

## IS TURKEY IN A VICIOUS CYCLE?: AN ANALYSIS ON ROSANVALLON’S CRITICISM OF THE WELFARE STATE

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### ABSTRACT

Pierre Rosanvallon’s criticism of the welfare state, since he considers the welfare state not only as an economic structure but also as a socio-cultural structure, offers a different perspective compared to neo-liberal criticisms that directly oppose the welfare state and claim that it has come to an end. Rosanvallon’s analysis of the reasons for the collapse of the welfare state in the 1980s can actually be read as a last and brave effort to revive the welfare state. In this study, Rosanvallon’s findings will be read in terms of showing why and how the principle of the “welfare state”, which although its roots can be seen in an earlier period in Turkey, found a permanent place in the political vocabulary of the state with the 1961 Constitution, works dysfunctionally, and beyond that, how it combines with the traditional authoritarian structure of the state apparatus and turns the state into the “boss” of civil society and how it undermines the concept of the “individual” in the daily lives of the Turkish people. In this sense, the article analyzes Rosanvallon’s work to revive the welfare state, and uses it to identify the damages inflicted on civil society and political culture by the Republic of Turkey, which has an authoritarian face reinforced by military coups, and to present a roadmap to eliminate these damages with an updated reading of the welfare state. Using Rosanvallon’s understanding of the welfare state, the article explains how the relationship between authoritarianism and tutelage systems and the welfare state creates a vicious circle, and questions how this vicious circle can be broken with a re-imagined understanding of the welfare state.

**Keywords:** Welfare State, Civil Society, Turkish Politics, Military Tutelage, Authoritarianism.

## TÜRKİYE KISIR DÖNGÜDE Mİ?: ROSANVALLON’UN REFAH DEVLETİ ELEŐTİRİSİ ÜZERİNE BİR ANALİZ

### ÖZET

Pierre Rosanvallon’un refah devleti eleřtirisi, refah devletini sadece ekonomik yapı olarak görmenin ötesinde, sosyo-kültürel bir yapı olarak da ele alması nedeniyle, refah devletine doğrudan karşı çıkan ve artık ömrünü tamamladığını iddia eden neo-liberal eleřtirilere nazaran daha farklı bir bakış açısı sunmaktadır. Rosanvallon’un refah devletinin 80’li yıllardaki çöküşünün nedenleri üzerine yaptığı analiz, aslında refah devletini tekrar diriltmeye yönelik son ve cesur bir çaba olarak da okunabilir. Bu çalışmada, Rosanvallon’un ortaya koyduğu tespitler, Türkiye’de her ne kadar kökleri daha erken dönemde görülebilsede 1961 Anayasası ile devletin siyasi lügatinde kalıcı yer bulmuş “refah devleti” ilkesinin neden ve nasıl işlevsiz bir şekilde çalıştığını, bunun da ötesinde, devlet aygıtının geleneksel otoriter yapısıyla birleşerek devleti nasıl sivil toplumun “patronu” hâline getirdiğini ve Türk halkının gündelik yaşamışında “birey” kavramının altını nasıl eşelediğini göstermesi bakımından okunacaktır. Bu anlamıyla makalede, Rosanvallon’un refah devletine can vermek için giriştiğı çalışma analiz edilerek, askeri darbelerle de perçinlenmiş otoriter bir çehresi olan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin sivil topluma ve siyasal kültüre verdiği zararları tespit etmek ve güncellenmiş bir refah devleti okumasıyla bu zararları ortadan kaldırmaya yönelik bir yol haritası sunmak

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amacıyla kullanılmıřtır. Makale, Rosanvallon'un refah devleti anlayıřını kullanarak, otoriteryanizm ve vesayet sistemleri ile refah devleti arasındaki iliřkinin nasıl bir kısırđöngü yarattıđını açıklamakta ve yeniden kurgulanmıř bir refah devleti anlayıřıyla bu kısırđöngüden nasıl çıkılabileceđini sorgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Refah Devleti, Sivil Toplum, Türk Siyaseti, Askeri Vesayet, Otoriteryanizm.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The main topic of discussion of the study is that the policies of the Republic of Turkey, which was founded with the authoritarian state mentality inherited from the Ottoman Empire, which always and in every matter focused on the state, and this authoritarian face of the state, which was periodically reinforced with military coups, overlapped with the welfare state policies that experienced their brightest period especially in the 1960s, and produced much more effective results on the sociological basis than would normally be expected from an authoritarian system, and since these results left deep sociological traces, the welfare state understanding has become permanent, even though the Republic of Turkey has experienced various breaks from pure welfare state policies after the 1980s. This situation has the risk of pushing Turkey into a vicious cycle from which it will not be able to escape, due to the fact that the welfare state has been incorrectly constructed or the disruptions experienced in its implementation have been combined with an authoritarian statist management mentality.

Therefore, a way out of this sociological vicious cycle should be sought and the main suggestion of the study is that the criticisms of the welfare state by Pierre Rosanvallon, one of the contemporary thinkers who has been working on the welfare state in the recent period, can open a way out if they are carefully analyzed and taken into consideration. Thus, in the first part of the study, the basic framework of the authoritarian state understanding that Turkey has, reflected on the society through both public policies and military coups, will be presented and the negative consequences that these historical lines have when combined with welfare state policies will be discussed. In the other half and the last sections of the study, the foundations of Rosanvallon's thought will be explored and the sociological perspective he put forward to repair the negative aspects of the welfare state will be included and how this can create a roadmap for Turkey will be discussed.

The welfare state should be evaluated as a structure that determines not only the economic functions of modern political systems but also their social legitimacy mechanisms. Pierre Rosanvallon considered the welfare state not only as a sum of social expenditures but also as a tool that institutionalizes values such as democratic participation, social justice and collective belonging (Rosanvallon, 2004:98). According to him, the welfare state not only alleviates poverty but also strengthens the bond of citizenship and builds the inclusiveness and legitimacy of politics. In this context, Rosanvallon's welfare state theory provides a convenient framework for understanding certain forms of political regimes thanks to the relationship it establishes between the legitimacy bases of political power and the social role of the state.

In Turkey's recent political history, tutelary structures, the influence of the bureaucratic oligarchy and increasingly evident authoritarian tendencies have brought the state's relationship with society to a problematic ground. In this context, the formation of welfare state institutions has emerged not only as an economic but also as a political struggle area. In this study, based on Rosanvallon's welfare state approach, how welfare policies in Turkey are articulated to the tutelage regime and bureaucratic power structures will also be included.

Rosanvallon's criticisms of the welfare state differ from other contemporary scholars, especially in his evaluation of this structure as an "invisible" or "silent" figure in modern democracies: One of Rosanvallon's most striking criticisms is that the welfare state represents not only an economic structure but also a democratic form of social relations (Rosanvallon, 2004:93). According to him, the welfare state does not only provide economic security to individuals, but also serves to realize democratic values such as establishing social justice, securing equality and citizenship rights (Rosanvallon, 2004:94, 103). This perspective, especially with the rise of

neoliberalism, argues that the welfare state should exist for the purpose of strengthening the social contract rather than providing only economic benefits. At this point, Rosanvallon finds it insufficient to criticize the welfare state solely on the basis of economic efficiency and productivity, and emphasizes that the state should function for the public good. While other contemporary scholars in their critiques of the welfare state often focus on its size and costs, Rosanvallon discusses more of its role as a tool to strengthen democracy.

When examined carefully, it can be seen that Pierre Rosanvallon's critique of the welfare state offers a more historical, social and democratic perspective than the approach of other contemporary scholars, viewing the welfare state not only as an economic structure but also as a form of democracy and social relations. His approach suggests that criticisms of the welfare state should be evaluated in a broader social and political context rather than being discussed solely in terms of economic efficiency and the cost of the state. Therefore, Rosanvallon's approach provides a much more useful tool when analyzing the social damage caused by the welfare state practices combined with authoritarianism in Turkey.

However, in order to ensure the integrity of the narrative, before examining Rosanvallon's analysis in detail, it is necessary to explain the roots of Turkey's basic authoritarian structure and the relationship of this structure with welfare state practices. After that, Rosanvallon's analysis will be examined and whether it is a new roadmap for Turkey will be discussed. At this point, it is essential to underline that the study does not merely adopt an abstract or philosophical critique of the welfare state but situates Rosanvallon's analysis in direct dialogue with the specific political conditions of Turkey. In particular, concepts such as tutelage, bureaucratic oligarchy, and authoritarian governance - which have historically shaped Turkish political life - are examined through the lens of Rosanvallon's understanding of the welfare state as a structure deeply tied to democratic legitimacy and social trust. Rosanvallon's criticism that the welfare state in modern democracies often turns into an invisible or silent mechanism aligns with the Turkish case, where welfare mechanisms have functioned under the shadow of an entrenched state-centric mentality. This situation has led to a paradox: While the welfare state ostensibly aims to promote social cohesion, in the Turkish context it has often reinforced the top-down, bureaucratic and paternalistic control of the citizenry, deepening democratic deficits. Therefore, the study aims to trace how the structural problems of Turkish democracy - especially those tied to tutelary institutions and authoritarian reflexes - interfere with the normative goals of the welfare state, and how Rosanvallon's thought provides a conceptual framework to understand and eventually transcend this entanglement.

Moreover, Rosanvallon's emphasis on the welfare state as a democratic institution - one that is not merely distributive but also participatory and reflective of collective will - offers a compelling counterpoint to the Turkish experience, where welfare policies have often been implemented without meaningful civic engagement or democratic accountability. In Turkey, the welfare state has frequently been instrumentalized by a centralized bureaucracy or military-backed tutelary mechanisms to consolidate state power rather than empower citizens. Rosanvallon's critique urges a rethinking of this model by proposing a welfare state rooted in reciprocal trust, transparency, and active citizenship. By highlighting the necessity of social dialogue, democratic representation, and a sense of mutual responsibility, his approach provides a normative path away from authoritarian patterns and toward a more inclusive and democratically grounded welfare model. In this way, Rosanvallon's framework not only diagnoses the sociological consequences of combining authoritarianism with welfare but also suggests institutional and cultural reforms necessary to break Turkey's cyclical crisis of governance.

## **2. TURKEY AS AN EXAMPLE OF “AUTHORITARIAN” WELFARE STATE**

Although the authoritarian state approach and welfare state practices in Turkey seem to be two different concepts at first glance, they have overlapping aspects from time to time. As can be understood from examples such as the Social-Welfare Legislation (1883) in Bismarck's Imperial Germany and the Swiss Factory Act of 1877, the welfare state emerged in the 19th century and is a state approach that generally fulfills social state functions such as ensuring the economic security of individuals, reducing income inequality, and expanding health and education services (Topak, 2012:39). But the authoritarian state refers to a form of government that has existed since the earliest periods of the state apparatus in history, where freedom of thought and expression is limited, and the opposition and the press are repressed, under the rule of a generally centralist, strong political center (Karahanoğulları & Türk, 2018:406).

However, historically in Turkey, authoritarian governments have adopted welfare state policies or used these policies to consolidate their own power. The overlapping points between the development of the welfare state concept in Turkey and authoritarian governments have been shaped by the strong intervention of the state and the relationship of the people with the state. This overlap has sometimes led to the use of welfare state policies as a tool to increase the state's control over the people. In order to better understand the relationship between the authoritarian state concept and welfare state practices, it is important to look at the historical development and interaction of these two phenomena.

The Ottoman Empire had a state structure based on a strong centralized administration approach from the beginning. The empire had established a strong hierarchy to protect the authority of the central government, especially in terms of the administrative distribution of the vast conquered lands and their administration. The foundations of authoritarianism in the Ottoman Empire were roughly based on four elements: According to the absolute monarchy approach, the sultan was both the political and religious leader of the state, which gave him absolute authority. The sultan's decisions were absolute and unchangeable (Kunt, 2008:86-87). On the other hand, the administrative structure of the state in the Ottoman Empire, especially after the 16th century, became quite centralized. This centralization restricted the autonomy of local governments against the central authority. In addition, the bureaucracy based on the devshirme system was an element that strengthened the power of the central government. Young men were recruited to join the high-ranking military and civil bureaucracy of the Ottoman Empire, which increased the state's control over its subjects (Kunt, 2008:83-84). Finally, the Ottoman social structure was divided into certain classes and the majority of the population was excluded from the administration. The strict distinctions between these classes weakened the ties of large segments of society with the administration and the state, while at the same time making the powerful and oppressive structure of the state sustainable (Kurtaran, 2011:62).

Although the Ottoman Empire was far from a modern understanding of the welfare state, it occasionally created limited social assistance and support mechanisms to protect the public and especially low-income segments. However, these aids were generally provided through mechanisms such as foundations and religious institutions of the state or Ahi Order (Topak, 2012:174). The concept of aid and support in the Ottoman Empire was shaped more as a social responsibility and a religious obligation in order to control the society. Naturally, the state's control over society reinforced the divisions between social segments. The people were divided into social segments based on both religion and economy within a more feudal structure. The limited intervention of the state caused the marginalized and disadvantaged segments of society to need

more assistance. Peasants, the poor and minorities were important among these segments (Özkoray, 2021:328). Social assistance and the state's control over the people were mostly based on religious foundations. Within the framework of the social justice principles of Islam, the state's duty was to fulfill religious obligations while also looking after the welfare of the people. However, when religious assistance was used as a tool to guide society, it reinforced the people's commitment to the state's ideologies and central structure (Özkoray, 2021:311).

With the declaration of the Republic, far from abandoning this perspective, the centralized structure of the state was strengthened and direct interventions towards the welfare of the people increased. However, the welfare state concept in this period also began to be used for the purpose of controlling certain segments of the society and strengthening the central power of the state. During the Single Party Period, the state's intervention in social policies served the purpose of taking certain classes under greater control, directing the people towards the policies of the state and ensuring social order (Mutlu, 2013:66). In the early years of the Republic, welfare state practices<sup>2</sup> were under the control of the central bureaucracy. This made it possible for social welfare to be provided by institutions under the strong control and management of the state and therefore supported an authoritarian bureaucratic structure. Welfare state policies were shaped as an extension of the strong intervention and centralized structure of the state. Therefore, social aids such as education, health and job security increased the commitment of the society to the policies of the state and social harmony was achieved in return for these aids.

During this period, known as the Single Party Period (1923-1950), the young Republic experienced a time in which the Republican People's Party (CHP) founded by Atatürk was dominant as a single party. During this era, Kemalist reforms, although implemented rapidly, were often implemented unilaterally by the state without the participation and approval of the people (Cem, 2009:250-252). Again, various practices implemented to strengthen the principle of secularism were another element that reinforced the strong authority of the state. These practices aimed to fundamentally change the social structure, but were radical and coercive for the majority of the people.<sup>3</sup> The idea that religion and state affairs should be separated was sometimes dictated by the central authority, despite the religious sensitivities of the people (Şan, 2012:11-13). This situation was another element that strengthened the legitimacy of the authoritarian state. While the CHP maintained its single-party rule, it blocked the way for dissenting views and some left, right, liberal and religious groups were excluded from politics. Events such as the Sheikh Said Rebellion in 1925, the Free Republican Party movement in 1930, and the Wealth Tax in the 1940s were used to legitimize the government's harsh interventions to suppress dissident ideas (Baysal, 2022:39; Gülmez & Cesur, 2021:1315). The single-party government led by Atatürk essentially had the characteristics of a one-man government. Although Atatürk had the respect of the vast majority of the people, he had absolute control over every aspect of the regime. All important decisions were

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<sup>2</sup> Examples of these practices include policies in the field of education and health: During this period, the expansion of health and education services was carried out in accordance with the welfare state approach. For instance, health centers were established in villages and rural areas, and policies were implemented to expand education. In addition, the state established active social assistance practices for workers and civil servants, as well as social insurance and retirement systems. Such systems constitute early examples of welfare state practices in Turkey (Buğra, 2019:114, 120-122).

<sup>3</sup> The three most widely known examples of these practices can be given: The Presidency of Religious Affairs was established, and religious activities were taken under the control of the state, thus restricting all religious movements that were contrary to the state's understanding of secularism (Koçak, 2009:136). In addition, practices such as the shutting down of schools providing religious education (madrasas) and the prohibition of dervish lodges directly contradicted the religious beliefs of the people, and these reforms imposed by the state caused serious reactions in large segments of society. Finally, with the Law of Unification of Education (Tevhid-i Tedrisat) accepted in 1924, the education system was unified, and an education in line with the state's ideology began to be provided. In addition, social transformation reforms such as the Turkish Alphabet Reform, the Clothing Reform, and the Hat Law were also elements that strengthened the state's influence on the cultural structure of the people (Kılıç, 1995:532).



made at the highest levels of the state, especially under Atatürk's leadership (Koçak, 2008:157). This situation limited the people's participation in politics and narrowed the influence of local governments.

Even after the Democrat Party period opened the doors to a more liberal period economically, the welfare policies implemented since the Single Party Period largely continued during this period. On the other hand, although it entered the political scene with a more "liberal" claim, the authoritarian tendencies of the government continued during the DP period. The Menderes government took various steps to encourage economic development and increase economic freedoms, but at the same time it tried to suppress political opposition and social criticism. After the DP's second term in power (1954), opposition parties and the press have constantly become the government's target. The Republican People's Party and other minor parties in particular have often been subject to various restrictions by the state. The freedom of press has been further restricted, and anti-government publications have been blocked (Bulunmaz, 2012:208). On the other hand, the DP has resorted to various electoral manipulations to maintain its success in the elections and has made election security questionable. In addition, the DP has occasionally changed electoral laws and electoral districts in order to maintain its grip on power (Alacı, 2021:466).<sup>4</sup> Finally, in the last years of its rule, the DP increased its influence on the law and the judiciary and weakened the independence of the judiciary. In particular, the DP's political opponents and those with opposing views were suppressed through the law and unjust arrests were made. The Democrat Party frequently resorted to political arrests to suppress its political opponents and opposing ideas (Alacı, 2021:467).

The 1960 Coup emerged as a result of deep crises in Turkey's economic and political structure. In the 1950s, the economic policies implemented by the DP government resulted in external dependency, high external debts, inflation and economic imbalances, which created great unrest among the people (Boratav 2008:347-348). The free market-oriented policies pursued by the DP government deepened problems such as contractions in the agricultural sector and the inadequacy of the industrialization process. In addition, the DP government's limited state intervention in the economy brought about a high unemployment rate and social insecurity (Takım, 2012:169). Moreover, the DP's emphasis on religious values led to social divisions and had an impact on the trust of the public segments supporting the founding ideology in the state. The DP government, which was a period when religious segments were stripped of the state's authoritarianism, created a counter-stance against the state's authoritarianism in secular segments. This would increase social polarization and be one of the paths leading to the 1960 coup. In this environment, while the military government came to power with the 1960 Coup, a radical economic, social and legal change was initiated in Turkey. After the military intervention, the 1961 Constitution was prepared and this constitution included important regulations that would lay the foundations for the establishment of a social welfare state. The 1961 Constitution emphasized that the state should not only provide legal order but also be responsible for improving the living standards of its citizens, reducing inequalities and ensuring economic development (Durdu, 2019:115). This constitution adopted an approach that specifically envisaged the state providing basic services such as health, education and social security, and laid the foundations of a system that increased social rights and economic security. Within the framework of the welfare state

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<sup>4</sup> The most popular example of this situation is the conversion of Kırşehir into a district. Kırşehir, which did not vote for the Democrat Party in the general elections of May 2, 1954, was made a district as a punishment and connected to Nevşehir on July 20, 1954. Even within the Democrat Party, voices were raised about the absurdity of the incident and as a result, the city was converted into a province again on July 1, 1957 and the mistake was corrected (Kırşehir Ticaret ve Sanayi Odası, 2023).

approach, state intervention in the economy, social policies and investments were expected to increase.

Economically, the 1961 Constitution foresaw state investments that would ensure the development of agriculture and industry in line with Turkey's development goals. During this period, the state intervened in the economic growth and development process, especially to encourage infrastructure projects, industrial investments and agricultural reforms. Economic growth was supported by domestic demand-oriented industrialization and import substitution policies aimed at reducing external dependency. In addition, the state's social policies aimed at reducing inequalities in income distribution were strengthened with regulations such as the protection of workers' rights and union rights (Yay, 2014:156-157).

In the 1960s, the state tried to shape the lives of the people with authoritarian welfare state practices. During this period, the state's interventions in economic and social areas increased. The government aimed to reduce unemployment and poverty with large public investments and infrastructure projects, and in this process, job security and social rights were expanded in parallel with the growth of the public sector. The state's economic and social policies especially increased access to public services and aimed to improve the welfare levels of the broad masses (Topak, 2012:188). Examples of this include regulations made in the fields of health, education and social security. As a result, the authoritarian face of the state could only tolerate the social freedoms that came with the welfare state concept for a short time, and wanted "welfare" to be understood not in the context of social freedoms and democratic rights, but purely and simply as an economic redistribution mechanism with the state at the center. In a strange manner, welfare state policies, the logic of "feeding" the people by the state, and the state's portrayal of a "stern father feeding his children" also benefited the coup plotters (Avcioğlu, 1996:1189, 1202-1204).

The economic security and social services provided by the state aimed to ensure social peace, while also legitimizing the authoritarian structure of the state. In return for the opportunities and assurances provided by the state, the people submitted to the authority of the state and showed less resistance to the decisions of the state. For example, the fact that the people did not react at all to the execution of Menderes, who had won the hearts of a significant portion of the people during his political rule, and that even the Justice Party did not pay enough attention to this issue, the opportunities promised by the 1961 Constitution on paper, the development policies regarding the poor and shantytowns that came to the agenda after the coup, and the authority of the military junta in power gain meaning when read together (Buğra, 2019:182; Fedayi, 2019:136). This situation signals an environment where the economic aid provided by the state, especially for the poor and rural areas, has turned into a kind of loyalty relationship. However, the political climate created by the 1961 Constitution paved the way for leftist movements and led to a clear reaction against the authoritarian aspect of the state among the urban and university-educated segment of the population.

This reaction was attempted to be stopped with the memorandum dated 12 March 71, but it gave way to an environment of political instability and chaos that would last until the 12 September coup. In the periods of military coups in Turkey, the state-society relationship was shaped as a tutelary and interventionist structure operating from top to bottom, rather than a bond based on democratic participation. The state regarded the society as an object that needed to be guided within the ideological framework it defined; citizens, on the other hand, were excluded from decision-making processes and pushed into a passive position. This situation was clearly observed in the 1960 and 1980 coups: The constitutional order was redefined, political parties were closed, union activities were suspended, and the area of civil society was greatly narrowed. In this context, the state derived its legitimacy not from the consent of the people, but from a "superior mind"



position nourished by the discourse of order and stability. Society, on the other hand, was seen as an area that was not trusted and needed to be controlled.

With the long-term impact of the coup periods, the state-society relationship evolved into a fragile, insecure, and one-sided relationship rather than establishing a democratic and horizontal structure. In particular, the changes made at the constitutional and institutional level in the post-1980 period (for instance, the 1982 Constitution) served to construct a system that limited individual rights and restricted the political capacity of society. During this process, civil society organizations were weakened, participatory culture failed to develop, and the “watchman” role of the state was further strengthened. Instead of the state’s awareness of being responsible to the people, the understanding that the people should obey the state became institutionalized. As a result, coups transformed the state-society relationship in Turkey into an authoritarian consent production mechanism, moving it away from the democratic legitimacy, social recognition, and participation principles described by Pierre Rosanvallon.

Although the authoritarian spirit of the state was revealed once again with the coup of 1980, the Turgut Özal government, with the wind given by the new-right trend in the world, embarked on policies that would help tear at least the mask of the welfare state from the authoritarian fabric of the state: The January 24 Decisions (1980), prepared by Turgut Özal, who was currently the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry, began to be implemented when Özal was appointed as the Deputy Prime Minister Responsible for Economy. While torture and oppression came to the fore as general characteristics of the period, everything in the name of democracy lost its meaning and this last coup was placed in the history of Turkey as a dark stain not only in terms of democracy but in every aspect. The 1982 Constitution, created after the coup, went down in history as the strictest and the most stringent Constitution in the history of the Republic of Turkey. This “rigidity” also applies to the implementation of welfare state principles. Although the Coup was carried out in order to implement the January 24 Decisions that heralded neo-liberal economic policies, the most important feature of the 1982 Constitution is that it emphasizes again that the Republic of Turkey is a welfare state. Even so, Turgut Özal’s policies were an important turning point in Turkey, symbolizing the break from the welfare state approach. The free market economy and liberal reforms he implemented in the early 1980s significantly reduced the role of the state in the economy, and state intervention was limited, giving more space to the private sector. Privatization, opening up to the outside world and export incentives accelerated Turkey’s integration into global markets, liberalized imports and ensured that domestic production was shaped by international competition. These new-right policies encouraged a market-oriented economic model, in contrast to the protectionist and statist structure of the welfare state (Duman, 2011:111).

The tax reforms implemented by Özal, changes in the social security system and restrictions on social expenditures reduced the state’s intervention rate in social policies. Solutions based on individual insurance systems were proposed in the field of social security, and state expenditures in areas such as health, education and social assistance were reduced. These policies caused the welfare state model to emphasize market-driven individual solutions instead of social assistance and state support, and limited the state’s role in social services (Akdoğan, 2010:3). While Özal’s reforms shifted Turkey’s economic structure towards a market-friendly model, they represented a significant deviation from the welfare state’s understanding of social security. After 1980, while the neo-liberal reforms in Turkey seemingly reduced the role of the state purely in the economic field, the welfare state concept was preserved at a constitutional level. However, social inequality increased with neo-liberal policies, and the state’s social control continued to increase due to factors such as terror and religious reactionism. While neo-liberal economic policies, on the

one hand, try to reduce the size of the state, on the other hand, due to the increase in actors such as mafia and bankers who try to use the market irregularly in the areas vacated by the state, it has also created a need to reconsider the state's control and welfare state services within a neo-liberal framework (Turan, 2018:163).

During the Özal period in the 1980s, a significant transformation occurred. The dismantling of the welfare state framework through neo-liberal reforms - emphasizing market liberalization, privatization, and reduced state intervention in social services - profoundly altered the state-society relationship. As the state retreated from its welfare role, the direct paternalistic bond between state and citizen weakened. This created a dual effect: The erosion of state authority in social sphere as a first effect can be seen as the reduction of welfare provisions diminished the state's direct presence in citizens' everyday lives, undermining the paternalistic legitimacy that had previously buttressed authoritarian control. Citizens were increasingly expected to navigate social risks through market mechanisms and private initiatives rather than relying on state guarantees. Secondly, the emergence of new social actors and fragmentation was important. The retreat of the welfare state opened space for non-state actors - including private enterprises, religious groups, and informal networks - to provide social support. This pluralization of welfare providers fragmented the once centralized state-society linkage, creating multiple, often competing, sites of loyalty and identity. Social polarization deepened as inequalities widened and different groups experienced uneven access to resources.

Consequently, the state-society duality shifted from a hierarchical, dependent model to a more fragmented and contested relationship. While citizens gained a degree of economic and social autonomy, this was not matched by enhanced democratic participation or political empowerment. Instead, the state's authoritarian core persisted, now expressed through security policies, judicial control, and political tutelage rather than welfare provision. Thus, the dissolution of the welfare state did not lead to a democratization of state-society relations but rather to a reconfiguration marked by social dislocation, inequality, and sustained authoritarian tendencies under a more market-driven facade. During the Özal era, the role of the state in the economic sphere was reduced, public services were commercialized and social expenditures were selectively increased. During this process, state responsibility towards society was transferred to market dynamics, and the citizen-state relationship was transformed from a rights-based bond to a service recipient-customer relationship. This situation led to the erosion of the principle of the "state establishing social ties" emphasized by Rosanvallon, weakening the sense of belonging of citizens to the state and deepening the crises of political representation (Rosanvallon, 2004:100-101). In summary, the rise of the welfare state in Turkey established a paternalistic, centralized state-society relationship that, while authoritarian, created social stability through welfare provision. The decline of this model in the Özal era dismantled this paternalistic bond, leading to fragmented social relations and a less visible but persistent authoritarian state presence - significantly reshaping the nature of state-society duality without resolving its underlying tensions.

Failure to resolve those underlying tensions also revealed another aspect of authoritarianism. Although more freedom and economic freedoms were seen in Turkey towards the end of Özal's term as prime minister and president, these freedoms could not completely break away from the oppressive structure of the state. During this period, many authoritarian characteristics still continued: Especially in the 1990s, with the rise of political Islam, the authoritarianism of the state was reshaped by taking a harsh stance against religious movements. Movements such as the Welfare Party (and as the Justice and Development Party would later experience) frequently encountered military and bureaucratic obstacles during this period (Tunahan, 2015:33). On the other hand, the fact that PKK terrorism, which emerged in the second

half of the 1980s, became seriously threatening was also the reason for the state to implement extremely harsh security policies. These security policies were not limited to military importance, but also manifested themselves in many areas such as media and freedom of expression, with negative effects (Arslan, 2015). This situation has also opened up a space for intervention for the state and, especially in the second half of the 1990s, both for these reasons and under the pretext of terrorism and religious reactionism, it has prepared the ground for interventions by the military wing of the state such as February 28, 1997. All these processes would create social divisions and unrest among the public, and this state of polarization would be Turkey's legacy in the 2000s and beyond (Kasalak & Uçar, 2014:51).

As a result, in Turkey, the authoritarian state approach and welfare state practices have sometimes been complementary and reinforcing elements. While the strong central structure of the state aims to provide economic security and social order, it has also been a tool that has tightened the people's ties with the state. This relationship has not been limited to social assistance and development policies, but has also functioned as a strategy to increase social control: The overlap between the authoritarian state understanding and welfare state practices in Turkey has seriously transformed the social structure. The state's intervention in social policies has complicated the people's relations with the state and led to the strengthening of the centralized structure. However, this process has also increased social inequalities, limited individual freedoms and increased social polarization. Although welfare state policies began to weaken from the 80s onwards, they maintained their place constitutionally and were completely replaced by the state's authoritarian practices due to the political environment of the 80s. By the 90s, this authoritarianism would become tangible through institutions such as the National Security Council and the State Security Court, and the tutelage system would make itself felt in many areas, including the so-called free press, after the February 28 post-modern coup (Kösece & Paşaoğlu, 2021:2168-2171). This entire political fiction would serve no purpose other than polarizing the public base and sowing the seeds of hatred; indeed, it is the dream of every authoritarian system to easily govern a people who are divided and whose object of reaction is directed not at the state but at each other.

In the final analysis, welfare state policies have not led to a change in the authoritarian identity of the state; on the contrary, they have overlapped and integrated with these policies. Although the neo-liberal transformation period in the 1980s was able to create a relative environment of freedom because it somewhat weakened the welfare state, it could not affect the authoritarianism at the core of the state. In fact, the authoritarian spirit of the state returned for various reasons and provided the ground for military interventions in the second half of the 1990s. For now, the narrative on the relationship between authoritarianism and the welfare state in Turkish political life will be interrupted here, and Pierre Rosanvallon's analysis of the welfare state will be examined.

The political narrative surrounding Turkey's welfare state reveals both points of convergence and divergence with Pierre Rosanvallon's theoretical framework. On one hand, there are notable coincidences. Like Rosanvallon, the Turkish case illustrates how welfare mechanisms function as tools of social integration. Welfare programs in Turkey have historically created bonds of loyalty between the state and its citizens, reinforcing a hierarchical relationship wherein the state assumes a paternalistic role. This aligns with Rosanvallon's view that the welfare state was designed to promote social cohesion and reduce societal fractures by embedding individuals within a shared institutional framework. Additionally, Turkey's centralized, state-driven provision of education, healthcare, and social security resonates with Rosanvallon's observation that the modern welfare state emerged through bureaucratic institutions delivering standardized, impersonal services. In both frameworks, welfare provision also serves a political function - acting as a

mechanism to manage dissent, legitimize authority, and ensure stability. Rosanvallon acknowledges that welfare states can pacify social conflict and depoliticize class tensions, a function clearly observable in the Turkish context, particularly during periods of political crisis or authoritarian rule.

However, significant contradictions also emerge when Rosanvallon's normative ideals are measured against the Turkish experience. While Rosanvallon roots the welfare state in democratic traditions and labor struggles, emphasizing its role in the expansion of citizenship and participatory equality, the Turkish welfare model often developed under authoritarian or tutelary regimes. Rather than empowering citizens, it reinforced vertical, clientelist structures and reduced recipients to passive dependents. This stands in stark contrast to Rosanvallon's conception of the welfare state as a vehicle for enhancing autonomy and civic agency. Moreover, the Turkish model has frequently been marked by political selectivity, opacity, and the instrumental use of social programs to reward loyal constituencies - practices that directly conflict with Rosanvallon's emphasis on institutional trust, transparency, and horizontal accountability.

In sum, while the Turkish welfare state coincides with Rosanvallon's theory in terms of its functional role - promoting integration, redistribution, and political legitimacy - it fundamentally diverges in form. It lacks the democratic ethos, egalitarian impulse, and participatory character that Rosanvallon considers essential to a legitimate welfare state. This comparison underscores how welfare mechanisms, though similar in structure, can be embedded within vastly different political logics (democratic or authoritarian) leading to divergent social outcomes. In order to further analyze the authoritarian welfare state practices in Türkiye in Rosanvallon's theory, it is necessary to examine Rosanvallon's welfare state analysis in detail. After this examination below, in the conclusion section, the situation in Turkey in the 2000s and afterwards will be discussed and interpreted together with the possibility of reconsidering the welfare state as suggested by Rosanvallon, and whether the welfare state can be used to shave off the authoritarian structure of the state if it is utilized as suggested by Rosanvallon will be discussed.

### **3. ROSANVALLON'S CRITICISM OF THE WELFARE STATE**

#### **3.1. A THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

According to Pierre Rosanvallon, the welfare state is not only an economic distribution tool but also an institutional expression of democratic legitimacy. The public organization of welfare includes individuals not only in material security but also in public belonging; thus, the state establishes a kind of "moral contract" with its citizens. In this model, the welfare state is a ground for social consensus and is designed as a tool that strengthens the political participation of society, not the centralization of power. However, this understanding can only be realized if the state remains loyal to the principles of transparency, accountability and pluralism.

In Turkey, welfare policies have often been used not as a way to produce democratic legitimacy but as a tool to reinforce the state's own existence. In particular, tutelary approaches and bureaucratic oligarchy have transformed welfare mechanisms into interventionist and controlling tools of power instead of establishing a contract with society. Social aid and public services have been provided with selective and instrumentalized policies that make citizens dependent rather than empowering them. This situation has fostered a ground where authoritarianism is reproduced at the social level, moving away from the democratic welfare state idealized by Rosanvallon. In Turkey's realpolitik structure, welfare has served a function of strengthening the state, not democratizing society.

There are some basic reasons why Rosanvallon's welfare state analysis has been preferred in this study. While many prominent contemporary theorists - particularly since the 1970s - have offered influential critiques of the welfare state, their approaches have generally focused on structural, economic, or class-based dynamics, often with a Western-centric lens. These perspectives have contributed significantly to welfare theory but remain somewhat limited when analyzing contexts like Turkey, where authoritarian political traditions and top-down governance have uniquely shaped welfare policy.

For example, Gøsta Esping-Andersen, in his seminal work *Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990), categorizes welfare states into "liberal," "conservative," and "social democratic" models and examines how political economy structures shape these systems (Esping-Andersen, 1990:32-33). Similarly, Anthony Giddens, through his "Third Way" approach in the 1990s, emphasized reforming the welfare state by incorporating market logic and promoting innovation and efficiency (Giddens, 1998:119, 121-122). David Harvey also critiques the welfare state but from a more radical, anti-neoliberal position, arguing that neoliberalism has eroded social protection and left individuals exposed to the market (Harvey, 2012:508, 534).

British literary critic Terry Eagleton, writing from a Marxist perspective, critiques the welfare state as a structure that may paradoxically reinforce capitalist inequalities, arguing that it should be fundamentally restructured, not merely reformed (Eagleton, 1996:60-61). Though varied in their theoretical commitments, these thinkers share a tendency to anchor their critiques in economic, class-based, or neoliberal dynamics without adequately addressing the sociocultural or political contexts that shape welfare policies in more authoritarian or hybrid regimes.

In contrast, a number of theorists have taken steps to move beyond economic determinism by incorporating cultural and sociological critiques. Nancy Fraser, for instance, makes a compelling case that the welfare state must engage not only with economic inequality but also with cultural injustice, gender discrimination, and identity recognition. In *Justice Interruptus*, she develops the concept of "redistribution and recognition," arguing that social policy must consider intersecting axes of inequality such as gender, race, and class (Fraser, 1997:15, 43). However, her work remains largely situated within gender and feminist theory, and does not directly address the mechanisms of political power or state authoritarianism.

More relevant to this study is the work of French sociologist Robert Castel, who developed the concept of the "society of security" to critique how the welfare state, while offering economic protection, can inadvertently weaken social integration and individual autonomy (Castel, 2017:397, 447). Castel argues that individuals may become dependent on the state and isolated from broader social ties. His work provides a foundational link to Rosanvallon, who extends this line of thought to include how welfare structures influence democratic legitimacy and political participation.

The reason Rosanvallon's thought is preferred in this study is precisely because it brings together the economic, sociological, and political dimensions of the welfare state in a more holistic manner. Unlike the previously mentioned scholars, Rosanvallon frames the welfare state not simply as a redistributive apparatus but as a democratic institution—a tool for realizing social justice, political inclusion, and civic trust (Rosanvallon, 2004:93-94, 103). He critiques the welfare state's evolution into an "invisible" or "silent" actor in modern democracies, warning that it can become technocratic and disconnected from public deliberation and democratic oversight. This is particularly relevant to the Turkish case, where welfare practices are entangled with authoritarian governance, military tutelage, and a bureaucratic oligarchy.



In this sense, Rosanvallon's work serves as both a diagnostic tool and a normative framework: it helps reveal how Turkey's welfare state has failed to foster genuine democratic citizenship, while also suggesting a way forward through renewed focus on transparency, public trust, and participatory legitimacy. This perspective opens space for analyzing the Turkish experience beyond narrow economic terms, addressing how authoritarian legacies distort welfare practices and proposing a more democratic, relational vision of the state that can offer a pathway out of the existing sociopolitical impasse. Making an effective analysis of the crisis that the welfare state has fallen into in the 21st century, Pierre Rosanvallon identifies this crisis and its solutions, and on the other hand, criticizes the definition of state in classical liberalism by examining the works of major liberal thinkers. These criticisms of the author are generally compiled in his work titled "The Crisis of the Welfare State".

Rosanvallon begins his critique of the system by examining the historical background of the welfare state from an earlier date than usual. According to the author, the reason for this is that, in welfare state analyzes limited to the 19th and 20th centuries; the welfare state was seen only as a result of the dynamics of capitalism by both liberal and Marxist theories (Rosanvallon, 2004:20). Accordingly, the welfare state is either a complementary element of social democracy, which is a transition process between capitalism and socialism, or, in a negative sense attributed by some Marxists, "a tool for the social legitimization of the capitalist order" (O'Connor, 1973:242-257).

Rosanvallon puts the emergence of the welfare state at an earlier time (18th century) and claims that it is actually an extension of the modern nation-state, which is the point of the state's modernization process reflected today. Principally, the reason for the evolution from *Ständestaat*<sup>5</sup> to the modern state in Western Europe is that the power accumulated at the center established the individual-state relationship with the mission of "protection". In classical liberal political theory, the assumption that the state was only obliged to "protect" the freedom and rights of the individual, together with the desire to eliminate all threats (against "the others") posed by the sovereign state, paved the way for the modern state (Poggi, 2007:80). In economic terms, with the real emergence of the concept of citizen, the state felt the need to establish social mechanisms that would provide the equivalent of political protection to citizens who could not own property. However, the transformation of the classical protective state into a welfare state in its current sense occurred with the emergence of a dual radicalization that emerged later, that is, democratic and egalitarian movements in late 19th century.

According to this broad historical perspective, one branch of the welfare state is chained to the social contract. Rosanvallon's original idea, based on this point, is that, unlike the view that the welfare state is only a crisis period phenomenon; the reason for the rapid development of the welfare state in crisis periods is that these periods are testing periods in which the social contract is reformulated in some way (Rosanvallon, 2004:27). Especially after the destruction brought about by war periods, a social restructuring occurs each time, the social contract comes closer to its reason for existence, and therefore the nature of the protective/welfare state re-emerges more effectively over and over. But if the welfare state is developing by leaps and bounds, what is the reason for the radical trouble it is in today?

Rosanvallon claims that the reason why the welfare state has entered such a severe crisis has a more socio-political origin than the increase in public expenditures. Accordingly, either the social need for the concepts on which the welfare state is based has decreased, or these concepts have been emptied by interest groups that attack and denigrate the welfare state. In other words, the cause of the crisis is not the failures of the welfare state, but its successes: The welfare state has

<sup>5</sup> A transitional state in the process of evolving from feudalism to a centralized state.



come very close to its initial goal of “guaranteeing minimum abundance” and has managed to significantly reduce the social and economic inequality. However, the concrete impossibility of determining the limit of this “minimum” has naturally led to the unlimitedness of the welfare state program. As a result of the economic differences decreasing with the implementation of the unlimited program, the idea that “the ideal of ensuring inequality has now reached its goal and the need for this ideal has decreased” has gained ground: “If there is a fundamental doubt that shakes the welfare state, it is the question of whether equality is still a value with a future” (Rosanvallon, 2004:33).

On the other hand, in increasingly stratified and fragmented societies, such as India and Brazil, the welfare state is no longer considered the only way of social protection, and this situation is presented as a criticism of the welfare state in itself by some interest groups that are against the welfare state. (Goodin & Klingeman, 1998:597-598)

The only reason why the welfare state is in crisis is not that the concepts on which it is based have lost their value. In addition, especially in the political conjuncture of the last half of the 20th century, the emergence of welfare state practices in a completely mechanical manner, without any elements aimed at revising the social contract in the crisis environment in which it came into being, resulted in the welfare state falling away from its *raison d'être* after 1980s and onward.

However, Rosanvallon points out that this trouble that the welfare state is in has strengthened the hand of liberalism even more and questions whether liberalism is “the only possible way”. He first started by revealing the critical aspect of liberalism. Accordingly, liberalism is a doctrine of social criticism to the extent that it clearly reveals the bureaucratic corruption in the welfare state. However, according to Rosanvallon, the real power of liberalism does not come from this criticism, but from the relativity it reveals when comparing its own principles with the principles of the welfare state: “None of the thinkers mentioned deny the weaknesses of the market; What they are trying to show is that these weaknesses are less than the weaknesses of the bureaucracy” (Rosanvallon, 2004:53). However, this relativity approach is insufficient in itself; because even if this approach can ground a critical discourse, it cannot ensure the formation of a liberal state theory. Right here, Rosanvallon analyzes one by one the efforts of the four thinkers most frequently cited by today’s liberal theorists to create a liberal state theory.

First of all, Rosanvallon makes a meaningful criticism of Adam Smith, the famous Scottish philosopher, and includes Smith’s views that the market cannot regulate the entire economic field in his theory and that a part of the economic field inevitably remains in the public sphere. Indeed, according to Smith, free market conditions can only emerge in a healthy way if there is a public infrastructure (Smith, 2008:5). Thus, Smith justifies state intervention with the quality of the market and perfect competition. However, while granting this approval, he also weakens the criteria for limiting the state that he had previously defined (Rosanvallon, 2004:58). This paradox of Adam Smith manifests itself in the concept of “externality”, which emerged in welfare economies in the first quarter of the 20th century and still exists in today’s scientific studies of public finance. It is thus demonstrated that Smith could not develop an original theory of state that was consistent with his ideas.

Secondly, Rosanvallon deals with Jeremy Bentham’s concepts of “agenda” and “non-agenda”. Accordingly, the area that includes individual freedoms is off the government’s agenda. However, in Bentham’s economic writings, it is emphasized that the government’s intervention in matters within the agenda is sometimes necessary, even though it may have harmful consequences (Bentham, 1962:109). Because there are some situations that directly affect individual actions and need to be corrected: Knowledge, human tendencies and abilities. However, in this case,

Bentham's state limitation is at least as fragile as Smith's, since what is inside the agenda covers more space than what is outside it.

As another thinker, Edmund Burke makes a distinction between public and private spheres and declares that the state should not extend beyond the public sphere. However, the difficulty of precisely defining the public sphere shakes Burke's theory about what the state should and should not intervene in. As a matter of fact, he himself admits that the principles he puts forward contain exceptions, "some of which are temporary" (Hampsher-Monk, 2005:72). On the other hand, the most fundamental point of Burke's state theory, as he was a conservative, is the preservation of social order, which imposes many clear duties on the state.

According to Wilhelm von Humboldt, the last theorist discussed by Rosanvallon, the state should only interfere with security-related issues. Thus, Humboldt returns to the classical definition of the protective state and, based on this, sees only the minimum state as a truly legal state. However, Humboldt does not propose any criteria for those who make the law or the concepts of justice and law to ensure security, which he narrowly defines as *the protection of legitimate freedom* (Humboldt, 2014: 56). Moreover, when the development and rapid expansion of law is considered, Humboldt's contradiction also emerges, and it is this expansion that characterizes modern societies.

Since its inception, liberalism has considered the state with an instrumental approach, but has not been able to concretely determine the characteristics and form of this instrument. One of the reasons for this is the way liberal theory examines the security problem, as seen in the ideas of the thinkers above. Another reason lies within the idea of individualism. For instance, according to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the individual is unique and perfect:

"(...) this collective freedom is a result of human creation. The first law that man obeys is to preserve his existence; the first thing he does is to show the care he owes to himself. As soon as man reaches the age of self-knowledge, he finally becomes his own master, as he has the sole say in valuing the means by which he protects himself." (Rousseau, 2006:4-5)

The most important feature of this kind of radical individualism is that it rejects even the idea of "social context". Society and the state exist only in an instrumental sense, and society is merely a "cooperative structure that produces mutual benefit" (Rawls, 2007:520). In a way, this kind of thinking is a disregard for sociology, because radical individualism clearly ignores the "social". The reason for this is the prejudice that there is a dynamic of "otherization" within the "social". Along with this prejudice, the concept of jealousy that exists in society has not been examined realistically enough. The concept of fairness, which is the basis of the liberal theory of justice, has not been discussed independently of the prerequisite of the absence of jealousy, and it has been suggested that in a developed society, jealousy will be replaced by self-esteem. Thus, the main goal in liberal thought is for individuals to become indifferent to each other (Rosanvallon, 2004:86). However, this idea empties the political field as a reflection of the "social", and the "political" is seen only as a tool for individual actions. Thus, the problem of freedom, which was initially the aim of politics, becomes a completely non-political concept.

### **3.2. A NEW LOOK AT THE WELFARE STATE**

At this point, Rosanvallon begins by criticizing the distinction between privatization and expropriation, thinking that the only way to save the welfare state from the impasse it is in is through reconsidering the "social" that liberal thought does not want to consider. Accordingly, both privatization, which is the argument of the liberal wing, and expropriation, which is the argument of social democracy, are flawed because they cannot consider the social progress of the future.

Because both parties reason from the existing social needs; they obstruct the social development by not taking into account the new needs and demands that will arise in the future (Rosanvallon, 2004:92-93).

The most reasonable method that comes to mind to clear the way for this blockage is to redefine the relations and boundaries between the state and society. Because thinking about the issue only in terms of expropriation-privatization makes it an enigma by reducing it strictly to the financial dimension: The question “who will pay for the collective service?” makes people forget the question “what is collective service?” (Rosanvallon, 2004:93). To save the future of the welfare state, Rosanvallon proposes a triple dynamic of democratic socialization, administrative decentralization and autonomy, instead of the one-dimensional logic of expropriation.

Democratic socialization is defined as the removal of large-scale equipment and collective work from the hands of bureaucracy, which the author himself recognizes is not an innovative way. Administrative decentralization, on the other hand, can be achieved by organizing public services and bringing them closer to those who benefit from the service. The key point of the solution put forward by Rosanvallon is the transfer of the task of performing these public services from the public sector to non-public organizations (associations, different organizations, etc.), that is, the way of autonomy. In short, the alternative offered to the welfare state crisis is only meaningful if it exists with a triple combination of *reducing government spending, reintroducing solidarity to society and creating a more social outlook*.

As can be easily noticed, reducing government expenditures and creating social solidarity are parallel to each other. In other words, the alternative to the welfare state should be sought in a social rather than institutional nature. A stronger civil society should be created and mechanisms of change and solidarity that society can easily adopt should be developed. However, in order to achieve this aim, it is necessary to establish an appropriate law. A social law theory that will function effectively within civil society should be created, leaving behind a legal infrastructure divided into two poles: individualist (Civil Law) and statist. According to Georges Gurvitch, this can be achieved by recognizing that “effective groupings” must become autonomous producers of law (Gurvitch, 1973:167).

On the other hand, the welfare state has become far removed from society as bureaucratic processes have developed and become more convoluted. The way to eliminate this negativity is, of course, to bring society closer to itself. The first condition for this, as mentioned above, is to reduce government expenditures. However, as a second condition, increasing free time to improve sociality can be added to this. Because, with simple logic, the individual with less free time demands more from the state and consumes more; however, if he/she has free time, he/she can provide mutual service and develop social relations and solidarity (Rosanvallon, 2004:103).

However, while Rosanvallon brings these solutions as an alternative to the welfare state, he does not reflect “the problems encountered in the application of theory into practice”, which is his main criticism of liberal theory, in his own thoughts. For example, it is not possible in practice to create the necessary precondition (social law institution) for Rosanvallon's most important thesis, “reducing the government expenditures through increasing socialization”. As a matter of fact, the current conjunctural understanding is that the increase in socialization and the increase in expropriation are fairly coordinated. In fact, if this kind of socialization/expropriation is combined with bureaucracy, it may lead to a *bureaucratic collectivism*, as Bruno Rizzi points out (Rizzi, 1985:97), and in this case, Rosanvallon's model is in danger of being dragged even further to the left of social democracy.

On the other hand, another important point in Rosanvallon's criticism is the "invisible" aspect of the welfare state. This is the argument that, unlike other contemporary critics, the welfare state is not only a mechanism that provides public services and establishes security networks, but also establishes the relationship between the people and the state. Rosanvallon argues that the welfare state does not only provide economic aid and services, but also functions as a certain kind of "hidden" government in the relationships of individuals with the state (Rosanvallon, 2004:39-40). This means that the daily lives and security of individuals are shaped by the invisible, sometimes controlling, and sometimes unifying role of the state in these processes. Other contemporary scholars generally ignore such "invisible" functions and question the functionality of the state through more concrete and explicit economic and social policies.

In order to move away from this reductionism, Rosanvallon shapes his criticism of the welfare state by examining the balance between individual freedoms and equality. While arguing that the state should provide social assistance, he emphasizes that these assistances should be provided without restricting the independence and freedom of individuals, and in this context, he argues that the welfare state should serve a modern democracy by balancing not only economic inequalities but also social freedoms (Rosanvallon, 2004:93). This balance, which is generally evaluated in relation to either economic efficiency or certain functionalities of the social structure in other criticisms of the welfare state, has acquired a completely socio-political aspect in Rosanvallon.

Rosanvallon's criticism of the welfare state is also shaped by the effects of neoliberalism. The criticisms that neoliberal policies bring against the welfare state aim to minimize the role of the state in the lives of individuals. Rosanvallon, on the other hand, argues that neoliberalism narrows the understanding of the welfare state and limits the area of intervention of the state, and as a result, social inequalities increase. He states that neoliberalism is not only an economic understanding, but also a social and political projection, and that it weakens the understanding of democracy in society (Rosanvallon, 2004:87). Other contemporary scholars such as Gøsta Esping-Andersen, Anthony Giddens and David Harvey also criticize neoliberalism, but Rosanvallon examines this criticism not only in terms of economic and state intervention, but also from a broad perspective such as social ties, understanding of democracy and the impact of the state on the individual.

In any case, although Rosanvallon's work has practical problems in the solutions it proposes, it brings a contemporary breath to the "crisis of the welfare state" debates, thanks to both his historical analysis of the welfare state and his remarkable criticisms of liberal state theory. It is an important and bold step towards offering a new alternative to world politics, which is struggling with periodic economic crises that have become almost routine.

### **3.3. THE NEED FOR A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE STATE**

As seen in Rosanvallon's welfare state analysis, all the elements that put the welfare state into crisis are also coherent with the "authoritarian" understanding of the Republic of Turkey. These elements, far from moving the country forward, have taken it further back in every respect. The state structure's understanding of "welfare" in Turkey is extremely distorted: To whom does the targeted welfare belong, the people or the state? On the other hand, offering this welfare to the public, when done by the oppressive state apparatus, serves no purpose other than instilling more obedience and statolatry<sup>6</sup> in the people.

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<sup>6</sup> An understanding of the state-society relationship in which the state replaces God and citizens begin to worship the state instead of God. In such an understanding, state demonstrations and ceremonies have become almost a form of

According to Çapoğlu, who approached the subject from a similar perspective to Rosanvallon, the way to stop this regression and overcome all these problems is through regulations such as strengthening civil society, restructuring political parties, downsizing the state, restructuring local governments to support direct participation such as the right to recall, referendum, citizen initiatives (Çapoğlu, 1994:28). However, when it comes to the practical aspect of the matter, many problems arise in applying them. The problem that needs to be addressed first is the state's distrust of the public. This is the basis of everything, because failure to respect the will of the people is the main reason why fundamental rights are not "reinstated". The denial of the right to organize freely to civil society is based on this basis, because after every organization, a coup suppressed all these developments. This is the awareness that should be given to the public first.

On the other hand, the intensity and size of public expenditures can cause a country to experience chronic economic problems as these expenditures, especially in the education and health sectors, both create inefficiency and, as Rosanvallon feared, accustom the public to laziness (Rosanvallon, 2004:86). In particular, free state-sponsored education in Turkey's welfare state approach is an essential problem. While chronic problems in the education system fill the minds of young individuals with a lot of information that they will not use throughout their lives, the fear of not being able to find a job pushes individuals to any path. This erroneous education system forms the basis of academic and scientific deprivation in the country (Şahin, 2004:30-32). Creativity that is extinguished in the name of "national" education is another reason why the country fails in the field of economy (apart from improper policies in the economy). This situation creates an inextricable and constantly self-feeding vicious cycle.

The problem in the structuring of political parties is yet another step. Corresponding to the principle of extreme bureaucratization of welfare state institutions and their complete separation from society, seen in Rosanvallon's analysis, political parties have turned into self-interested bureaucratic organizations that see themselves as superior to the people, lack the understanding of intra-party democracy, and stop doing things for the benefit of the masses that brought them there as soon as they come to power. Factors such as party aid and the distribution of election budgets allocated for parties by the state, which are included in the political leg of welfare state policies, support this bureaucratic blindness in the parties (Hinterleitner & Sager, 2018:140).

Although the founding philosophy of the Republic claims to create a system centered on the concept of the citizen, it should not be forgotten that in practice the system has turned into a bureaucratic tutelage system. Although this bureaucratic tutelage is a practice inherited from the Ottoman Empire in the life adventure of the Republic, it is ironic that military tutelage has been strengthened with military coups that took place at 10-year intervals in Turkey, which aims to go beyond the Ottoman Empire and position itself as a modern state. Although its early applications are seen with the Republic, the welfare state principle, which entered our constitutional literature with the expression "social state" in the 1961 Constitution, has been an extremely functional apparatus to strengthen the legitimacy of this tutelage system in the "psyche" of the society. This tool has been used by the authoritarian spirit of the state at every opportunity. In this sense, the welfare state serves as cement between the tutelage system and social obedience (Rosanvallon, 2004:71). In short, it is possible to evaluate the welfare state policies and distribution of social aid practices since the foundation of the Republic together with the state's expectation of an obedient

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worship, the infallibility of the state is in question and any opposition against the state is unimaginable. The term was first used by Ludwig von Mises in his work named *Omnipotent Government: The Rise of the Total State and Total War*, published in 1944.



citizen profile. In this sense, it can be said that the state wants to allocate state resources in accordance with the ideal of a “good” citizen.

Perhaps the most important achievement of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government, which left its mark on the 2000s and the years after, was the elimination of the military tutelage system. Although there were various attempts by the military to intervene in politics during the AK Party period, such as the April 27, 2007 Declaration or the July 15, 2016 Coup Attempt, the government was able to ward off these interventions with the public support it received (Hotar, 2020:16-17). However, despite the fact that the role of the military in the political arena was narrowed, it is possible to say that the state did not lose any of its authoritarian identity during this period: Under the influence of the Ak Party government in the 2000s, the political structure in Turkey underwent significant changes. Although economic growth and foreign policy successes initially strengthened the legitimacy of the government, authoritarian tendencies resurfaced in the mid-2010s (specifically in social movements such as the Gezi Protests).<sup>7</sup> Particularly, the transition to the Presidential Government System with the constitutional amendment referendum in 2017 was one of the most important steps that deepened the authoritarian structure of Turkey (Bektaş, 2019:216). This system transferred the executive authority completely to the president with very wide range of opportunities and greatly limited the influence of the parliament. Again, especially since the 2010s, there has been serious pressure on the media and restrictions on freedom of expression. Arrests of journalists, closure of media outlets and pressures on opposition parties are concrete indicators that the authoritarianism process has resurfaced (Uzun, 2014:138). In addition, increased controls on social media and digital surveillance practices have taken the state’s control over the people to another level.

Compared to previous decades, although welfare state practices have been replaced by an understanding that is trying to integrate with global capitalism to a large extent, it still does not seem possible to talk about a completely “liberal” Turkey in socio-political terms. The reasons why Turkey remains an authoritarian state are related to the centralized management approach that originated in the Ottoman Empire, modernization efforts, military interventions, and the desire of a certain segment of society to establish strong ties with the administration. Authoritarianism is related to the efforts of not only the government but also the state to establish a strong control mechanism. The authoritarian characteristics seen in Turkey today reflect a historical continuity and social context; this shows that the country’s governance style is shaped by a centralized and powerful administration rather than the participation of the people.

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<sup>7</sup> Since coming to power in 2002, the AK Party has carried out many reforms, arguing that it was fighting against military tutelage and bureaucratic tutelage. However, over time, criticisms have come to the fore that this struggle itself created a new tutelage system. This situation can be explained from various perspectives: For example, after the 2010 referendum, criticism was made that the judicial bodies had come under party control and that the independence of the judiciary had weakened. In this process, changes such as changing the structure of the Council of Judges and Prosecutors and increasing the influence of the executive in the appointment of members of the judiciary are considered as political tutelage over the judiciary. On the other hand, criticism is made that media outlets are being repressed, some media outlets are closed or changed hands, journalists who criticize the government are arrested, and censorship practices are increasing. Similarly, criticism is expressed that pressure is increasing on institutions that should be independent, such as non-governmental organizations and universities, that these organizations are managed by figures close to the government, and that opposing views are suppressed. More importantly, it is seen that the AK Party restricts the powers of local governments by following centralist policies, increases control over municipalities won by opposition parties, and even disregards the will of the people by appointing trustees to some municipalities under various excuses. This situation is considered as a tutelage that limits the capacity of local governments to act independently. These and similar elements show that the AK Party government has established its own tutelage system as it becomes stronger. In this context, the tutelage system created by the AK Party government has evolved into an authoritarian regime based on the weakening of democratic mechanisms, violation of the principle of separation of powers, and independent institutions coming under the control of the executive branch. On the subject, see: (Somer & Baykan, 2022).



This situation is undoubtedly a projection of the state-civil society relationship created by the statist policies and authoritarian state spirit in the Republic of Turkey. Unless there is a total cultural transformation that can include both the state organization and the public base, this vicious cycle will continue regardless of which ideology or political view comes to power. So, can this vicious cycle be broken by adopting a welfare state model that is free of crises, based on Rosanvallón's criticism? In other words, can the welfare state concept, which has been integrated with the statist authoritarian practices that have existed in Turkey since the foundation of the Republic, be refined and used to eliminate this authoritarianism and establish a freer and more democratic system? These possibilities will be discussed in the conclusion section of the study.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Rosanvallón's understanding of the welfare state examines the social functions of the state and its effects on social ties in detail, while also taking into account how welfare state practices reinforce social inequalities and increase authoritarian tendencies. Thanks to this attention, he has been able to conduct a discussion on purifying the welfare state from this aspect. Rosanvallón argues that this system needs to be reformed by examining how welfare state practices shape the relationship of society with the state and the connections between social control and inequality.

He has a very important observation that welfare state practices, especially in areas such as social security and social services, transform the relationship of individuals with the state and social ties (Rosanvallón, 2004:98). In this context, it can be discussed how the reform process should work in line with Rosanvallón's analyses, based on the sociological results of the authoritarian state understanding and welfare state practices in Turkey, which are discussed in the second section of this study.

Pierre Rosanvallón's fundamental criticism of the welfare state is that this system generally makes individuals dependent on the state's social services and suppresses social diversity with its homogenizing effect on societies (Rosanvallón, 2004:33-35). According to Rosanvallón, welfare state practices not only eliminate social inequality, but can also restrict individuals' freedoms and increase social control, making people dependent on the state. This leads to more inequality in society on the one hand, and strengthens an authoritarian state structure on the other.

Although the welfare state is established with the ideal of providing social equality and security, according to Rosanvallón, these state structures can cause the restriction of individual rights and freedoms, especially by concentrating the people's relationship with the state at a central point (Rosanvallón, 2004:86-87). This can lead to autocratic or authoritarian governments. In the historical process of Turkey, the overlap between the welfare state and authoritarianism emerges as a reflection of these criticized points.

A few basic principles suggested by Rosanvallón regarding welfare state reform can be an important guide for the improvement of social freedoms and the restructuring of social ties in societies with an authoritarian spirit and centralized state structure such as Turkey. These suggestions aim to make welfare state practices more sustainable and democratic by reshaping the state's influence on social services and social control.

The first suggestion that can be implemented for Turkey is to reduce the dependency of individuals on the state: Rosanvallón draws attention to the danger of welfare state practices turning into a structure that reinforces the dependency of individuals on the state. By constantly keeping the people under control through the state's extensive social service networks, the welfare

state can weaken individual initiative in society and shape the relationship with the state through dependency (Rosanvallón, 2004:92-93). This leads to an increase in social control and legitimizes the authoritarian practices of the state.

In this case, an important step for welfare state reform should be to ensure that individuals have more control over their own rights and responsibilities (Rosanvallón, 2004:105-107). This is possible if the state adopts an approach that encourages autonomy and participation while providing social services. Social security systems can be structured to encourage the participation of individuals rather than just providing assistance. Such an application can help people transform their relationship with the state into one based on active participation, rather than “dependency”. By strengthening local governments instead of the central administration, the society has the opportunity to access its own social services more closely and has an active say in these services.<sup>8</sup> This reduces the people’s dependency on the state and ensures the spread of participatory democracy and decentralization.

Secondly, policies can be suggested to overcome social inequality and support social diversity: While classical welfare state practices mostly aim to equalize different segments of society, they can also deprive these groups of social diversity. The reform suggested by Rosanvallón aims to transform welfare state policies into a more egalitarian, yet participatory and diversity-supporting structure (Rosanvallón, 2004: 100-102). This should be aimed at ensuring social integrity by taking into account not only income inequality but also social identities, cultural diversity and social distinctions.<sup>9</sup> In order for welfare state practices to provide social justice, policies that support cultural and social diversity and that all groups can benefit from should be implemented. In addition, ensuring equal opportunities in education should be supported not only through financial aid but also through policies that take into account social participation and diversity in education.<sup>10</sup>

Another suggestion is to reshape the role of the state in the field of social services: Rosanvallón states that the role of the state in the welfare state should not be limited to social security systems, and that collective social services connected to local initiatives should be made widespread (Rosanvallón, 2004:99). In the meantime, the state should establish a more active relationship with society and manage social mechanisms without limiting the freedoms of individuals. This requires the state to assume not only a protective but also an educational and guiding role. Social assistance systems can be redesigned with an approach that respects human dignity, is egalitarian and participatory, instead of just providing material assistance. This will enable the state to intervene in ways that are appropriate for the needs of society, not only economically but also socially. From this perspective, social services are considered as a type of educational/cultural service that is participatory and egalitarian.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For instance, the implementation of voluntary supports such as the Pay-It-Forward, Family Support Package, which the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality has been implementing since 2020 and which have been adopted by other municipalities since then, and the City Restaurants, which accept payments from the service recipient, even if only a small amount (thus, they are separated from the donation in a manner befitting human dignity), are important steps to be taken by local governments. Thanks to these implementations, a know-how that is suitable for implementing Rosanvallón’s suggestions has begun to form, albeit slowly.

<sup>9</sup> Examples of this include the elimination of discrimination based on ethnicity, faith and political affiliation in hiring (not only on paper but also in practice), the elimination of interviews, making social diversity more visible in the media, or the more merit-based implementation of DEI Hiring (diversity, equity, and inclusion) policies that have been effectively implemented by American and European countries in the last decade.

<sup>10</sup> In this regard, Turkey already has an experience such as Village Institutes, which are taken as a model in the current education systems of countries such as Finland and South Korea. All that needs to be done is to make this system more democratic and to reshape and structure the curriculum according to the needs of today’s Turkey for educated people.

<sup>11</sup> For instance: Measures such as granting the right to partially benefit from social assistance while working; offering programs that will increase the professional skills of individuals benefiting from social assistance; limiting the duration of

As a result, according to Pierre Rosanvallon's analysis, in order to prevent the overlapping of the welfare state and authoritarian state concepts, welfare state practices need to be transformed into a participatory and egalitarian structure that strengthens individual freedoms, supports social diversity, and is participatory. In light of Turkey's historical experiences, this reform process requires taking important steps such as overcoming the centralized structure and strengthening local governments, eliminating social inequalities more effectively, and increasing social participation. These reforms not only transform the state's social policies, but also enable the construction of a more democratic, participatory, and egalitarian structure in society. If we consider Turkey's last decade as a base, it can be seen that the practices that can be considered the first stage of these reforms already exist in a weak and limited form. In this respect, the country's only shortcoming is the absence of a political will that sincerely wants to get rid of the authoritarian state mindset and strives to establish egalitarianism and participation. When the necessary socio-political will emerges, Turkey is a country that has the power to make such a transformation with the knowledge it has gained from its historical experiences and finally get rid of the burden of authoritarianism on it permanently.

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social assistance and reviewing it at certain periods; or granting assistance based on conditions such as looking for a job, receiving education or performing community service. Increasing free time and reducing working hours is also an important requirement for Rosanvallon's reform (Rosanvallon, 2004:103). Frankly, Turkey is implementing some of these practices largely through in-house training and e-government. An additional step that can be taken here is that these practices should not be limited to the public sector and should be reconsidered in a more participatory manner.

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