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STIRRED, NOT SHAKEN

Turkey's second war of independence

Stavros I. Drakoularakos

The failed military coup of 2016 has had a number of ramifications both on the domestic, as well as on the foreign affairs of Turkey. Although the most publicized ones are the aftereffect on the military, the crackdown on dissidents and the downfall of the relationship with the Gülen Movement, it is of note that the entire coup affair has led to the declaration of a second war of independence during 2019, akin to the one during 1919-1923 which eventually gave way to the creation of the modern Turkish State. This analysis focuses on the similarities between the two wars, as well as their differences, and, especially, in regard to their endgame.

THE FAILED COUP of July 15th, 2016 in Turkey was considered as an attempt against Turkish sovereignty and national integrity, and led, through the implementation of new security measures, to the imprisonment, deportation and forced exile of academics, activists, journalists, minorities, foreigners and religious officials, in large numbers.¹ The Gülen movement was named as the main driving force behind the attempted coup, and, coupled with Fethullah Gülen's self-imposed exile in the United States, provided ammunition for renewed conspiracy theories regarding US backing and foreign interference in general.²

Conspiracy theories regarding foreign intervention are not strange to Turkey. They have managed to find fertile ground throughout the 20th Century. The idea and fear that Turkey was being surrounded and would be further dismembered after the First World War was cultivated and was constantly nourished by international events, such as the Watergate scandal in the USA, the creation of the State of Israel, the fear of a third World War, or the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The fact that conspiracies were discovered in Western countries provided the necessary ammunition for the Turkish conspiracy theories to grow. The most well-known theory on the above is the "Sèvres Syndrome", which found its basis in the never-ratified Sèvres Treaty of 1920. The appeal and growth of the many conspiracy theories was rooted in a simple idea: that there were agents in the midst of Turkish society which were conspiring through the tutelage of foreign powers against Turkish interests, with the neutralization of Turkey as their endgame.³

Hence began a second war of independence, as alluded by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan himself in 2019, during the 96th anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, while also stressing that it "represents the centennial of the beginning of Turkish struggle for Independence of 1919-1923".⁴ Although the Lausanne Treaty was widely considered during the 20th Century as the internationally recognized document which cemented Turkish national sovereignty after the Sèvres Treaty fiasco, a revisited narrative is now being established. The territories of the former Ottoman Empire which were determined as Turkish via the "National Pact"⁵ throughout the first war for independence of 1919-1923 and were not included in the Lausanne Treaty, are now being brought back into the conversation. In other words, there is a conscious attempt to undermine the prestige of the Lausanne Treaty and to renegotiate.⁶

The origins of the second war of independence can be found at least as early as 2014, when Erdoğan was in the midst of a political scandal that emerged, in which he equated a political attack on himself with an attack to the Turkish State, and hence cul-

tivating the idea that Erdoğan embodies Turkey, as Kemal did previously.⁷ Nonetheless, the starting point, against which the war of independence is waged against, is certainly considered to be July 15th, 2016. The crackdown against Gülenists and Kurdish militants was swift and ongoing and eventually led to the Turkish operations in northern Syria, namely Euphrates Shield and Olive Branch, in 2016 and 2018, respectively, and with Operation Peace Spring in October 2019, as their most recent and efficient effort.⁸



In a speech in December 2016 regarding the Turkish military intervention in northern Syria, President Erdoğan claimed that the predicament would be that Turkey would face Sèvres-like conditions, referring directly to the Sèvres Treaty of 1920 and indirectly to Turkey's original war of independence. At first, it seems that the idea was to link the two wars of independence by juxtaposing them, and presenting the second one as the one which would correct the errors of the first, especially concerning the territories defined by the Lausanne Treaty. The downside of this particular approach was that it would directly oppose Erdoğan's with Kemal's Turkey, and would provide the long-standing and hibernating Kemalist interests with the necessary means for a political backlash domestically. What is more, the underwhelming results of the most recent local elections of 2019 regarding Istanbul and Ankara, paved the way for a refocusing of priorities. Soon enough, a conscious change in the narrative was initiated, course-correcting and labelling the second war of independence as a continuation rather than an overhaul of the *acquis* of the original war.⁹

Furthermore, it should be of note that in the past years, there has been an ongoing debate in Turkey, prominently through social media, regarding the validity of the Treaty of Lausanne in the near future. It seems that there is a popular conspiracy theory defined at times by the view that the Lausanne Treaty has a secret 100-year expiration clause or that all international treaties have a 100-year life, and that afterwards they can be renegotiated. Despite the fact that the first point is incorrect, and that the latter, especially, is erroneous and goes against International Law, when viewed through the lens of avoiding to antagonize Kemal's Turkey, this particular conspiracy theory can do wonders in regard to reshaping a potentially divisive narrative.¹⁰

The benefits of linking the current Turkish struggle with Turkey's war of independence are threefold: firstly, the Turkish people's historic memory is reignited, especially when taking into account the Kemal-leaning version of events that until recently was the cornerstone of the schools' curriculum; secondly, the centennial celebration of Mustafa Kemal's revolution in Ankara is coming up in 2020; and, thirdly, it opens up a Pandora's box of possibilities – in complete disregard of International Law – regarding both Turkey's long-established national borders, as well as potentially reenergizing relations with former-Ottoman States by refuting the will of foreign powers.

Although it began as a means to counteract the 2016 coup internally, as it currently stands, Erdoğan's second war of independence is mainly focused on northern Syria, and is inherently dependent on an outcome in line with Turkish interests and aspirations in the region. By shaping the narrative both domestically and internationally, Erdoğan's Turkey might have painted itself into a corner, contingent on developments in the next few months leading up to the 1920 anniversary. It remains to be seen whether the current framework of the second war of independence will change anew, or if the gamble to position Erdoğan as the most important Turkish figure, superseding Mustafa Kemal, will have paid off.



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KURDS IN TURKEY

Unending struggle amid repression
and shrinking political space

Katia Zagoritou

Alongside the ongoing Turkish military operations in Northern Syria and in Iraqi Kurdistan against the Kurds, a growing crackdown on the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HDP) - the sole parliamentary party opposing the incursion in Syria - is taking place at home. Despite their differentiated stance towards the opposition in the March 2019 local elections, Kurds remain alone facing dilemmas and difficulties over their response to the repression and the support to their fellows in Syrian Kurdistan respectively. Meanwhile, Ankara's water policies in the predominantly Kurdish regions in the southeast constitute an attack on Kurdish culture and collective memory.

THE TURKISH STATE'S REPRESSION against Kurds has escalated since 2015 when peace talks – albeit never being institutionalized – with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) collapsed following the loss of the Justice and Development Party's (AKP) majority owing to HDP's parliamentary entrance.¹ The repression has been intensified after the 2016 failed coup which resulted in the declaration of a state of emergency, used by the government in order to exert harsher oppression on Kurds. Yet, despite its formal termination in July 2018 - replaced however by new counterterrorism laws one month later - the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has not ceased to attack Kurds at home, as well as in neighboring countries, in Iraq and Syria.²

So far, twenty-eight out of sixty-five HDP mayors elected during the March 2019 municipal elections have been ousted and replaced by government-appointed trustees, while eighteen have been detained on terrorism-related charges.³ The accusation for their removal is alleged ties - regardless of the extent and nature - with the PKK, which waged a nearly 40 year-long guerilla war against the Turkish state and is designated as a terrorist organization by Turkey, NATO and the EU. Yet, prior to the elections, all mayors had passed compulsory security controls and their candidacy had been approved by the Turkish electoral officials. Roughly two millions of people are therefore deprived of electoral representation and confronted to an evident violation of civil rights.⁴

Furthermore, the accusations are not limited to the PKK but are extended to the HDP, which is equated systematically with the PKK by the ruling party. Still, although the two parties do share some objectives and organizational links, they differ significantly in ideological and tactical terms. Avoiding any differentiation between them constitutes Erdogan's tactic which has served so far his personal ambitions and AKP's electoral interests.

By making no distinction between the outlawed PKK and the legitimate HDP, Erdogan has sought to weaken the Kurdish movement related ideologically to those parties, mainly with the HDP. In addition, such approach has provided the AKP with the justification for its repression against anyone alleged having a connection either with the Apoist movement or the HDP within Turkey. This justification has been useful to the AKP in order to silence critical voices on the military incursion in Northern Syria, launched on October 9, 2019.

It is noteworthy that the HDP has been the only parliamentary party opposed to the offensive in Northern Syria. That highlights the homogeneous stance of the Turkish political scene vis-à-vis the Kurdish issue at home, as well as abroad. Additionally, it accounts for the lack of significant reactions, in spite of some rather pro forma condemnations, towards the removal of HDP's mayors.

The leader of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, did condemn the HDP mayor's arrest; yet, his move was interpreted as an effort to bridge the gap created with respect to his support for the military operation in Northern Syria. The CHP is mindful that its electoral victory in the largest and most important Turkish cities, Istanbul and Ankara, is owed to the HDP crucial support.

So does the AKP, which suffered the defeat of its candidate in the decades-long controlled cities.⁵ The AKP's fear with respect to the HDP's dynamics, as well as its would-be alliance with the main opposition party CHP have been visible on its effort to disgrace the Kurdish movement and to fuel rumors regarding the purported internal disputes between the PKK and the HDP, as well as with



the Democratic Union Party (PYD) in Rojava. The effort to erode the relationship between the PKK and the HDP has been evident during the June 2019 Istanbul local elections rerun when the AKP released a letter claimed to be written by Öcalan, through which the jailed PKK's leader was calling the Kurds to "remain neutral", unlike the HDP's line.⁶

Moreover, the Turkish Interior Minister Süleyman Soyulu stated on November 21 that there are serious internal disputes between the PKK and the People's Protection Units (YPG) regarding each group's sway, alliances and leadership.⁷ This trend has been repeated in various articles; yet, there has been no official confirmation by the Kurds. It should be stressed that internal disputes are a common phenomenon within all movements, which does not translate necessarily into a rupture. Most importantly, in the PKK and HDP cases, their differences on tactics and aims depend, inter alia, on the status each party enjoys. That is to say, it is evident that the PKK being outlawed has opted for different tactics than those of the parliamentary HDP.

The importance of the legal political activism for the HDP has been reflected in the decision it took during the meeting organized on November 20 under its constituency's pressure to withdraw from the Parliament owing to the growing crackdown. HDP decided against the withdrawal considering its presence in the legal political arena as priority and as the result of a longstanding struggle which cannot be neglected, and instead it called for early elections.⁸

Hydro politics against Kurdish collective memory

Alongside the ongoing crackdown on the HDP, Kurds are confronted with the forced relocations and the attack on their historical and cultural heritage due to the Turkish state construction of dams, which has also affected the broader region.

On one hand, the dams' construction has had evident ecological repercussions - linked to the climate change - and has caused resource problems to the neighbouring countries; the dams on the Euphrates River have reduced water flow into Syria and Iraq by 40% and 80% respectively during the past forty years. On the other hand, the impact on Kurds is of great importance, since it affects mostly the Kurdish regions in Southeast Turkey. That translates not only into forced relocation but also into the annihilation of the Kurdish history and the collective memory by extension. Moreover, water policies have been used as a tool of assimilation of Kurds into Turkish society via their resettlement in areas where their culture and community would be eroded.

More specifically, the Ilisu dam, across the Tigris river - part of the huge hydropower project of the Southern Anatolia (Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi- GAP) - has started to hold water on July 2019, according to the Kurdish-led NGO Keep Hasankeyf Alive. As the water rises, the 12,000-year-old



historic village of Hasankeyf, alongside many of its archaeological treasures, which have not yet been explored neither excavated, will soon submerge. Meantime, Kurdish people are forced to be displaced, losing not only their land and livelihood, but also parts of their collective history.⁹

A demographic threat?

Meanwhile, Turkey seems to face a serious demographic threat which is related to some extent with its policies in the Southeastern, predominantly Kurdish, regions, mostly being impoverished, rural and with low education level. Besides, there is a high correlation between education levels, poverty and fertility rates. Indeed, Turks' fertility rates steadily decrease (1.5%), while those of Kurds are more than two times higher (3.5%). Consequently, whereas Turkey faces an ageing population, the composition of the Kurdish population includes a large proportion of young Kurds (mean age 31.8 and 22.6 years respectively). It should be noticed that there are no official up-to-date demographic data regarding the Kurds due to the ban of ethnic censuses; estimations on their population vary from 17 to 23% of the Turkish population.

According to several researchers and Erdogan's statements, should the existing trend persist, the Kurdish population will outnumber the Turkish one within a generation; the Turkish President has repeatedly warned over this risk and sought to offer small incentives to Turkish couples in order to have more children and reverse this pattern.¹⁰ Yet, in spite of the evident gap between the fertility rates of the Turkish and Kurdish population alongside the steady decrease of the former, a demographic change constitutes a slow process and depends on various factors.¹¹

In conclusion, one should take into consideration the linkage between the regional picture and the Turkish domestic developments. Thus, the current crackdown on the Kurdish political expression in Turkey does not simply coincide with the Turkish offensives in Northern Syria and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI); in fact, they are both interlinked. Considering the serious domestic socio-economic problems, as well as the electoral defeats in Istanbul and Ankara, the AKP has had to demonstrate its power and break the potential opposition alliances, such as the one between the CHP and the HDP. The threat perception is thus strategic and is rather linked to the internal political needs than military gains.

Last but not least, the repression of Kurds at home would serve as a deterrent against a potential future PKK insurrection against Turkey following the collapse of the Rojava project.¹² Given the strong linguistic and kinship relations between the Kurds of Turkey and Syria, it is likely that deprived of territory - both in geographical and political terms - in Northern Syria, Kurdish fighters might leave the country in order to retaliate against the Turkish incursion in Turkey itself. Nonetheless, as the armed struggle turns ineffective in both Rojava and Turkish Kurdistan, one could argue that the voices calling for peaceful political activism and civil disobedience within the Kurdish movement would get stronger and more influential.



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AKP's



Dimitris Papanikolaou

The Balkan region has always been a point of interest for the Republic of Turkey, due to its Ottoman past and its great geopolitical significance. Since 2002, the AKP has shown a volatile Balkan agenda, depending on factors such as its leadership, Turkey's economic situation and the unfolding national, regional and international developments. After the 2016 failed coup attempt, the AKP seems to be reshaping its Balkan agenda towards a new direction, with the involvement of the gülenist network at its heart.

Emerging Soft Power Game in Balkans

Gülenism as
a Counterweight?

THE BALKAN REGION has been one of the main pillars of Turkish foreign policy since the Justice and Development Party (AKP) came into power in 2002. The historical, ethnic and religious ties with some of the states, along with their crucial geopolitical importance, make the Balkans essential to the AKP's agenda for the broader region.

Fetullah Güllen's network, on its part, before being officially accused by the AKP Government for the orchestration of the 2016 failed coup attempt, was spearheading Turkish influence over the Balkans by running various institutions. In fact, according to Asli Aydintaşbaş, the self-exiled Imam used to run the best educational institutions within the region.¹ This factor made the "de-gülenization" of the Balkans an indispensable element of AKP's Balkan agenda.

From 2016 to this day, Turkey has driven its Balkan policy towards a more pragmatic, personalized, and Erdoğan-centric approach. This policy comes as a successor to the two previous stages of AKP's Balkan policy, atlanticism and neo-ottomanism. The first stage, which lasted until approximately 2009, was mainly based on maintaining solid relations with Albania, Bosnia and N. Macedonia and the fostering of their involvement with NATO and the EU enlargement. The second one, during the Davutoğlu tenure, as both Foreign and Prime Minister, had a wider scope, was more intense, and was strongly characterized by a brush of nostalgia, conjuring up the shared Ottoman legacy.²

What is more, the exportation and proliferation of various religion-based cultural and educational initiatives, has been at the core of AKP's soft power policies within the Balkans. Major state-backed institutions such as the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) have spread Turkish influence all over the Balkans during previous years.³

However, since 2016, the AKP seems to have shifted the cultural-religious identity of its Balkan policy towards the establishment of economic ties, with the financial aid from both state and private sector, as well as with personal ties with leaders transcending their religious-ethnic identity and past, such as Serbian President Vučić. This shift in AKP's Balkan approach which gradually relegates the soft power imposed through religious manifestations to second place, is not unsubstantial.

Turkey made various efforts to dismantle the gülenist networks in the Balkans, openly asking various states such as Bulgaria, Kosovo or Montenegro for the extradition of its members. In fact, after the coup attempt, state-backed news agencies stated that gülenists run universities, schools, store chains and other institutions all over the Balkans.⁴

The Gülen side criticizes the AKP for promoting proxies, religious fanaticism and radicalization in the Balkans and openly accused Erdoğan of hijacking civilians from Kosovo.⁵ The mutual suspicion and accusations, prove once more that the Balkans is a crucial region for both sides, and that their approach and interests are clashing.

This clash was intensified mainly from the AKP's side, given that the region is of vital significance to its foreign policy. Consequently, Erdoğan's efforts to reshape Turkey's Balkan policies follow this train of thought and attempt to overcome the obstacles that might hamper this reform.

For instance, the insistence of Erdoğan on the extradition of Balkan based civilians, linked with Gülen, could harm the relations between Turkey and the respective Balkan state, as well as their image. The extradition of the aforementioned, would probably be



against the rule of law and possibly query the Balkan states' interests, or even jeopardize their EU accessing process.⁶ The circumvention of the rule of law, could also affect Turkey's image projected to the West and to other strategic partners within the international community.

Even at the third – more pragmatic – phase of AKP's Balkan policy, some aspects of the neo-ottoman approach are also present. For instance, 18% of TIKA's global aid funds go to the Western Balkans while most of them are being directed towards the maintenance and restoration of Ottoman elements.⁷

Nevertheless, the Turkish government seems to be aware of the fact that most of the religion-based institutions within the Balkans have been linked to the gülenist network throughout many years and that this linkage is too complicated to be broken.

Although the AKP's Balkan policy is distancing itself from imposing this kind of influence, it has already found alternatives through similar channels in order to attempt a spillover of its influence within the Balkans. A symbolic example is the establishment and the rapid development of the Maarif Foundation, a multi-level educational institution openly presented as substitution of the gülenist ones, with a global vision.⁸

The AKP seems to feel obliged to expel the Davutoğlu era self-perception of an Ottoman legacy inheritor and continuator of its Balkan policy. It is true that AKP's Balkan influence in many cases can nurture its self-perception, but it is currently – and increasingly – based on more economic and diplomatic ties at both a bilateral and a multilateral level.

Erdoğan seems to be using other soft power instruments, beyond religious and cultural connotations. For instance, the highway bridge linking Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia was built by a Turkish company and funded by the Turkish Exim Bank. Likewise, in October 2019, the Turkish and Serbian leaders signed agreements on various sectors, including that of defense. In both cases, Turkey was projected as a stabilizing factor in the region and as a supporter of their NATO and EU integration path. The mentioned cases are just indicative examples of the orientation of the emerging AKP's Balkan policies. Lastly, complementing the developing economic ties, Erdoğan has also established a strong personal relation with various leaders of Balkan states, which can potentially boost Turkey's influence.⁹

Regarding the “de-gülenization” of the region, Erdoğan seems to be aware of his government's advantages against Gülen's

network in the Balkans. The two sides compete for their influence in the region under very different conditions. Turkey, as a state actor, can offer to the Balkan States things that Fetullah Gülen cannot, as well as obtain more in return.

Turkey's state institutions can keep providing state or private aid to Balkan countries, fund initiatives, sign more bilateral or multilateral trade agreements or cooperate in other sectors. Erdoğan could also ensure these states' pro-



motion of their NATO (e.g. the support provided to Montenegro's integration) and EU involvement. At a diplomatic level, Turkey has also proved the support towards Balkan states regarding the recognition of their independence, as seen in the cases of N. Macedonia and Kosovo. For the Balkan states, these factors are really appealing and in terms of a realistic approach, go beyond cooperation based on religious-cultural ties.

The AKP government seems willing to radically reshape its Balkan agenda on the basis of the situation that emerged after the 2016 failed coup attempt and the deposition of Davutoğlu. In that case, Erdoğan may have to capitalize on the aforementioned advantages, and adapt its Balkan agenda to Turkey's current role and expectations within the region and beyond.

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THE TURKISH

“DİASPORA”

An Old Story's Belated Recognition



Ilias Mitrousis

Until recently, in Turkey, the term “diaspora” used to refer to Armenian and Greek transnational organizations with a slightly negative overtone.¹ However, in a period tellingly coinciding with the AKP party’s rule, it was used to describe the approximately five million-strong Turkish migrant community abroad and to support a more coordinated state policy of engagement. With Germany hosting two out of Europe’s four million Turkish migrants, the remaining one million is scattered across the USA, Canada, Australia, and the Gulf. Hence, the formation of what Turkey identifies as its diaspora today has been - and still is - a lengthy and multifaceted process. One that has unfolded mainly through two phases and mirrors critical aspects of the evolution of the modern Turkish state.

THE FIRST PHASE of the Turkish diaspora formation began in the 1960s. With the signing of a series of bilateral agreements with several European countries, Turkey attempted to alleviate the pressures of its rising unemployment by exporting its workforce surplus to the labour-thirsty European economies. With Germany being the primary recipient, agreements were also signed with France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Austria, and Switzerland, thus leading to the formation of sizeable Turkish communities. Turkey and the host states assumed the workers' status as temporary, due to those agreements' limited timeframe. Therefore, Turkey settled with a minimal engagement policy, while profiting by its "guest-workers'" remittances, which included the provision of counsel on bureaucratic and pension issues in attendance of their repatriation. At the same time, basic religious accommodation was provided by Turkey's official religious agency, the Diyanet, mainly by sending imams. However, repatriation expectations were gradually refuted.²

The proxy civil strife that preceded the coup d'état of 1980 in Turkey and the crackdown that followed gave a new push to emigration, marking the second phase of the Turkish diaspora formation. The European countries received large influxes of Turkish migrants, initially from family reunifications, and later in search of political asylum. In the host countries, people from various ethnic, religious and political backgrounds such as Kurds, Alevis, leftists and political Islamists, gradually begun to form umbrella organizations. Indicative cases are Necmettin Erbakan's Milli Görüş and Fethullah Gulen's Hizmet. MG, which advocates for a peaceful, bottom-up Islamization of the state, opened its first European branch in Germany in 1976 and has since evolved into one of the most influential Islamist organizations of the Turkish diaspora. Gulen's movement, while already active within Turkey, it increasingly expanded abroad since the 1980s through a vast network of educational institutes. These institutes promoted Gulen's moderate version of Islam which allegedly conforms with democracy and favors inter-religious dialogue, and attracted followers among - but not exclusively - the Turkish diaspora. However, both organizations' versions of Islam deviated significantly from the Diyanet's.³

Eventually, their widespread influence, in conjunction with other organizations' -particularly PKK-affiliated - home-oriented political mobilization, triggered Turkey's security reflexes. The state sought to counter those groups which it considered hostile by further institutionalizing its engagement with its migrant communities beyond the economic spectrum. The Diyanet's responsibilities abroad were expanded via the establishment of official branches in Turkey's embassies in Europe. Further, organizations such as the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DITIB) in Germany and France, established under the Diyanet's wing, have successfully rivaled other religious organizations over time. The state also tried to co-opt organizations affiliated to the nationalist MHP party, aiming to counterbalance leftist and secular organizations such as L'ACORT and TGD in France and Germany, respectively.⁴ Regardless, these measures were merely catching up with developments in Turkish migrant communities rather than constituting a concrete diaspora policy.

The formation of a coordinated diaspora engagement policy has been put forth by the AKP party since 2003 and was subsequently heavily influenced by its Islamic and neo-Ottoman ideologies. Firstly, under a broad definition, Turkey designated as its "diaspora" not only the Turks living abroad but also ethnically diverse populations that shared a common Ottoman history (i.e., Armenians, Greeks, Kurds), yet with a focus on Islamic faith references. Secondly, an extensive institutionalization of the diaspora policy followed,



with the establishment of authorities such as the Office for the Turks, Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) in 2010 and the Yunus Emre Cultural Centers (YEKM).⁵ These, along with the Diyanet, form the institutional arm of Turkey's diaspora engagement policy and are tasked with the management of diaspora affairs in the full spectrum.

The rising Islamophobia in the west following the 9/11 events and the concomitant hike in religiosity within Turkish communities, provided a platform for Turkey to identify itself as the Muslims' global champion. While active advocacy against Islamophobia was critical to gain sympathy for Turkey among segregated Muslims, the Islamic orientation of state leadership was also instrumental.⁶ It could now approach and cooperate with formerly denounced organizations such as MG and Hizmet, and even influence them to spearhead Turkey's re-imagination effort abroad. However, the same Islamic orientation is the leading cause of inconsistencies in the country's diaspora engagement policy. Despite the ambitious definition of diaspora, the AKP's Islamic umbrella of state policies is hardly suitable to accommodate ethnic or heterodox migrant communities originating from Anatolia, with particular sensitivities such as the Kurds and the Armenians. Consequently, its appeal tends to be limited mostly on religious and conservative parts of the diaspora.

The AKP's expectations on the diaspora's role in the realm of foreign policy though took a complicated turn. As Kemal Yurtnaç, YTB's founding president, argued, the diaspora represents the embodiment of Turkey's "public diplomacy" and "soft power". Indeed, an integrated and active diaspora can potentially shape a positive image abroad and even lobby, effectively. Therefore, Turkey regularly supports integration in the host countries, albeit opposing assimilation. It contends that integration can and should take place without severing cultural, religious, and political ties with the homeland. Nevertheless, persistence in non-assimilation puts Turkey at odds with some countries.⁷ For instance, in Germany, which favors integration through assimilation, studies indicate Turks as the least integrated (scoring 2.4) among all migrant communities. Furthermore, the AKP's occasionally paternalistic approach to the diaspora has even been perceived by several host countries as interventionism. Official complaints in 2013 about Turkish foster children handed over to Christian families have only reinforced such perceptions in Germany. Besides, Erdogan's escalated divisive rhetoric following Germany's and the Netherlands' refusal to allow AKP's rallies ahead of the 2017 Turkish constitutional referendum, only reinforced concerns over potential inflammation of intra-diasporic tensions.⁸

A particular reference is in order at this point to AKP's clash with Hizmet. Being blamed for the 2016 failed coup, the organization

has since been under severe crackdown both in Turkey and abroad.⁹ Turkey's campaign to control or dismantle Gulen's network abroad has been relatively successful. Several African and Asian countries have responded positively to requests to close or hand over Hizmet's institutions. Subsequently, the state-introduced Maarif Foundation, charged with operating all confiscated institutes abroad, seemingly evolves into another powerful diaspora institution. Mean-



while, the purge on Gulenists has pushed thousands to seek asylum in European countries, creating a process for a new diaspora formation. Turkish pressures for extraditions and a reported surge in its spying activities on Hizmet's followers abroad - even through diasporic organizations - have also generated discomfort among many European countries.¹⁰

To sum up, Turkey's new diaspora policy has evolved considerably in recent years, particularly in the fields of community support and transnational polity building. However, as this policy is merely a party-inspiration, its implementation proceeds under ideological exclusionary biases. Moreover, the AKP's often assertive foreign policy and attempts to paternalize the diaspora, combined with mounting domestic authoritarian tendencies, may at the end of the day not only impede Turkey's public diplomacy but also complicate the diaspora's position in the host countries. Last but not least, while a new Gulenist diasporic community is potentially on the making, the AKP's growing diasporic institutional arm may render a shift towards a more inclusive diaspora policy, 'wishful thinking'.

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Syrian Refugee crisis

CONTROL

in Turkey

A political tool
or a burden for
the state?

Maria Kourpa

Turkey has welcomed more than 3.6 million refugees from Syria, making the country the biggest refugee population receiver globally.¹ In this article, the Turkish strategy is examined both on the control of refugee flows to the European Union as well as on the strategy concerning the refugee settlement in the country, which is, by now, far from temporary. The country supports an important part of the refugee crisis, acting as the EU borderline, and carries the number of refugees that Europe refuses to host. As a result, the management of the refugee crisis is creating some good opportunities for Turkey in international relations, specifically for political pressure against the EU. Also, the hosting of refugees has been weaponized for the control of internal threats, such as the support for Kurdish autonomy in the southeast.



Turkey as a safe third country for the European Union

THE TURKISH STATE AGREED from day one to an open-door policy for Syrian refugees without official documents coming from its southern borders. The refugees are under the “temporary protection status”, which grants them access to public healthcare facilities, the state education system, social services but also limited access to the official labor market. Nevertheless, official recognition for asylum seekers is legally lacking and the processes of registration are slow and insufficient.

The majority of the Syrian refugee population is living in urban, semi-urban and rural areas in Turkey and only a small portion of them is being hosted in Temporary Accommodation Camps. The camps –most of them near the Syrian borders-, are run by the Ministry of the Presidency, the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) and the Turkish Red Crescent.

As the EU decided to accept only a portion of people from war zones in the Middle East, Turkey has promised to control the refugee arrival from the Middle East and to manage the flow to Europe. Back in 2016, in the EU-Turkey Statement, EU promised €6bl to the country for projects on humanitarian response through the European Union Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (the Madad Fund) and the Facility for Refugees, among others. Therefore, the funding is transferred through programs supervised by both the EU funds, with the cooperation of Turkish ministries and public bodies. Managing its own economics, it has facilitated the process of distributing the EU money and control the projects run and partly financed by the EU. The country and part of the army has amenablely undertook the financial and organizational responsibility for the camps, which has led to moderately good living conditions for the habitants - especially in comparison with the refugee population living outside the camps.² The cooperation of Turkish authorities with the European funds is fundamental for the sustainability of the programs and has proven to lead to better long-term outcomes for the effectiveness of the humanitarian response.³ The policy strongly differentiates from the habitual refugee management in other refugee-hosting countries, run by external humanitarian partners, and it surely reflects Turkish peoples' views on the refugee crisis. Specifically, by executing the crisis management on its own, the Turkish state does not allow any external, and especially Western, agencies to intervene into its internal decision-making and implementation. Besides, the country has shown small to zero tolerance to the work of western NGOs within its territory overall. Nevertheless, this approach has provided better targeted support to those in need of protection for Turkey, the EU and their partners.

The scope of the deal itself was the prevention of refugees fleeing to Europe, and the success of it is still dubious. When it comes to it, approximately 10,000 to 12,000 refugees are fleeing illegally from Turkey to Greece per year at this point, and it is still a very moderate number compared to the one that the country hosts. However, the EU alleges that the Turkish state is weaponizing the crisis during the negotiations, while, at the same time, loosening the security control of migration routes in the Aegean at its convenience.⁴ Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan uses threats of “opening the gates”, when the EU or its member states criticize Turkish policies in the East Mediterranean and Syria.⁵ These threats have not led to any effect on EU policies towards the country, although the flows into Greece have indeed risen through 2019 and the Greek authorities are the ones that feel the pressure.

From its side, Turkey has accused the EU that it has failed to deliver on the promises held.⁶ First and foremost, it appeared indeed



that the amount of funds agreed on is a fraction of the €36.7bl that the Turkish state has spent to preserve the refugee flow in the country. Still, only a part of the €6bl has been sent to Turkey, since these funds were promised only in relation with concrete projects, such as new camps. Lastly, the EU has not resettled to member states up to 72,000 Syrian refugees from the country as promised in 2016.⁷

It is without question that Turkey is indeed bearing an insupportable number of refugees and its consequences on Turkish political life. The refugees reveal questions stemming from Turkish social dynamics: there is political pressure internally, as in any other receiving country, coupled with internal anger, racism and nationalistic behavior,⁸ always in juxtaposition with the failing economy. The anti-refugee sentiments in Turkey are rising progressively, anti-immigrant tweets and hashtags are becoming popular in social media and Turkish nationalist groups are being more active in social media against the “invasion” of foreigners in their country.

The refugee crisis has risen to become a political liability for Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP).⁹ The AKP is facing a united opposition front, both from the conservative and the progressive side that unanimously accuse the government of accepting the vast number of refugees and mismanaging their settlement, while political leaders are pressing for and promising to voters the repatriation of Syrian refugees.

Is there a “Safe Zone” safe enough?

As a result, the Turkish state has left the refugees in a temporary state and hesitates to grant them citizenship, a move that will be condemned by both the society and political opponents. During the past two years, the Turkish police is coming after undocumented migrants and refugees in large cities, or refugees registered in different districts than the ones they reside in. Meanwhile, NGOs in Turkey report and condemn forced deportations based on “voluntary return”, as non-refoulement of refugees in unsafe conditions was one of the key principles in the EU-Turkey deal, as well as in the international law per se.¹⁰

Moreover, this past October, Turkey started Operation Peace Spring, extending 32 km into Syrian territory thus far. This move towards Syrian Kurdish territory solidifies the plans for a safe zone with modern facilities and infrastructures in the Turkish-Syrian borders for the resettlement of Syrians living in Turkey. Erdogan aspires to achieve this plan with international economic and political

support and presents the plan as the sole solution for Turkey and the EU. Nevertheless, he has received little backing for its plans and accuses that world powers, including Muslim nations, were more concerned about sending arms to Syria than supporting his “safe zone”.

The Turkish state expects that the resettlement of a considerable number of Syrian refugees in this “safe zone” will deflate the economic and political pressure that the presence



of refugees is causing in the cities and villages of Turkey. In the meantime, the establishment of Syrian refugees in the region will eventually change the dynamic of the Kurdish population. This move is part of a larger plan that aspires to minimize PKK and YPD support in the area, and, therefore, the demands for the establishment of an autonomous Kurdish state. The influx of Syrian people of Arabic descent will create a barrier to Kurdish autonomy but fears are rising that this plan will lead to further ethnic conflict in the region, as it did in the past, and it is being criticized by EU political leaders and parties.

Refugee hosting in Turkey is a great gamble for the economy and the society of the country; it is without argument that Erdogan's choice to accept the refugees was a very responsible and courageous decision that put his government at stake and required virtuosity on his part. At the same time, flow control is both a tool and a powerful alibi for revamping Turkey's relations with the West and resolving some demanding internal concerns with minorities in the southwest.

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TURKEY

THE STATE OF 5 1/2 COUPS

Alexandra Nikopoulou

The military forces have played a great role in the establishment of the Turkish State and have served as the guardians of security of the nation. This prominent position of the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has affected the history of the country which often, when facing an internal threat, is also faced with the reality of army intervention in civic affairs. This practice has resulted in what has been known as 5 1/2 coups, however as the Erdogan regime has already survived its first coup, the cards have turned, and the military seems to be losing its authority within the Turkish State. Could that mean that the domestic balance in Turkey is changing or is it simply a downturn soon to be changed?



THE MODERN TURKISH STATE was founded in the 1920s by a military group named the Young Turks, and, throughout its history, military forces have played a vital role in its establishment and survival. Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the State and an army officer himself, took over the rule of a declining sultanate and led the transition to a modern Western-like state, being supported by the army in his venture. This newly-founded State was in fact a by-product of a revolutionary coup and thus the military already held a leading position in the state-building process that followed.¹

During this transitional period, the Turkish people were not ready to adjust to the new conditions of the Republic and the State was lacking a middle class that would be willing to adapt to this new reality. The military officers took over this role and for the first years of the Republic became the bureaucracy and the leaders of the reforms that Ataturk was aiming to apply. The armed forces became a tool in Ataturk's mission to modernize the Turkish state and soon adopted the concept of "guardianship" of the Kemalist principles and the Republic. In a sense, modern Turkey was founded, protected and progressed with the help of the army, which is why in the following years, the TAF had the authority to intervene in domestic politics and impose their will as soon as a threat – as perceived – was looming. Hence, for many years the TAF served as a veto player in Turkish politics, ensuring the survival of the civilian leadership and thus becoming a necessary factor in the political equation.²

In the years following the First Republic, the army maintained its role in the Turkish State, even though it was facing a gradual decline, as a middle class of businessmen emerged in 1930s.³ After World War II, relations between the army and the government further deteriorated following the adoption of the multi-party system. This development signaled that the relationship between the government and the army, which was strongly connected to the Republican People's Party, could no longer be taken for granted. That is also when we observe the first sign of interference of the armed forces in civic affairs.⁴

In the next decades, one may observe that the Turkish State experienced several coups targeting specific internal enemies. It is important to note that as the years passed, the nature of the coups became more cohesive and organized.⁵ The first coup which took place in the 1960s was one against the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes and was reflecting the discontent amongst young army officers that were not enjoying the same benefits as their seniors, while the Turkish state was also facing a severe crisis in its economy, despite support offered from its Western allies.⁶ The 1971 coup became known as the "coup by communiqué", as President Demirel received a memorandum by the army in light of increasing tensions between left and right-wing groups, due to financial insecurity that sparked instability in the country. In the years that followed, instability remained and the 1980s were marked by a coup that became known as the most organized, successful and bloody coup ever faced by the Republic. This coup came as an answer to the growing fears for the rise of communism, enabling the rule of the officers for



3 years. In these years, concepts such as Pan-Turanism and enlightened Islamism were utilized as a way to tackle the leftist threat. The last coup before that of 2016 came in 1997 and is known as the soft-coup since the army never seized power, but chose instead to impose its will via a memorandum that later became known as the February 28 Process. As in previous cases, the military reacted to the rise of opposing forces and intervened in civic affairs in an attempt to limit the influence of religious elements that were promoted by the ruling Welfare Party.⁷

The tables were turned with the election of the Justice and Development Party and the rise of its leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. JDP was an Islamist party and came to power embracing the co-existence of Islam with the aspect of the country's accession to the EU. In the first years of its rule, the party chose to follow a policy of avoiding confrontation with the army due to its strong foundations and connections to society. Until 2007, Erdogan was unwilling to confront the main pillar holding together the Turkish Republic for almost 80 years. However, in that year, one can identify the beginning of a new era for the JDP Party. After his re-election in 2007, Erdogan began a "witch hunt" against the military which became known as "the counter-coup", and launched two mega-trials (Ergenekon and Balyoz) against military officers with accusations of plotting against the regime. This period marks the beginning of the effort for consolidating power on Erdogan and is also characterized by a significant turn in the foreign affairs of the country. The regime turned its back to the EU and embraced cooperation with countries in its eastern borders, with which it shared religious bonds.⁸ Utilizing its growing influence to the public and share of power, the JDP government tried to "dethrone" the army from its position as the main pillar holding together the Turkish Republic and initiated a new era, where religion and people-centered politics played a key-role in the country's affairs. The continuous crackdown towards opposing forces, resulted in the first unsuccessful coup in the history of the Turkish state. The 2016 coup attempt was indeed conducted by the military, however, it did not come from its secular ranks. According to Turkish officials, the coup was orchestrated by supporters of the exiled cleric Fethulah Gulen and was thus stemming from a religious branch within the army. This coup was in fact different from the previous ones, as it was the first one taking place in the era of the internet and social media. The government took advantage of those tools and called on its supporters to turn against the army officers, changing the pattern and creating an unknown territory for the military officers involved.⁹ Under these circumstances, the Erdogan government managed to survive and later launched the largest reform process in the military after the Kemal Ataturk one. These developments signaled a significant change in pattern, as it was the first time that a Turkish government managed not only to prevail but also to control the military and change the balance of power between the military and civic pillars in the Republic.¹⁰

Since the founding of the Republic, the military was the main institution participating in the nation-building process and was a continuous force of stability in the country, ensuring the safeguarding of Kemalist principles. As Erdogan's rule is becoming more authoritarian, the Turkish leader has consolidated his powers and presented himself as the main leading figure after Kemal Ataturk. This process has questioned the role of the military which was the main supporter and guardian of Kemalism and has created new conditions in the Turkish State. The disruption of the coup pattern, in which the army successfully intervenes to ensure stability in



the country, has created new poles of power within the State and has marked the end of the Kemalist Republic as it was known until the early 2000s. The policies followed by the Erdogan regime have challenged the role of the army, which has been severely weakened. In the coming years, this development has the potential to halt the interference of the TAF in the civic affairs of the country, however, as the military is the main pillar of the Turkish state, it is likely that it will eventually regain its power and status within the Turkish political scene.

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OTTOMANISM

and the creation of an Ottoman Nation

The Ottoman Empire in the 19th century was forced to drastically change its perception of the state; this gave birth to Ottomanism and the idea of an Ottoman nation for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It was a state-led policy, which started to be realized with the Tanzimat reforms and was gradually internalized from various ethno-religious groups of the empire. While the ideological basis of Ottomanism and its policies changed over the years that corresponded with the territorial losses and the need of cohesion of the remaining population, it was an important force within the Empire, aiming at its survival.

Charitini Petrodaskalaki

DUE TO THE WESTERN ENCROACHMENT in the Ottoman lands, the emerging nationalisms of minority groups within the empire, as well as the interference of the western powers in defense of these minorities, the Ottoman Empire, from the late 18th century onwards, was gradually forced to give up most of its lands. However, it also faced a crisis of its legitimacy; as the empire was until the very end an Islamic empire, its legitimacy originally derived from religion. Yet, the claims of the divine nature of the monarchy were no longer enough in the eyes of the population. The gradual, worldwide emergence of public opinion seems to be evident in the case of the Ottoman Empire as well; thus, a new social base was needed to confront the ideological challenges of the era.¹ The doubts about the empire's survival, along with the positive attraction of western liberal ideas and the insistence of European powers for reform led to a radical change in the perception of the state, and the emergence of a new state ideology. This vision of the imperial ruling class was called Ottomanism or Osmanlilik.

Originally describing the ruling class, and including all those who "knew the Ottoman way", i.e. the High Culture of the elites by the 16th century, the term Ottoman was expanded to define the entire population of the empire. This turned the imperial identity into an ideology of unity, which aimed at furthering social cohesion and attracting loyalty. Even if the state was not prepared to concede real equality to all subjects, Ottomanism was internalized by various social and ethno-religious groups. Merchants and upper agrarian classes that emerged from the new capitalist order were inclined to side with the state and adopt it; elites and upper classes usually internalized it and used it as a vehicle of upward social mobility.² Ottomanism was particularly successful in the Arab provinces, where the rise of urban notables allowed them to be self-identified as Ottoman for the first time. It also helped reinforcing the Arabs' sense of ethno-cultural awareness and offered them protection against imperialism; the Nahda, as expressed in the 19th century, was not a territorially defined ideology, but existed within the framework of the Ottoman Empire.³

With the introduction of the Tanzimat reforms, whose key purpose was to transform the subjects into citizens, a new bond was created between the state and the individuals. The Hatt-I Serif of Gulhane in 1839 introduced the first egalitarian reforms as imperial concessions to all Ottoman subjects, setting the ground for the creation of an Ottoman nation. Its primary goal was to counter the separatism among the Christian population of the empire, but also to address the Western audience. While the Ottoman Sultans had a long tradition of passing law (kanun) applicable to Muslim and non-Muslim subjects alike, the declaration was deliberately based on religious justifications. Although they were claiming that these concessions were in line with the Sharia, in truth, the legal equality of Muslims and non-Muslims was contradicting it, which may explain the fact that the legal status of the non-Muslims as dhimmis did not change yet.⁴ In any case, the decree heralded the beginnings of a modern secular state, even if the language and its roots were still Islamic.

Various reforms furthered the above concessions, and the Hatt-I Humayun in 1856 extended these points by letting all subjects into public employment and fill the positions according to merit. This led to a significant increase of non-Muslims in the Ottoman government.⁵ However, it should be noted that after the fall of Resid Pasa in 1852, the governmental reforms drifted away from the Sharia and towards Westernlike measures. In turn, this created an ideological vacuum in the governmental policies.⁶ At the



same time, the millet system was still in place, creating a contradiction between the ideology of a united nation and the reaffirmation of the rights of each millet, leaving the Muslim population increasingly dissatisfied.

The distancing from the Islamic principles created a reactionary movement within the Ottoman elite that led to the rise of the Young Ottoman movement in the mid-1860s. While the boundaries between what was Ottoman and what was Islamic were still unclear, Namik Kemal, a representative figure of the movement, also introduced the idea of “fatherland” as a geographical and emotional bond in Ottoman thought. The Young Ottomans expanded the political significance of Ottomanism, propagating that a cohesive Ottoman citizenry would be achieved only if both Muslims and non-Muslims shared full equality before the law and in parliamentary representations, pointing out that many of these Western principles pre-existed in Islam;⁷ this became the official ideology of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876.

Sultan Abdulhammit II furthered the Islamic tendency and introduced a new Islamist policy that became the ideological supplement of Ottomanism, providing the psychological background that the Muslim population needed. He may have claimed that the Caliphate was in a higher position than the Sultanate, but in reality he used the Caliphate to reinforce the status of the Sultan, and used a specific language of state that manifested social integration of all the population of the empire.⁸ With the restoration of the Ottoman Constitution in 1908, the Islamic element of Ottomanism lost its significance, as the Young Turks did not wish to base their society on Islamic laws and values. Their ideology was to a high degree reactive to the concessions to the non-Muslim population; their policies seemed to be more exclusive than inclusive, aiming at strengthening the position of Ottoman Muslims. Even if this version of Ottomanism was dramatically different from the one that called for a state of Muslims and non-Muslims alike, it still aimed to preserve the Ottoman Empire. In fact, the challenge of the late Ottoman state was how to include the other Muslims in its modernity.⁹

Despite all these, the rise of Turkish nationalism, along with other nationalisms, was evident in the Second Constitutional period, even if it was not an official policy. Still, the non-Muslims' position was undermined further in favor of the Ottoman Muslims, and, as the empire shrank, the proportion of ethnic Turks in the empire grew. It should also be noted that Ottomanism also worked as

an unintended means of Turkification. Turkish was the official language of the state, and, in the last quarter of the 19th century, many jobs were created for Turkish-speakers, in the sectors of education, judiciary, administration, and the press; thus, those who wished to have some influence had to learn Turkish.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the Ottoman Empire ultimately collapsed due to warfare, while many Ottomans remained loyal to the state until the very end. After the empire collapsed, Turkish nationalism remained the only viable option for the state's survival.



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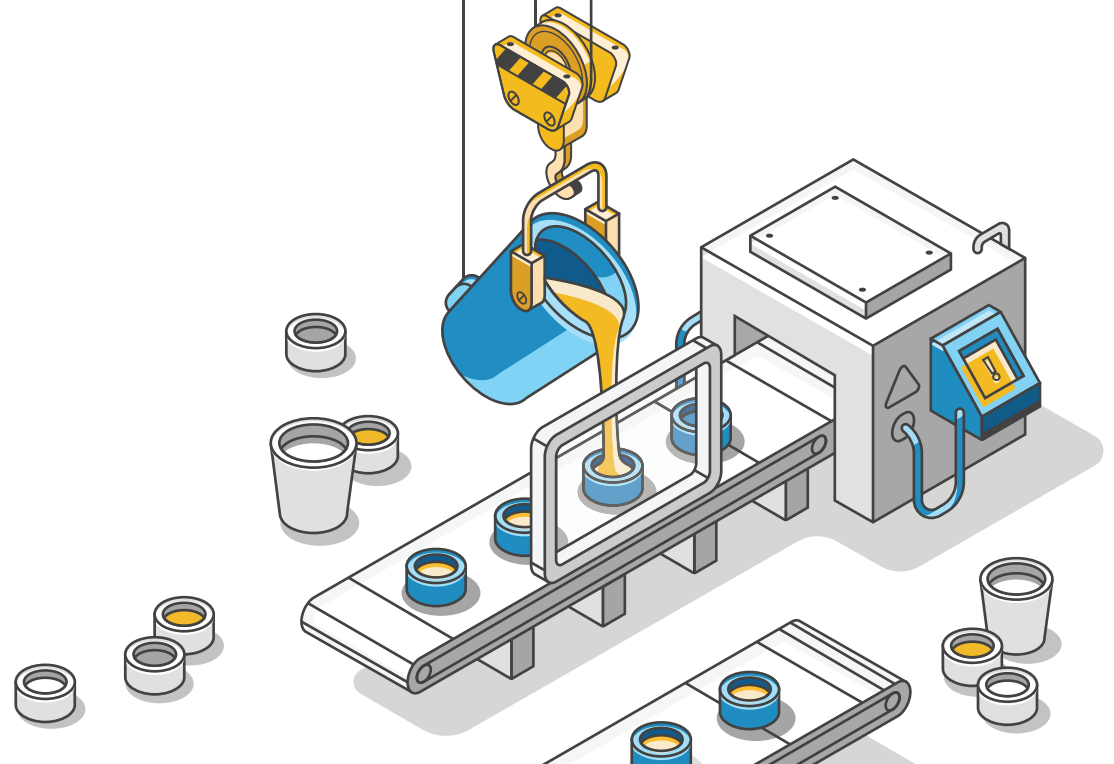


Political Economy of Turkey

A Hybrid Economic Model

Minas Stravopodis

Turkey's economy oscillates between the state-oriented and the liberal economic model. Initially, Turkey followed a completely state-oriented model of economy. This changed due to the economic reforms implemented by Erdogan's government, Thus, the Turkish economy has been partially liberalized. However, there is much to be done in order to eliminate state intervention. This creates a significant gap between the Turkish economic model and the Western one. Although political intervention in the economic affairs is common, in recent years the Turkish economy indicated a rapid economic growth. Nevertheless, due to many external and internal factors, Turkey has been experiencing economic instability.



THE YEAR 2002 CONSTITUTES a turning point for Turkey. It is the year when Recep Tayyip Erdogan and the Justice & Development Party (AKP) came into power. Erdogan's new policies affected every aspect of Turkish affairs, from political and economic matters to social ones. It was Erdogan's vision that changed Turkey. Erdogan introduced the neo-ottoman doctrine, giving more emphasis on the idea/notion of Islam and religion and less on the idea/notion of the Turkish nation as previous governments did. Especially after 2007, the AKP has taken into account the changing power dynamics in the Middle East in order to shape its policies, which have altered Turkey's character. From the Turkish independence (1923) to Ozal's government (1983), Turkey had followed a state-oriented model of economy. This changed with Ozal's government, which implemented numerous economic reforms that liberalized the economy. In fact, between 1983 and 2001, Turkey indicated a 4% annual economic growth. However, chronic economic problems led Turkey to grave adjustments on the political milieu.¹

When the AKP came into power, its economic policy, combined with the IMF's advice, led Turkey to a significant economic growth from 2002 to 2007. More specifically, Turkey indicated a 6.8% economic growth during these years; a percentage that turned the country into an emergent power with an economic growth rate similar to that of China and India. This success story made the AKP very popular and the IMF's influence on the economic matters of Turkey helped the AKP remain in power.² Still, after the first years of Erdogan's governance, the tables turned. The 2008 economic crisis played an important role in the destabilization of the economy. It is not accidental that the 2008 economic growth plunged to 1%. Following this development, the impact of the economic crisis affected Turkey and, as a result, in 2009, the Turkish economy indicated a 5% recession. Nevertheless, in 2010, Turkey indicated an 8% economic growth, being the exception in a world where the majority of the states indicated recession in the aftermath of the global economic crisis.³

A significant destabilization factor was the Arab Spring uprisings and the emergence of the 'Islamic State'. The Turkish economy was affected by the negative implications of the conflicts that were escalating in Iraq, Syria and Yemen. The unprecedented refugee crisis, with millions of refugees crossing the border, negatively affecting Turkish stability. Although the economic policies dealt with these challenges, these unique circumstances started to negatively differentiate Turkey from the other emergent powers.

After the July 2016 coup d'état attempt took a negative turn, both at the level of political stability and of social cohesion, which are important factors for the economy. In turn, uncertainty emerged, and investors hesitated to invest in Turkey. Another crucial factor regarding the economy is the strategic partnership with Russia and the reaction of the U.S., which resulted in a huge increase of tariffs on the Turkish products. This move caused a 30% devaluation of the Turkish lira during 2018. These U.S. tariffs combined with a generalized trade war between the U.S. and China make the economic situation in Turkey even worse.⁴

In addition, the Turkish invasion of northern Syria to fight against Syrian Kurds last October caused further damage to the Turkish lira, which lost more than 3% of its value. As a result, the Turkish lira approached 5.90 against the U.S. dollar. The U.S. government imposed further sanctions and higher tariffs on some Turkish imports. However, there has been a disagreement between the U.S. Congress and President Trump regarding the Turkish invasion of Syria.⁵ It is evident that the economy is deeply affected by the un-



predictable political decisions of the AKP government, which cause and compound uncertainty and instability. This was evident not only with the Turkish invasion, but also with the S-400 case, where Turkey's economy was affected by its decision to buy S-400 missiles from Russia, despite being part of the NATO alliance.⁶

In contrast, Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in Turkey are regarded as Erdogan's asset vis-a-vis the economy, given that since 2013, Turkey has provided fertile ground for a remarkable number of investments. More specifically, from 2013 to 2017, Turkey indicated approximately an average of 14.5 billion in FDI annually. It is of vital importance to mention that in 2018, the FDI increased in Turkey (13 billion), although the global FDI indicated a decline. This positive result in the Turkish FDI is directly related to some structural reforms that the government implemented in order to reach financial stability. As a result, foreign investors did not lose confidence in Turkey, particularly on the sector of tourism and industries, as these are the current comparative advantages of Turkey.⁷

An important factor as to why the Turkish FDI increased, is China. Although the two countries have many political disagreements and very different approaches on political matters, such as the Uyghurs case, Chinese-Turkish economic partnership in the Chinese project of Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) has brought the two countries together on the basis of mutual interest. This has brought many infrastructure projects into Turkey. Furthermore, this economic partnership is directly related both to China's will to become a great power, modifying its economic power to political influence, and to Turkey's shift of orientation that moved away from the West and towards the East. Consequently, it is a combination of successful structural reforms, foreign investors' confidence and the Chinese project, which cause the increase of Turkish FDI, despite of the general Turkish economic decline.⁸

The latest developments regarding the Turkish economy seems to be positive as it is the first time within 2019 that the economy indicates a 0.9% growth. The contraction was shorter than that expected by many economic analysts thanks to the fiscal stimulus and the state-bank reboot growth. Despite this aspect of the Turkish economy, recovery will not satisfy Erdogan's will, who wants Turkey to return to the rapid pace of economic growth of the previous decade. It is claimed that Turkey will indicate a 0.5% economic growth in 2020. Nevertheless, Erdogan assumes that Turkey's economic growth will overcome 5% of the GDP. Moreover, he declares that both inflation and interest rates will fall to single digits in 2020.⁹

In conclusion, Turkey remains a very strong – economic – player in the region, despite some severe economic problems that it is confronting. It remains the major economy in the broader Middle East region (766 billion GDP, 2018), even if its economy indicated a significant decline (from 950 billion GDP in 2013 to 766 in 2018). The generalized turbulence in the Middle East along with Erdogan's revisionism have affected both the Turkish economy and currency. However, Ankara's economic reflexes, even in such a distorted



economic environment, are quite promising for the upcoming future as there are indications for significant economic growth and increase of the Turkish FDI. Bearing in mind its economic power, Turkey is expected to maintain its role as a regional power and affect stability in the Middle East.

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IRRECONCILABLE FOES?

Religion, class and the state in Turkey

This article will try to explore the phases and the trends of the problematic between Islamist politics and part of the secular tradition in Turkey, namely the Left. The periodization we adopt covers the phases of the early enmity in the 1960-70's, the subsequent rapprochement during the 1980's and the late mounting distrust between the two political trends since 1990's.

Ihab Shabana



TURKEY, THE BESTOWED REPUBLIC OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE, a country with an imposed secularization “from above”, has long experienced a rise of a politicized Islam. Ever since the 1960’s and ‘70’s, but especially after the 1990’s and the Islamists’ electoral victories, Islamist politics has consolidated its place in almost every aspect of social, economic and political life. As C. Tugal has argued, the Turkish political elite diachronically chose to institutionalize Islam rather than de-establish it.¹ This struggle for “official Islam” can be portrayed in the Republic’s management of the religious realm throughout the last decades, which is divided into mainly three bifurcations.

First, the manipulation of religious institutions and its discourses. A revealing example is the proliferation of the religious secondary schools, the Imam Hatip Okkulari (IHLs). Second, the incorporation of religious orders (tariqas) and religious minorities into a “social Islam”, building thus a national consensus on a new Islamized society. This incorporation is mainly based on a “social contract” that involves direct financing to religious organizations in return for electoral support and social discipline. The Gulen movement used to be part of this network. A third way of enhancing and strengthening Islam’s public image is creating new religious organizations, usually controlled by members of the regime’s family or loyal friends. TUGVA (The Service for Youth and Education Foundation of Turkey) and TURGEV (Turkish Foundation to Serve the Youth and Education) are two prominent examples of these newly and loyal established organizations.²

The attempt of creating a state-controlled Islam led to tensions with other political forces, such as the Left, creating phases of either tensions or convergences. The first phase of the relations between Turkish political Islam and the Left extends mainly between the late 1960’s until 1979. The concomitant emergence of a militant leftist workers’ movement and of a nascent religious middle class provoked stir between the two factions, with the latter being supported by Turkish governments in fear of “a communist takeover”. The former’s obsession with the theoretical and materialist debates left little space for Turkish reality, as some claim.³ Nonetheless, material quests were not the only driving force for this havoc. Cold War and Turkey’s peripheral role played a fundamental role. Notwithstanding the general enmity, the Cold War lenses ushered parts of both sides to form a burgeoning form of “Islamic socialism”. Influenced by respective discussion in Egypt and Syria, and specifically after the “bloody Sunday” of 1969, the leftist magazine *Yon* (The Way) phrased its disposition for a reconciliation.⁴ This reconciliation was mainly based upon hatred to American imperialism and its cultural extensions, but also on the necessity of the Left to understand Islam’s role to the working class. As the leftist Cahit Tanyol wrote in *Yon*, Islam can address both spiritual and material needs.⁵

The turning point that signifies the second period is the Iranian revolution that was welcomed by both left-wing and right-wing cadres. Under the influence of revolutionary Shi’ism and the street violence between leftists and rightists that caused serious predicaments, the rapprochement period of the 1980’s is characterized mainly by a twofold approach: a dialectical and a practical one: on the one hand translations of the works of Islamic socialism are produced, such as that of al-Siba’i’s and Shariati’s. For example, a prominent political figure, Hikmet KIVILCIMLI approached religion with Marxist methodology in his works.⁶ On the other hand the need for a practical cooperation between the Left and antiimperialist Islamists is underlined by communists in Turkey, especially due to



the mounting de-legitimization of the leftist and Islamic discourse by the Turkish junta. Edip Yuksel, a member of the Islamist Raiders movement, had stated that Islamists and communists had common aspirations on some political, social and economic issues. Nevertheless, at the same time Turkish governments introduced the religious element in their attempt to undermine growing leftist and Kurdish militancy.⁷

The third period was characterized by the rise of the AKP that generated a political and social momentum that promoted both a pro-democratic and pro-European agenda and at the same time a new liberal-Muslim intelligentsia, the “Anatolian bourgeoisie”.⁸ This process prompted an ideological flexibility. Despite the cemented enmity between the Left and Islamists continued parts of the Turkish socialist trends perceived the emergence of the Islamist – democratic movement – namely the AKP – as a component of the civil society movement, praising its liberating and egalitarian rhetoric.⁹ This is not an individual process, as vis-à-vis the autocratic regimes in the MENA, Islamists and the Left merged their powers at the turn of the century. The anti-war movement further fostered this approach. A number of intellectuals, such as Ihsan Eliacik and Mehmet Bekaroglu, have been prominent figures in promoting the ideas of a Muslim Left since the 2000’s. These ideas are mostly based on working class activism and on late oppositional rhetoric against AKP, a process portrayed after the Gezi protests and the growing joint May Day protests.¹⁰

Notwithstanding, the main arena reflecting ideological and power contests since the 1990’s between Left and religious right, is the Kurdish issue. The Turkish (Kurdish) Hezbollah ferociously fought the PKK in the southeastern provinces of Turkey along the

borders with Syria during the 1990’s and the 2000’s. This “civil” war between Kurds, not only mirrors the priority of the Turkish state to fight the “enemy within” and remove the PKK, but it also resonates on the battlefield of ideas as well.¹¹ Since the PKK endeavored to spread Marxist and federalist ideas, the Turkish state, by manipulating Hezbollah, tried to consolidate political Islam and the idea of the core Islamic element that accompanies Turkish identity. After a period of a lull in their relationship, the distrust between the two sides was reactivated with the emergence of ISIS in the area after 2014. For Kurds supporting the PKK, the attacks initiated by Huda-Par (successor of Hezbollah) is Ankara’s “plan-B” in its effort to regain control over Kurdish population in the region. Nevertheless, the arming of Huda-Par and other Islamist currents is portrayed by political Islam activists as an inevitable development due to leftist Kurdish aggressiveness.¹²

Therefore, relations between the Left and Islamists in Turkey have been mostly wavy. These countermarches show the need for shifting alliances amid semi-democratic political systems, an inclination much celebrated throughout the Middle East.



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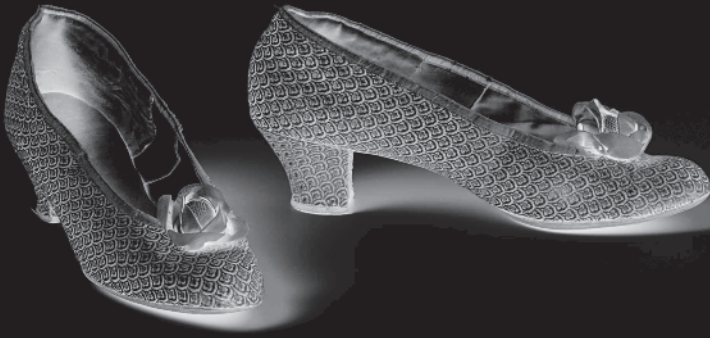
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PAIR OF SHOES

Femicide in the Turkish borders

Eleni-Panagiota Stoupa

Swaying among tradition and modernity, the Turkish state faces pressure to be confronted with the sharp rise of femicide. Gender-based violence shares a long history that has been mostly linked with Turkish religion and traditional values. However, throughout time, cultures and norms are reshaped along with social, economic and political changes. Consequently, the analysis of femicide in the Turkish state goes beyond the concept of “honor killing” and its traditional roots, performing a revolutionary practice that rises inside the Turkish dilemma among traditionality and modernity.



IN SOME PARTS OF TURKEY, when someone passes away, it is a traditional rite to leave their shoes outside the house up on a wall, as a way of mourning and grieving. Crossing Kabataş' neighborhood in the Beyoğlu district in Istanbul, 440 pair of shoes are hung up on the most prominent buildings of the capital. Each pair represents a woman murdered by her partner in 2018, performing a bold statement against domestic violence and femicide, by artist Vahit Tuna.¹

Turkey has a long and painful history of gender-based violence that goes back to the depths of the Ottoman Empire. However, domestic violence was introduced to the Turkish political agenda during the 1980s along with the growth of the feminist movement, a milestone exclaiming that the private sphere is also political.² Throughout the decades, amid Turkey's attempt to integrate the European community around 1990, human rights activists and scholars were attracted by the phenomenon of "honor killings" or "femicide". The former being the killing of a person -who is a woman- in defense of a male's or family's honor. The same killings have been interpreted through the concept of femicide, namely the murder of women because they are women.

The turning point of femicide in Turkey was 2010. The murder of Ayşe Pasalı by her former husband attracted the media's interest and became the benchmark of honor killings. In this framework, femicide started gaining ground in the governmental agenda, fostering the Turkish state to develop new regulations against domestic violence. Swaying among tradition and modernity, the Turkish state faced the pressure to be confronted with the sharp rise of femicide. During 2011, Turkey became the first country to sign and notarize the Council of Europe convention on thwarting domestic violence, and, in 2012, the Turkish state established a law to prevent violence against women.³ Nevertheless, the outcomes were inverse.

From 2011 until today, there has been a progressive increase in women's killings counting hundreds of victims despite the fact that in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) reformed political discourse and practices in its attempt to join the European Union. In the post-2011 period, the government underpinned initiatives and declarations that focused on the discipline of female bodies and control of fertility.⁴ In this vein, the utilization of female bodies, strengthens the conservative gender regime, encouraging gender-based violence.

The colossal number of women's killings has been mainly analyzed in academic reports and studies through the prism of culture and religion, interpreted as "honor killings", while laying at the roundabout of various social and political dynamics. In most of these analyses, the traditional honor-based value system encourages femicide to restore the family's honor. Nonetheless, norms and cultures are transformed along with social, economic and political changes. Consequently, the analysis of femicide should transfer beyond the concept of "honor killing" and its traditional roots. Following Ihsan Cetin, the examination of women's killings should be analyzed within the discord that has developed between the traditional status of men and the modernized status that women assert in the last decades.⁵ The dilemma between the patriarchal system and modernity has created an ambiguity that is expressed through murder, and "honor killings" are superseded by "revolt killings".⁶



Tradition, violence and modernity

In the contemporary international social and political field, Turkey is often collimated as the link that bridges traditional Middle East and modern Europe. Through this process of modernization, human identities are reshaped. In the last decade, women's roles have changed, going against tribal patriarchal social structures and the traditional value system, while men's roles remain stable.

In the Turkish value system, "honor" represents the most important sacred value, whose loss is equal with the loss of human life.⁷ One of the principal beliefs that underlies and conserves this value system is the idea that the honor of a family is embodied in women and their sexual property. Therefore, in an "improper" decision, such as the petition of divorce, rejection, or separation, under the shades of shame, death becomes a vehicle capable of restoring the honor of the defeated. Cultural and social imaginaries are inextricably linked with violence, which is able to perform order and disorder.⁸ Upon that ground, femicide is presented as a measure that restores order and normality. The masculine identity and men's roles incorporate traditional codes, which are perceived as threatened by changes in women's roles. As a consequence, the traditional codes develop a defiance in order to maintain their status quo. The murder of a woman who demands divorce or makes decisions about her own life becomes the utmost form of defiance. Femicide in Turkey has been transformed into a structural violence mechanism that enhances the state's masculinity, sharing a revolutionary character between traditional narratives and superstitions of the past along with the struggles for modernity. Therefore, the strong patriarchal social structure of Turkish society inside the modern Turkish state reproduces and increases femicide not only as "honor killings", but also as "revolt killings" that are able to restore honor, order and masculinity.

Regardless of the laws, measures, juristic regulations and repercussions that Turkey has undertaken the last years, femicide underlines a daily threat that eludes to a deeper, structurally, cultural problem. The strict laws do not prevent gender-based violence, while the authorities turn a blind eye on. The concept of violence carries on a virtuality that has the potential to make and unmake the world, connecting daily life with the spectacular. Femicide has become a blight in Turkish society, in the name of which the apoplexy of women's groups accuses the authorities of failing to implement their commitments under the Convention. Measuring up against these accusations and trying to modernize its legal context, the current Turkish government announced last month the preparation of a 75-article plan to curb violence against women. The new program has been named "Coordination Plan to Eliminate Violence

against Women", based on which the Turkish Government has taken measures to protect women and prevent violence against them.⁹

However, in the ideological dance between modernity and tradition, Turkey still sacrifices women. According to the observatory platform based in Istanbul "We will stop femicide", since 2010, more than 2,600 women have been murdered in Turkey, while more than 400 women have been murdered so far in 2019.¹⁰ And the waltz goes on.



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MUSEUMS

and the politics of culture in the Republic of Turkey

Amalia Chappa

Since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, a diverse and polyvalent network of cultural institutions has developed in the country as a response to complex negotiations of identity and politics. Museums and cultural institutions have been utilized, throughout the course of the Republic, by changing cultural policies. Two recent museum examples are showcasing the extent to which collective memory can be charged with political agendas.

MUSEUM DISPLAYS IN THE LATE OTTOMAN ERA (1839-1922) were collections of antiquated weapons and military spolia - for example the Basilica of Hagia Irene in the first courtyard of the imperial palace - or accumulations of archaeology objects found in excavations, such as the Antalya Museum, the Bursa Archaeological Museum, the Bursa Museum of Turkish-Islamic Monuments, the Konya Archaeological Museum and the Sinop Museum. These displays lacked scientific context and did not develop from an interest in the works per se: defined by conquest and conflict with the heritage of Europe, they emerged as a response to the European claims of the peripheral territories of the dismantling empire.¹

With the Tanzimat reforms, which started in 1839, and the efforts to bring the Ottoman Empire closer to Western models and establish stronger political, economic and cultural relations with the increasingly powerful nations of Europe, museum and collecting policies changed. The state introduced specific legislation to control the undertakings of foreign archaeologists in the country and museums started to be seen as spaces that could display a new Ottoman identity tied to European heritage. Regardless of their origin, antiquities from across the Empire were assembled and transported to the central and most important institution of the Empire, the Imperial Museum in Istanbul, and as museology practices improved, the collections were reorganized with the application of scientific methods.²

When Atatürk founded the republic in 1923, the country was put on a fast track of secular reforms. In that framework, museums underwent a profound reformation as a new national identity had to be created that would encompass the populations of diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds of the country. In this context, they were tasked with achieving an equal status to European countries to re-negotiate the nation's heritage: to embrace its Ottoman legacy but also disassociate it from the force that destroyed it.³ Gradually, the archaeological museums of Istanbul and Ankara re-contextualized their artifacts, modified the arrangement of different collections and employed display techniques towards modernization and competition with the European institutions. As part of this revamping, a different approach was adopted towards the ancient past but also the contemporary heterogeneity of Turkish identity, with diverse findings from different territories across the previous Empire -Hittite, Roman, Greek, Seljuk, and Byzantine- being included in the collections. An example is the Ethnographic Museum (1922), located in the new capital of Ankara, which gathered together tools, furnishings and everyday items related to village life and agricultural production in the Turkish country. These were collected from all regions of the country and were presented alongside objects of religious utility as sources for a national culture that emerged from the people.⁴ Likewise, rather than serving as a palimpsest of religious practices, the Museum of Hagia Sophia (established in 1935) turned instead into a space where Ottoman and Byzantine cultural histories co-exist.

A series of new museums were opened in the 1950s under the leadership of the Democratic Party of Adnan Menderes, which favored a central role for Islam and reintroduced religion into public space. Menderes brought back Arabic as the official language, established secondary schools for the training of imams and a faculty of divinity at the University of Ankara.⁵ As part of this resurgence of cultural Islam, these museums were dedicated to Ottoman-associated themes. For example, the Istanbul Yedikule Museum (1959) was dedicated to fortresses associated with the conquest of Constantinople, the Bursa-Iznik Museum (1960) with the pre-conquest



Ottoman era and the Karatay Porcelain Works Museum (1955) with the Seljuk era. In May 1960, Menderes was ousted by the military. Under an era of technocratic leadership (1961-1983) which aimed at strengthening the policies of the early republic, many museums were established to be dedicated to Atatürk, the War for Liberation and the foundation of the republic, such as the Ankara Museum of the War for Liberation which opened in 1961.

Following the 1980 military coup, an era of privatization was initiated for cultural institutions. The economic liberalization promoted by the civil government increased opportunities for large corporate families and banks to invest in museums devoted to art, such as the Sadberk Hanım Museum, the first private museum that opened in 1980. Other private museums that opened in the 1980s and 1990s include the Yapı Kredi Bank Vedat Nedim Tor Museum (1992), the Akbank Arts Centre (1993), the Garanti Platform Centre for Contemporary Art (2000), and the Ottoman Bank Museum (2002). With the rise of moderate-Islamic led governments in the mid-1990s, several of this era's private institutions were used as spaces for ideological expression of a national, republican opposition to the populism associated with Islamism. With varying degrees of state and municipal intervention, these initiatives favored an elite, urban culture.⁶

Since the Justice and Development party (AKP) became a dominant force in the country in 2002, the government has sought to leave its mark in the country by charging memory with political agendas. The AKP originally presented itself as a rebellious movement for the more traditional, religious Turks who felt oppressed by the secularism of Kemalists and the West. In this context, the government called for a cultural policy that aimed at reinventing tradition by bringing together all the disparate elements of the Ottoman heritage while at the same time promoting a form of modernity that breaks with the Western model; for example, the foundation of an independent arts council by the Ministry for Culture and Tourism in 2013 without any advance indication and with reference to the British cultural policy model. The failed coup attempt of 2016 came to fit this narrative quite perfectly: the revival of traditions came under attack by the military and the West. Rather than downplaying the events of July 2016, the government was quick to develop a response propaganda mechanism that would commemorate the attempted coup and brand it as a triumph of democracy. And it did so by charging memory with spectacular and emotive representations.⁷



Just a year after the failed coup attempt, the 15 July Democracy state museum was opened on Stations Square of Gaziantep, outside Ankara. The museum features permanent and temporary exhibits narrating the timeline of the events of 15th July with the use of sources coming from broadcast and security-camera data as well as photographs of the “warriors” and the local “martyrs” of Gaziantep and a memorial wall bearing the names of the 248 “martyrs” of the attempted coup. The displays present the coup attempt

as an attack against democracy defeated by faith and a contravention of human rights.⁸ The scale of grandeur is even greater at another newly opened museum, the July 15 Memorial Museum of Istanbul, inaugurated on 15 July 2019 by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on the former Bogazici (Bosphorus) Bridge - which was renamed as “the July 15 Martyrs’ Bridge” just ten days after the attempted coup. Surrounded by 15,000 square-meters of green field, it puts on display various memorabilia, items belonging to “coup plotters, veterans and martyrs”, interactive visitor touch-screens to browse through images and biographies of the “martyrs”, a history of colonialism and coup d’etat in different parts of the world as well as 3D videos of the events shown in the “Hall of Consciousness of Martyrdom” of the museum.⁹

Throughout the history of the Republic of Turkey, the shifts in cultural policies by different leaderships have been multifold. Museum collections and institutions were appropriated as tools to charge the past, history and heritage with specific messages and meanings that served different state ideologies. In opposition to or following European cultural norms, emphasizing or downplaying its Ottoman past, in the interest of or at odds with secularism, museums in Turkey emerged as responses to changing political needs and today comprise a wide variety of institutions that at time of their establishment reinforced different national narratives.

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