

## Tutulary Regime of Single-Party Period: Segue or Impediment to Democracy?

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### Abstract

*This article examines the political regime during the single party rule in Turkey between the years of 1923-1950 in relation to the concept of tutelage. In the academic literature, the policies implemented during the one-party period are justified under the title of guardianship democracy. It is argued that the Kemalist elite of Turkey, unintentionally and undesireably constructed authoritarian one-party regime for the sake of achieving more robust democratic regime. Hence the adjective tutelage is used to define the desire of one party regime to reach democracy and point its untotalitarian feature. This study is trying to explain that tendency towards tutelary regime does not constitute a positive property, unlikely it is pressuring dynamic for democracy, even clearing out the possibility of a democratic system. The main argument supported in this work is that tutelary tendencies, contrary to the assumptions of Kemalist historicization, do not serve as segue to democracy, but rather make consolidation of democracy difficult, even impossible.*

**Keywords:** *Single-party rule, authoritarianism, totalitarianism, tutelage, democracy*

## Tek Parti Döneminde Vesayet Rejimi: Demokrasiye Katkı mı, Engel mi?

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### Öz

*Bu makale, 1923-1950 yılları arasında Türkiye’de hüküm süren tek parti iktidarının siyasal rejimini “vesayet” kavramı çerçevesinde ele almaktadır. Tek parti dönemi üzerine oluşan akademik literatürün bir kısmında, tek parti döneminde uygulanan otoriter-totaliter politikalar “vesayetçi demokrasi” başlığı altında ele alınarak meşrulaştırılmaktadır. Bu çalışmalarda, Kemalist elitlerin, toplumun olgunlaşması ve Türkiye’nin daha sağlam bir demokratik yapıya kavuşması uğruna istemeden ve geçici bir süre ile otoriter bir tek parti rejimi kurguladığı ifade edilmektedir. Dolayısıyla, tek parti rejimini tanımlamak için kullanılan vesayetçi sıfatı, olumlu bir anlamda ve rejimin totaliter olmayışını ve demokrasiye hedeflediğini ima etmek üzere kullanılmaktadır. Bu çalışma, iddia edilenin aksine, vesayetçi eğilimin, demokratik bir sistem için olumlu bir nitelik oluşturmadığını bilakis demokratik sistemi zora sokan, hatta imkânsızlaştıran bir niteliğe sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaya çalışmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, bu çalışma, tek parti rejiminin vesayetçi bir eğilime sahip olduğunu kabul etmekte ancak, Kemalist tarih yazımında savunulunun aksine, vesayetçi eğilimin demokrasiye geçişi zorlaştırdığını hatta imkansızlaştırdığını iddia etmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler** *Tek-parti iktidarı, otoriter rejim, totaliter rejim, vesayet, demokrasi*

## Introduction

Turkey, for the last ten years, is going through the most extensive transformation process in its modern history. While the judiciary system was restructured on charges of intervention into politics, many military officers were tried on charges of attempted coup. The coup attempt on July 15, 2016 threatened the country's peace and stability, and mobilized a major bureaucratic and political change. During this transformation, the political center was almost completely restructured and the political system has changed. This transformation has come to life with the motivation of the elected political actors, to reduce the influence of bureaucratic actors, particularly the army and the judiciary, on the political system. In fact, despite the fact that it has intensified in recent years and has raised the political agenda and created public awareness, this debate and political struggle is not a new one.

The fundamental reason for these discussions was the leading elites' proclamation of their primary duty of protecting the reforms made during the single party regime and the nation-building process with the fear that after the transition to the multi-party regime these advancements would be reverted. In this context, the Kemalist elite had intervened in the system after ten years of Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP) incumbency, which had taken over the power from Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP) after its twenty-seven yearlong administration. The political history of the Republic was going to witness various other interferences with the democratic order, including three more military interventions after 1960 (1971, 1980, 1997)<sup>1</sup> and numerous attempted coups. The Kemalist elite, due to the distrust they had in the elections and the parliamentary system, had intervened in the system and carved themselves a privileged position in the name of protecting the regime and the nation. After 1960 military coup, 1961 Constitution which was prepared under the surveillance of the putschist soldiers governing the country as National Unity Committee, re-shaped the political system.

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<sup>1</sup> While at 27th May 1960 and 12th September 1980 coups, military had directly taken the control of the government, at 12th March 1971, military pushed the change of government by issuing a military declaration. As 28th February 1997, government was removed by a military led prolonged campaign against the civil government.

The constitutions prepared in after the coups had attached a constitutional legitimacy to the elites' protective instincts and their perceived right to exercise this instinct. The fourth article of the 1961 Constitution had established that the people would exercise its sovereignty through "constitutional organs." The constitutional organs had given constitutional legitimacy to the elites' right to intervene in the political functioning and to serve as the guardian of democratic politics in the name of Kemalist ideology. One of these constitutional organs, The Constitutional Court (*Anayasa Mahkemesi*) was vested with the authority to audit both the legislation and the political parties. To this end, the Court has closed down 24 political parties since its establishment in 1963.<sup>2</sup> That these parties were closed down because of their incompatibility with the Kemalist ideology (secularism, nationalism, and unitary state) also reveals the limits of the political arena that are marked by something other than the exercise of violence and force (Aslan, 2002, pp. 9-25; Erdem, 2004, pp. 252-301; Özbudun, 2010, pp. 125-142). Another constitutional organ, the National Security Council (*Milli Güvenlik Kurulu*), had made it possible for the military officers to directly involve in the domain of the executive power. Governments were obliged to comply by the decisions taken by the National Security Council, which consisted of civilian and military representatives. Until recently, the Council has served as a platform of bureaucracy's primacy over the popularly elected parliament (Cizre, 1997, p. 157).

The elite's attainment of constitutionally legitimized right to intervene in the political system had increased the political privileges of the appointed positions while diminishing the effectiveness of the elected politicians and as such had brought the political system under bureaucratic tutelage. The privileges ascribed to the bureaucratic elites within the political system and power vested in them to monitor the political regime itself created a double-headed political system and deficiencies in the democratic system. The dynamic underlying these tensions is the concept of tutelage and that Turkey's democratic experience and trials are framed

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<sup>2</sup> Before the establishment of the Constitutional Court in 1963, two political parties were shut down—Nation Party (*Millîyet Partisi*, 1948-1953) by the Ankara Peace Court and Democrat Party (1960) by Ankara civil court.

by this very concept. Tutelage is conventionally defined as the prerogatives of a state elite who believe in their own superior judgment to decide what's best for the common interest of the people and in their right to govern the people without popular consent in order to achieve that common interest.

State elites managed to control the elected governments through constitutional institutions after 1961 Constitution. Thus, "Tutelage System" is usually being used to describe the post-1960 political life at academic studies and political discourse. However, tutelage is neither a new phenomenon, nor the consequence of the coup d'état of 1960. So, it will be much better to look at the single-party regime in order to have an in-depth analysis on the matter. But some academics (Duverger, 1959; Tunaya, 1966; Daver, 1983) who prefers to use the concept of tutelage attributes a positive connotation as a facilitator for transition to democracy.

These studies which attributes positive meaning to tutelage at single-party period are using such theses: tutelage regimes (1) are not totalitarian (ergo must have democratic potential); (2) have democracy as their ultimate target; (3) are temporary (interim governments); (4) are segues to democracy.

Below is a discussion on tutelary theory—with its general framework as well as its factual mistakes and deficiencies. The theory has been criticized through certain facts in various academic studies in Turkey. Critiques took aim at one of the arguments of tutelary theory—that the single party was temporary and it had an ultimate democratic goal. These studies tried to put forward that Kemalist elites had tried to design the single-party rule not as a temporary system but rather a permanent structure.

Looking at the matter from different perspectives, various scholars reached at similar conclusions as single party designed a permanent authoritarian regime: the discussions at the first Parliament by Ahmet Demirel (1995); the foundation of single party regime by Mete Tunçay (1989); political developments at Milli Şef (Natinol Leader) by Cemil Koçak (2008, 2009); post-1930 political developments by Çetin Yetkin (1997), and participation to political process during single-party rule by Esat Öz (1992). In spite of their valuable contributions to academic literature regarding understanding the authoritarian nature of single-party rule and revealing

deficiencies of tutelary theory; these studies are not questioning the concept of 'tutelary democracy'. In other words, these studies argue that single-party system is authoritarian; accordingly, it is not tutelary.

This article, different from these studies, accepts single-party regime as tutelary but, as opposed to what Duverger, Tunaya, and Daver argue, argues tutelage system does not facilitate transition to democracy. Rather it argues that tutelage is an insurmountable impediment on the path to democracy. The concept of tutelage, or in other words, vesting of residual authority, *de facto* or *de jure*, in political guardians as guarantors of the nation's permanent interests, is not compatible with democracy. The exercise of government authority, by those claiming a teleological project or a "historical mission" to impose a common interest and defend that interest against all perceived threats, is incompatible with democratic politics. Achieving the "common good" in this sense permits little or no tolerance of opposition and perceives any divergence in ideology a potential threat (Loveman and Davies, 1997). Furthermore, when ideological missions are institutionalized in the practices of tutelage by the tutoring elite, the regular functions of a formal democracy masks the fundamental characteristics of tutelage politics. Under this type of regime compliance with democratic procedures—including elections, congressional debates, judicial deliberation, media reporting, and government succession—masks the permanent threat of veto by guardians' swords.

The remainder of this article/study will develop the conceptual framework of this examination. Then, four underlying assumptions of tutelage theories will be examined and refuted.

### **Assumptions and Shortcomings of Tutelage Theories**

The section below offers a representative sample from the most prevalent tutelage theories based on the four assumptions identified above and examines their shortcomings in the context of Turkish experience.

Maurice Duverger is one of the few and most influential scholars who paid attention to the unique attributes of Turkey's single party experience. Duverger, rather than contextualizing his examination of Turkey's single party regime within the comparative studies of single party regimes in academic literature, placed Turkey in a category of its own (1959, pp. 275-

280). The rationale behind Duverger's classification of Turkey as a unique case was Turkey's peaceful transition to multi-party system in 1946 and the peaceful change of power in 1950. For this reason, Duverger classified Turkey's single party regime as a "tutulary" or "potential democracy" (1959, p. 280). Duverger's examination of the single-party system is in accordance with the arguments posed by Turkish academics such as Tarık Zafer Tunaya (1966) and Bülent Daver (1983). These scholars proposed to attach the label, "tutulary democracy", to Turkey's single-party regime for its non-totalitarian and temporary nature, its circumstantial authoritarianism, its democratic credentials, and for the democratic structures it helped build. Tutelage theory suggests that the justification offered above qualifies the Kemalist single-party regime for the category of tutulary democracy.

Tutelage theory, in its observations on Turkey's single-party system, has two significant shortcomings. First, this theory commits many conceptual errors and makes several assumptions based on false optimism. Secondly, this theory bestows a positive meaning upon an ideology of tutelage and assumes that their tutelary ambitions endow single-party regimes with democratic qualities. Consequently, tutelage theory ignores the process of founding the single-party regime and fails to predict and explain the problem of repeated military interventions after the transition to multiparty system. The section below will begin by examining the four assumptions that frame tutelage theories, and identify their shortcomings.

### *"Tutelage Regime is Non-Totalitarian"*

Tutelage theory, first of all, supports that the single-party system in Turkey differs from totalitarian regimes for its ideological elements and the policies adopted at the time of its application. The single-party system in Turkey is identified as a non-totalitarian system for not following or endorsing a dominant ideology, for enacting a partial – not a total – transformation of the society, and for accommodating pluralism, albeit with limitations.

Duverger explains the non-totalitarian nature of Turkey's single-party system thus:

... some single parties are not really totalitarian either in ideas or in organization. The best example of this is provided by the People's Republican Party, which operated in Turkey from 1923 to 1946 as a single-party. Its first claim to originality lay in its democratic ideology. In no way did it set itself up as an Order or a Church like its fascist and Communist brethren. It imposed on its members neither faith nor mystique: the revolution of Kemal was essentially pragmatic. Its task was to 'Westernize' Turkey by fighting the prime obstacle to any modernization amongst the peoples of the Middle East; that is Islam. The anti-clericalism and rationalism of the leading strata of the party gave it a definite resemblance to nineteenth-century Liberalism: even their nationalism was not very different from that which convulsed Europe in 1848 (1959, p. 276).

Tarık Zafer Tunaya also argues that Turkey's single-party system is different from totalitarian regimes:

Though all single-party regimes may not be totalitarian, they are authoritarian, without exceptions. In some cases, a single political party goes as far as declaring that it serves a temporary function, leading the country towards a more democratic and modern system. (...) This particular sort of single-party regime is not and cannot be totalitarian. And as it sets the stage for democracy, it also prepares its own demise. The Kuomintang in China and the CHP in Turkey are examples to this sort of single-party (1966, pp. 208-209).

These two examples demonstrate that, tutelage theories (theorists) assume that the single party regime in Turkey, carried a democratic potential based on the simple fact that it differed from what was understood to be a totalitarian regime. This conception of the single party regime in Turkey as a non-totalitarian party fails to consider the significant distance between authoritarian and democratic regimes. The conceptualization of authoritarian regimes was born out of the necessity to identify those regimes that were neither totalitarian nor democratic. Duverger and Tunaya claim that single party regime, for the simple virtue of not being totalitarian, must carry democratic potential. The democratic qualities of the Kemalist regime are shown through its differences from those cases of totalitarianism often referred to in political science literature, namely Communist Soviet Russia under Stalin or fascist Germany under Hitler and Italy under Mussolini.



Until Juan J. Linz (1964) observed the Franco regime in Spain to identify authoritarianism as a distinct regime type that is different from totalitarian regimes and liberal democracies and has particular dynamics, political systems were defined according to the categories of totalitarianism and democracy. In this framework, single-party regimes that were not easily filed under either of these two traditional categories were identified as temporary single-party systems, de facto single-party system, potential democracy, tutelary democracy, etc (Linz, 2000, pp. 52-53; Özbudun, 2011, p. 3). Duverger named Turkey's single-party system as 'potential/tutelary democracy' in his book, *Political Parties* (1951), which was published at a time when the academic literature distinguishing authoritarianism as a regime type different from totalitarianism and democracy was not widely available. Tunaya published at a relatively early date (1966) his analysis on Turkey's one party system where he referred to Duverger's term and did not feel a need to revisit his use of tutelary democracy despite the evolution in relevant political science literature.

According to Linz, authoritarian regimes may be different from totalitarian and democratic regimes but authoritarian and totalitarian regimes share a common trait: neither is democratic (2002, p. 53). Moreover he argues that while it is difficult to distinguish totalitarian regimes from authoritarian ones due to blurring of the borders, it is significantly easier to distinguish democratic regimes from non-democratic regimes (2000, pp. 60-61). Therefore, the non-totalitarian nature of Turkey's single-party regime does not directly lead to its nomination as a tutelary democracy. Non-totalitarianism may only imply that the single-party regime in Turkey was authoritarian. The linkages between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes are far more pronounced than those between democratic and non-democratic regimes. Authoritarian tendencies in Turkey's single-party regime prevented opportunities for democracy from arising and especially after 1930s increasingly resembled totalitarian regimes in terms of its discourse and practices. After 1930 and particularly during the term of Recep Peker as CHP's Secretary General, the single-party regime's discourse and practices began to fall out of line with the three qualities that authoritarian regimes are expected to have; the fact that the party ideology was being formulated through the magazine, *Ülkü* (Ethos); *Halkevleri* (People's Houses) and *Halk Hatipleri Teşkilatı* (Public Speakers Organization)

were institutionalized in attempts to mobilize and transform society; and that Press Law, Law on Foundations, the office of the 'national chief', etc. were founded to abolish limited pluralism.

### *"Tutelage Regime Aims Democracy"*

The second proposition made by the tutelage theory is that Turkey's single-party regime was democratic in its intents and purposes. Tutelage theory asserts that although the regime had democratic intentions, the socio-economic structure at the time and the targets it adopted obliged CHP to resort temporarily to authoritarian practices. In other words, theory suggests that a distinction ought to be made between the mentality of the single-party system and its practices. Kemalism clearly advanced a democratic rationale and intended to transform Turkey into a liberal democracy for all intents and purposes, however adverse conditions delayed Turkey's stride towards liberal democracy. Authoritarian policies were employed so as to undermine those adverse conditions and ultimately to deliver democracy.

Tutelage theory bases the democratic nature of the single-party regime in the principle of "populism" (halkçılık). References to and definitions of the principle of populism found in Atatürk's public statements and CHP's party program and manifesto are frequently addressed in the relevant literature. Daver, who emphasized the tutelary nature of the single-party system, also believed that Atatürkist thought was essentially democratic:

Democracy was Atatürk's political system of choice. He wholeheartedly believed in the superiority and true value of this system. He professed that the values that members of the Turkish nation share make them more susceptible to accepting democratic rule. That he had long been planning to establish a democratic republic, even as early as the beginning of the war of independence is highly likely and there are not insignificant indications to support this claim (1983, p. 252).

Daver wrote the 1924 constitution was drafted with the intention of instituting a democratic republic, and therefore young Turkey was at least on paper a democracy, which was in its configuration not very different from Western democracies. However according to Daver "in practice,

Turkey was not a Western democracy; in fact, it was ruled by an authoritarian, if not a dictatorial, regime" (1983, p. 253).

Tutelage theory makes a distinction between the policies adopted by the single-party regime and the rationale that feeds these policies. It assumes that the ideological foundations of the single-party regime were democratic and yet historical conditions prevented the party leadership from putting into practice the democratic ideals they espoused. To convey the democratic ideals of the party leadership, proponents of tutelage theory refer primarily to public statements of Atatürk and to a lesser extent to speeches of other leading party figures. However, only those references in public statements of party leadership that demonstrate evidence for the existence of a democratic mentality are selected, and anti-democratic statements are ignored. Certainly, the period of one party rule in Turkey is laden with messages in favor of and opposing democracy. Besides, the single-party regime reached a political and ideological breaking point in 1930s after which the democratic spirit, which tutelary theory persistently draws attention to, was gradually overtaken by a totalitarian mentality. In other words, after the 1930s not only did the policies of the single-party regime become authoritarian, the rationale behind it also becomes tainted with authoritarianism. For this reason, it is impossible to toss aside these authoritarian practices and assume that Turkey's one party rule had a democratic potential.

After the Free Republican Party (*Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, SCF) experience in 1930, the single-party regime experienced a significant transformation in its thinking and practices. CHP leadership was deeply affected by the remarkable attention the public paid the SCF and they were convinced that the key tenets of the revolution were yet to be internalized by the masses. At a time when the free world was grappling with severe economic depression, fascist regimes were accruing considerable economic and political power and this intrigued CHP leadership. The single-party regime in Turkey was already burdened with many challenges so they drew inspiration from the fascist regimes' success and embarked on a decisive path towards authoritarianism. The ideological transformation after the 1930s introduced authoritarian elements to the key tenets of the regime. Particularly, the principles of populism and nationalism were transformed and thereby the regime's democratic potential was replaced with

authoritarianism and an emphasis on solidarity. During this period, CHP's leading administrators and intellectuals were also impressed by the strength of communist and fascist regimes' public outreach, mass mobilization and economic growth. On occasions where authoritarianism was dominant, fascist and communist regimes were praised and liberal democratic regimes were scorned (Öz, 1992, pp. 114-115; Özbudun, 2011, pp. 96-97; Yetkin, 1983, pp. 31-42).

### *"Tutelage Regime is Temporary"*

The third assumption tutelage theory makes is that the single-party system in Turkey does not rest on a doctrine that legitimizes the existence of a single political party. This conception draws its support from prevalent democratization theories that understand interim governments legitimized only by the virtue of their being temporary guardians (Przeworski, 1993). In this conception, the party leadership does not consider the single-party system an ideal condition and are ashamed to exercise single-party rule - only temporarily - due to the conditions imposed upon them. This argument, which correlates to the dichotomy offered above between democratic rationales versus authoritarian practices, further states that Turkey's single-party system did not follow a single-party doctrine, that single-party rule was not a sustainable and favorable option for policymakers, and that it was a temporary consequence of the conditions of the time. Duverger backs this argument with the following statement:

The Turkish single-party-system was never based upon the doctrine of a single-party. It gave no official recognition to the monopoly, made no attempts to justify it by the existence of a classless society or the desire to do away with parliamentary strife and Liberal democracy. It was always embarrassed and almost ashamed of the monopoly. The Turkish single-party had a bad conscience differing in this from its fascist or Communist brethren, who offer themselves as models to be imitated. For its leaders the ideal remained a plural party-system, monopoly being a result of special political situation in Turkey. On several occasions Kemal attempted to bring it to an end, and this fact itself is deeply revealing. Nothing similar was conceivable in Hitler Germany or the Italy of Mussolini (1959, p. 277).

The tutelary nature of Turkey's single-party regime is explained by the temporariness of the one party rule, the fact that the regime did not rely on a doctrine and that the party held power temporarily so as to steer Turkey out of the difficult conditions it faced and prepare the foundations for a democratic regime. Evidence for the argument above is offered from some public statements and practices from before 1930. For examples of practices, the literature lists the founding of The Progressive Republican Party (*Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*, TpCF) and the establishment of SCF by Atatürk himself; and for examples of public statements the literature contains quotes from an interview Atatürk gave *The Times* and Fethi Bey's speech at the inauguration of the SCF.

Atatürk's comments on TpCF in an interview on 21 November 1924 with a reporter working for *The Times* are often used to demonstrate the tutelary characteristics of the regime. Atatürk said the following on TpCF: "In countries, which are ruled by national sovereignty and particularly in Republican regimes, naturally, political parties exist. No doubt, political parties that will compete with the single-party will emerge" (1997, III, p. 109). These words, published on 11 December 1924 in the newspaper *Halkimiyet-i Milliye* indicate that Atatürk would receive the emergence of a second political party competing with CHP well. However, this statement is not supported by the events that ensued. The full text of the interview presents a different picture: In the full text, Atatürk confessed that he thought the TpCF leadership to be dishonest, devious, backward, ungrateful and disloyal (Öz, 1992, p. 92; Zürcher, 1988, p. 18). Evidently, TpCF, founded four days before the interview was due to be held (17 November 1924), was prohibited and closed down by the order of the Cabinet 7-8 months later (3 June 1925).

A second example offered by tutelage theory to support the hypotheses that one party rule in Turkey was conceived as an unavoidable and temporary period; that it did not possess an official doctrine; and that it had democratic intentions was the fact that the SCF was established as an initiative by and through the support of Atatürk and İnönü. A more thorough evaluation of the SCF experience and the developments that followed its demise reveal that the SCF experience fails to prove the temporariness of the single-party regime and instead affirms the survival of the one party rule. Taking SCF's fate in to consideration, it becomes evident

that Atatürk and CHP leadership aimed primarily to present Turkey as a democracy to the West and then to discipline CHP bloc in the parliament in the area of economic policy in particular. Therefore, the role assigned to SCF did not involve competing for office against the CHP by effectively demonstrating its credo as the main opposition. SCF, on the other hand, either misunderstood or ignored the instructions it was given and rallied for popular support, vied for political power and functioned as a genuine opposition party; therefore, it threatened CHP (Barutçu, 1977, p. 285; Karaosmanoğlu, 1968, p. 105; Okyar, 1980, pp. 377-547; Us, 1964, p. 142).

The SCF experience urged CHP administration to leave behind the practices of a non-indoctrinated/de facto single-party; to come to terms with the single-party regime; and, to subsequently develop ideological and institutional mechanisms to correspond to the one party rule. CHP adopted a definition of society that is susceptible to single-party regime; at every step, established strong links between the party and the state; either abolished or merged with every non-partisan organization and institution; nurtured a cadre of supporters who would bear the weight of party on their shoulders and act as agents of the party in society; and invented policies to educate the society. All these developments, particularly the SCF experience indicates that CHP underwent an ideological and political transformation. Before 1930, one party rule was pursued for practical reasons and pragmatically; after the SCF experience, the single-party regime was sustained decisively and consistently based on an ideology and concrete policies. As such, it could be argued that the postulations tutelage theory relies on—namely that the single party system was not transformed into a single party doctrine and that single party system was temporary and carried out of pragmatic reasons—lost their validity after 1930, even though they could be partially supported by the developments before that time.

### *“Tutelage Regime is Segue to Democracy”*

The last one of the four assumptions that frames tutelage theory asserts that tutelage system not only makes transition into democracy easier, but it renders democracy inevitable due to the rationale behind the tutelage system and its structural composition. Not only democratic consolidation

was an ineluctable consequence of the single party regime in Turkey, but it was also the conscious choice of the tutelary elite who saw democratic consolidation as their teleological project. In other words, Turkey was not forced into a transition from single-party to multiparty system by unforeseeable domestic and international developments; system change was a natural and inevitable outcome of the Kemalist regime's structural dynamics and of the ruling elite's preplanned policies and foresights. Duverger was one of the earliest supporters of the hypothesis stated above. He believed that the single-party system was a step on the road to democracy in Turkey. According to Duverger,

... A system that definitely stated that the single-party was transitional, that it considered it to be no more than a necessary stage on the road to pluralism, could well be considered to be potentially democratic. (...) The idea of 'potential democracy' may provoke a simile; the idea of a single-party evolving towards pluralism may be greeted with skepticism; both ideas however have a basis in fact: the post-1923 evolution of Turkey that ended in the 1950 elections with the peaceful triumph of the opposition. With neither checks nor disturbance, Turkey passed from the single-party system to pluralism. (...) The example of Turkey ... seems to demonstrate that the technique of the single-party, applied with discernment, makes it possible gradually to build up a new ruling class and the independent political elite, which alone make it possible to establish at some date on authentic democracy (1959, p. 280).

Similar to Duverger, Tunaya argued that the revolutionary characteristics of the single-party system in Turkey compelled its transition to democracy:

Some single-party regimes declare that their rule is to be temporary and that they aim to serve as bridges leading to more civilized and democratic systems... (These parties) self-terminate as they prepare for a democratic system. The Kuo Min Party in China and CHP in Turkey possess these qualities (1966, pp. 208-209). The single-party regime in Turkey did not consider its rule to be permanent, announced as a fundamental principle its commitment to temporary rule and to facilitating democratic transition. It volunteered to realize a revolutionary movement or cause towards development and modernization. (...) In a way, the single-party regime had an operational character (1966, p. 241).

The main argument formulated by Duverger and Tunaya supposes that the CHP administration aspired to a democratic system however was obliged to prolong the single-party rule for a while due to the adverse conditions Turkey found itself in. When more favorable conditions were obtained, the party administration initiated democratic transition. In other words, tutelage theory assigns a democratic characteristic to the single-party regime in Turkey on the grounds that it permitted the system to evolve into a multiparty regime in 1946; transferred power to the democratically-elected Democratic Party (*Demokrat Parti*, DP); and this move was driven almost entirely by internal dynamics and İnönü's personal longing for democracy. This analysis overlooks the external dynamics that triggered Turkey's transition into multiparty democracy and prompted CHP to agree to transfer power to DP. In fact, the theory's dismissal of external dynamics is deliberate for it is assumed that factoring in the impact of external dynamics on democratic transition would weaken the arguments in favor of the single-party's democratic potential. However, any analysis that omits external dynamics will inevitably fail to explain why, suddenly, a single-party regime that has since 1930s followed the organizational models of fascist regimes to consolidate one party rule and grown more authoritarian through its use of Kemalist principles decided to consider the option of multiparty system. Thus emerges the need for a new analysis that takes into account external dynamics as well as internal ones.

At the end of the Second World War, the most important development that cemented Turkey's political orientation was the security threat posed by Soviet Russia when it demanded that the future of Russia's special relationship with Turkey depended on Turkey's and USSR's agreeing to declare the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits a common defense zone. In fact, since the beginning of the war of independence Turkey may have been expected to follow the international trends and to ultimately align with western powers by democratizing its regime. Evidently, at the time, İnönü, party intelligentsia and İnönü's opponents were joined in thinking that a consequence of Allied powers' victory for Turkey's domestic politics was to democratize. As early as May 1944, articles published in *Vatan* and *Tan* newspapers called for greater freedom of thought and press, and CHP bloc in the parliament began to criticize the government for its poli-



cies and its management of the national budget. When stories on the criticism raised against CHP leadership were published, the government put into force Article 50 of the Press Law, which authorized for the prohibition of newspapers (Toker, 1970, pp. 31-40).

Nevertheless, the security threat posed by USSR compelled the single-party regime to consider the option of democratic transition seriously and to take the necessary steps forward hastily. Turkey refused to fight in the Second World War next to the Allied forces, maintained its commercial and political relationship with Germany throughout the war, and its political regimes bore resemblance to fascist regimes in Europe; for these reasons, USA and England did not respond in Turkey's favor to the Soviet threat and Turkey was left to its own devices (Erkin, 1968, pp. 251-155; Yılmaz, 1997, pp. 5-6). İnönü interpreted the Soviet's precondition to build a common defense zone in the Straits as an indication of Soviet intentions to turn Turkey into a satellite state and perceived this as an existential problem for Turkey's Kemalist regime (Toker, 1970, p. 196).

For the single-party leadership the safest way to deal with the Soviet threat and to sustain their power was to demand the protection of the US-led western bloc. To this end, İnönü prioritized earning the friendship of USA and England and to subscribe Turkey to the Western bloc for protection against the Soviets (Toker, 1970, pp. 41-43). Consequently, Turkey ended its policy of non-alignment and froze its bilateral relationship with Germany; thus Turkey entered the Western bloc. On the domestic front, Turkey triggered a process of democratization.

USSR officially communicated to Turkey's ambassador to Moscow on 19/21 March 1945 its decision not to renew the Turkey-Soviet Friendship Agreement, signed in 1925 and due to expire in November 1945. İnönü was able to partially secure Turkey against the Soviet threat by entering into the Western alliance and becoming a UN member state however to ensure full protection against the USSR, Turkey still needed American and British assistance. The easiest and safest way to ensure full protection from the Soviet threat was to change Turkey's regime into a democracy. Hence, İnönü gave the most powerful indication of Turkey's intentions for democratic transition in his statement on 19 May 1945, after having received the official communication quoted above from USSR and before the signing of San Francisco Treaty: "Our country's political system will continue

to evolve in every possible direction, guided by our nation's will reflected in the Republic. When the restrictions pressed upon Turkey due to difficult wartime conditions are lifted, there will be more leeway to exercise principles of democracy in the our thinking and politics" (Toker, 1970, p. 76).

İnönü's recent demonstrations in Turkey and abroad of his will to facilitate democratization charged Turkey's opposition with confidence to vehemently argue in the parliament against the Land Law in the second half of the month of May. MPs Bayar, Köprülü, Koraltan and Menderes formed an opposition group in the CHP and presented a draft proposal to the CHP bloc in the parliament on 7 June 1945 offering to secure personal freedoms and to expand parliamentary oversight. Then, the CHP Administrative Council, convened by İnönü, agreed to prohibit intra-party opposition and yet to allow a second political party to emerge (Toker, 1970, p. 91).

On 1 November 1945, İnönü gave important signals for Turkey's intentions to move from a single-party system to a multiparty system.

Throughout the Republican era, there was a strong commitment to preserving democratic credentials. Dictatorship was never accepted in principle and was always condemned as potentially hazardous to and unsuitable for the Turkish nation. (...) We merely lack a second party that could challenge the party in government. There were even attempts by those in power to establish a rival political party. Unfortunately, twice these initiatives succumbed to social pressure and failed. However, guided by the needs of the country and as a result of the proper functioning of the mood of freedom and democracy, it is possible for new political parties to emerge. (...) We do not know whether a new political party will form in time (for the next elections) and whether it will emerge within or outside of the parliament. We do know however that the correct path, which also is more attuned to the interests and political maturity of our nation, to follow is not for those politicians who disagree in principle and practice with their peers to form cliques inside the ruling party but for them to exercise their political agenda and plans independently/externally (İnönü, 1993, pp. 60-63).

Particularly the last few sentences of the excerpt above addressed Bayar and his colleagues and İnönü implied that he wished them to leave

CHP to establish a new political party. Bayar and his colleagues treated İnönü's speech as an affirmation and began working towards finding a new party. Subsequently, on 1 December 1945, Bayar announced their intentions to establish a political party and on 7 January 1946, DP was officially founded. Before the 1946 elections, the two-tier election system was replaced with the one-tier election system and Article 50 of Press Law was removed. These strides towards democratization and the first national elections with two parties campaigning for power galvanized the positive reaction that İnönü anticipated in the West and USA was compelled to encourage Turkey to reject the demands USSR voiced repeatedly, in August and September 1946.

Without a doubt, İnönü, with his title as national chief and his unequivocal influence on Turkey's political life, served as the most crucial driving force of the democratization process. Since 1945, İnönü employed his power and influence to democratize the regime and pursued the path towards a multiparty system decisively. In this framework, there is consensus on İnönü's influence and power over democratic transition. Disagreement arises when İnönü's motivations to support democratization are considered. Was İnönü driven by democratic intentions that were primordial to the single-party system or by foreign policy dynamics and concerns over national security? Toker observes that four months after İnönü's appointment to Presidency, he delivered a speech at the Istanbul University where he declared that he desired democratic transition. İnönü said in his speech on 6 March 1939;

Our political life will always advance to higher and more progressive phases of a popular regime. Unless there is genuine de facto oversight of the nation over the government and unless the nation believes that they have the ability to exercise democratic oversight, the regime cannot be considered popular (Toker, 1970, p. 18).

Toker evaluates these comments as a clear indication of İnönü's commitment to free elections and democratic transition. Toker finds traces of this sentiment in a later statement by İnönü, delivered after the transition to a multiparty system: "I remember following those countries around us hold free elections and feeling deeply ashamed" (Toker, 1970, pp. 18-19). According to Toker, İnönü delayed his dream of realizing democratic tran-

sition because the Second World War started and yet he never really abandoned the idea all together. Therefore, from 1944 onwards the waves of liberalization in domestic politics and the ultimate decision to move to multiparty system were results of İnönü's conviction that the time for change had come (1970, p. 31, 105). Toker refers to the conversation İnönü had with Nihat Erim immediately after he delivered his famous 19 May 1945 speech to prove his point:

Our current system is entirely dependent on its leader. These kinds of regimes often start gloriously and sometimes even sustain their glory for some time. However, they cannot live forever as such. When the leader leaves the stage, the survival of the regime becomes uncertain. Single-party regimes have fallen when they were not able to make the necessary transition to democracy on time. Beneath the rubble laid many institutions that have taken great effort to build. We need to protect our country from meeting such an end. We need to quickly adopt serious and effective systems of oversight and opposition. (...) I might live only to see a single-party regime in Turkey. However, I am concerned about what might ensue after I pass. Therefore, we need to act quickly (Toker, 1970, p. 77).

Not unlike Metin Toker, Bernard Lewis (1979, pp. 313-314) and Feroz Ahmad (1977, p. 24) disagree with the claim that Turkey attempted to democratize only to respond to its foreign policy challenges. They base their criticism on the grounds that the US would not have acted to protect the interests of Turkey or any other country simply because of its democratic credentials and would have considered first and foremost the strategic worth and consistency of the country concerned.

Özbudun (2011, pp. 124-125) on the other hand professes that though Lewis' and Ahmad's observations on US policy preferences ought to be considered, a more significant consideration is how CHP administration viewed those policy preferences. Özbudun argues that İnönü and his close aides were convinced that democratization would be an effective tool to attract US protection against the Soviet threat. Yılmaz shares Özbudun's view and suggests that in order to best analyze US policy at the time, a distinction needs to be made between America's basic intentions and its revealed ideals (1997, pp. 8-9). Yılmaz notes that those members of the CHP leadership who were less familiar with US policy paid more attention than was due to public statements on freedom and democracy, such

as those reflected in the Atlantic Declaration signed by President Roosevelt. Therefore, CHP leadership failed to consider that America's real interests might have been markedly different. Based on this reasoning, Yılmaz presents the three public statements delivered by İnönü (on 19 May 1945, 1 November 1945, and 12 July 1947) as evidence for how the process of democratization in the home front ran parallel to Turkey's bilateral relationship with the US. More specifically, Yılmaz connects the two speeches in 1945 with the San Francisco Treaty and the 1947 Declaration with the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan.

The developments that took place until the establishment of the Democrat Party and the events that followed, especially until the 12 July 1947 Declaration, show that external dynamics influenced both CHP's and DP's policies. CHP expected democratic transition to solidify Turkey's place next to its Western allies and DP, aware of İnönü's conviction, confidently demonstrated its opposition. As a result, evaluating democratic transition in Turkey by studying its internal dynamics alone and by assuming that transition was prompted by the nature of the single-party regime will be as faulty as studying external dynamics alone, without paying attention to internal dynamics and the influence of İnönü.

However, two more points need to be considered for a complete analysis of the transition in 1945 and the transfer of power in 1950. The political histories and personalities of Bayar and his colleagues and the party program of DP have influenced the process of transition and of transfer of power. In 1945, there were quite a few opponents to İnönü who might have founded a political party to rival the CHP. However, İnönü asked Bayar to establish the new political party because İnönü was confident of Bayar's allegiance to the Kemalist regime and Atatürk' legacy. (Toker, 1970, pp. 52-62, 112-113).

The second point to be considered when explaining the smooth transfer of power in 1950 was the strong conviction that İnönü shared with CHP leadership that their party would not lose the elections. There are many indications to prove this claim. The first indication is that CHP, worried that the post-election parliament where the embattled DP has not earned even a single seat would not be well received in the west, offered DP reserved seating/contingency seats in the parliament (Ahmad, 1977, p. 30; Ahmad and Ahmad, 1976, p. 62; Karpat, 1959, p. 239; Yalman, 1971, p.

208). The second indicator was that CHP did not consider introducing certain legislative/constitutional changes that would have helped it to consolidate its position of power after the elections. Hence, CHP did not offer to introduce a system of direct elections for the post of President (İnönü); to consider a second house or representative assembly; to adopt the system of proportional representation (Özbudun, 2011, p. 127; Yılmaz, 1997, pp. 26-27).

Clearly, whatever reasons there may have been for democratic transition, the fact that a single-party regime was able to turn into a democracy is noteworthy. However, the internal and external dynamics of the period must be factored into assessments on the nature of the single-party regime, instead of assigning primordial democratic qualities to it. İnönü's comments to Erim, democratization policies to counter the Soviet threat by recruiting US assistance, and facilitating the establishment of DP based on a personal trust to Bayar all reveal the concerns of CHP leadership over maintaining their hold on power and their pragmatism. In other words, the transition to democracy is not a consequence of the single-party regime, as tutelage theory suggests. However, single-party regime did not have a structure that presented obstacles to democracy building and hampered democratization either. Since there was not a categorical rejection to democracy as a regime type, when favorable internal and foreign conditions were reached, the single-party regime was able to democratize. By implication, just as the top leadership of CHP was influenced by totalitarian-fascist regimes in 1930s for various reasons, they were drawn to western democratic regimes in the 1940s for more or less similar reasons. The single-party regime adopted authoritarianism and democracy for pragmatic reasons; they were not drawn to either regime type for their principles or ideals. The party leadership effortlessly employed authoritarianism, to the extent that it seemed impossible then for the regime to ever consider democratic rule, in the 1930s and a decade later, they just as easily espoused democratic ideals. They were so convinced of the merits of democracy that they seemed to have never advocated authoritarianism. Their capacity to transform so remarkably is testament to their pragmatism, which is guided by their concerns of threats to the security of their country.

To conclude, tutelage theory's arguments to prove the existence of an undisclosed but nevertheless inevitable democratic agenda in the single-party regime in Turkey rest on assumptions and ignore the authoritarian tendencies that the regime demonstrated in the 1930s, thereby provide a misreading of the historical events. It is possible to detect these conceptual fallacies by looking at the period of transition to multiparty system in 1946 and of transfer of power in 1950. The real value in these two historical developments is that both transitions were peaceful. Tutelage theory, springing from this simple observation, of peaceful transition, arrives at wrong conclusions.

### **Tutelage: Segue or Impediment to Democracy?**

The last point that has to be mentioned about the tutelage theory – which is beyond a simple conceptual fallacy and which, in fact, is source of the conceptual fallacies described above—is that they insist on ascribing positive conations to the tutelage system. In these theories, that the tutelary tendencies of the single party administration carried an inherent democratic potential and that democratic potential was realized between 1946 and 1950 is considered as given. Yet, a closer look at Turkish political history in terms of the tutelary tendencies of its rulers reveals that the interval that needs to be examined is the period between 1925-1960.

Tutulary democracy theory, in understanding the single party system as given and an inevitable passage to democracy ignores the fact that the single party regime was founded after it put an end to the pluralist political system of the time. It is a common misconception of the democratic transition theories in general that in order to offer an accurate reading of the political system, they often examine the nature of the previous regime and the mode of transition to that regime (Geddes, 1999). What is often ignored in this literature is that an analysis on the nature of the single-party regime ought to consider the condition under which such regime was formed as well as how it ended.

The Kemalist regime systematically eliminated all opposition and viable contenders for power in this political landscape that supported a pluralist political system in terms of its social base and political representa-

tion. The Kemalist incumbents, then, moved onto the project of homogenizing the pluralist platform on which the Republic had been built. As such, the Republic, which had inherited the legacy of more than one hundred political parties since the formation of the *İttihat ve Terrakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress) in 1889, moved to institutionalize the single party regime after destroying pluralism and eliminating any viable alternatives for power (Tunaya, 1966, p. 261). Therefore, when the nature of the single party regime is being examined, it is of utmost importance to consider the process through which CHP, coming from a multi-party pluralist political culture, became the dominant party and then institutionalized the single party regime. When examined from this perspective, it becomes clear that the exception is not the multi-party regime after 1950, but the authoritarian single party political system of 1925-1945. The architects of this exception are the military-civilian elite classes whose agenda was nation state building.

Tutelage theories, in line with democratization theories, attempt to offer an understanding of the nature of the single party regime by examining only the transition in 1950 and ignoring the military intervention of 1960. However, in the span of a decade, Turkey had already undergone enough political changes to grant another examination of the single party regime. The military junta had overthrown the government and with the 1961 constitution endorsed by the CHP and Kemalist Intelligentsia, bureaucracy had become an accomplice to power. As such, the military intervention just a short ten years after the transition and the Constitution drafted in its aftermath had both tainted the rightly earned fame of the transition experience and established a guardianship that would maintain its influence to this day.

Duverger (1951) introduced the term "tutelary democracy" to the literature on Turkey's political history long before the military intervention of 1960; however neither he nor other political scientists, who also embraced tutelage theory, felt compelled to revisit their arguments after the coup. In fact, the 1960 coup is as relevant as the 1950 democratic transition to the arguments on the political nature of the Kemalist regime. In other words, the Kemalist single-party regime that had made the peaceful democratic transition in 1950 possible had also made the military intervention of 1960



and the tutelage system formed in its aftermath, possible. The coup illustrated that the democratic transition of 1950 could not be sustained and the single party regime harbored characteristics that were not conducive to democratic consolidation.

Furthermore, the arguments offered by Kemalist elites to justify both the transition from a pluralist party tradition to a one party rule in 1925 and the overturning of a democratic regime by a military junta in 1960 revealed their tutelary intentions. In other words, Kemalist elites acted on their tutelary intentions on both occasions and legitimized their actions by their tutelary ambitions. Consequently, if the democratic transition of 1950 allowed Turkey's single-party regime to discover its democratic potential, then the judicial coup in 1925 and the military coup in 1960 ought to be examined to discover whether the same single-party regime might possess dynamics that work against democracy. Kemalist regime possessed the necessary potential and qualities to build a formal democracy and it also holds the key to why this formal democracy was bound to exist within an institutional guardianship. Kemalist regime presents a diverse set of narratives on the political system established in 1950 and the system it was replaced with in 1960. Yet, tutelage theory almost automatically assigns democratic qualities to the single-party regime; it cannot explain military and bureaucratic attacks to politics. Thus, its reliance on only one of these two significant political-historical realities renders the retrospective analysis of tutelage theory insufficient.

In that sense, the tutelary nature of Turkey's single-party regime does not possess a democratic potential or core; on the contrary, it makes the realization of democracy impossible or at least dampens the prospects of democracy. In other words, this article proposes that instead of facilitating democracy, tutelage presents obstacles to and sometimes completely hampers democracy.

## **Conclusion**

Turkey, as of its foundation until today, except for few years, has coddled to apply her formal mechanisms of the democracy. However, despite the permanency of formal mechanisms of democracy, political activity has been maintained in the shade of open and secret limitations. These limits,

in academic studies and in popular political discussions, which determined the framework of the policy, are evaluated by the concept and fact of tutelage.

Tutelage can be defined as an elite group's consideration that they are, on behalf of society, entitled to define and decide the public good and public interest, and to administrate and to govern the society and the state, in realizing public interest without claiming or asking the social consent. The abstract definition of tutelage, when applied to Turkey, is embodied by Kemalism. Kemalism defined in such a framework; refers to the orientation of every inch of social and political life under the guidance of "six arrows" toward elevating of Turkey to "the level of modern civilization". The very mission of Kemalist elites is taken to be as providing the policies to maintain execution of politics to remain within the ground specified by these principles. In this framework, the tutelage refers to both Kemalist ideology, specifying the ground and the limits of political activity and activity of Kemalist elites, maintaining the monopoly on defining this ideology, construing it through historical process and providing the policy to be executed on the axis of this ideology. In other words, "tutelage" implies; the attempt of Kemalist elites for bringing Kemalism—whose meaning is defined through their monopoly on its content- to be the basic authoritative discourse and determinant factor in politics. Such condition, led the real framing of politics and policies to be defined through dynamics struggling for the arbitration or adjustment of Kemalism since the foundation of the Republic.

This authoritarian epistemology, has excluded the 'politics' and has legitimized authoritarian tendencies in the name of protecting, defining and delineating the public good. This tutelage, alongside and despite its claim for modernization and democracy works through and by the exclusion of (the plurality of) democratic politics and wills. Political tutelage, by its nature relies on the negation of the very basic requirement of any democratic regimes, the existence of plurality of political positions. The political tutelage did not transform or lay the ground for cultivation of a democratic utopia, as since the very beginning it has been tied with an (im)possible mission, defined as "civilizing mission". Creating a new society, another project on the agenda of pioneer classes, fed and enhanced such difficulty.

Kemalist elites, in its discourse, declared to *create* a unified national identity (Turkish) and a secular society, which are taken to be the very basic requirements of the formation of a democratic regime. Nonetheless, the ideological antecedents, political wills and vision of reconstruction period and the implemented instruments made such a transition difficult and even impossible.

The democratic experience of Turkey after 1950s and 1960s displayed the existing problematic relation of tutelage with democracy. By relying on the assumption that the society does not have the competence to use its political rights, the tutelage politics envisages to govern the society under an authoritarian regime for the sake of the society. The tutelage politics bases its existence on the assumption that this requirement would end one day and the society would gain the competence to use its democratic rights. However, the democratic history of Turkey reveals that the assumption of democratic politics would follow political tutelage would not take place. Further, it takes the tutelary vision as the strongest obstacle against democratic politics. The realization of democratic system postponed to an uncertain future contingent upon adequacy of social conditions had been the central reason that prevents the materialization of the assumption. The privilege to define whether the social conditions are ready for democracy has been appropriated by the elites, creating a vicious circle. After 1960s, tutelary vision did not encounter any difficulty to legitimize the continuity of tutelage system by continuous updating of its excuses of "conditions/maturity required for democracy". Hence, the elitist mission of protection put the democratic process into a never-ending circle. The post 1960s, institutional tutelage is an example of this process.

As a conclusion, the history of democracy in Turkey displays it well that the assumption of laying the ground for democratic politics by and through tutelary politics is proven wrong and the tutelary vision is the biggest obstacle against consolidation of democratic regime.

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