

# **A PATH-DEPENDENT ANALYSIS OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE TURKISH REPUBLIC**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper studies the overall institutional evolution of the Ottoman Empire and the foundation of the Turkish Republic through an analysis based on path-dependency theory. It focuses on the relationship between institutions and people, first as the subjects of the Ottoman Empire, then as the citizens of the Turkish Republic, and the societal forces in favor and in opposition of change. The role of conservative tendencies as a constant impediment or a reversal force in the way of institutional evolution occupies the center of the argument. The argument of this paper would lead to a claim that the process of creating new institutions by the political elite to replace the old, traditional ones initiated in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and radicalized by a complete transformation on a civilizational scale with the proclamation of the republic in 1923 will be finalized with the future European integration of Turkey.

## **KEYWORDS**

Ottoman Empire; Turkey; Path-dependency Theory; Turkey's European Vocation.

### 1. Introduction: Laying down the theory and the questions

North defines institutions as the humanly devised constraints that shape human interaction, which consequently structure incentives in human exchange, whether political, social, or economic. He further asserts that institutional change shapes the way societies evolve through time and hence is the key to understanding historical change.<sup>1</sup> The agent is the individual responding to the incentives embodied in the institutional framework and the institutions evolve over time defining the overall historical path of change.

The significant point North emphasizes is that institutional change is overwhelmingly incremental. To illustrate this point, he considers the demise of feudalism and manorialism in Europe that consisted of a gradual restructuring of a framework in which the interconnections between formal and informal constraints and enforcement characteristics evolved over centuries. The changes that altered the feudal structure were interwoven over a long period with changes at other margins as a consequence of e.g. population decline. Thus the informal constraints, customs of the aristocracy were eroded and this led to formal legal changes, such as the Statute of Wills. North again directs attention to the fact that the changes were an aggregation of literally thousands of specific small alterations in agreements between lords and serfs, which in total made for fundamental institutional change.

The important question regarding the objective of this paper is what happens in the absence of persistent societal forces that initiated and continued the aggregation of thousands of specific small alterations, which led to the fundamental institutional changes in Europe over a time span of almost five centuries? Thus was the situation of the Ottoman Empire, which formed a momentous legacy for the Turkish Republic that succeeded it. The first part will be devoted to the analysis of this question and its possible answer. The second part will look at the inefficiency of the Turkish political market and the distortion of the path in accordance with the theory. The other question that this paper aims to rise is as of today how this

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<sup>1</sup>For detailed analysis, see, C. Douglass, North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

particular situation serves or still hunts the democratic development of Turkey to the European Union standards.

## 2. The Ottoman Political Thought and the Discontinuity of the Institutional Change

The theory of path-dependent institutional evolution of societies treats wars, revolutions, conquests, and natural disasters as sources of discontinuous institutional change, which would otherwise be a continuous and smooth process.<sup>2</sup> Yet, North explains that by discontinuous change, he means a radical change in the formal rules, usually as a result of a conquest or revolution. Formal and informal political institutions can/cannot provide a hospitable framework for evolutionary change. If such an institutional framework has not evolved, the parties to an exchange may not have a framework to settle disputes, and thus may attempt to break out of the deadlock by violent means. Even when change in formal institutions is achieved, the informal institutions may not change and continue to exert their existence as constraints creating an irresolvable tension between the formal and the informal rules. The relationship between the new formal rules and prevailing informal ones will be self-consistent but their tension will ameliorate their intra-inconsistency since the informal constraints, which had gradually evolved as extensions of previous formal rules, will still persist.

In this context, it is safe to assume that the decline in the medieval Turkish economy was caused by the same factors that had affected the West. However, this decline was not followed by the emergence of new economic forces and institutions, and consequently political ones, as had been the case in Western Europe<sup>3</sup>. The difference owes itself to a radical dissimilarity between the societal forces of the two and their political evolution.

Before we begin to explore and analyze the abovementioned difference and the institutional evolution of the Ottoman society, it

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<sup>2</sup>For further discussion, see *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>For a lengthy discussion, see Niyazi, Berkes *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, Canada, McGill University Press, 1964.

will be illuminating to understand the first of the vital existentialist concepts of authority in the struggle between the traditional conservatives and the reformists.

The word "secular", meaning "the temporal world", has been used in the Protestant countries while the policy of secularism has been expressed by the term "laicism" in Catholic countries. Secularism emphasizes the idea of worldliness; laicism emphasizes the distinction of laity from the clergy. In Christianity, the spiritual and temporal realms were separate from the beginning,<sup>4</sup> although the relations between the two varied with time. The church represented the highest and strongest authority of the spiritual matters while the state represented the highest and strongest authority of the temporal. Hence, secularization or laicization in the Christian world referred to the transformation and reassignment of the formal and informal institutions, most importantly the political ones, which were previously in the sphere of the spiritual, to the sphere of the lay authority. Peculiar to Christianity and its historical evolution, the establishment of a church above, or subordinate to, or parallel with the state constituted an exception rather than the rule in relations between the state and religion.<sup>5</sup>

In Islam there were no such concepts of church and state as specifically religious and political institutions because religion and state were fused together. The church was not above, or subordinate to, or parallel with the state; the religion was the essence of the state, and the state was the embodiment of the religion.<sup>6</sup> Hence, the conflict was not between the church and the state as it was in Europe prior to the Reformation rather it was between the forces of tradition, which promoted and was promoted by religion and Shari' a, and the forces of change.

In the non-secular or traditionalist system, there is no room for the idea of change through the agency of state or any organ of society or individuals, whether by legislative or by other means independent

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<sup>4</sup>'Render unto Caesar what is his, render unto God what is His.'

<sup>5</sup>Berkes, *Development of Secularism, in Turkey*, pp. 5-19.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. The State was by definition founded on religion (by Muhammad or by the four-Caliphs).

of the fixed traditional prescriptions. On the other hand, rational behavior, as the epitome of secularism, is the most prevalent condition manifest in economic and scientific behavior, which invalidates the sanction of religion and leads to the emancipation of political institutions.

The differences in institutions and hierarchies within the religion formed the base of the distinction between the Christian and Islamic experience of religious and political authorities. "Secularism within Christendom came in its real sense, not with separation of state and church, but with the collapse of the medieval concept of society".<sup>7</sup> The political, economic, cultural and scientific institutions of the new secular view of society were overwhelming and produced following the separation of church and state within Christian world. What is important here is the fact that these formal and informal changes rooted in the society over a long span of time came about with the collapse of the medieval organization of society, and that there was no secularism as long as the medieval concept was the defining concept for the society despite the fact that, as previously noted, in Christianity, the church and the state existed side by side. Thus, it is hardly without historical evidence, that in a society governed by a tradition, which carries the sanction of Islamic rule, secularization will involve upheavals and an irresolvable tension quite in connection with the path dependency theory.

In Islam, the law precedes the state as the main principle of guidance for social cohesion. The law, Shari' a, based on the Koran, is the ultimate source according to which the political organization, taxation and the militancy issues are determined for the Muslim believers that constitute the whole as a community. Hence, the theory does not derive itself from a lay ethics but from the religious dicta of the Koran, and becomes a principle of unity that is personified by Allah (God). The two products of this theory are: The idea of a contract of society has a much more restricted substratum in Islamic theory compared to Greek, Roman, medieval Christian and finally modern Western thought; the Islamic conception of natural law differs from the Western conception, even from the medieval Christian conception. In the West, the distinction existed between natural law as

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

the will of the divinity and natural law as an order of things existing independently of the will of the divinity with again divinity's will and wish. Although Aristotle did not explore the problem of the originator of the order of nature and only asserted that the universe always existed, even St. Thomas provided the ultimate base for a belief in the autonomy of nature, which made the secularization of natural law possible. Furthermore, the underlying ancient Greek conception of natural law, e.g., in Heraclitus, was the idea of a common natural source of laws and physical motion. Accordingly, Roman theory of natural law, e.g. in Cicero, was the product "not of opinion" but of a "certain innate force", which was "a part of a world of self-moving things".<sup>8</sup> These conceptions found their grounds more firmly in Galileo and a law of nature unfolding itself without the active intervention of God, which meant the use of reason and rationality.

On the contrary, Islamic natural law could only be conceived as the very presence of God. This is obvious in the overriding acceptance of Gazali in opposition to Ibn Rushd's attempt to allow for the idea of a self-moving nature. This comprehension bore the idea that the law of universe that is the law of God could not be captured by the mere use of reason. Even in Ibn Khaldun, who attempted to introduce the idea of regularity of social occurrences in Islamic thought, the use of reason in politics is taken with suspicion. Once more, due to the fact that the basis of the Islamic theory derived itself from the dicta of Koran rather than worldly ethics, Islam divulged that a foundation of the Islamic social polity was made on the basis of a compact of agreement in which the parties to it were in no way on equal standing, meaning it was a compact of submission in accordance with Allah's covenant with man.<sup>9</sup> This nature of "contract" formed the very nature

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<sup>8</sup>Şerif, Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1962, p. 88.

<sup>9</sup>Mardin, *ibid.*, states: "Indeed, the first agreement arrived at between man and God was one which related to man's acceptance of his condition of slavery vis-à-vis God". He further details that paradoxically this primeval obligation of man to God was also the basis of man's absolute liberty in this world, for "men are free to observe or to violate the terms of this agreement". Moreover, this agreement, placing in men the freedom of using things of this world puts him in a superior position to that of all other creatures. Still, the agreement makes only a hierarchical arrangement and limitation of liberty, creating a condition of slavery for man vis-à-

of the institutional evolution complementary with the absence of property rights and persistent societal forces. The inherent understanding of the contract also lies at the core of the explanation for the lack of development of property rights and societal forces "from below".

Although Koran acted as the brake on the Islamic theorists, there were still other sources such as the "Sunna", the practice of the prophet Mohammed, the "Idjma", consensus of the Islamic community, and the agreement of the Islamic jurists on a principle deduced from these sources. Yet, within the restriction of the unchangeable natural law, the Islamic jurists devised; "a theory of representation, which introduced a temporal element into the political theory of Islam; a conception of natural rights, which came close to medieval Western theories of natural rights; and, finally, a method of gauging legitimacy that was a timid step in the direction of an embryonic theory of resistance".<sup>10</sup>

The background for secular lawmaking in the Ottomans, on the other hand, was set by the Islamic conception of "Urf", the theory, which stated that where Shari 'a did not specifically provide a solution to a problem, "necessity" and "reason" could be used. Yet, the developments of the 13<sup>th</sup> century resulted in the equation, by the "Ulema", of the use of secular law with the most tyrannical of absolutist rule. These developments were the result of the invasion of the Mongols, who regulated their social life by means of secular law. Still, although the Ulema had an increasingly strong position in time, the Ottoman Sultans, in accordance with age-old traditions, had quite large space to practice law which was regarded as "extra-Ser'i". This

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vis God, and the basis of man's liberty remains man's obligation to God. This submission should be kept in mind especially in understanding the loyalty to the Sultan and the state, which prevailed in even the modernizers of the empire and the founding fathers of the republic such as Rauf and Ali Fuad. In Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, although he definitely rejects any form of loyalty to the Sultan or Sultanate, the idea of "submission" remains in the idea of "loyalty to the republic" and exists as the principle of unity in the republican era.

<sup>10</sup>Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p. 91.

can be argued to have contributed to the realization of the prospect of secularization.<sup>11</sup>

The tension created by the Ulema's being at a loss with and even hostile to this imperial prerogative as a result of their education, which stated firmly that there was no law above divine law, would lead to the ultimate duality in the state governance, which would be accentuated over time with the modernization appeals and impacts. This effort of change would be taken by the Ulema as a most vital threat to the "harmony of the whole", rather than as a solid basis for the rationalization and secularization of the polity, and would play against the reformist Sultans of the declining era of the empire.<sup>12</sup>

### **Institutional Evolution of the Ottoman Empire**

The decline of the empire, which began to show its first symptoms in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, requires a historical analysis. The reasons were many and complex composing of political, military, social and economic factors. For the purpose of this paper, its effects only on institutional evolution are considered. They produced two outcomes: First a traditionalist reform mentality; later a modernist reform mentality. After the failure of the first, the latter was the result of the realization and conviction that the only way to salvage the unity of the empire was through a societal reformation. The pertinent aspect of the evolution to the theory of path-dependency argument is that the evolution did not continuously come from "below" (the society), due to the lack of coherent and persistent societal forces, but rather was implemented from "above" (the state administration) due to the desire first, to bring back the glorious days of the early years, later on, simply, to survive the new ages. The answers of two questions will lay down the basis of this particular way of change: Why was there an absence of persistent social forces and institutions to initiate change? Why was the empire so late to recognize the decay and take action?

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>This point is relevant for the Young Ottoman reformists' confusion. Since the main objective was to maintain the harmony and unity of the empire, they would be misled in their means of achieving the harmony and unity because of the (un)conscious Islamic underpinnings of their political thought.



The Ottomans, being geographically close to Western Europe, were yet quite apart in culture and religion.<sup>13</sup> Europeans depicted Ottomans as a tyranny in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although this concept obviously designates corrupt and perverse regimes in Western political thought, with some degree of ambiguity, it is argued to have conveyed a different meaning when applied to the Ottoman Empire. Tyranny certainly allowed for positive features. It implied the greatness, success and stability of the empire, regardless of the feelings that this might have invoked in the Western writers of the time. It also did not suggest that the Ottoman regime was illegitimate not only because Europeans treated the Ottoman Empire as a legitimate government in both domestic and international relations, but also because the concept implied theoretically a temporary regime and the Ottoman regime was permanent since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> With the social, economic and political changes in Europe, and the decline in the Ottoman Empire, "despotism" began to replace the word "tyranny", certainly expressing the backwardness and corruption of the Oriental system.<sup>15</sup>

These images of Ottomans in the eyes of Europeans have two important aspects. One is that they are essential to comprehend the Ottoman pride and self-confidence, which, backed by the immobility of tradition, led to the indifference of the system to the dynamic changes in Europe and ultimately resulted in its "lagging behind". The other is that since European observers usually designated the empire as a tyranny with the absence of a noble class and the existence of arbitrary management of private property (both of which are crucial in the explanation of the absence of forces to initiate the change in time), and therefore relates to our question in the very beginning.

Ottoman pride and self-confidence had interwoven reasons. The most important of these, in terms of the illusion they later caused,

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<sup>13</sup>For further information, see, Asli Çirakman, 'From Tyranny to Despotism: The Enlightenment's Unenlightened Image of the Turks, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 33 (1), Feb 2001, pp. 49-68.

<sup>14</sup>With the exception of the aftermath of the Ankara War between 1402-1413.

<sup>15</sup>For the evaluation of these European writers' motivations for the description of the Ottoman society and state, see Çirakman, 'From Tyranny to Despotism'.

seems to be deriving from religious reasons. The extent of the domination of religious rules, in terms of informal and formal institutions, over all spheres of life and the extent to which these are supported or implemented by the state is crucial in understanding the process of secularization in a non-Christian society.<sup>16</sup> Ottomans, regarding themselves the best servers of Islam in terms of conquest and thus spreading of religion to the "infidel", viewed themselves as the "righteous and virtuous" and the "others" as the "infidels and deprived of virtue".<sup>17</sup> The Sultan was the direct representative or "shadow of God", and people were his blind-obedient subjects.<sup>18</sup> The Ottoman lands were, thus, not only desirable but also sacred, and the Sultan's rule was not only undisputable, but also righteous a priori. Thus, "the Ottoman state suffered from the paradox of being too powerful and stable to make the structural adjustments necessary to meet the challenge of dynamic and innovative Europe".<sup>19</sup> The social and economic changes in Europe brought about new trends, which the Ottomans were neither prepared for, nor grasped. The romantic mysticism of the Orient contributed to the decline creating an illusion of superiority and a false self-confidence, which became fatal.

On the other hand, the institutional evolution of the society was shaped by the fact that Ottoman rule did not allow the emergence of an aristocracy with rights and duties toward the sovereign. The "timarli", who constituted a military class, did not have a base to be compared to Western feudal lords since they were authorized by law to collect the assigned tax revenue but had no specific rights to land or peasants.<sup>20</sup> From the very beginnings of the empire, the relationship between the ruler and his Turcoman allies was not without tension,

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<sup>16</sup>See Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*, London, Routledge, 1993.

<sup>17</sup>This image is bewildering because the sultans did not interfere in their non-Muslim subjects' religion and worship, and promoted "mosque, church and synagogue" together; still this did not prevent their inherent pride and views of morality.

<sup>18</sup>Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, pp. 13-17.

<sup>19</sup>Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*, p.22.

<sup>20</sup>See Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, 1973; "The Nature of Traditional Society", in Reobert E. Ward and Dankwart A. Rustow, (eds.), *Political Modernization in Japan and Turkey*, Princeton University Press, 1964.

which undermined all attempts by the sultan for a strong state.<sup>21</sup> The effort on the sultan's part to lessen his dependence on his Turcoman notables resolved itself into an effort of creating a counter-force, for which the Christians of the conquered territories seemed to fit. To this end, the possibility of an independent Ottoman landowning aristocracy for which the notables could have been candidates was destroyed by the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, and with "devshirme" system in full use, the central authority was made ever more powerful.<sup>22</sup> Had it been the opposite, the historical evolution of Ottoman society and politics could have followed a somewhat more similar evolution to that of Europe. Unlike Europe, however, there emerged no social force with a strong base to challenge the sultan's absolute power, and transform the society from "below" compared to that of the Magna Carta of 1215, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance and the Reformation of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, all of which were the results of long bloody wars as well as the revival of antique Greek heritage. On the other hand, "the Sened-î Ittifak (Pledge of the Agreement/Alliance-1808), far from being a Magna Carta, was one of the first steps toward the transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a modern centralized state".<sup>23</sup> Truly, an effective impact of Western "awakening" reached the empire only after the French Revolution of 1789. By then the empire was referred to as "the Sick Man of Europe".

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<sup>21</sup>See Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*, for a detailed historical review.

<sup>22</sup>Murat I began the practice of recruiting the brightest and most talented Christian male youths to be trained in the capital. Mehmed, conquering Istanbul, guaranteed this system, enhanced his central rule by countering the notables. For further details, J. Shaw, Stanford, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 1, London, Cambridge University Press, 1976.

<sup>23</sup>Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p. 148. Mardin also mentions that although the document itself amounted to recognition of the independence of "Ayans" (local dynasties) insofar as it did rely on their assistance, the historian Cevdet Pasa quite clearly indicates that this was a temporary compromise due to the weakness of the central powers. It was more of an era of cooperation between the Sultan Mahmud II and the bureaucrats who brought him to the throne. Thus, although the end was an institutional reformation and emancipation, the means required a "strong and determined" sultan to reach the end.

### **The Determining of A New Path; Remedies for the "illness"**

The declining era of the empire is broadly characterized by palace conspiracies, reformist Sultans who initiate traditionalistic reforms, and conservative forces that reverse these reforms. The resultant confusion of duality in the path-dependent evolution of institutions and the patent tension between conservatives and reformists constitute a devastating effect on the future demise of the empire as well as forming the preliminary basis of the future Western path. The most important conservative institutions of this age appear to be the Ulema, and the Janissaries, the Soldiers of the Sultan.

The Ottoman Empire witnesses, in this era, the fundamentalist tendency of the Ulema. The Ulema, by nature, maintained the continuity of law and tradition and combated the anti-authoritarian, anti-traditionalist religious tendencies, even when they manifested themselves as the antinomianism of the mystic (sufi). Members of Ulema were drawn from "medreses", colleges for the education of law and theology, which were inside one and other, and founded by the Sultan. Since the role of Ulema was the interpretation of the Shari'a whenever new cases arose, and especially if the case involved something, which had special religious or political import, the Seyhul-Islam (highest ranking Ulema) assumed an almost equal power to the Sadrazam/Grand Vizier in state affairs. Over time, with the fundamentalist propensity, even a seemingly insignificant innovation was regarded as a deviation from Shari' a, and thus was viewed to be leading to the destruction of "the harmony of the whole". Any innovation was prevented by the Ulema with the conviction that it was contrary to Koran, the Holy Book of Islam and Shari' a, its rule.<sup>24</sup> The Janissaries developed a no less fundamental mentality under the hold of tradition, particularly with the first military defeats of the empire and the consequent military reforms. They became actively involved in palace politics, assuming a different role, and with their power, they could depose, even kill the Sultan.

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<sup>24</sup>Any innovation was discouraged if not prevented since it was the innovator's life at stake let alone the concepts such as patent rights. This is related to the lack of development of property rights, which is the main ingredient of individual and societal (economic and political) development.

The era of reform can be argued to have started with the Tulip Era, which lasted for 12 years, following the Treaty of Passarovitz (1718).<sup>25</sup> The year 1727, however, saw the introduction of the idea of change and progress, and modern scientific thinking into the empire by İbrahim Muteferrika, whose interest rested in science<sup>26</sup>. This introduction of only a primitive form of rationalism came through printing press, which was allowed to be used for the printing of what was regarded as scientific materials. Yet, such individual attempts, because the empire lacked the institutional framework, the most vital of which is the security of tenure and protection from confiscation, could not lead to an importunate social change.

In the modern sense, the earliest theory of reform belonged to Sultan Young Osman, who, at the age of 16, attempted to curb the power of the Seyhul-Islam and the Janissaries.<sup>27</sup> The Janissaries killed him before he could implement his ideas. Later, an important figure was Selim III, who founded a new Army section Nizam-ı Cedit (New Order), introduced significant militaristic reforms, opened embassies, engineering and medicine schools under European instruction. Selim III attempted to reorganize the empire through traditionalistic reforms, but When the Janissaries revolted in 1807, he gave in to their demands to prevent further bloodshed. The conservatives led by the reactionary Seyhul-Islam convinced him to negotiate and conciliate. Encouraged by this that they could get whatever they wanted, the Janissaries, with their assault on the Palace, deposed and killed Selim III.

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<sup>25</sup>The Tulip Era, characterized by its failure of several reform attempts, the extravagance of the Sultanate at the expense of the public welfare and the desire to avoid war at all costs, was ended by a brutal uprising.

<sup>26</sup>Berkes notes that Muteferrika's most significant work was the "Rational Bases for the Politics of Nations", which presented the idea that the empire had to learn and adopt from Europe. The printing press, as a Western innovation, was excluded from the arena of religion; thus could not bring a rationalization in religion.

<sup>27</sup>Although the nature of his reforms were traditionalis, that is, involved no attempts to change the political system, as Young Osman took a secularizing step, the whole process is taken here in the context of modernism. Later modernist reforms had an increasing tendency to eliminate the religious hold in social and political life.

Following the reign of the most liberal of the traditionalistic reformists, which ended in failure and defeat by the traditional forces, came the era of radical reforms. Those failed reforms in fact set the Ottoman system on a path toward modernization, which would characterize its last century of existence.

Witnessing the results of Selim's weakness and indecision,<sup>28</sup> Mahmud II realized that: '1) reforms, to be successful, had to encompass the entire scope of Ottoman institutions and society, not only a few elements of the military (evolutionary thinking); 2) the only way that reformed institutions could operate was through the destruction of the ones they were replacing, so that the latter could not hinder their operation (revolutionary thinking to form the base for evolution)); 3) the reforms had to be carefully planned and support assured before they were attempted (evolutionary thinking).<sup>29</sup> These three points were vital in the maintenance of the path the empire was put on in three ways. First, although they could not save the empire from dismantling, which was always the prior objective, they made a historical turning point in that despite confusion and deviations from time to time, they assured a future success. Second, the points referred to the real "illness" that the empire suffered. Third, they formed the very base for the final modernist Mustafa Kemal and the foundation of the secular republic.

In accordance with the first point, Mahmud II started an almost sweeping reformation period that involved every institution; the Army, the state administration and education. This determined the direction of the path as Western. The second point, most importantly, served to lessen the degree of effect of the most powerful two institutions in the way of innovation and a strong modernization. It

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<sup>28</sup>Mahmud was decisive in rejecting the demands of the Janissaries when they revolted and attacked the Palace. Further showing his power, he was decisive again in ordering the execution of the heir to the throne. Thus, although the conservatives wanted to depose and probably assassinate him, he left nobody to succeed him and purged their intention.

<sup>29</sup>Stanford Shaw, & K. Ezel Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2, London, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p. 1 (The parenthesis are mine).

eliminated the Janissaries in 1826<sup>30</sup> and secularized the state to a limited extent by cutting down the power of Ulema. Notably, the third point served the survival of the reforms and thus all the past incremental changes gained a framework for formal and informal institutional changes on the horizon. Still, the lack of an aggregation of literally thousands of specific small alterations in agreements between lords and serfs, which were initiated from "below" by the people, and in this absence, the presence of an aggregation of formal changes and attempts at informal changes, which were initiated from "above" by the Sultan did not lead to a continuous institutional evolution although its resultants were achieved ultimately by a discontinuous evolution of institutions: Kemalist Revolution.

The most momentous of Mahmud II's reforms that prepared the future institutional framework are given briefly below in terms of their effect on the Western path the empire was set on.

Mahmud II, in order to be able to embark on the reformation he planned, extended the powers of the central government and abolished *timar*, the Ottoman version of feudalism. At the same time, he tried to improve the apparatus through which the central government powers were exercised, implementing such actions as ending the embodiment of unilateral policy decisions drafted by the sultan himself.<sup>31</sup> The insecurity of tenure and exposure to confiscation, which led to a decline in competence as well as a weakening of moral fiber, was ended despite the fact that it would be costly in the short run for the Treasury. Yet, in the long run, this facilitated the transaction of public

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<sup>30</sup>This incident is recorded in history as "The Auspicious Incident". Here, we see Mahmud's determination in directing history, by proclaiming the goodness of the event, which will be furthered by Mustafa Kemal's rewriting the national history in the nation-building process after the proclamation of the republic.

<sup>31</sup>See Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, Chapter V. This change is of paramount significance. Although Mahmud II was absolutistic in order to carry out the reformation project, this reform of implementing 'rule of law' indicates not only the far -reaching objective of his reforms, but also the fact that he had correctly assessed the starting point of the problem as the lack of property rights. Further, this attitude reminds Atatürk's single handedness in accordance with his use of pragmatism to achieve his ends in an absolutistic manner but for the establishment of 'rule of law'.

and private business, giving civil servants and indeed to others a measure of security of life and property, which is the main ingredient of development. Further, he initiated a process, which gravely weakened the power of the Ulema to oppose him through diverting their revenues and through the structural and organizational regulations implemented in the government and state administration.<sup>32</sup> Transferring the appointment of teachers and control of schools and colleges to a Ministry of Education; the appointment of judges and the administration of the law to a Ministry of Justice; and entrusting the drafting of fetvas to a committee of legal specialists in the Chief Mufti's (Seyhul-Islam) office under the Fetva Emini (Supervisor of Fetva) and thus transforming Seyhul-Islam into a government officeholder with some consultative and advisory functions, were immense strokes against conservatism and traditionalism that had formed the most significant basis of informal and formal constraints in the way of the evolution of formal institutions. These steps taken toward a secular system is of great importance: The religion and state once existed under the auspices of traditionalism and status quo and within each other were thus treated as two separate issues for the first time.

Mahmud II's further reforms on education had two motivations. One was his attempt for a total social change, and the other was to create a competent officer corps for the Army<sup>33</sup>. The Sultan took the revolutionary step of opening a medical school to educate in French and Turkish. With this action, he touched on a central problem of the educational and indeed of the entire reform project-the language barrier.<sup>34</sup> Also, opening of modern schools of science formed the social basis needed to carry out the future reforms. His other step was one of sending four students to Paris, which would be followed by others. These students would eventually play a prominent role of indispensable importance in the transformation of the country.

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<sup>32</sup>For a full discussion, see Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, pp. 92-94.

<sup>33</sup>The need for a fullfledged reform was first recognized for the Army due to which the Empire suffered loss of territory and economic independence. As a consequence, the military officers were the first enlightened elite of the Empire.

<sup>34</sup>For a full discussion, see *ibid.*, pp. 83-89.



New governmental institutions on Western lines were created such as the *Takvim-i Vakayi*, the Official Gazette; a postal system, a police system and entirely new ministries such as the Ministry of Finance.<sup>35</sup> In 1837, the institutionalized form of the Council of Ministers and a more specialized governmental organ, where the decisions arrived at during discussions were to be embodied in laws and presented to the sultan's approval, were established. Mahmud II's reforms had a "democratic" aspect, in the modern terminology: It had, in fact, been a well-established governing principle of the empire that the important political decisions were taken with the presence and advise of the state dignitaries. Furthermore, the extent of the modernist approach reveals itself better in Resid Pasha's attempts to exclude those who tended to "be unable to divest themselves from the manners and customs with which the old generation was impregnated".<sup>36</sup> Thus the drive of the reformation was clearly Western and modernist. The legacies of this period, undeniably, characterized the foundation of the republic. Another striking similarity would be the means sought for a future democratic formation (first implicitly, later explicitly). Although the historical circumstances would be different, their justification would remain the same due to the gap between the swift formal changes and the slower informal ones.

Still, Mahmud II did not stop at introducing formal, political changes but went on to introduce new formal social rules and regulations to abridge the discontinuity created by the abruptness of the formal changes and the prevalence of the traditional forces and constraints within the society. He changed the official dress code for the civil servants to this end. Hence, Mahmud II, it would seem, "was

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<sup>35</sup>See Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*; Shaw, Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, for details.

<sup>36</sup>Mardin, *Genesis of Young ottoman Thought*, p. 153, explains that Resid Pasha could not have reference to the idea of popular sovereignty, and specifically stated that while members of similar bodies in Europe were elected, under the Ottoman monarchy they could only be appointed. He further asserts that this was quite a logical appraisal of a system under which sovereignty had been held in trust for God by the Sultan. This whole system of political thought and practice that had evolved through the centuries would be altered by the discontinuous evolution of the Republic.

not only the Peter the Great but also the Henry VIII of Turkey".<sup>37</sup> Yet, he was criticized with the argument that depriving the Ottomans of their traditional heritage, he could offer no new, coherent system of values to replace. On the other hand, from a historical perspective, it is obvious that the traditional heritage referred to was already dismantling with the erosion in the multi-national character of the empire and the severe military defeats mainly as a result of lack of innovations that brought the country under economic and social imperialism of the West.

#### **Constitutional Monarchy (Tanzimat Period, 1839-1878) and 'Constitutional Despotism' (Hamidian Era, 1878-1908)**

The predicaments of the empire in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century were many folded. The most profound effect of Western notions of nationalism and liberty was felt through the empire with a number of nationalistic movements. The empire was no longer able to contain its multi-national character against the explosive force of nationalism born out of French Revolution. On the other hand, it had already been both realized and accepted as a resolution by the reformers that the dual principles of the sanctity of private property and the power sharing of the ruler were the underpinnings of European political thought and recent success. However, these ideas and principles, which were the consequences of the evolution of European society and politics, were still incompatible with the traditional Ottoman political theory and practice.

Although the Declaration of Gülhane in 1839, to a certain extent, guaranteed individual rights for the subjects of the empire in the form of security for "life, honor and property", it neither challenged the Sultanate nor exceeded its limits by introducing a comprehensive and novel system to replace the obviously malfunctioning Ottoman system. Rather, it led the empire to an ever more confused path with miscellaneous ideologies and superficial restructurings.

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<sup>37</sup>Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 93. For the disadvantages and more difficult tasks Mahmut II had compared to Peter the Great and Henry VIII, refer to chapter 4.

Gülhane Rescript embodied "the abolition and removal for ever from official documents of all discriminatory terms and expressions indicating that any one community was held to be inferior to any other in respect of religion, language, or race. The use of such terms by officials or private individuals would be forbidden by law".<sup>38</sup> This appeared as a sign of an embryonic democracy due to the secularization of the Tanzimat and despite the authoritarian tone of its language. An unintended effect has been to create an impression that it had been issued under European pressure and a feeling among the Christian subjects that their salvation would be with those powers.

The reaction in Europe, on the other hand, was prompt and fervent. Even August Comte decided that "the Ottoman Empire was the political and social laboratory of which he had dreamed, alleging that the Religion of Humanity could become the guiding beacon of governmental action, for Islam did not stand in the way of a complete remodeling of society, and the rulers had shown that they believed in 'energetic' reforms".<sup>39</sup> Yet, the declaration was certainly based on the groundwork of Mahmud II, who died three months before it, and was definitely absolutistic<sup>40</sup>. The declaration was the equivalent of a European constitutional charter only insofar as it promised that in the empire, government would be based on principles eliminated from arbitrary rule, although the emergence of the state separate from the Sultan, which identified the state not with the reigning ruler but with established values, could be observed as early as the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>41</sup> Further, though generally accepted as the peak sign of

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<sup>38</sup>"The emphasis on religious equality did not please everyone; some Muslims deplored it, for obvious reasons, while some Christians resented being placed on the same footing as Jews". See Geoffrey Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, Newyork, Praeger, 1974, p. 45.

<sup>39</sup>Quoted in Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p.156

<sup>40</sup>This single handedness is a common point of the Ottoman and Republican modernization projects. The state elite took on the "social engineering" due to the disorganization of the social demands and attempts for change and development.

<sup>41</sup>In the *Sened-i Itifak* (1808) of Mahmud II, for instance, the state was mentioned instead of the Sultan as a party to the pact. In fact this has been only a counter-trend since the power was concentrated in the Sultan. This imperative of concentration of power in one-hand was a significant factor the modernizing elite, including the

reformation, Gülhane Declaration, in order to appease the conservatives, had to be backed up by the justification that it came into being to ensure that the individual, when granted security of life, honor and property, would become a more useful member of his society and devote himself fully to the state being freed from becoming preoccupied with his own affairs. Resid Pasha, himself, stated, two years after the proclamation, that education was by no means so widespread in Turkey as to make the constitutionalism possible, and asserted that the declaration only intended to introduce a complete security of life, property and honor of individuals and regulate the internal and military expenditures of the Porte.<sup>42</sup>

The "imposed from above" changes that found their framework to penetrate more deeply into the society, however, again, had almost no base within the larger picture except the well-educated elite who spoke French and supported the so-called modernization process social engineering. In other words, it was not an imposition of the people for individual or collective rights. Largely uneducated and preoccupied with economic problems, people remained as loyal subjects of the Sultan, the Caliph of all Muslims, with the exception of non-Muslims among whom nationalism and liberty were no longer alien concepts. Still, owing to the enlightened and audacious individuals who formed the first base of a civil society in Turkey, the Tanzimat years saw a remarkable advance of liberalism in Ottoman political thought. "In the world of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Turkey had to modernize or perish, and the men of Tanzimat, with all their

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Republican, relied on. Moreover, the political parties that were formed as opposition to the Republican elite and came to power in the first multi-party elections inherited the same element. This is one of the reasons why and how the party leaders appear stronger than their parties, and people tend to vote for leaders rather than parties in today's Turkey. For further discussion on contemporary Turkish politics, see Metin Heper, 'The Ottoman Legacy and Turkish Politics', *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54 (1), Fall 2000, pp. 63-82; and Ismet Inonu: *The Making of a Turkish Statesman*, Leiden, E. J. Brill, 1998. See also Carter Findley, *The Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Port, 1789-1922*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1980.

<sup>42</sup>Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, p. 157.

failings, laid the indispensable foundation for the more thorough modernization that was to follow".<sup>43</sup>

However, in the preceding era, the fate of the Constitutional Monarchy would be in shaky hands and conditions, as the following thirty years of absolutism were without precedent in Ottoman history".<sup>44</sup> Abdulhamid was not against the declaration of the Constitution, by accepting which he could come to the throne in the first place, but manipulating the ideological confusion that characterized this era and the patriotic Ottoman youth as its agents, he was able to use it for his own ends, turning away from constitutionality and assuring his survival and throne under an absolute rule. In fact, "Abdulhamid's constitutional absolutism derived its power from the constitutionalists' attempt to solve inconsistencies created by the [unrelenting] duality of state and religion in the Tanzimat regime".<sup>45</sup> His regime appealed to his subjects because the society had for a long time entered a period of ideologies, which the people were alienated to, after having gone through a period of bureaucracy to which the people were not adopted. The fundamental reason for this was the people's being neither bourgeois nor proletariat, but despite previous reforms, the overwhelmingly uneducated subject of the sultan with a feudal-like socio-economic system and with no effective political conscious, totally closed to the Western developments. Combined with the distressed economic condition of the country and Abdulhamid's appearance as the self-confident Muslim ruler and above all the Caliph respected by lands outside Turkey and Persia, which were under foreign domination, created a sense of belongingness on the part of the people to the regime. Thus, neither the Constitution nor the Parliament mattered. The secular path was reversed since all power was concentrated under the auspices of Caliphate and Sultanate.

In time, Abdulhamid organized an incredible network of spies and informers who were paid to denounce those who might be conspiring against him. Consequently, the official trends of thought followed the opposite direction that of those characterized the

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<sup>43</sup>Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 126.

<sup>44</sup>G. Lewis, *Modern Turkey*, p. 48.

<sup>45</sup>Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 253.

Tanzimat. The official political thought and policy revolved around the isolationist (from the West) pillar, creating a major disruption in the path of social and political evolution. Traditionalism, apologetics, anti-Westernism, pan-Ottomanism and pan-Islamism regained their lost grounds. However, "it is an irony that a system designated to isolate the mind from change and innovation coincided with the most devastating infiltration of the prohibited ideas"<sup>46</sup>.

One of the considerable products of concentration of power in the Hamidian system was that the large bureaucratic organization became the weakest systematic point. A rational administration could not be founded because the organization lacked the means, methods, and the personnel as well as being ideologically inconsistent. The inconsistency was in that Abdulhamid from a different perspective founded in fact what the new agents of change (Young Ottomans) would perceive as the Islamic constitutionalism. This inconsistency further fed on the "spirit of submissiveness"<sup>47</sup> which has revealed itself throughout centuries in the role of the unconditional, unquestionable and willing acceptance of the absolute authority of the Sultan as the shadow of God. Even the later ideologues of the empire (Young Turks) were not totally free from this spirit, and could not consider, at first, deposing Abdulhamid. At this point, it would be safe to argue that Abdulhamid alone did not create this "spirit" but discovered and used it for both internal and external affairs of the state, turning it into an Islamic ideology that aimed to maintain the unity of the empire.

#### **Ideologies of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and the New Agents of Change:**

The end of 18<sup>th</sup> century marked the two shaping concepts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: Nationalism and liberalism, both of which were alien, unorthodox and dangerous for the Ottoman Empire. A new literary

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid, p. 276.

<sup>47</sup>This "spirit" will be the focal point of attention in the Kemalist revolution since M. Kemal aimed to replace it with "rationality". I argue in this paper that this spirit has still not completely disappeared but changed in time with liberalization and globalization effects weakening the moral substratum of the republic.

movement emerged as the promoter and defender of these Western ideas despite (and thanks to) arbitrary and paranoiac suppression of Abdulhamid. The leading writers, poets, journalists and thinkers of this era, in time, with the new enlightened elite of the empire, who were the fruits of the reforms of Mahmud II and his successors, formed secret political organizations. These men were enthusiastic, ambitious and idealist in understanding the European writings, thought, ideas and developments, and applying them to the ills of the empire. They also had the ideological and technical instruction of opposition and even revolution.

Three distinct political creeds competed at this time: Ottomanism, Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. Ottomanism envisaged a modernized Ottoman Empire, well equipped with Western liberal institutions that promoted a conflict free system for the Muslim and non-Muslim subjects of the Sultan. Pan-Islamism enjoyed its supremacy in the Hamidian era and was in favor until when Arabs preferred to become independent rather than follow the Ottoman Caliph in the WW-I. Pan-Turkism aspired to unite all the Turks of Russia and Asia in one state. It was the last emerging ideology because of all among the subjects of the empire, Turks were the least self-conscious, the least advanced towards nationhood, and the most confused and divided.<sup>48</sup> They first came up with the other two ideologies in order to save the empire, and then realized that they were a separate nation as well which could be united. However, Pan-Turkism was at least as utopian as Ottomanism, and would be at least as destructive as Pan-Islamism for the maintenance of the integrity of the empire.

The Young Ottomans were the first ideologues of the empire. The ideology of loyalty to state was an integral part of their scheme. Their design could be stated as "taking the best of European political institutions and placing them on an Islamic substratum". In this they were frustrated because the European theories of "responsible

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<sup>48</sup>Indeed, to call somebody a "Turk" was a source of insult to refer to the peasants of Anatolia; the Turks usually called themselves Ottomans. See for details G. Lewis, *Modern Turkey*; B. Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*; Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*; Ahmad, *Making of Modern Turkey*. Also see C. H. Dodd, *The Crisis of Turkish Democracy*, London, The Eothen Press, 1983.

government" had grown around theories of justified resistance and atomistic individualism, while the major Islamic theory had not evolved an accepted theory of resistance and had not provided a theory of individualism. On the other hand, their theory did not dispose one of a corporate nature of the state whereas the Roman theory of corporate personality bore the "Raison d'Etat" as well as the democratic product of modern theory of representation. The Young Ottomans certainly missed the point in not realizing that there existed an organic bond between the political institutions of Locke and the individualistic concepts behind them.<sup>49</sup> At this point, a reference should be made to the intellectual history of Ottomans, which had Islamic roots and therefore reflected inadequacies in constructing a coherent, liberal system of (political) thought. On the other hand, the Young Ottoman patriotism, which would earn more national connotations over time, was founded on the urge to take action in the face of humiliation suffered in military defeats and policies dictated by European powers. The emergence of the phrase "Jeune Turquie" (Young Turk) coincides with this period.

As a consequence of Abdulhamid's political suppression, the intellectual debate shifted to a cultural context, severed from the political-religious questions.<sup>50</sup> This, sharpened by the Western impact, helped develop the pits for a revolution combined with the cultural consciousness that the shift to a cultural context provided.

The Young Turk movement is differentiated from the earlier reformist eras with the clearly accentuated Westernist ideals and aspirations of the new generation of prominent writers, journalists and thinkers. The often neglected point of difference between the Young Ottomans and Young Turks, however, is the most momentous of all, particularly in terms of the culmination of the principles that laid down the republic: While Young Ottoman thought had an Islamic origin, in the Young Turk theories, Islam had a weaker bond.<sup>51</sup> This

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<sup>49</sup>That is one reason why Abdulhamid was able to defeat them ideologically. Again, we are faced with the differences in the social contracts of the two societies.

<sup>50</sup>Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 297.

<sup>51</sup>For example, Namık Kemal, a prominent political and literary figure, to whom the first use of "freedom" and "fatherland" is attributed, had Islam and Islamic law as the basis of his thought of modernization.



weakened Islamic content disappears in the Kemalist thought, the underpinning contemplation of the republican era.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, although just as the Tanzimat Era was shaped by a vigorous Westernization effort and the Tanzimat reformers were sophisticated enough to tailor some Western political theories to the Ottoman traditionalist rule, and so were the Young Turks, the main purpose of the movement remained as the restoration of the authority of the center while with Kemalism, the main purpose was to establish a new authority of center.

As still a power struggle between conservatists and reformists, the modernization process embarked on by the newly emerged elite, by now better known as the Young Turks, relied its survival on the very same authoritarian characteristics of the Ottoman State tradition. Again, there was no trace of a smooth and continuous change; despite the ideological influence of the West, the structure to which it was applied was still not related to the social and economic structure of the West. Hence, the result was not an evolution of the political institutions but the continuous arbitrariness of Sultan Abdulhamid, declaring the Constitution under pressure from Young Turks, and abandoning it when he had the opportunity. While Young Turks were suspicious of the sultanate and played the game his way, the Sultan was able to freeze any social developments in his hands until the 1908 Revolution, which restored the Constitution.

Despotism and enlightenment were the two sides of the coin for the Ottomans, only that of enlightenment came through despotism, and could only survive with a new form (usually its own version) of despotism. Both the means and the context of the reforms were, too, authoritarian, and although the absolutism of the Sultan was restricted for the first time, the Constitution, this time, became a gun under the monopoly of the Young Turks who had been politically organized as the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) in 1889. The three Young Turks, Enver, Talat and Cemal assumed pivotal roles in the ruling of the country. The diversified and inconsistent ideologies of Young Turks and their suppressive methods furthered this fatal alienation, and the institutionalization of this alienation marked both

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<sup>52</sup>See Mardin, *Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*, for a full examination of this point.

their end in the political history of Turkey and the end of the empire. Yet, this end prepared the ideological accumulation of Mustafa Kemal and of the nation state.

In terms of ideological accumulation, a reference to two men will be revealing as a hint of the future path of the Ottoman Empire. One is Yusuf Akçura (1876-1933), an intellectual, who watched the factional struggles within the Young Turks and saw that the determining factor would be not the union of nationalities but their ferocious struggle among themselves. In an article titled "Three Policies", he argued that the interests of the Turks, non-Turkish Muslims, and non-Muslims did not coincide, and that the only left thing for the Turks to do was to forget about being Ottomans and to recognize their own nationality and aspirations, just like the non-Muslim subjects of the empire had done. Akçura also recognized that pan-Turkism would be difficult to achieve since there was yet no national consciousness among the Turks, and the interests of the Turks outside the empire and the interests of the ones inside would also divert.<sup>53</sup> This streamline was not a common point of agreement within Young Turks; however, found its implementation with the Kemalist republic. The other man is Kılıçzade Hakkı, a known contributor to *Ijtihad*. Kılıçzade shared the belief that Islam was a rational, even a natural religion. This judgment would be the keystone of Kemalist thinking on religion, thus would form the most important component of the republican identity, which rejected Islam, as it was, to be the base of national identity. Kılıçzade in "Son Cevap" (The Ultimate Response, 1915) wrote in response to a criticism by a member of the Ulema, of this rational view of religion:

Ijtihad is warring not against Islam, but against fanatics of your kind.... The enemies of Islam are not in the Balkans or in Europe, but right here in the medreses, and in the Şeyh-ul Islam's office.... We have never thought of abolishing religion.... because we know that, aside from their sublime spiritual values, religions are the most effective forces to keep men and, especially the debauched clericals under control.... One thing ought to be learned categorically; reform

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<sup>53</sup>See for further information and analysis Berkes. *Development of Secularism in Turkey*; and Hugh Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and Turkish Republic*, New York, New York University Press, 1997.

in Islam can be realized only through the aid of Western learning.... Islam owns nothing today; it has exhausted everything. It is dependent upon the West to regain its life. It is dependent upon the West even to learn its own principles...How can we restore the vitality of this great religion with these Şeyh-ul Islams, with these snuff-addicted preachers, with this army of vagabond softas whose ideas of faith do not go beyond voluptuous desires to own beautiful girls (hûris) and boys (gilmâns) in Paradise?... Islam is a religion that prohibited such actions practiced by these men as telling lies, committing adultery, homosexuality, drinking...It is to bring happiness and success, not misery and failure. Talk about the after-life, which has continued for fourteen centuries, has gone long enough. Let me talk of this world from now on. What the Muslims need are not illusions, but realities.<sup>54</sup>

Kılıçzade, hardly a representative of the new "political elite", stating that religion is the most effective force to control the debauched clericals, exceeds the idea of secularism, in the sense of worldliness, but touches upon the policy of laicism, the separation of the spiritual and temporal as well as the rationalization of religion. His approach and language represents an aspiration that could be achieved in a revolutionary way. The next section will be of this revolution.

### 3. From the "Sick Man of Europe" to a "Contemporary and Respected Republic"

The Ottoman Empire under the rule of CUP led by Enver entered the WW-I on the German side. "Pan-Ottomanism, pan-Islamism, and pan-Turkism collapsed together with the Ottoman Empire on October 30, 1918",<sup>55</sup> while Westernism, Islamism, and Turkism re-emerged. The core of the struggle, as Berkes puts it, which determined the essence of the ideology of the new regime was neither a struggle between nationalities, as in the Ottoman Empire, nor a class struggle between capitalism and communism. Once nationalism and populism were established in their new meanings, the

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<sup>54</sup>Quoted in Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 378.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid, p. 431.

emerging regime (1919-1923) still had to face the mightiest of all challenges: the question of religion and state.<sup>56</sup>

The situation was incomparably graver than any previous problematic era in the Turkish history with; the destruction of the empire, occupation of Asia Minor by the Allied Powers and the Greek Army under the British supervision, "the clear alternatives were fight or perish".<sup>57</sup> As a result, in Western and Eastern Anatolia, spontaneous and sporadic resistance movements sprang up. These uncoordinated and disunited local groups were later united under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal,<sup>58</sup> and thus emerged a historical opportunity for a hero to arise to make the radical transformation he had long ago envisioned. The Independence War was waged not only against the Allied Occupation Powers and the Greek Army but also against the Sultanate in İstanbul, who viewed the national resistance to the Greeks in Anatolia as a challenge to the Allied Powers and, believing that the Allies were bound to prevail, turned against the nationalist movement. In this, the Sultanate used the "forces of tradition" declaring the nationalists as "infidels" who by taking upon an impossible task, in the eyes of the İstanbul Government, were endangering whatever integrity of the empire was left.

"The establishment of the Turkish Republic was simultaneously an endeavor in state building, political institutionalization, nation building, Cultural Revolution, and far-reaching social and economic change".<sup>59</sup> For the Ottoman society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the "exit from the Ottoman system" was a most radical cultural transition. The regime transition that the Turkish state experienced in 1923 was one that involved and aimed a complete transformation of the political, economic and social system, an alteration of formal rules and institutions that gave the society a wholly established historical

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<sup>56</sup>For a full examination of the developments of these ideologies among the Turkic people in Russia as well as in the empire during the WWI, see *ibid.*, chapters 14 and 15.

<sup>57</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 432.

<sup>58</sup>For details see, Lord Kinross, *Atatürk; A Biography of Mustafa Kemal, Father of Modern Turkey*, New York William Morrow Company, 1965, chapter 40.

<sup>59</sup>Heinz Kramer, *A Changing Turkey: The Challenge to Europe and the United States*, Washington D. C., Brookings Institution Press, 2000, p. 3

direction in which the informal rules and institutions (that take much more longer to change) took a complimentary path with the formal ones. The regime transition was the "breaking point" of the path dependant evolution of the Ottoman society and politics. It possessed an abrupt change in the theoretical foundations of the state, and reaching the cultural roots of Anatolia by abolishing the religious foundations of the state and eradicating most of the cultural symbols by which these foundations were expressed in everyday life, it was very obvious on the structural look.

With the Treaty of Lausanne, the re-establishment of complete and undivided Turkish sovereignty in almost all territory in the present-day Turkish Republic and the abolishment of the Capitulations, were achieved. Thus, "Turkey, alone among the defeated powers of the WW-I, succeeded in rising from her own ruins and, rejecting the dictated peace imposed on her by the victors, secured the acceptance of her own terms".<sup>60</sup>

Mustafa Kemal, took the first step of the sweeping transformation by abolishing the Caliphate, the Ministries of Shari'a and Evkaf, the religious orders (tariqas), the religious schools (medreses), and by unifying education under the Ministry of Education. The new regime was unfalteringly a secular republic. The idea of populism conceived differently from liberal and the communist doctrines was first represented by Ziya Gökalp, a prominent Young Turk, in 1918. The validity of popular sovereignty to the degree circumscribed by the post war Turkey requirements of national unity, sovereignty, and reconstruction was embodied with populism. It meant to prepare paths of development for all social classes, hence the nation in integrity. Through the civic idea of nationalism, national identity replaced religious identity.<sup>61</sup> Territorial

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<sup>60</sup>Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, p. 254.

<sup>61</sup>For a discussion of civic nationalism, territorial nationalism and the elements of ethnic nationalism that were fused under Kemalism, see Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*. This paper, due to its limits, does not include the Turkification aspect of the republican policies, with the exclusion of religion as a base for the new identity. The paper also had to exclude the sectarian aspects relevant to Anatolia: The differentiation between the Sunni Islam and Alevi Islam and their

nationalism, which recognized most of the Turkish lands drawn in the Misak-ı Milli, excluded any idea of expansionism, Turanist and/or pan-Turkist aspirations. Civic nationalism attempted to create a new "Turkish citizen". Republicanism named the "child", and secured the transfer of sovereignty from the Sultan/Caliph to the "people" under the auspices of nation-state. Laicism defined the sovereignty and legitimacy of rule as one of law and founded the basis for a future, liberal democracy, which was the ultimate aim of the path that the reformists of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century put the empire on although not knowingly. Laicism assured that sovereignty and legitimacy would, theoretically, not reside in the Sultanate but in a Grand National Assembly. Revolutionarism/Reformism aimed to consolidate and protect the republican revolution against potential inside and outside attacks. More importantly, it also implied that necessary changes and adjustments in the other Kemalist principles should be made according to the times' needs.<sup>62</sup> A series of all-encompassing reforms were undertaken that reshaped the nation's history as well as her ideas and outlook as their reflection.<sup>63</sup>

### Kemalist Westernism

In the context of the evolution of secularism in Turkey, Kemalist Westernism and the rationalist approach to religion are the cornerstones of Turkey's formation of civic Turkish identity as the basis of its path to civilization and are relevant to the present integration efforts with Europe.

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different role in the overall social evolution as well as the difference in their inner evolution as a part of the whole are not explored in this paper.

<sup>62</sup>Atatürk envisioned the first of the principles to be changed over time to be his Etatism. Laicism would be out of scope for changeability, however, without which the revolution would lose its meaning. For the formation of the six arrows of Kemalism, Kinross, *Atatürk*; Lewis, *Emergence of Modern Turkey*; G. Lewis, *Modern Turkey*; and Ahmad, *Making of Modern of Modern Turkey*. For a psychological analysis, see, Vamik Volkan & Norman Itzkowitz, *The Immortal Atatürk: A Psychobiography*, Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1984.

<sup>63</sup>For a full list and discussion of Kemalist reforms, see Atatürk, *Nutuk* (Speech); and Emre Kongar, *Devrim Tarihi ve Toplum Bilim Açısından Atatürk*, İstanbul, Remzi Kitabevi, 1999.

According to F. R. Atay, in Kemal's comprehension, "the Ottomans were not the victims of the material superiority of the West, but the victims of that very moral superiority which had given material superiority to the West. The West is an institution of freedom of the mind. The failure of the reactionaries was due to their identification of the "moral" with religion and their fear of our losing religion or nationality when the question of separating the world and religion was faced".<sup>64</sup> Ironically, as the path of historical development asserts, it was this very fear that led to first the decline, then the disintegration of the empire. M. Kemal's belief that the struggle for national liberation was one between advanced nations and nations that allowed themselves to be exploited by their insistence on their medievalism defined the outline and context of his Westernism. His status and prestige as the "national hero" determined his drive "towards the West in spite of the West". Since at the same time, the political struggle with the traditional opposition, the Khilafatists<sup>65</sup> was yet ongoing, wherever he toured he emphasized that the war for independence was over in the battlefield but the real struggle for independence was to begin only then, that is the struggle to achieve the earned place among the civilized nations, the level of Western civilization and surpass it. He also underlined that the task of rising above the level of modern/contemporary civilization was left to the next generations.

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<sup>64</sup>Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 464.

<sup>65</sup>Khilafatists refer to those in support of the continuation of the Caliphate. Yet, various liberals were also supportive of the Caliphate and/or Sultanate to remain as a "symbolic" institution. Caliphate continued to exist until the right opportunity revealed itself when the segments that still displayed "loyalty" or "submissiveness" to the Sultanate began to refer to the Caliph as a political figure likewise in the Ottoman Empire. Then, M. Kemal ended the *duality* by ending the Caliphate. The fact that the independence struggle did not rely on the Caliphate, on the contrary was tried to end by the Caliphate, eased the process. The developments prior to its abandonment also convinced M. Kemal that the Caliphate would not coexist even as a cultural institution for two reasons: First, because of the peculiarity of the evolution of an Islamic society, it could not remain as only a cultural symbol. Secondly, the revolution was already a cultural process, which anyhow aimed to erase Islam as the main basis of identity for the citizens of the republic, rather confining the religion to the "conscience of the believers" through rationalization.

With this rationale and the following reforms, what the target was what Europe had achieved with the Reformation and Enlightenment in terms of mental freedom, and the separation of church and state in terms of political freedom. How was this to be achieved?

If the crux of Western secularism lay in the relations between church and state, the pivot of secularization in Muslim societies lay in secularization of law, particularly the Civil law.<sup>66</sup> The evolution of the religious institution and its legal base Shari'a, from the Mahmud II's reforms on, came gradually under the spell of secularization. The end of this evolution, which resulted in the abolishment of the Caliphate, implied that Shari'a came to an end as the law of the state because without the traditional temporal and political power, its legal and structural bases were deprived of practicality. Thus, a new Civil Code was passed, securing the legal equality of Turkish citizens regardless of race and religion as well as the complete equality of men and women in regards to the inheritance and succession rights, right to a divorce through a court of law, the recognition of a mother's equal rights to the guardianship of children, and the full and equal franchise for women.<sup>67</sup>

The intensions of M. Kemal, did not stop at secularizing the legal and administrative system, and the areas of social and economic life, but rather tended to extend into the areas of mores and informal cultural institutions in order to deepen the super structural revolution and turn it into an evolution over a time span which would obviously exceed his life time. Thus, without losing time, he took radical steps to change the "outlook" of the people, wearing himself the Panama hat instead of fez, which symbolized the Islamic culture, and without the prohibition of wearing the veil for women, all measures were taken to discourage it.

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<sup>66</sup>For a lengthy discussion see Kinross and Berkes.

<sup>67</sup>Women were permitted to vote and stand for election in municipal elections in 1931, and in 1934 a constitutional revision gave women full political rights and duties.



On another area, he used every opportunity to emphasize the inherent rationality and naturality of Islam on which he based his argument that it was not Islam but the misinterpretation of it that made the religion appear so irrational and that the religion needed a reform as well. Hence, Islam would be approached through reason rather than tradition. Abolishing the Caliphate earned Islam liberation from its unreasonable traditional associates and prepared the grounds for a rational religion. However, this was not sufficient, and the objectives were defined as the studying of Islamic philosophy in relation to Western philosophy, and the ritual, rational, economic and demographic conditions of the Muslim peoples. Thus, the religious reforms did not consist of a mere separation of religion and politics, and the establishment of religion out of the political and economic sphere, but rather an initiation of religious enlightenment that would directly involve the ordinary Turkish Muslim and transform him/her into a new identity while at the same time leaving a place for an enlightened religion in his/her conscience for his/her spiritual well-being. The struggle was not only over the question of separating the spiritual and the temporal, but also over the difference between democracy and theocracy. Religion could no longer be implemented as the basis of the state whereas the new regime would accept the freedom of religion as its duty to safeguard freedom.

#### **4. A Path-Dependant Look at the Failure of Institutions to Correct the Distortions of the Turkish Political Economy**

North states that the result of discontinuous change over time tends to be a restructuring of the overall constraint -in both directions- to produce a new equilibrium that is far less revolutionary. Does Turkey possess such equilibrium?

An agreement on the answer to this question is extremely difficult due to various reasons. It could be argued that the reformists from Selim III on have determined Turkey's path to be Western, and the Republic sealed it. However, the old traditional vs reformist challenge, has not disappeared, and not only constitutes a major political debate in modern Turkey in the form of Islamist vs. secularist, but also, shaping political policies, obscures the

development of democracy, and hence challenges that very same path and its equilibrium.

This challenge is not the only division of the country although definitely the most disturbing one. It is neither the only prolonged problem. Turkey has also been unable to resolve its "Kurdish question" despite the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of PKK, since it fails to make the democratic political and cultural transition to a unity based (multi-cultural, plural) politics and society from a uniformity based (mono culture) one.<sup>68</sup> Political elite regards the issue still under the effect of "Sevres complex",<sup>69</sup> which results in a political deadlock.

The other prolonged problem is institutionalized political corruption, and lack of credible, strong political will and authority to end it. A resultant of the situation is an enduring economic mismanagement, which seals the country's economic development and creates an endemic economic and financial crisis. It is a well-delineated argument that unfavorable socio-economic conditions fuel extreme political factions and anti-systemic affiliations, such as ultra nationalist and particularly in Turkey's case religious socio-political movements.<sup>70</sup> On the other hand, the crisis environment causes alienation in Turkey's young and more than ever well-educated. This relates to an extent to the lack of civil societal developments or rather to the fact that the Turkish political life had been "stabilized" by

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<sup>68</sup>For a detailed analysis, see, Doğu Ergil, 'Document of Mutual Understanding, "A Proposal for the Democratization of the Political System and Solution of the Kurdish Problem in Turkey", Ankara, TOSAV, 1999.

<sup>69</sup>Treaty of Sevres, which recognized the partition of Turkey among Allied Powers, and establishment of an independent Armenia and an autonomous Kurdistan, was signed by the Sultanate and the Western Allied Powers in 1920. It was never put in use, and with the victory of the Independence War, the Treaty of Lausanne that recognized the borders of the Turkish National Pact as the Turkish state borders was signed by the new Turkish government in Ankara and the involved Western states. The term "Sevres complex" is a frequently used concept to describe the uncompromising and emotional reaction of the Turkish political elite to demands for democratization, countering it with fears for survival of the state.

<sup>70</sup>See S. George Harris, *Turkey: Coping with Crisis*, Boulder, Colorado, Westview, 1985.

military interventions, which suppressed the healthy development of a strong base for civil society.

Institutionalized political corruption and the role of media in Turkey alleviate this situation to a dramatic extent, especially because influential media is owned by businessmen who have multiple holdings and use their sources to manipulate public opinion for their business interests. In established democracies and good economies where the majority is satisfied with the system, the rational ignorance and abstinence of voters in the elections might not constitute an alerting point whereas in troubled democracies, which are economically mismanaged such as Turkey, do constitute an alarming reality, particularly when the dissatisfaction among the social segments of the society reflects itself in anti-systemic pressures, and the conditions better the chances of success for those pressures. This pattern of behavior is accompanied also by the political alienation of the people, who do not seek a radically different political regime but view all the system parties as mere interest groups head over toes in corruption. Turkey's current political developments could be examined under this light. The contention is that the high level of inefficiency in Turkey's political market, and its persistent path due to the lack of incentive for change, lead to serious systemic challenges and disturb its path-dependent evolution toward efficiency.

Betz states, that "it is tempting to attribute the rise and increasing success of radical right wing populist parties to voter alienation".<sup>71</sup> The same cautiousness should be given to the rise of political Islam, which would also be supportive of the argument in this paper since the logical consequence would be that the rise of Islam also has its path-dependent evolution. Yet, it is safe to emphasize that the fragmentation of politics and the rise of extreme political movements as the continuance of inefficient political markets is the underlying theme in accordance with the path-dependency theory. Turkey is, under the current circumstances, doomed to struggle with anti-systemic forces particularly when the systemic forces create severe social, economic and financial crises, and the democratic and educated social segments choose to be "rationally

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<sup>71</sup>Betz, Georg Hans, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe*, St Martin's Press, 1994. p. 38.

ignorant" often as their reaction to the persistent corruption. The significant point is that since both the systemic and anti-systemic forces are the main beneficiaries of this environment (lack of incentive for change), the situation is almost a deadlock.

A most controversial interrelated issue is the "military in politics particularity" of Turkey, which does not allow it to meet the Copenhagen criteria for integration with European Union. Alternatively, military is argued to be the vital force to prevent the rise of Islamic insurgency, which as a threat to Turkey's constitutional order and regime, would be a significant potential source of disruption for Turkey's path-dependent institutional evolution towards West. However, the irony is that the military, having such a power over civilians in the political sphere is also a source of disruption of the very same path as seen since the 1980 coup d'etat. The real problem is still the political vacuum, which "legitimizes" or "makes the military a last resort for the protection of the regime".

The 1980 coup re-introduced a combination of Turkish nationalism and Islam (Turkish-Islamic synthesis) as a new recipe for the Turkish identity, as "The breakdown in society of the 1970s, with radical anti-systemic groups fighting on the streets, made the military authorities, the bastions of secularist Kemalism, attempt to instill "Islamic" values into the population through the education system".<sup>72</sup> This new synthesis had a striking resemblance to Abdulhamid's use of Islam as a solidifying element in society, and Özal governments in the late 1980s further carried on its basic tenets. Özal's liberalism brought an expansion of the boundaries of private experience and new opportunities for religious organizations to market and propagate their wares and thus their ideology. With the rise of private religious instruction, the opening of religious schools (imam-hatips) whose graduates entered universities, the Islamic organization has very much expanded, with television programs, outlets in Central Asia, such as schools in places like Samarkand. One important consequence of this religious penetration in all aspects of life was due to the fact that it all, quite paradoxically, took place under "liberalism". The "tarikats",

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<sup>72</sup>Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p. 204. Although Poulton takes for granted the military as the bastions of Kemalism at the time of the coup, this paper argues that the interpretation of Evren was definitely not Kemalist.

religious orders, which were formally banned in 1925, have revived in new forms more adapted to the modern state. Islamic fashion in clothes,<sup>73</sup> manufacturing and music, Islamic learned journals have made Islam pervasive in a modern sense in Turkish society. These were the liberal looks that Islam gained in the 1980s. However, the important consequence for the concern of our paper is the fact that this has worked against religion becoming a private belief, making it even more communal and thus undermining the republican attempts to confine it to the individual sphere and to "enlighten" it. Thus, a strange mix of liberalism and communalism (in terms of religious identity) appeared which benefited certain groups economically; pushed forward institutionalized corruption; eroded democratic values while supporting a Sunni Islam in the public space. Poulton asserts that mass appeal of Islam in the squatter settlements of major cities among migrants from the countryside whose lives have been disrupted by modernization and its appeal to small businessmen resulted in the contention on the part of many secularist Kemalist elite commentators that it was a transient phenomenon, which would fade away.<sup>74</sup> Although this observation has a truth to it, due to the inefficiency of the political market with corruption and other social variables aggravating it, and its persistent path, the path-dependency theory holds that the Islamic revival certainly does not convey a transient nature but a major redefinition of social identity, which the theory already treats as an expected tension. Yet, Sunni Islam penetrated the central apparatus as well as the education system, and this rise of religion, which had a seemingly complimentary role in Turkish identity, was, in time, paralleled by a rival ideology, which gave Islam not a complimentary but a pivotal role.<sup>75</sup> Although

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<sup>73</sup>There are various interpretations of "turban" (headscarf) which appeared especially in universities: As the symbol of "womanhood" for religious Muslim women as a reaction to Western values; or simply as a matter of fashion or a personal expression preference; or as an alarming symbol of political ideology, creating a serious tension in the public space. Further, it has been portrayed as a matter of "human rights". Although it has a humanitarian dimension to it, the implicit totalitarian nature of the system the Islamists propose should be kept in mind in order to assess whether this claim is their commitment to human rights or merely a political polemic.

<sup>74</sup>Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p. 205.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 185 and chapter 6.

Poulton names this rival ideology as "overt Islamization", and claims that "covert Islamization" (the rise of Sunni Islam as a part of Turkish identity) should not be exaggerated, it is obvious that today's open Islamic movements are the inevitable result of the covert Islamization realized by the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, which was legally and formally introduced by the military authorities of the 1980 coup, who could be argued to have shared the same observation with Poulton at the time. However, the theory asserts that covert Islamization, brought by the military and severed in the consequent Özal era, disrupting the evolution of informal institutions to catch up with the formal institutions, caused a reversal point in the history of the Republican evolutionary path that was to complete Turkey's transformation. In other words, "covert Islamization" constructed the base for "overt Islamization" as the theory suggests and as an example, the case of Iran proves in the practice.

One of the fiery troubles of modernity in the context of globalization is referred to, as the erosion of nation-state, and the relevant question is one of multiculturalism. Although the nature of political Islam embraces a totalitarian political theory, and the Islamists on many occasions have been clear about their ideas and feelings regarding democracy, it can still be confusing from a Western point as the Islamist alternative involves a similar criticism of modernity and authoritarian nation/state building policies to that of postmodernism. Gülalp discusses in length how advocates of political pluralism accept Islamism as the promotion of "civil society" since Islam is an element of popular culture, and hence the development of Islamist movement is taken to be inherently democratic because democracy requires the free expression and development of civil institutions. Gülalp, however, defuses this contention with his examination of the Islamist notion of dividing the society into communities of "faith" and building distinct legal orders for each "community" under a proposal of "multiculturalism". He further points out the imminent danger of violating the freedom of persons to live as they wish under such a system. The most important aspect is again the inherent implication that persons are not conceived as "free individuals" but "members of communities" they are assigned to according to their "faith". As Ali Bulaç, a prominent Islamist writer, does not refrain from stating, in a society that is conceived to be 99% Muslim, the community of faith, the formal and informal rules, norms

and legal framework the society would be subject to in an Islamic reorganization is nothing but an Islamist one.<sup>76</sup> Even this basic point makes it clear that liberalism in an Islamic context takes us to the opposite pool of Locke's liberalism and his concept of freedom of religion. Cahn notes "...toleration [referring to Locke's Letter of Toleration] makes it clear that the entitlement to practice the religion of one's choice without compromising the public peace and safety is paramount among those rights and liberties".<sup>77</sup> This nature of practice is secured with secularism, however, it is obviously not in the agenda of political Islam since every Muslim will have to obey the legal and informal framework of his/her "community", and will be deprived of individual interpretations and consequent actions. Hence, the system will hardly resemble any kind of democracy.

In this context, are age-rotten traditionalism and the failed ideologies and the confusion of the Young Turks of the Ottoman Empire hunting modern Turkey, under the mask of democracy, in the current absence of strong and credible political leadership and presence of deep economic crisis? Is religion in state space an ingredient of democracy or a regression of society? Or still, is it Muslim "Democrat" politics, which have no intention of disrupting democracy and the constitutional order, and will peacefully transfer power after elections? Another worrisome question at this point, is, however, even if the peaceful transfer were guaranteed, would the state and society go back hundreds of years under the Islamist governance for a set period of time?

Poulton maintains that one of the biggest challenges that Turkey faces today is essentially a nationalist argument over what is the essence of the Turkish nation.<sup>78</sup> Yet, as Ottoman Empire and the republic maintained a somewhat "geographical Europeanness", and

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<sup>76</sup>For a full discussion of postmodernism, Islam, the political Islam agenda, the Medina Constitution and what the Islamic formal and informal rules referred to here are, see, Halil Gülalp, "Multiculturalism versus Liberalism? Islamist Perspectives on Pluralism and Democracy in Turkey", presented at the EUI, Mediterranean Workshop, Florence, March 2002.

<sup>77</sup>M. Steven Cahn, *Classics of Modern Political Theory*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 214.

<sup>78</sup>Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p. 205.

the modernizer elite of both, added "cultural Europeanness" to it, the chief argument would be one of "progressiveness" along the evolution of the Western path or its "regression and reversal". Although Turkey is not an established democracy,<sup>79</sup> and has different challenges from the established democracies of Europe, there are two important similarities. One is that the extreme political stratum are not nonexistent in Europe.<sup>80</sup> The other is that Turkey is the only secular state with a Muslim population, which makes it closer to "Europeanness" if it is to be defined outside the Christianity criteria. What is significant is that the momentous factor in reform attempts to transform Turkey into an "established democracy" should be the inner motivation rather than "EU pressures or impacts on change". According to Müftüler-Baç, Turkey's problems, whether Islamic or ethnic, pose threats to Turkey's security for two reasons: "They are manipulated by Turkey's enemies and they are serious challenges to Turkish identity".<sup>81</sup> If so, Turkey cannot continue on "advices" or "warnings" from Europe for democracy: It has to transform itself finding its own cures. Tanzimat Era showed that the pinned Western notions are not sufficient although necessary to create enduring solutions, and hence result in alien structuring. Kemalist Republic showed that an inner born transformation is possible, and today Turkey finds itself in a crossroad to take the initiative to resolve its tensions. If Turkey fails to take this initiative, its path-dependent evolution will be once more and seriously disrupted.

## 5. Conclusion

It is both a historical and a philosophical argument, with some degree of allegory or a melancholic tone in it, that because the Ottoman Empire learned and used in its lands "matbaa", the printing

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<sup>79</sup>Particularly the human rights issues, rule of law, gender equality are the pressing matters where Turkey should attempt reformation. For the impact of EU on Turkish politics, see, Meltem Müftüler-Baç, "The Impact of the EU on Turkish Politics", *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 34 (2), June 2000, pp. 159-177.

<sup>80</sup>The reference is to the recent rise of Le Pen in France and Heider in Austria; generally the rise of the radical right in Europe.

<sup>81</sup>For further discussion, see Müftüler-Baç, "The Impact of the EU on Turkish Politics."



press, some three hundred years after Europe,<sup>82</sup> it has lagged behind Europe three hundred years, and still, so does Turkey. However exaggerated this admittedly sounds, it reflects the psychological mood of the Turkish modernists at some point.

This mental paradigm might also contribute to our argument in two ways. As from the theoretical aspect, path-dependency suggests that the tension between the formal rules and informal rules is expected and persistent when the formal rules go through an abrupt disruption to which the informal rules are unlikely to live up (considering that the formal rules again change within time, according to the time's needs). In the light of this argument, it follows as a natural and logical consequence that what is aforementioned as a mental construct is not far from an assertion of the theory. The other point is one of a more practical issue in that if this mental state is a reality, then it constitutes a major part in shaping the current situation and policies, as well as the future. This is not to suggest a pessimistic stand, however, since the institutional evolution studied in this paper indicates a Western direction, which could be complete with Turkey's integration into European Union.

It can safely be assumed that Turkish political culture has a personality cult aspect to it due to the historical evolution of state traditions and nation building. This has from time to time heightened nostalgia for a strong leader in a crisis driven Turkey. This and Turkey's need for more efficiency in its political economy will be met with European Union. It would not be an exaggeration to argue that European Union is the only institution to break Turkey's stalemate, and within which Turkey's historical challenges would be liquidated through democracy. This would assure Turkey's path-dependent institutional evolution as envisaged as early as the time of Mahmut II. The founding fathers of the republic built a modern society out of a medieval society, and it is Turkey's task as bestowed by Atatürk to carry out the necessary adjustments, today within the auspices of a stable institution of liberty, that is the European Union.

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<sup>82</sup>See Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, p. 39. The printing press here symbolizes the idea of change and progress, and modern scientific, rational thinking.

In the Ottoman Empire, the lack of individual rights due to the governance structure and the accumulation of deep rooted "slaveness"<sup>83</sup> of the subjects to the state, namely to the Palace, Sultanate or the Sublime Port, had not allowed Turkish Muslims develop "individualism" like the Western society. Even in the later stages, the elite that tried to bring Western-style institutions did not comprehend the significance of property rights as stated above until the Kemalist revolution. Under Mahmut II, we see partially recognized property rights (including tenure rights, which allow people improve human capital by preventing the state to rip off fruit of their effort). However, widespread lack of property rights, more importantly, of the will to use individual rights on the part of the individuals due to their lack of self-consciousness as an individual, regular path dependence argument does not apply since there is the lack of the very forces that cause the evolution. The similar tendency in modern Turkish society still exists, not in the form of servitude to the state but in such a construct that people still bend over, with hope, any formal and informal ruler other than respecting the rule of law.<sup>84</sup> This is a major problem to be explored scholarly, and as well to be used as developing future policy implementations in Turkey for a long-term achievement. Namely, Turkey does have modern Western institutions, which can be readjusted within a democratization process, but lacks the conscious and the will to use them as a society. That's the main question why Turkey appears to still have the spirit of "slaveness" in it vis-à-vis a personality, a ruler instead of using the mechanism that was provided by and left as the only legacy of the Kemalist revolution. Only then, the stream of reformist policy, which had been espoused by "men of pen" since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,

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<sup>83</sup>This concept here refers to the exaggerated loyalty to the Sultan/Caliph since in his person, the shadow of Allah (God) was reflected. Same loyalty was to the Shari'a as the rule of Allah.

<sup>84</sup>Although the Republic attempted to change this through education, the political inheritors did not grasp the point or neglect it for political benefits. The Democrat Party that came to power in the first elections for multi-party system had to rely on political market and median voter theorems as their legitimacy source. In fact, İnönü, following Atatürk used a strict Kemalism as his own legitimacy source. On the other hand, Atatürk did not need these legitimacy sources. In the multi-party democracy, the rule of law had constant blows; in the recent political history, particularly so in the aftermath of the 1980 coup and with Özal's policies.

will have found a continuous base for the path-dependent evolution of the society.

Given the tendency of polities to produce inefficient property rights, poor economic and political performance can persist under the organizations with incentives to award redistributive rather than productive activity. This is why the polities with no tradition of democratic norms tend to be a politically unstable democracy, and why it is hard to reverse such a path. Yet, this was achieved in the Turkish case. The persistence of the inefficient path of the Ottoman rule both in political and economical terms was ended by a discontinuous evolution, the Kemalist revolution, which ended dualism with both political and economic independence, and the cultivation of a "new state and nation". Then again, from the historical perspective that the theory claims "to matter" and "to count for the divergent paths", this discontinuous evolution was in line with the path-dependent evolution. Yavuz puts Turkey's dilemma as "modern Turkey, like a transgendered body with the soul of one gender in the body of another, is in constant tension...The soul of "white" Turkey and its Kemalist identity is in constant pain and conflict...".<sup>85</sup> Yet, one thing should be realized downright: One conclusion of the path-dependent look at Turkey's evolution is that even if there were no Kemalist revolution, the tension would still be observant because then there would still be developments in favor for the evolution of the path (that first of all, the men of pen put the society on) opposed to the then conservative and traditional, apparently somewhat Islamic rule. This is to say that the socio-political condition of Turkey would be reverse but the tension would at a halt be there. Therefore, the tension does not owe its existence to the "Kemalist identity" but to the forces of change and the conservative forces in opposition to it coming from the Ottoman Age. Only this time, in the absence of the revolution, the duality would not have ended, hence the more inefficient path of the Ottoman Empire would have continued in a different polity with all its confusions, lagging behind the concept of "contemporary civilization" and an "established democracy". Today, in Turkey diverse political orientations, including the Islamic one, look with sympathy for different reasons to a future EU membership. However,

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<sup>85</sup>M. Hakan Yavuz, "Cleansing Islam from the Public Sphere", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54 (1), Fall 2000, p. 21.

the point is that an integration that would be a continuation of this path-dependent evolution should be the necessary factor and a systemic reformation the sufficient factor to become an established democracy. As Barkey notes, "this process of transition to EU is likely to force Turkey to undertake significant changes that will make the state smaller, more efficient, less repressive and intrusive and, yet, genuinely stronger".<sup>86</sup> These changes should transcend Kemalism and reproduce itself in the new milieu.

Here, it should be noted with caution that there are abundant events, movements and turning points in history that have played indispensable role in shaping the evolutionary direction of the Turkish society, which this study, due to its limits, have failed to include. As the theory contends, institutional change is overwhelmingly incremental. Bearing this in mind, a complete and comprehensive political analysis definitely seeks a full analysis of republican and particularly present-day politics. The questions that; whether the multi-party system could be seen as an evolution of democracy or its regression, whether Turkish society is a "military" society, and whether the Islam on the rise and the system it promotes is an ingredient of democracy or a revival of reactionarism should be raised in a complementary study.

Also because the questions stated in the introduction of this study are historical in nature, and attempted through a theory principally drawn from economics, without a supplementary study as outlined above and an analysis of Turkey's economic evolution, these questions will not find peace. Yet, the main intention of the paper was to record an historical and somewhat philosophical summary of the Ottoman and Republican legacies for understanding the historical context, and thus providing an insight to Turkey's European integration process from an institutional evolution perspective, also taking into account the nature of political markets. Another objective was to familiarize the reader, to a certain extent, with the current situation regarding the republican path for again providing an insight to Turkey's present point in its institutional history and prospects within Europe. All of this required a cultural and obviously historical

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<sup>86</sup>Henri Barkey, "The Struggles of a "Strong" State", *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54 (1), Fall 2000, p. 87.

analysis raising questions of political thought as well as of political economy. It is indeed a long and complex task to attempt to include all points of life; cultural, political and economic, and essential as well for the overall purpose since the issue at hand is an issue of cultural identity, historical legacy, political development, economic evolution and a future insight. Hence, this paper merely attempts to indicate what is to be studied. On the other hand, how European integration would affect the path of evolution for Turkey would compose another subject to contribute to the general picture that this paper aims to offer.