; hence, an economic liberalism was put into effect by the military and later Özal rule. Since the liberal economic policies of the era after 1980 is beyond the scope of this study, I concentrate on the effects of the military intervention and displacement of the 1961 Constitution with a new one, namely 1982 Constitution on the political system and especially on political parties.

One of the results of 1982 Constitution was the restriction of political participation; for instance students, military and public officials, who constituted the great portion of the electorate, have not been allowed to actively participate in political parties. Hence that situation has ensured the participation of a limited portion of population, mainly peasants, businesspersons, and artisans, in politics. The historical consequence of restrictions on party programs and limits on participation has been the weak institutionalization of party system and democracy.⁶

⁶ According to the current Turkish Constitution, Article 68:

“Citizens have the right to form political parties and duly join and withdraw from them. One must be over eighteen years of age to become a member of a party.

Political parties are indispensable elements of democratic political life.

Political parties shall be formed without prior permission, and shall pursue their activities in accordance with the provisions set forth in the Constitution and laws.

The statutes and programs, as well as the activities of political parties shall not be contrary to the independence of the State, its indivisible integrity with its territory and nation, human rights, the principles of equality and rule of law, sovereignty of the nation, the principles of the democratic and secular republic; they shall not aim to

Secondly, related to first reason and one of the main problems of today, political elites who have pioneered different political parties and movements have not shown great differences in terms of their programs and ideologies. However, political parties and their leaders hardly accept other parties as legitimate.

The problems of democracy after 1980 coup, surely carrying the problems of previous periods, can be summarized as follows: There have been many parties in the multi party politics from a quantitative approach, but those parties have preserved the principles of one-party politics and system when analyzed qualitatively; e.g., democratization within political parties has been weak, and with few exceptions, “founding leader remains in office until he dies”⁷; the conception of politics in terms of dichotomies such as “we-they”, “modernizer-traditionalist”, “secular-religious”, “Turk--non-Turk”, and “patriot-betrayer” still persist⁸. Political parties hardly can stand each other, though, the Turkish political parties’ position in 1980s, the programs and ideologies of a great number of parties overlap^{9,10}.

Conclusion

The main cause of the conflict in Turkish politics may be assigned to modernization from

promote or establish class or group dictatorship or dictatorship of any kind, nor shall they incite citizens to crime. Judges and prosecutors, members of higher judicial organs including those of the Court of Accounts, civil servants in public institutions and organizations, other public servants who are not considered to be labourers by virtue of the services they perform, members of the armed forces and students who are not yet in higher education, shall not become members of political parties.

The membership of the teaching staff at higher education to political parties is regulated by law. This law shall not allow those members to assume responsibilities outside the central organs of the political parties and it also sets forth the regulations which the teaching staff at higher education institutions shall observe as members of political parties in the higher education institutions.

The principles concerning the membership of students at higher education to political parties are regulated by law.

The State shall provide the political parties with adequate financial means in an equitable manner. The principles regarding aid to political parties, as well as collection of dues and donations are regulated by law.” (The Grand National Assembly of Turkey, “Constitution of the Republic of Turkey”, http://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf)

⁷ Samuel P. Huntington (1970: 30-32) determines that death in office is one of the main characteristics of one party system. Turkish case, to a great extent, in that point resembles one party system, the only exception is the existence of more than one party. The founder of the Turkish Republic M. Kemal Atatürk died when he was in office as the First President of the Republic. İsmet İnönü, the second President of Turkey, was in office for a long time as the leader of the RPP from 1930s till 1970s. After transition to democracy, Adnan Menderes was in office till his execution; Süleyman Demirel and Turgut Özal left party leadership provided that they became presidents, Özal was in office till his death in 1993; Demirel desired strongly to replace parliamentarism with presidentialism, so to become a strong president for a second term but he was to leave the office because his term of presidency ended. The leader of National Order Party, and National Salvation Party was Necmettin Erbakan, and he was the leader of Welfare Party till its prohibition by law. Erbakan died when he was the leader of Felicity Party. Bülent Ecevit once the leader of RPP, and died after leaving the leadership of Democratic Left Party because of severe illness. It must also be noted that the leader of the National Action Party, Alparslan Türkeş, holding the leadership when he died.

⁸ Again following Huntington, we can determine that current Turkish politics inherits the characteristics of one party system. Huntington claims that: “The ideology of a one-party system identifies a chosen people or constituency, targets an enemy, proclaims the necessity for a struggle against the enemy, and holds forth the assurance of ultimate victory. Strong one-party systems come into being only when there is an explicit recognition of the difference between “we” and “they” and of the necessity for conflict between the two”. See, Huntington (1970: 13).

⁹ For similar views on the problems of party system in Turkish politics, see, Sadak (1947), Helm (1954), Ülken (1963), Bozdağ (1975) and Sunar (1994).

above and to the vague and fragile compromise held in late 1940s between guardians and politicians; it was fragile because both Kemalists and non Kemalists, even anti Kemalists have sustained the historical experiences of authoritarian single party era and its exclusionary policies in their memories after the transition. This situation has prevented the formation of a virtually real consensus on democratization.

Furthermore the main principles of one party system embedded in the political and constitutional structure; e.g., political parties are to admit the Kemalist principles taken for granted. Hence the effects of one party system continued in two forms: First, the boundaries of political system have been drawn in a strict and limited sense that no political party could have entirely surmounted the ideology of one party, the principles of Atatürk Revolution. All political parties had to accept those principles to a great extent, otherwise they would be regarded as a threat to the Republic.

Another problem is related to the lack of a clear cut differentiation between political organizations and other institutions in terms of their functions in the system and lack of determined programs. Hence, political parties and their leaders do not hesitate to develop community linkages and to cooperate with other institutions, especially non democratic (sometimes anti democratic) institutions like military, to attain political power. Here the role that military plays is to be considered; because military interventions in politics or military coups whatever the causes applied to justify the interventions have prevented the institutionalization of democracy, political system and party politics. The conception of military as the guardian of regime is considered and justified so far in Turkish history and political culture, but the other side of the issue is ignored or given little attention in general. As Henry Bienen clarifies the point:

...Most militaries have shown a great reluctance to create political parties with grass-roots lives of their own because this threatens the militaries' own monopoly of power. At times, when the military has created such parties or allowed them to be created, it has not very much liked its own handiwork and has reintervened (Bienen, 1983: 13; also see, Clapham, 1985: 156-157).

What can be deduced when democratization experience of Turkey is considered is that a weakly institutionalized democracy prevents the institutionalization of political parties, and, in addition, military intervention into the politics leads to the weak institutionalization of political parties and political party system, and vice versa. However, one of the most important of all those factors is that the absence of civic culture constitutes an intractable obstacle on the democratization process. When analyzing the dilemmas of democratization in Turkey, the focal attention is to be given to the degree of development of civil society, that is, to what extent Turkish society developed in terms of civic attitudes, organizations, and institutionalization independent of primordial, hierarchical and patron client relations. This necessitates, surely, the development of individuality, and, at the same time, the emancipation of politicians and individuals from primordial and power relations embedded in all spheres of the society.

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Yukarıdan Modernleşme Bağlamında Türkiye’de Demokratikleşme Çıkmazı

H. EMRE BAĞCE

Özet: Türkiye’de demokrasinin kurumsallaşması ile ilgili sorunların anlaşılabilmesi için Osmanlı toplum ve siyasal yapısının dikkate alınması ve Türk modernleşmesinin üzerine kurulduğu temel ilkelerin sıkı şekilde gözden geçirilmesi gerekir. Yeni devletin kuruluşundan 1980’lere kadarki dönemi kapsayan bu makalede Türk modernleşmesinin “yukarıdan aşağıya” doğru uygulanışının demokrasinin kurumsallaşmasını ve sağlam dayanaklar üzerinde yükselmesini engellediği tartışılmıştır. Siyasetin toplumsallaşamamış olması, dolayısıyla dar bir çerçevede kalması bu zaafın derinleşmesine ve siyasal, bürokratik ve askeri elitler halk arasındaki karşıtlığın kronikleşmesine yol açmıştır. Zaman zaman uygulanan popülist politikalar da bu sorunu aşamadığı gibi, patrimonyal ilişkileri yeniden üreterek demokrasinin gelişimi ile sıkı şekilde bağlantılı bulunan sivil ve siyasal bir toplumun oluşumunu engellemiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Demokrasi, siyasal kültür, sivil toplum, yukarıdan modernleşme, Türkiye