The Changes and Continuities Between the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic

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ABSTRACT

The transformation of the Ottoman Empire into the Turkish Republic was accompanied by change and continuities. The newly founded early republics necessarily inherited relics from the previous era and were significantly affected by economic and social institutions that sculpted their personality and mannerisms. This paper reveals the connection between the subjectivity of the late Ottoman and early Turkish republics through four aspects: state traditions, bureaucracy, the role of the military, and political culture, with both innovative changes and continuities. These connections facilitate comprehension of the early republic's history, political actors, and notable events.

Keywords: Changes, Continuities, Ottoman Empire, Turkish Republic.

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I. Introduction

The Turkish Republic came into being at a time when the country was experiencing both internal and external warfare. Internally: Armenian irredentism and Kurdish nationalism; externally: the War of Independence that took place between 1920 and 1922. Not to mention the war's negative impact on the economy, the clash that erupted between the country's new and old cultures, and the internal inconsistencies that plagued the population's sense of national identity. In such a complicated environment, Kemal and others who follow in his footsteps need to locate a tool and a route that will allow them to construct nations and institutions that can respond to both internal and exterior crises. This kind of endeavor might be exceedingly challenging. Kemal is described by Heper (1985, p. 61) as having not only led a "broken nation to victory," but also established a brand new and novel form of governance.

Polity, which derives itself from a particular history, religion, and culture, is not water without a source; rather, it inherits the spiritual and institutional heritage of predecessors while simultaneously adjusting in line with the social reality. The newly founded early republics unavoidably inherited the ancestral relics of the previous time and were significantly affected by economic and social institutions that sculpted their temperament and mannerisms while also both socially and politically changing some Ottoman aspects. I will present subsections that contain both changes and continuities in each paragraph, based on the four characteristics of state traditions, bureaucracy, the role of the military, and political culture.

II. Methodology

This article provides a recap of the major authors' works on modern Turkey, as well as a categorization of those works. Additionally, it provides a summary of the four most important aspects of modern Turkey, which are state traditions, bureaucracy, the role of the military, and political culture. The in-depth study and classification allow to evaluate and understand Turkey's complicated modern history and politics from a particular point of view. Beginning with just one facet at a time can make it much simpler to find the thread of analysis that runs through a particular historical era even though the era as a whole may be difficult to comprehend. If the era is segmented in accordance with the characteristics that define it, it is much simpler to find the thread of analysis. The references that were chosen for this paper were taken from some of the most influential researchers in the field. In addition, articles written by some researchers from other countries are also included, and an effort is made to construct a readable guide to understanding Turkey's recent history from a comprehensive and objective point of view.

III. STATE TRADITION

A. Transcendentalism State

In contrast to the instrumentalism of certain European state, Ottoman empire conformed to transcendentalism, emphasizing *the uniformity, ideals of duty, service, and sublimation of energy*. The consolidation of legitimacy is based on *moral community, collective reason, and leadership*. The early Ottoman period and the late 19th century were defined as *moderate transcendentalism*, while in the middle, the changing economic conditions and the need to strengthen the sultan's power due to the rising local nobility, marked an *extreme transcendentalism*, with the state being structured in the person of the ruler rather than in institution or collective reason.

The early Republic is also defined as *transcendentalism*, however, *transient*. Under Atatürk's leadership, the Republicans collectively guided the people with a certain norm to find a development path for Turkey with six principles: Republicanism, Populism, Nationalism, Secularism, Etatism, and Reformism. Republicanism substitutes personal rule. The idea behind nationalism is that each country should come up with its own set of priorities. To practice populism, one must take into account and respect the will of the people. In a secular society, norms are not determined by any one faith. Revolutionism and reformism hold that established rules need to be subject to change in response to the development of new circumstances. In response to the great depression, statist economic policies were implemented. One can see that Kemalism, rather than being dogmatic and unchanging, is pragmatic and grounded on reality. Kemal did not identify or appoint a particular philosophy, since he did hold the belief that Turkish society was capable of "resolving disagreements regarding basic issues" on its own (Heper, 1985, p. 65; Vali, 2020).

The state of Kemalism is a transcendentalist state, which means it makes a distinction between its ruler and the state. Kemal is not a supporter of Kemalism as his own creation; rather, he views it as a collective topic. Kemal has, from the very beginning, shown little interest in having the elite "personally devoted to him" (Heper, 1985, p. 61). In its early stages, Kemalism was not an ideology but rather an ideologue, which might be defined as "a technique for uncovering truth and destroying illusions" with the goals of realism and pragmatism (Heper, 1985, p. 63). For republicans, bureaucrats were to promote the public good while the Republic was founded on virtue (Heper, 1985, p. 60). Being "transient," the later Kemalism was narrowly ideologized as bureaucratic elitism which took over the politics, at least until the 1970s.

B. Center-Periphery Relations

The Center-Periphery theory is quite typical to describe Turkish internal politics. In both periods, there was resistance to the centers from local/autonomous forces with quite different cultures, degrees of religious, economic bases, and attitudes to westernization, while the rulers tried to squeeze periphery resources for a strong state. Both Atatürk and the Young Turks inherited such "old patrimonial tradition, which assumed the dominance of the state" (Heper, 1985, p. 17). However, unlike the Ottoman coherence and consistency, the position of the center and periphery is fluid in the Republic due to the democratic partisan rotation. Considered local and marginal, pro-religion force as AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi: Justice and Development Party) is now at the center, and has begun to politicize the state apparatus and spread its "center" ideology.

IV. BUREAUCRACY

A. The Composition

One thing that has stayed the same is the bureaucratic legacy that the Republic received from the Ottoman system (Sayari & Dikici-Bilgin, 2011, p. 741), which helped maintain order in the government despite the fact that it fell behind the times of the society and became a barrier to modernization after 1950. (Barchard & Barchard, 2002, p. 199). Within Turkish institutions, the bureaucracy serves primarily as a tool for achieving various ends. Kemal himself did not like the bureaucracy of the former empire at first. His skepticism of the municipal bureaucracy may derive from the revolutionary era when the civic bureaucracy was considered an "emanation of the sultan" preoccupied with personal interests, via "abuse of power" (Heper, 1985; Younis *et al.*, 1992). Kemal is an advocate of the Hegelian state, and he does not think that the civil bureaucracy is capable of fulfilling its role as the defender of public will (Shell, 1994). The bureaucrats, in his view, are nothing more than tools (Turan, 2019).

In terms of the composition of the ministries, if we consider the ministers of the Republic who were born in the Ottoman Empire to still be "Ottoman," from Table I, we may come to the conclusion that the early elites were primarily drawn from the armed forces. However, over time, the number of ministers holding engineering and academic professions increased (Sayari & Dikici-Bilgin, 2011, p. 754), which reflected voters' shifting focus to social issues as well as the changing elite origins.

TABLE I: OCCUPATIONAL BACKGROUND OF MINISTERS SINCE 1923 (%)

Channels	1923 – 1950	1950 – 1960	1960 – 1980	1980 – 2002	2002 – 2009
Economics	10.7	21.0	12.8	19.9	14.9
Professors	12.6	9.7	10.2	11.7	19.1
Law	14.6	30.6	30.2	16.9	23.4
Engineering	2.9	0.0	14.2	22.4	14.9
Government	27.2	11.3	11.9	9.5	10.6
Medicine	11.7	11.3	8.1	5.8	2.1
Military	11.7	6.5	5.8	2.8	0.0
Others	8.6	9.6	6.8	11	15

Note: The data and table format come from Sayari and Dikici-Bilgin (2011). There are some merges and modifications in the content and format of the table.

B. State Guardians and Elitism Politics

In both time periods, the elite bureaucrats regarded their judgments to be superior to those of the ordinary man and saw themselves as the protectors of the state (Heper, 1987, p. 135). The use of Ottoman vocabulary (Barchard & Barchard, 2002, p. 207), and the grandeur of municipal buildings showed a significant distinction between the state and the non-state, which was rooted in Ottoman statism and patriarchy. It goes without saying that the ruling class was grown and educated in the palace under the absolutist elite politics manner (Esmer, 2002). However, Turkish democracy expanded and bureaucratic replacement arose, and as old bureaucrats faded into history, localism and politicization steadily weakened statism (Özbudun, 1993, p. 190). The decade of the 1970s was marked by a number of political shifts and the formation of coalition governments. As a result, the composition of the bureaucracy was continually reshuffled. The elite of the bureaucracy did not put up much of a fight against the wave of politicization, and as a result, they gradually lost their autonomy and guardianship.

V. THE ROLE OF MILITARY

A. Political Influence and Autonomy

Under both time periods, the military was able to exert a significant amount of power, thanks in large part to the considerable degree of independence it was granted during the Republic. Although Sultan was able to maintain control over the military, there were occasions when the military presented challenges. The Sultan was forced to form a new army known as the Janissary so that he could use power more effectively; nevertheless, the Janissary eventually revolted as well. In the Republic, the armed forces were responsible for staging two full-scale coups and one semi- or quasi-coup. Since its founding in 1961, the National Security Council has consistently worked to broaden the scope of its authority. In addition, up until the 1980s, the president held the position of retired general. Additionally, the military had unrestricted access to both money and intelligence.

It is the responsibility of the military as an institution to uphold its "integrity, unity, and modernity" by making decisions in the following four areas: the appointment and promotion of senior personnel; the size and level of the armed forces; military education; and the reform and modernization of the armed forces. The military is considered to have political autonomy if it is able to exert direct or indirect influence, and this power places it outside the institutional authority of the elected civilian government. In Turkey, the budget for the military's operations has never been up for discussion in the parliament (Sakallioglu, 1997). According to Karaosmanolu (2000) and Yildiz (2014), civilian administrations are unable to manage or reduce the funding allocated to the military, and they have no impact whatsoever on the development, manufacturing, or upgrading of weaponry. The armed forces operate according to their own internal logic and have their own modernization goals. In addition, the military has its very own intelligence operation units. Despite the fact that Turkey maintains a civilian-based intelligence service, the vast majority of its members are drawn from the armed forces. Because the democratically elected government was compelled to recognize or put up with the dominance of the military, the latter eventually became the "last resort" in resolving various political impasses.

B. The Military as A Guardian

Even if the ideals of the state were different during the Ottoman and Republican periods, the people and the military alike held the view that the military served as the protector of the state's values. On the other hand, the ideals that were supported by the military shifted once it became populated by people who were politically active and ideologically divided. It is impossible to argue that the military still maintains autonomy or that it continues to serve as the defender of republican ideals, especially following the election in 2016. Historically, the military has been viewed as reliable; however, as democratization, citizen consensus, and increased civic rationality have occurred, the people have begun to gradually prefer the use of nonviolent legal means to assert their justice. As a result, military coups are now forbidden, unwelcome, impossible to replicate, and unlikely to occur within the Republic (Gürsoy, 2012, pp. 736, 746).

VI. Political Culture

A. Political Tolerance and Legitimate Opposition

One of the political cultures shared by the Ottoman period and the early Republic is: that inclusiveness and legitimate opposition are not constructed. The Ottomans, as a typical Eastern autocratic dynasty, had few non-governmental institutions, urban autonomy, independent community or strong merchant class (Özbudun, 1988, p. 4), only a supreme authorized Sultan, lacking for substantial opposition and checks and balances. In the early Republic, parties as the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi: Republican People's Party) and DP (Demokrat Parti: Democrat Party) inherited this temperament and tended to see legitimate opposition as rebellion (Özbudun, 1988, p. 18), leading to the CHP's closing down of the fledgling opposition in the 1920s and the DP's oppression of the CHP in the 1950s. However, unlike the Ottomans, the Republic gradually developed political tolerance and cooperation on the road to democracy. In the 1970s, the CHP embraced the working class. In its early rising years, AKP also tried to define itself as a moderate reformer. In face of AKP dominance, opposition parties have learned to put aside conflicts and to form cross-ideological pre-election coalitions in 2018 (Başkan *et al.*, 2022, pp. 1-2).

B. Civil Society

It is said that the Ottoman Empire had an authoritarian governmental framework and viewed civil society as being self-interested. This was partly owing to the empire's reliance on statism as its economic underpinning. Taxation and mandatory military service are the two main pillars on which the state is built, yet the average citizen has little interest in politics. Even though the early Republic inherited a somewhat concentrated economy and governance as well as a delayed growth of civil society and participation, education was able to help extend the civil support base. With the 1950s, and notably after Özal's economic privatization in the 1980s, one observed the fast rise of a private economy and organizations, together with the devolution of authority and rapid growth in civic involvement.

Kemal had the impression that under the Ottoman system that was in place before, the people not only had a "negative attitude," but they were also indifferent to the state (Norman, 2011). Due to the fact that the structure of government was nothing more than "a personal rule" (Heper, 1985, p. 49), the people did not have any say in the matter of sovereignty. Therefore, he made the decision to establish a people's state. Additionally, there is not the slightest shred of a shadow of a doubt that under a republic, absolute and unqualified sovereignty is vested in the people (Yanikdag & Karpat, 2001).

Nevertheless, the Turkish people need not just a powerful republic but also the means to bring it into existence (Demir *et al.*, 2004). As the leaders of the revolutionary movement, the Republicans were forced to "discover" and represent "the collective conscience of the people" when they were confronted with the unique historical circumstances of the time, which included internal and external conflicts as well as a lack of a sense of national identity (Heper, 1985, p. 50). This group endeavor of discovery and investigation serves as the foundation for the development of civil society in modern-day Turkey (Casanova, 2006; Parla, 2021).

C. Influence of Religion

In both periods, religion had a great impact on political culture. The Ottoman rulers used Islam and Islamic communities to create common solidarity (Turan, 1991, p. 31), at the local level. The new Republic demonstrated both continuity and change with respect to religion. The early leaders established a dominant secular politics that opposed the institutional and cultural foundations of religion. The CHP also created the State Directorate of Religious Affairs to govern the religious issue, putting state above religion (Kadıoğlu, 2010). This trend of laicism had its start in the 1920s, when the caliphate was abolished in 1924 and the General Directorate of Religious Affairs was founded to handle religious affairs and religious education in the country (Yavuz, 2009).

In spite of the fact that the Republicans wanted to attain secularism with this program, religion and education ended up being blended together. As a result of the strategy, rather than creating a division between subjects pertaining to the state and religion, the policy succeeded in making religion subservient to the state. When this happens, the state uses religion as its one and only political tool (Eslen-Ziya & Korkut, 2010). The Republican government abolished folk Islam and established an official state religion. Laicism, in this sense, did not lead to secularism; rather, it was an impediment or an obstacle on the path to secularism. Religious were still connected to legitimacy, providing "the framework of political power," being as "an element of social control," and "a source of symbols (Turan, 1991, pp. 41-42)." In Göle (1997)'s argument, the attitude to the female hijab issue in Turkey is a test of religious inclination.

VII. CONCLUSION

Not only did the Ottoman Empire leave the Turkish Republic with its main Anatolian borders, but it also left behind the foundations of its political institutions, its social culture, and even the majority of its professional bureaucrats when it collapsed. The Turkish Republic was established in 1923. These inherited legacies had a significant impact on the political decisions and institutionalist culture of the early republics, as well as on the governing party and the people who followed it. This article sheds light on the ways in which that historical culture has evolved and been passed down the generations in the following four domains: political culture, bureaucracy, the role of the military, and state traditions. This brief introductory paper helps scholars understand the political context and decision-making mechanisms of the early Turkish Republic and contributes to considering the cultural context behind the complex political phenomena of modern-day Turkey, despite the fact that it does not expand on any of these topics.

We take a comprehensive look at the shifts and transitions that occurred in both the Ottoman Empire and the newly established Turkish Republic through the lenses of Transcendentalism State, Center-Periphery Relations, The Composition of Bureaucrats, Bureaucrats as State Guardians and Elitism Politics, Political Influence and Autonomy of the Military, The Military's Guardianship, Political Tolerance and Legitimate Opposition, Civil Society and Religion. This classification is as a catalog for future study that will be conducted as part of an integrated investigation of the politics of contemporary Turkish history.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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