Ideology, context and interest: the Turkish military

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Since the founding of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) has enjoyed a pervasive sense of its own prerogative to watch over the regime it created and to transcend an exclusive focus on external defence. If the TAF’s confidence and ability to do so was not palpable during the years of single-party rule (1923–46), Turkey’s multi-party political system has since 1946 been characterised by the military’s capacity to control the fundamentals of the political agenda in its self-ordained role as guardian of the Republic. By internalising this role as a central ‘mission of belief’, the military has been able to interpret internal ‘political’ conflicts in the language of internal security threats, and reduce ‘national security’ to a military-dominated concept. On four occasions (1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997), the military intervened in and reshaped Turkish politics, although it always returned control to civilians after a short time. The fourth intervention, on 28 February 1997, marked a qualitative change, when the military-dominated National Security Council (Milli Güvenlik Kurulu, NSC) brought down a constitutionally elected coalition government headed by the Islamist Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, WP), thus altering the relationship between the military, the state and society. The process of change that the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma

1 In the ‘guardian state’ model, the military regards itself as the Platonic custodian of a vaguely defined national interest. A. R. Luckham in his seminal article makes a distinction between four sub-types of military guardianship. The first is ‘Direct Guardianship’, where the military views itself as the unique custodian of national values; the second is ‘Alternating Guardianship’, where the dynamics are the same but the military alternates in and out of power; and third is ‘Catalytic Guardianship’, whereby the military in question may not wish to rule itself but installs governments favourable to itself. The last category is ‘Covert Guardianship’: the military may submerge and yet retain the capacity for direct action by supporting in the long term a political order that supports national security. The Turkish military’s political role can be said to have shifted between each of these sub-types over time. See A. R. Luckham, ‘A Comparative Typology of Civil–Military Relations’, Government and Opposition 6, 1 (1971).
Partisi, JDP)\(^2\) government has set in motion since its election victory in November 2002 in terms of curtailing the TAF’s political prerogatives and tutelage must also be understood within the context of a major shift in the regional and international power balance after the Iraq war and the democratic reform requirements of the European Union (EU).

A chief feature of Turkey’s parliamentary democracy since 1950 has been the formidable presence of the military in public affairs. Another fundamental premise of the regime has been the long-standing Kemalist commitment to identifying Turkey as ‘European’. The issue of the military’s proper role has created severe difficulties during Ankara’s long wait at the doorstep of the EU, which has prescribed a package of political preconditions that must be fulfilled if Turkey is to successfully gain entry into the European fold. While the military’s self-defined political role requires that it remains involved in social and political conflicts with little or no accountability, the EU’s entry criteria make it clear that the military must be subjected to the democratic control of civilian authorities. The lack of effective civilian control over the armed forces in Turkey has often contradicted democratic norms of civil–military relations. The EU accession process has provided an opening for a wider debate on the link between democracy and national security. It has also raised questions about the proper relations between military and civilian authorities in a democracy in an era of declining military budgets and changing threats. As a result, there is a rising consensus that without effective parliamentary oversight of the armed forces and without bringing Turkish democracy’s norms in line with EU requirements, the military’s attitude of permanent vigilance towards internal security can make that democracy insecure, conditional and crisis-prone.

However, the challenges to fostering a democratic role change in the TAF are formidable: while the post-communist states have constructed democratic civil–military institutional frameworks from scratch,\(^3\) similar reforms

\(^2\) The main predecessor of the JDP was the WP, which was founded in 1983 and closed down by the constitutional court in January 1998 on the grounds that it had become a focal point of anti-secular activities. With its closure, a five-year ban on the political activities of its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, and on five other top policy makers was imposed. It was succeeded by the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi), founded in 1997, which, like its predecessor, was closed down, on 22 June 2001, for its anti-secular activities and for violating the constitutional stipulation that a permanently dissolved party (the WP) cannot be reconstituted. In August 2001 the movement split into a traditionalist wing, the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, FP), founded in July 2001 and a reformist wing, the JDP.

\(^3\) Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Slovenia are typical examples of this. According to Anton Bebler, ‘perhaps the most striking feature of civil–military relations in Slovenia today is their lack of salience as a political issue, accompanied by widespread public indifference.'
in Turkey must take place against a backdrop of a deeply rooted tradition of civil–military imbalance. According to that tradition, the military perceives itself as a legitimate actor in political decision making without any meaningful checks and balances, and feels entitled to publicly promote different ideas about democracy and national security than those held by elected representatives.

The ultimate justification for the political predominance of the military rests on its guardianship of Kemalism, the state’s official ideology, of which fundamental components are secularism and territorial unity. TAF’s legitimisation of its dominant role lies in its identification of its ‘interests’ with those of the nation; it sees its mission as a continuing transformation of the country’s values in the direction of Western modernity. Secularism is the pillar, the principle and the proof of this role. It requires the disestablishment of Islam as the state religion and the establishment of a new modality of state control over it; the construction of a homogenous national identity linked with the logic of Westernisation and modernisation; and the creation of a strong state.

On the other hand, the tutelary powers and institutional prerogatives of the TAF also depend on its self-conscious attempts to steer civilian policies in a direction that will not challenge the military’s special position in politics and society. To do so the army resorts to two methods: first, it either threatens to stage another coup or issues public statements, often derogatory, regarding government policies; and second, it constructs the concept of national security in such a way as to legitimise the political role of the military as guardians. Given the external pressures on Turkey to improve its human rights and democracy record in order to join the EU, the crude device of a coup has become increasingly implausible. In addition, the military’s legally and culturally unchallenged position as the whistleblower of politics has made any ‘coup’ redundant. The TAF therefore tends to exert political influence by highlighting threats to national security.

Like its counterparts elsewhere, the Turkish military maintains the Republic’s security, officially defined as ‘the protection and maintenance of the state’s constitutional order, national presence, integrity, all political, social, cultural and economic interests on an international level, and contractual law against any kind of internal and foreign threat’. What is striking about this definition

In practice, civil–military relations in Slovenia have become relations between a civilian sector whose personnel were themselves civilians until only recently: see Anton Bebler, ‘Civil-Military Relations and Democratic Control of Armed Forces in Slovenia, 1990–2000’, paper presented at The Seventh Biennial Conference of ERGOMAS, Prague, 6–10 December 2000, p. 30.

is the broad and complex character of security. It includes not only the traditional national defence framework against external threats, but also non-military objectives pertaining to economic, social, cultural and political goals, fusing purely military missions with political ones. If, as Mary Kaldor argues, 'the nature of security policy contributes to the design of institutions and the implicit contract with the society', the definition of national security is crucial in reproducing the TAF’s role as the guardian of the regime and in undermining any civilian input in security policy. When the military monopolises threat perception and security policy formulation, it can then use these threats as justification for relying solely upon military power to guarantee security, just as it can exaggerate the extent of threats to serve its corporate interests. In Turkey, many aspects of national security have since the 1971 intervention been incorporated into laws regulating public order, limiting freedom of expression and association, inhibiting public debate and stifling the opposition and the media.

The record of Republican history shows an interplay between two dynamics of military motivation: while the Turkish military manifests a genuine ideological commitment to upholding the secular framework of politics, it also pursues a rather formidable contest of power with constitutionally elected civilian leaders. Blending the two perspectives enables us to see beyond the straitjacket of cultural–historical legacy that much of the literature on the Turkish military uses to explain the continuity in its mission. More importantly, this merged pattern of motivations can explain why the military’s exercise of power has changed over time. The institutional, attitudinal and ideological behaviour of the Turkish army has varied according to changes in political conditions, which have called for recalibrations of the military’s own interests, societal credibility, hierarchical discipline and political capacity. By shifting the focus to a myriad of factors affecting the military’s proactive and/or habitual policies, this analysis also takes into account the ability of both military and civilian actors to learn from history.

The common thread in this matrix is that both interpretations predict a modern rationale for ‘anti-politics’ in the Turkish military’s self-appointed

White Papers are published by the Ministry of Defence (MOD), but not at regular intervals. The pages of reference to the latter are from its web format in Turkish (the English version not being available on the web).


For instance, on 29 April 1977, the general staff announced a radical change to the country’s National Military Defence Concept (NMDC) without consulting the civilian government. It shifted the priority of the security threat from external to the internal threats of Islamic fundamentalism and Kurdish separatism, in that order.
The Turkish military role as the nation's guardian. This has led military leaders to view diversity and socio-political pluralism as obstacles to the emergence and preservation of a strong, modern state.

Anti-political reasoning framing the historical role of the Turkish military

Ever since the inception of the Republic, the military has exhibited a tendency to be politicised while claiming to be above or against politics. The formal separation of the military from politics in the early Republic was not intended to establish civilian supremacy in a way commensurate with its Western European and American counterparts; its only aim was to inhibit the military's potential as a rival source of power to the ruling group. Early Republican tradition set by Atatürk, by separating the army from ordinary political affairs, contributed to the army's perception of itself as 'above' political conflict, another anti-political vision, which assigns a sense of self-importance to the institution without requiring it to understand the political world it is situated in.

The anti-political pattern of thought prioritises 'order and progress, the latter being contingent upon the former'; an outright rejection of politics, which is perceived as being the source of 'underdevelopment, corruption, and evil'; and an instrumental recourse to elections 'in order to give a veneer of democratic legitimacy to authoritarian direction of the state and society'.

7 The Ministry of Religious Affairs was abolished and reduced to a government department in 1924, on the grounds that 'for religion and the military to be interested in politics leads to various negative results': M. Kemal Atatürk quoted in Mahmut Goloğlu, Devrimler ve tepkileri 1924-1930 (Ankara: Başvur Matbaası, 1972), p. 9.
9 The doctrine of an apolitical army in the early Republic, however, ensured, via the military backgrounds of the leading politicians, that military was incapable of posing a threat to the existing ruling class but remained available for political support when and if needed. See Metin Heper and Frank Tachau, 'The State, Politics and the Military in Turkey', Comparative Politics 16, 1 (1983), p. 20.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
This understanding of democracy is marked by a zero-sum perception of conflict and a view of opposition and criticism as threats to the regime. The anti-political perspective reflects an understanding of democracy as a matter of political responsibility and rationality, rather than of responsiveness to society.\textsuperscript{13} Professor Heper succinctly points out that in the eyes of the military, the ‘foes’ of this instrumental rationality are elected politicians, ‘who were often suspected of indifference toward the long-term interests of the nation’,\textsuperscript{14} and ‘the masses who had not yet attained a higher level of rationality’.\textsuperscript{15}

However, the Turkish military’s role as ‘guardian of Turkey’s ideals’ does not lead it to take a praetorian\textsuperscript{16} role in politics, as its notion of guardianship incorporates a utopian standard of democracy. The military institution controls the actions of politicians in accordance with its own maxims in order to make sure that Kemalist ideals are fulfilled. Furthermore, the TAF has adopted a refined concept of autonomy, refraining from destroying civilian–military boundaries and wielding executive power directly, whereas praetorian armies ruin the bases of democracy and replace civilian authorities. The Turkish officer corps’ conception of their role in politics has always been imbued with the notion that culture and politics should be subordinated to Kemalism as the highest morality of the nation. Meeting any threat to the ‘highest’ morality of the land becomes an imperative of national security. This understanding is fully internalised within the military institution as a normative ‘role belief’.

The anti-political reasoning of the TAF detracts from any consideration of the strictly ‘political’ determinants that mediate between societal, economic and military powers. It presupposes an excessive degree of consistency and coherence in the Kemalist ideology and dispenses with the effects of ‘political’ and ‘social’ changes that can alter the historical and cultural relationship between the civilian forces and the military. It also reduces Turkey’s political life to a dichotomy between the modernising and secular state elite, spearheaded by the military bureaucracy and its civilian allies, and the popularly elected and ‘traditionally oriented’ political class. As a result, this world view masks the profound contradictions and cleavages within the political–

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social landscape, pushing actors into simplistic modern–traditional, secular–anti-secular dichotomies.

If we accept that 'the military policy is always conditioned by political factors outside the civil–military relations', which specify the proper role of the military and the relationship of civilian and military leaders as seen by the rest of the actors in politics, new coalitions or new 'thresholds of antagonism' between the two sides do necessitate a revision of the cardinal principles of Kemalism and the role of the military. As I will show below with regard to the analysis of the interaction between the military and the current government, it may well be that Turkey's capacity to reset the civil–military balance depends on whether or not the government is politically secure, if not from the threat of a military intervention, then from the threat that the military leaders will publicly contest, criticise or veto their policies. The safer from 'military threat' the government feels, 'the greater is [its] potential margin to attempt reforms even at the cost of antagonizing the armed forces'.

Crises and the rationale of coups

The ultimate form of anti-politics is military intervention to suspend politics and reshape the political situation or system. The moral rationale for Turkey's coups was the salvation of the Republic, a rationale that in turn hinged on the existence of a 'crisis' or 'maxi-' and 'mini-breakdowns' in a Linzian sense. Restructuring political life in the aftermath of each such crisis involved both dynamics of Turkish military involvement in politics analysed above: while the TAF created continuity in its role as the sole guardian of the national interest, it simultaneously subsumed the Kemalist ideals to its own agenda and strategy, manifesting a proactive role in reproducing its power. Each intervention has created a conservative straitjacket for socio-political life, setting the institutional and moral parameters of politics for the decades to come. The fact that the 1960, 1971 and 1980 coups were also pre-emptive measures, designed to deal with the division between radicals and moderates within the

18 Ibid.
19 Juan J. Linz, *The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes: Crisis, Breakdown and Reequilibration* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 28–38. In Linz's schema, the process of breakdown is related to the key leaders manifesting a 'disloyalty' and 'semiloyalty' to the system. The former embodies a willingness to use force, fraud, asking for the military's support and other illegal means to obtain and keep power, while the latter involves forming governments and alliances with disloyal groups or to encourage, tolerate or cover up their anti-democratic actions.
TAF itself illustrates that the military also intervened to retain its own position and prerogatives.  

In each intervention the TAF relied on and assembled different civilian coalitions. The TAF has justified its interventions by claiming that as the overseer of the modern and secular tenets of the regime, it has smoothed the development of democracy and progress by removing obstacles and crises: authoritarian one-party government in 1960; political disorder and anarchy in 1971 and 1980; and reactionary Islam in 1997.

The 1960 coup was brought about by a number of factors: the government of the day, the Democrat Party (DP), represented the rising frustrations and discontent of the urban intelligentsia, emerging industrialists, professionals and countryside, in the post-war era of more openness, against the repressive single-party regime of 1923–50. It also favoured less étatisme and bureaucratism, and a relaxed secularism. This created unease among the old elite. As a party born in the single-party era, the DP shared with the ruling elite a belief in social engineering, a dislike and fear of any dissidence/opposition and the same preference for a system devoid of effective political checks and balances. At the same time the DP leaders also felt a deep sense of distrust towards the civilian and military bureaucracy. The symbiosis between the Republican People’s Party (RPP), the country’s only party during the Republican era, and the military, was a major source of concern to the DP. Partisan use of the army by the DP government to repress the RPP was met by the same political strategy on the part of the RPP. A vicious circle of politicisation of the military together with a series of authoritarian policies by the DP triggered the seizure of power by the TAF.

Although characterised by some as a ‘modernising/reform coup’ because the overall framework was to support ‘a modernizing and democratizing society under the rule of civilian supremacy’, the 1960 coup failed to set a new status quo where the army would return to its normal functions. Delegitimising electoral democracy and politicising the military while expanding democratic rights and freedoms created irreconcilable trends. It is not correct to assume therefore that the 1960 coup left a clear and straightforward legacy regarding any aspect of politics in Turkey, let alone its subscription to the Kemalist tradition, although the coup-makers established their connections with Kemalist principles by promising to oversee a “‘legal revolution’” that would return

the state to the principles of Atatürk'. To the extent that Kemalist reforms of the single-party Republic had been a radical process, changing the face of the country, it also laid the groundwork for the DP to rise as the party of the expectant periphery.

The coup was, then, in this sense backward looking, an attempt to recreate the elitist structure on which the Kemalist revolution had been based. Such a system was fundamentally incompatible with the democratic forms which gave representation to all elements of the population. Thus the Kemalist elite – of which the military played such an important part – could not be reestablished by constitutional fiat unless the franchise were restricted to the point of denying democracy.

In line with the ambiguous nature of 1960 coup’s tradition, many adopted the ‘easy’ perspective that the emergence of left- and right-wing student violence by the 1960s resulted from the expansion of individual liberties and excessive pluralism introduced by the 1961 constitution which destabilised the regime and led to the 1971 intervention. It is more apt to say, however, that the creation of new cleavages and actors – such as the Turkish Labour Party – as a product of socio-economic modernisation of the country in the 1960s, combined with the Cold War dynamic towards ideological contestation, transformed Turkey’s politics. Republican statists became social democrats, even flirting with the extreme left, while Turkey’s centre-right turned strongly anti-communist, coalescing with extreme nationalist and conservative forces. The centre-right government failed to move against the unrest caused by street violence, which turned into terrorism. On 12 March 1971 the high command of the TAF sent a memorandum to the president of the Republic, threatening to seize power if the parliament did not act to implement socio-economic reforms to end anarchy. The government was forced to resign and a civilian-cum-military government took over until the next elections in 1973.

The 1980 coup and the ensuing military regime (1980–3) led by General Kenan Evren represent the resurrection of the ‘guardian’ mission of the military to save ‘the state and its people from social division, economic breakdown, and the anarchy and violence for which the parties and politicians were responsible’. Indeed, nation-wide polarisation of the left and right and the unprecedented violence between them; intercommunal strife; the pull of the RPP

24 Feroz Ahmad, Turkey: The Quest for Identity (Oxford: Oneworld, 2003), p. 149.
towards the extreme left and the Justice Party (JP) to the militant right-wing flank; and the breakdown of law, order, parliament and the government prior to the intervention played into the hands of the high command and enhanced its legitimacy. The only counter-assertion comes from the then prime minister, Süleyman Demirel, who claims that the military deliberately refrained from using its martial law powers to quell the anarchy so as to discredit the government and to prepare the ground for the coup. However, the civil-war situation in the country prompted the populace at large to give their full support to military action without worrying about its anti-democratic nature. The military closed down political parties, parliament, professional associations and trade unions, arresting their leaders, declaring a state of emergency throughout the country and reversing the democratic rights and freedoms granted by the 1961 constitution.

The breakdown of Turkey’s political, social and economic life before the 1980 coup 'was likened to the war of 1919–1923 by the coup-leaders, when internal and external enemies combined in an attempt to destroy the Turkish state'. The coup-makers regarded the political changes they intended to make as the means by which Turks could return to Kemalist principles – above all populism, nationalism and secularism, in order to end 'fratricidal and separatist' strife. According to Kenal Evren, the chief of staff and leader of the coup, 'the Kemalist pattern of thought and the proper pride in being a Turk lie at the heart of the 'Turkish Republic'. The military authorities systematically classified the perpetrators of terror and anarchy before the coup in terms of 'degenerate' Kemalism and anti-Kemalism.

The 1997 intervention: why different?

The TAF’s assertion of its political role through the NSC intensified after the 1995 general election: leading military officials began making pointed public references to the secular nature of the state and brokered a coalition government between the two centre-right parties to block the Islamist WP from power. When the WP finally came to power at the head of a coalition government with Çiller's centre-right True Path Party (TPP) in June 1996 (called Refahyol), the army watched with alarm as the WP promoted religious observance in public and developed closer ties with Islamic countries. The military sent a column of tanks through the Ankara suburb of Sincan after the local

26 Pevsner, Turkey’s political crisis, p. 10.
27 Ibid., p. 11.
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WP mayor and the Iranian ambassador to Ankara made speeches in support of the şeriat. Finally, the NSC meeting on 28 February 1997 issued the coalition government with a list of demands designed to eliminate the 'creeping Islamisation' of Turkey and to fortify the secular system. The pressure applied by the NSC, in tandem with the civilian component of the secular establishment, led to the resignation of the government, the closure of the party by the constitutional court and the banning of its key leaders from active politics.

On 29 April 1997, the general staff announced a radical change to the country’s National Military Defence Concept (NMDC): it shifted the priority of security from external threats to the internal issues of Islamic activism and Kurdish separatism. The TPP’s previously harmonious relationship with the military also changed radically after the Refahyol experience. Çiller made a complete U-turn, from a position of regarding the armed forces as the best guarantor of democracy to challenging the military’s role in guarding secularism on the basis of popular sovereignty and ‘national will’. At some point, she even built up ‘her own’ civilian security forces within the Ministry of Interior.

It is certainly true that ‘no major element of Turkish politics at present can be understood without reference to the February 28 process’. Few analysts would dispute that the choices made and strategies followed since 28 February 1997 have proved fateful for Turkish political and economic life, leadership style, political alignments, civil society and bureaucracy. The military assumed an enlarged and heightened political role. Another difference of the 1997 intervention was the fundamental shift towards the military bureaucracy’s involvement in everyday politics, resulting from its deep distrust of civilian authority and the role of Islam in political life. Since then, it has become increasingly commonplace for senior commanders to make oral statements or issue written declarations either individually or jointly to reiterate their position on ‘fundamentalism’.

The ousting the Refahyol government signalled the start of the military’s plan to refashion Turkey’s political landscape along Kemalist lines without

28 In an interview with Mehmet Barlas on TGRT TV Channel on 22 February 1997, she openly stated: ‘Our army can do the civilianisation and democratisation very well.’ Excerpts from this interview were published the next day in the Istanbul daily Türkiye.
actually having to take over power directly. The term the ‘28th of February Process’ was coined to indicate the re-establishment of the basic assumptions of the Kemalist model without a classical coup and with the help of the civil society. Moreover, the central discourse of the establishment since the late 1990s with regard to pro-Islamic platforms represents a total reversal from the Republican pattern of state–Islam relationship, which had previously allowed for negotiation, compromise and reconciliation between Turkey’s political Islamists and the establishment.31 This earlier mode proves the non-zero-sum game character of the power struggle between the secular state elite and Islamists of various shades. Although the Kemalist leadership’s construction of a secular nation-state ‘eliminate[d] Islam from their definition of the concept of nation; in practice, . . . they continued to give a certain consideration to religion’.32

Since 1997, the high command has been convinced that Islamic reactionism is lying in wait, ready to subvert the secular foundations of the Republic. The secular establishment’s natural reflex is therefore a permanent state of alert. Retired General Huseyin Kıvırkıoğlu, former chief of the general staff, expresses this sentiment: ‘Radical Islam may appear gone one day to reemerge the next day . . . it is not possible to say that the danger has vanished.’33 The high command believes that by sticking to a ‘purist interpretation of the Kemalist bases of the republic’,34 the secular establishment can continue restructuring politics on a permanent basis. That is why Kıvırkıoğlu said in a press briefing on 3 September 1999 that ‘the 28th of February is a process. It began in 1923 and from [that] date until the present it has kept up the momentum against the threat of irtica [reactionary Islam] . . . If necessary, the 28th of February will continue for ten years. If necessary, one hundred years. If necessary, for the period of a thousand years.’35 Kıvırkıoğlu reiterated this position in April 2002 when Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, former mayor of Istanbul and present chairman of the Justice and Development Party (JDP) and current prime minister, made strong criticisms of the TAF’s handling of the war in the south-east: ‘We don’t believe that they [the JDP] have changed . . . We did not say that the 28 of

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February will last a thousand years for nothing.'36 Similarly, according to the former admiral Salim Derisoglu, who took command of the navy six months after 28 February and played an important role in the process, the 28th of February represents the 'continuity' of the 'reaction against the incidents that violate the principle of secularism since the advent of the republic'.37

Historically speaking, the coups have had a conservatising effect on both the military and the civilians. Not only have the highest echelons of the military turned out to be defenders of the status quo, they have become a stifling force compelling political parties and movements to toe a centrist line.38

Turkey's coup tradition shows that from the military's vantage point, 'rational democracy' is the key concept underpinning the 'true essence of Kemalism', the military elite's substantive and procedural understanding of politics: on the surface, provided the elected authorities function according to the rational democracy framework, there is no danger of military intervention. But the history of coups shows that military's definition of rational democracy is such that there are limits to party competition, ideologies to be espoused, political bargaining between partners within coalition governments, political mandates, styles of leaderships and strategies. All too often, the military justifies its involvement in major policy decisions on anti-political grounds: that 'too much politics' is to blame for conflict and bad policy decisions.

On the civilian side, the interventions have precipitated a certain 'style of power holding' on the part of politicians, characterised by short-time horizons, lack of self-confidence, reliance on their political base and an unscrupulous use of politics as a means of generating economic benefit for politicians and their friends. A political class threatened by the role of the military, both formal and informal, cannot give up its patronage resources easily, as it has to calculate the political payoff of patronage activities against the benefits of combating ineffective government, corruption and stasis. It is more than likely that the civilian political class will not terminate their personal profiteering by launching reforms that would reduce the prominence of the military in politics as long as the shadow of the 'guardian' role remains. The foremost concern of such a leadership will be to extract short-term gains, rather than risk a costly long-term strategy of reform. Indeed, the fear and insecurity on the part of the DP government between 1950 and 1960 emanating from the

36 'Kivrkoğlu Erdoğan'a sert', Radikal, 24 April 2002.
military and the old guard led by İsmet İnönü, the leader of the opposition RPP, played a large part in its determination to cling to power, which hastened the 1960 intervention.39

The Turkish right and the maintenance of the anti-political guardianship role

Traditional hostility between the successors of the DP and the military, both in emotive terms and also in a genuine struggle for power, should not obscure a major feature of the historical maintenance of the TAF’s guardian role: during much of the multi-party era, the military actions of the bureaucracy have not been prompted by fear of a challenge to its guiding role from the political left. Instead, it has acted on the well-founded belief that the principal threat to its prerogatives and privileged position is a centre-right government with strong enough popular support to enable it to challenge the TAF’s role and build on a power base that would shift the balance in favour of civilian authority.40

However, centre-right, centre-left and ultra-right political ideologies and movements in the Republic have frequently ratified the military’s decisions and, to varying degrees, supported the military elite’s definition of the ‘enemy’ and the strategies to fight against it: ‘communism’ during the Cold War; ‘reactionary Islam’ and ‘Kurdish’ separatism in the post-Cold War times. In theory, the only time centre-right forces could have presented a real threat to the ‘rules of the game’ was in the post-1980 period, when the modernism of the new right articulated a religious dimension to Turkish identity. Some tensions arose between the two sides during the first Gulf War, but on the whole, the military welcomed and supported the new Turkish-Islamic synthesis because it believed that this ideology strengthened national unity and social solidarity, eased the dislocations caused by the full liberalisation of Turkish capitalism and defused potential opposition by the left.41 The relationship between the neo-conservative civilian elite and the military rested on an open-ended set of arrangements whereby civilians managed politics by technical solutions, worked within the post-1980 institutional framework and implicitly agreed not to question the role of the military.

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After the military intervention in 1960 the JP, the successor to the DP, became the dominant party of the centre-right. In the 1960s the JP challenged the military by emphasising political freedoms, demanding an amnesty for the imprisoned and politically banned politicians of the DP, and by continuously stressing the 'national will' over the military's will in order to develop a power base from the ruined image of the DP. However, the military benefited from the fact that neither the DP nor the JP was unambiguously committed to political and economic liberalism. As parties of the rural periphery, their existence depended on the most significant cleavage within the existing power balance, that between the central bureaucratic elite and the rural periphery. The appeal of both parties 'was not ideological but . . . rooted in the social structure of Turkey'.42 Political and economic liberalism had only limited relevance for this core constituency of small peasants and rising urban commercial groups. They were organically linked to the state by statist subsidies and protections. More significantly, the tension between the Western/European and other/Islamic facets of Turkish national identity had not yet reached the stage of an open contestation about who was a genuine 'Turk'. Certainly, the 1960s and 1970s show that 'Europeanisation' and secularism were not limited aspirations during the Cold War, although the anti-communist ideology of the state further reinforced the conservatism of the periphery. Until the 1980s, the rising Turkish bourgeoisie wanted freedom from the straitjacket of state bureaucracy, not necessarily a liberal state per se. In sum, the DP and JP voiced popular resentment against the state in a basically pro-state discourse.43 As a result, containment and cooptation of peripheral elements through Turkey's centre-right forces within a Westernist/secularist frame reinforced the military's traditional role and prerogatives and the integrative power of the state.

The military has written increasingly authoritarian constitutions after each intervention to alter the formulation of public policy and the relationship between state and society in favour of a political system comprising its own values.44 The liberal character of post-1960 restructuring of political and social life may seem an aberration at first, but it can best be understood if put into perspective: American military aid and the modernisation of the army officer corps fostered a growing interest in social and political affairs, which then surpassed that of the civilian ethos of the DP government.45 The commander

44 Semih Vaner, 'The army', p. 238.
45 Lerner and Robinson, 'Swords and Ploughshares', p. 41.
of the War College, Talat Aydemir, who made two failed coup attempts in 1962 and 1963, explains the politisation of the military in his memoirs: according to him, while the education system in military schools was archaic and repressive until 1949–50, from that date onwards the staff officers were trained in a more liberal American system, which increased their technical professionalism as well as intellectual capacity. In the 1960s the insecurity and uncertainty of the JP, which suffered from factionalism within the party, rising social turmoil, ideological fragmentation in the system, weak authority and its status as the successor party of the DP, also increased the military's bias against the civilians.

The return to competitive politics after the 1980 intervention, on the other hand, was shaped by the intention to avoid the destructive instability of the past, which, the generals believed, was caused by self-interested political actors. The military rulers (1980–3) and the ruling party from 1983 to 1991, the Motherland Party (Anavatan Partisi, MP), altered the social bases of politics, the institutional framework for party competition and undermined the power of the old parties and political class. Globally induced electoral trends also found their way into Turkey with the increasing personalisation of political representation by individual leaders, expressed by the rise in the 'personal vote' or the 'Americanisation of political competition'. This development put a premium on the personal image of the prime minister, reinforcing the already undemocratic malaise of leader-based parties.

It is also important to underscore that as a result of the depth of the state's crisis in 1970, the armed forces had greater autonomy from social forces in 1980 than had been the case in previous interventions. The shift to economic liberalism was predicated on the creation of a socially disciplined and depoliticised society. In other words, the military and its political successors promoted economic liberalism through a conservative-authoritarian political agenda that narrowed the bases of political participation, banned the existing political leaders, parties and venues, strengthened state institutions and expanded the TAF's political privileges constitutionally. This process entailed a new phase of modernisation and entry into the global economy and politics.

The adoption of the neo-liberal agenda caused a convergence in the political debate and led to a sterility of alternative ideas and values. The 1980 intervention was one fundamental source of today's disconnection between state and society. By the end of the 1980s, the coup had created its own loyal clientele: there was now a sizeable and complex middle class that accepted

economic neo-liberalism, opted for an individualistic and hedonistic lifestyle and regarded any form of the social state as pathological. Apart from frowning at overt military intervention, however, the new middle classes were not critical of the political presence and role of the military. This acceptance of the military's role suggests that one reason why civilian governments have consistently acceded to the TAF's definition of the rules of politics is the diminished potential of the public sphere to create alternative ideas, energy and creativity in searching for new ways in which the state–society–citizen nexus can be made responsive to new needs, aspirations and hallmarks of democracy. This complacency, in turn, further contributes to the difficulty of establishing effective civilian actors in politics.

During the 1980s and 1990s, while Turgut Özal, former leader of the MP, emulated the global trend of shifting emphasis from party competition to ‘effective governance’, the right wing was not able to form a coalition capable of inhibiting the formal or informal political influence of the military. While the ideological background of the left was more democracy friendly, the tradition of the JP and its successor, the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi, TPP), was more supportive of a conservative and illiberal state. Therefore, attitudinal and legal shifts in post-1980 Turkey brought to the fore the tensions, limitations, contradictions and fault-lines of the Turkish right, as much as those on the left.

The restrictive provisions of the 1982 constitution, which emphasised 'the consolidation of the democratic authority of the state,' were essentially in tune with the pre-1980 JP line. Until the rise of Tansu Çiller (1993–2002), the successor of Demirel as the leader of the TPP, the JP–TPP tradition adopted a double-discourse policy on civilian–military relations: on the one hand, the leadership basically followed a conciliatory line towards military involvement in politics, but at certain crisis junctures, when civil–military relations were at a low ebb, the leadership made feeble efforts to reassert a discourse of supremacy of the parliament and primacy of the popular will. 47

Demirel, who since 1964 had seen three interventions, remained prepared to make strategic compromises with the military. His whole career was based on an extremely skilful balancing act between the two dimensions of this historical double-discourse. The best example comes from his days in opposition in the 1980s: in calling for greater democratisation, he emphasised anti-militarist ideas, the rule of law and expansion of political participation. This anti-militarist

stance and rhetoric was the most radical any mainstream political party had adopted in Turkey, because it openly questioned the constitutional role of the NSC and expressed concern over the changed power relations between the armed forces and the political class. The party hierarchy demanded the establishment of the principle of civilian control over the military. The MP was portrayed as ‘the emanation of the coup . . . using . . . the political influence of the military for furthering its political fortunes’. 48

In 1990, while he was still in opposition, Demirel demanded a reorganisation of civil–military relations to establish civilian control over the military. 49 But two years later, when he was the prime minister, he permitted a bill placing the chief of general staff under the minister of defence 50 to be defeated by the votes of his party members in the parliamentary committee on defence. 51 The same bill was again defeated eight months later in the same committee by the same deputies. 52

Tansu Çiller approached the military differently, departing from the traditional line of the party with her adoption of a more consistent discourse. 53 Abandoning any pretence of reasserting civilian supremacy, Çiller praised the armed forces, as she was reluctant to risk the military’s reaction and upset the status quo. She also hoped to score a political victory on the Kurdish issue by defeating the uprising by military means. Çiller explained her policy thus: ‘We were accused of governing by leaning on to the military . . . Which politician and political party in any country has come to power by bickering with its own army?’ 54 Indeed, when in August 1993 and 1994 the question of the appointment of the general chief of staff arose, Çiller refrained from undertaking any

49 Süleyman Demirel, ‘12 Eylül vaaderleri tutulmadi’, Milliyet, 28 May 1990. Demirel, in this interview with an Istanbul daily, openly stated: ‘In Turkey, the place of the chief of general staff is, in fact, above the minister of defence. Is Turkey a military republic? . . . The place of the chief of general staff should in fact be below the minister of defence . . . In which country in the world does the chief of general staff see [the] president every week and brief him?’
50 The issue of the chief of general staff being accountable to the minister of defence, rather than the prime minister, is of great significance in Turkey for those advocating the establishment of liberal democracy along the lines suggested by the EU and those who see this type of division of authority as indicative of subordination of the military to the civilian authority along Western lines.
51 Cizre, ‘Ruler to Pariah’, p. 88.
54 Ibid.
The Turkish military initiative that would displease the high command, and endorsed the wishes of the hierarchy on the issue. Doğan Güreş, the chief of staff she chose, and who was later elected as deputy on the TPP ticket in 1995, reiterated the harmony between Çiller and the armed forces: ‘The prime minister acted like a tiger, the armed forces liked it. I worked with ease with all the prime ministers, with Özal, Akbulut, Yılmaz and Demirel. But with Çiller I worked with even more ease.’

As a result, critical policy choices and initiatives on fundamental questions such as the Kurdish issue have been hampered by right-wing governments’ legacy of legitimising the status quo and therefore reinforcing the skewed equilibrium in civil–military relations in the military’s favour.

The military and civilian protagonists of the 1997 intervention saw the roots of reactionary Islam in the ‘irresponsible’ use of Islam for partisan purposes by the political class. They therefore attempted to marginalise the forces of political Islam by disciplining representative institutions, strengthening the centre-right and centre-left and implementing security-minded policies in the public. They were not interested in the promotion of regime capabilities through more effective governance, political legitimacy and expanded democracy. Their logic was guided by the rationale that structural changes could be introduced without any corresponding transformation in political ideas. However, their restructuring of the political system only served to bring out the state-friendly and state-dependent features of centre-left and centre-right parties and to stifle their vision, creativity and appeal. Both left and right became preoccupied with preserving the status quo and failed to generate any new, forward-looking ideas. The establishment’s single-minded concern with securing the country against potential threats originating from Islamism and Kurdish nationalism stifled public debate on key issues, and led the existing political class to subcontract the resolution of crucial problems to the civil–military bureaucracy. In sum, all political persuasions adopted a new rendition of the ‘politics of inertia’, a politics that was characterised by ‘the absence of political synergy or a credible parliamentary alternative, and the officials’ abject disregard for the concerns of those they represent’.

55 Cizre, ‘Ruler to pariah’, p. 92.
57 Ibid., pp. 316-17.
58 Ibid., p. 318.
The roadmap for Turkey's entry to the EU, drawn at the Helsinki European Council's meeting on 10–11 December 1999, has forced the heirs of the 28th February process to dilute their 'all-or-nothing' mentality towards Islam in politics. Pitting the rhetoric of 'contemporary life', which in Turkey is associated with Western secularism, against the opposite imagery of 'Islamic anachronism' was one way for Ankara to endorse Western values. In the post-Helsinki era, there was also a shift of discourse on the part of the military establishment to an 'argumentative rationality' when engaged with its domestic and international critics over accusations of democracy and human rights violations.61 Rather than denying the violations of democratic norms, the argumentative discourse affirmed the democratic deficiency in Turkey's political life, but tried to justify the suspension and limitation of democratic rights and norms on the grounds that as part of the military's campaign against internal enemies, particularly Kurdish insurgents, these measures were 'exceptional' and 'corrective'.

However, since the 11 September attacks, the Turkish general staff has moved towards a more conservative-nationalist position with regard to Ankara's fulfilment of the EU's Copenhagen Criteria. The high command is of the opinion that the conditions for fulfilling democracy are 'compromises', and as such they are too high a price to pay for being included in a bloc which displays a negative bias towards Turkey and will therefore create barriers to accession. Tuncer Kılınç, former secretary general of the NSC, told an audience at the Ankara War Academy in early March 2002 that 'the EU will never accept Turkey . . . Thus, Turkey needs new allies, and it would be useful if Turkey engages in a search that would include Russia and Iran.'62

**The military and the Justice and Development Party:**

continuing or breaking the modus vivendi with the right

The moderate Islamist JDP's election victory in November 2002 reaffirmed the military's perception of political Islam as an internal security threat. But the JDP drew a critical lesson from the failed coalitions of the 1990s, and as a result sought to change the status quo via efficient performance on the basis of two positions: first, a discursive denial of its Islamist pedigree and the adoption

62 See Jon Gorvett, 'Turkish Military fires warning shot over EU membership,' *The Middle East* 323 (May 2002), p. 33.
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of a moderate and non-religious discourse in its place; and second, securing Turkish inclusion in the EU not just as a reform strategy, but also as a way of transforming the domestic power balance.

With the EU accession process in mind, the government's reform packages since November 2002 have included the expansion of freedom of expression; the abolition of the death penalty and anti-terrorism provisions that authorised punishment for verbal propaganda against the unity of state; the provision of retrial rights for citizens whose court decisions are overthrown by the European Court of Human Rights; permission for education and broadcasting in the Kurdish language; and some softening of the intransigence of Turkish foreign policy towards the Cyprus question. The sheer volume and speed of the reforms, as well as the consensus of support behind them, have helped change the popular perception of civilian governments as underachieving, unstable and corrupt. More significantly, through a number of deliberate policies, the ruling party has tried to create enough elbow room to make decisions free from the tutelary control of the military. This process, in turn, has increased its ability to initiate pro-civilian reforms in spite of disquiet amongst the secular establishment.

As the JDP government has included in its political reform agenda the alteration of the existing system of civil-military relations, the TAF has been provoked into upholding its 'guardianship' mission, because it has continued to regard the government's discourse and true intentions with deep suspicion. The global reshaping of the world after the Cold War has had two contradictory policy implications for the Turkish military's role in public life: first, the explosion of military-defined internal security threats has encouraged the tendency for more security, less democracy and more vigilance from the TAF. In the 1990s, there was an increase in laws pertaining to internal security, anti-terrorism and the maintenance of public order. These laws criminalise certain political activities, constrain public debate and expand military jurisdiction over civilians. However, second, partly as a backlash to these repressive measures, partly under the firm impetus of the idea of entry into the EU, an impressive movement towards internalisation of European political values has dramatically increased the costs of 'more security'. This development has prompted reform and the scaling down of the TAF's political influence.

Of the democratic reforms that Turkey has undertaken, none are more important and controversial than those related to the Turkish military's power and autonomy in the 2000s. The democratic reform package of July 2003, which was formally put into effect on 7 August 2003, shows that the current military-civil equation in Turkey is characterised by greater dynamism than
expectations of historical-cultural continuity in the civil-military relationship would allow. The package contained an amendment to some articles of the Act on the National Security Council and the General Secretariat of the NSC that tipped the balance of power in favour of civilian leadership. The August 2003 laws are a distinct legislative accomplishment by historical standards because the political role of the military has been based on the NSC, an institution long considered to be 'the shadow government'.63 The reforms not only repealed the NSC’s executive powers and turned it into an advisory body, they also increased the number of civilian members to a majority.

From many perspectives, the August 2003 package of laws, also called the 7th Harmonisation Package, has compelling political and theoretical significance for the civil-military power equation. By converting the NSC into an advisory body that has little effective influence over national policy, the AKP government knowingly took the risk of a confrontation with the military leadership. This step showed that the government now felt itself to be in a secure enough position to establish civilian supremacy. The 8th Harmonisation Package, passed on 22 May 2004, further increased civilian oversight over the defence budget and removed military representatives from the Council on Higher Education (Yüksek Öğretim Kurumu, YÖK) and the Supreme Board of Radio and Television (Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurumu, RTÜK). It also abolished state security courts, which tried crimes against the state, a legacy of the period after the 1980 military coup.64 Finally, the amendments narrowed the right of military courts to try civilians for criticising the military. The government is also planning to increase the parliamentary oversight of defence spending in 2006, and has taken some steps in involving itself in the preparation of the latest national security policy document. These developments do not signal a total retreat of the military from politics, even along with the by-law of 8 January 2005 that made the NSC’s operation non-secret. But the most

63 Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül used the term in a speech he made in New York. See 'MGK Gölge Hükümeti', Milliyet, 29 September 2004.
64 Established in 1982 and commencing operations in 1984, the state security courts have been civilianised since June 1999 after the European Court of Human Rights ruled in 1998 that its composition of one military judge with two civilians was against the European conventions. To prevent criticism of the trial of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, the military judge sitting on the bench was removed and replaced with a civilian one. The EU Commission’s Regular Reports have repeatedly specified that the powers and proceedings of these courts be brought more in line with EU standards. The first round of democratisation reforms passed by parliament on 6 February 2002 dealt with the issue only procedurally by reducing the custody period for crimes tried in the state security courts. The scope of its functions is transferred to the criminal courts that are being set up.
important platform through which the military’s influence is exercised and reproduced has definitely been curtailed.

The military’s partial retreat from the political arena is explained not only by the requirements of the EU membership, but also by the strategic environment that arose in the aftermath of 11 September and the 2003 Iraq war. In this environment, international sympathy and support for the moderate Islam-identified government of Turkey is not at all irreconcilable with the prevailing moral sensibility that characterises international politics. This new state of affairs resonates well with the long-held Turkish aspiration of being European in a region of ‘backward’ religious beliefs, poverty, underdevelopment and democratic shortfall. As the historian Kemal Karpat puts it, ‘Turkey is probably the only nation to have turned modernity into [its] national religion’.65 Thus the relationship is mutually advantageous, because Turkey is both useful to the West and has ‘a vision of the future anchored in the West’.

As a result of the situation, the JDP government does not have to try hard to ingratiate itself with the West. The strategic change in the region has accomplished that task.

But what makes this argument complicated is that the Turkish military is not at all amenable to the idea of a secular regime in a culturally Muslim country providing ‘a good example for other countries in the region’.67 The Turkish regime has always taken an ambiguous position with regard to the country’s identity and connections to the Islamic world. Indeed, the regime refuses to define Turkish identity in terms of religion or to countenance any public role for Islam. But its definition of a secular identity is also open to debate: those who view Turkey from a critical perspective doubt the country’s secular credentials and claim that it has a laicist system of ‘domination and control of religion by the state at nearly all levels’.68

The factors that enhance Turkey’s political value in the eyes of the West are in fact rejected by the military: a former deputy chief of general staff, General İlker Başbuğ, defends a causal link between secularism and democracy, and therefore assumes that since Turkey is secular, it is also democratic. In his mind, it is false to juxtapose Islam and secularism: ‘It can be misleading to claim that countries with a predominantly Muslim population could adopt a

66 Ibid.
democratic structure by following the Turkish model. Countries which have not experienced the process of secularisation, cannot achieve a democratic structure easily.69 General Başbuğ also rejects the Islamic-democratic model on the grounds that the secular character of the Republic and a 'moderate' Islam are incompatible.70

Since 2003, there has been genuine progress on the EU issue in tandem with resolute international support for the JDP. Upon visiting Turkey, EU president Romano Prodi praised the government’s adoption of radical reforms and expressed his surprise at the decisiveness and rate of the reform process.71 Driven by the concern to protect its corporate and political interests in the long run, the TAF has retreated from the prioritisation of its security-first discourse. Cognisant that there is a clear linkage between Turkish EU membership and a solution to the Cyprus problem, hardliners within and outside the military accepted the UN secretary general Kofi Annan’s peace plan as the basic point of reference even though they had previously been reluctant to endorse it. One such hardliner, General Hurşit Tolon, the commander of Aegean Army, expressed that view very clearly: 'Some say the military does not favour an agreement on Cyprus, but it does not reflect the truth . . . it is fashionable to spread the lie that the military does not want Turkish entry into the EU . . . This is a total lie.'72

General Hilmi Özökök, the chief of general staff, reinforced this new positive approach to the EU in an interview he granted to a Greek journalist four months after Prodi’s visit. In keeping with his comparatively more flexible and democratic image, he made a sincere admission of the grounds for the army’s volte-face: ‘70 per cent of the people want the EU membership. Nobody can resist this kind of majority.’73 Thus, while still reiterating the exceptional characteristics of Turkey to justify the internal security function for the military, Özökök revealed the military’s flexibility in reconciling its guardian role with the requirements for entry into the EU: ‘We are ready to compromise and undertake risks to harmonize with the EU values.’74

On the issue of the Iraq war, the prevention of the emergence of a splinter Kurdish state in northern Iraq has been the predominant consideration shaping the Turkish government’s policies. The Turkish parliament’s decision

69 See www.turkishnewslne.com/.
73 ‘Yeter ki AB’li olalım’, Radikal, 19 October 2003.
74 Ibid.
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on 1 March 2003 not to grant US troops access to Iraq via Turkish territory, surprising though it may have been against a backdrop of time-tested strategic and political ties between Washington and Ankara, also reflected the popular reluctance to play an instrumental role in waging war on a Muslim neighbour.

In sum, the combination of internal changes and global opportunities has reduced the choices available to the TAF. The military is caught between two alternatives: either accept a shift in power away from the military as part of the conditions for EU entry, or confront the government and a mostly pro-EU society. The latter path would put the military at risk of losing its credibility as the self-appointed representative of Turkey's intellectual and social elite, responsible for fulfilling Atatürk's dream of 'raising Turkey to the level of civilization' of the West. In order to preserve its power base and corporate interest, without which it cannot preserve its political pre-eminence, it has opted for the first choice.

But it should also be noted that while the era of military interventions is past, the TAF retains a significant degree of political leverage. It has strong civilian allies who protect the officers' vision of democracy and counter any 'internal threats' to the regime. Despite the progress made in aligning Turkey's laws with the EU requirements and despite the fact that Ankara received the green light to start accession talks with the EU on 3 October 2005, the latest Annual Report of 2005 notes that 'since 2002, Turkey has made good progress in reforming CMRS . . . but the armed forces continue to exercise significant political influence . . . and Turkey should work towards greater accountability and transparency in the conduct of security affairs in line with member states' "best practices"'.

Military, society and political class

Modalities of interaction with the society

Historically speaking, the officer corps has been dissociated from Turkish society to a much larger extent than other professional groups. The logic of the situation is that for a group of people to be held responsible for the well-being of the nation, they must be freed from 'ordinary' burdens of public life. In

75 Through two major constitutional reforms made in 2001 and 2004 and eight legislative packages passed between February 2002 and July 2004 three areas of structural issues of reform as indicated by the EU, except the position of the chief of general staff (he is still responsible to the prime minister rather than the defence minister), have been tackled.

other words, the conditions causing the semi-isolation of the Republican army from the mainstream of the population were produced by the vanguard role of the military and civilian bureaucracy. As a result of that role, the military identified itself completely with the state and the status quo.

Although Kemalism is perceived in a much less militant and less fetishist manner at the popular level, this position of social autonomy enables the military to sustain it in an undiluted form which becomes relevant for as long as the military bureaucracy retains its social and political power, indicating once more the fusion of ideology and power as motivations. A pattern of self-recruiting the 'sons of military and civil-servants' into the military also explains the perpetuation of the conditions that reproduce that power. There is a large dose of truth in the claim that Kemalism is a pervasive ideology in the army that is largely reproduced by its distance from the society, including its weak links with capital owners.

The defining organisational characteristics of the TAF are based on the fact that it is a conscript army. This feature is of immense importance in integrating military values firmly into the society. Compulsory military service is an instrument that makes clear to young men who are enlisted at the age of twenty that they do not just have rights but also 'responsibilities and obligations' to the state. The implications of a conscript army are also projected into Ankara's thinking that security is tied to military strength, which, in turn, is to be gained by having a larger army.

As will be seen below, Turkey's threat perceptions and security thinking have been minimally affected by changing military requirements in the world. Therefore, the dominant military model and trends at work in the world, namely, abolishing compulsory military service; encouraging professionalisation and a smaller and a more technical army; discouraging the army's involvement in civic and political arenas; contribution to multinational power-generating schemes; and democratic control of the armed forces by civilians have limited—though growing— or no application in Turkish geography. It is no wonder then that, under these conditions, the political and social guardian role persists.

Moreover, there is no reliable research addressing the changes in the outlook and behaviour of the armed forces as a result of their focus on anti-terrorist missions and security-minded outlook in the 1990s and the resultant differences

from and similarities with civilian society in terms of values and attitudes. Nor do we have healthy data about the impact of broader societal changes from which the military cannot remain immune. What we can project intuitively and relying on historical data, however, is that the TAF's anti-political thought and style draws strength from the ideological and policy failure of domestic politics. As the lack of a meaningful public accountability and failure of policies of distributional equality have led to the erosion of public confidence in the political system, the military has benefited from a pervasive anti-political discourse which it shares with much of the general public.

Furthermore, a comprehensive process of social control by the state through the 'making of mass meaning' via the education system and mass media have provided crucial means through which the official ideology is diffused through the capillaries of the society and turns into 'microphysics of power'. Kemalist ideology's relationship of power with society is such that in socially defining and structuring individuals, it creates a form of control based on 'consent' which is a seemingly democratic feature. Kemalist ideology turns into the legitimate societal discourse through the manipulation of a public image which becomes effective in the end as the 'self-image' of a society which wants to identify itself as modern and progressive. The societal modernisation project of the state, in other words, is accepted by the society as being in its 'self-interest'.

The classic portrayal of Turkish society in awe of its military bureaucracy may not be illusory, but the real challenge is to understand how such a stance came about. The effectiveness of the military lies not just in the control-oriented discourse of the state, of which the military forms the most important pillar. Rather, it is a function of controlling the self-image of the society through a de-centred and diffused popular discourse. The success of the military's Kemalist values in making inroads into society lies in enabling society to identify its self-image with a 'public' image which is set in a top-down fashion but is perceived as if it is a bottom-up process.

Societal context in Turkey was distinguished in the 1990s by high levels of political conflict brought about by the rise of identity politics. Global changes in the concept of security have been translated into the Turkish context in such
a way that internal political conflict and instability provoked by new global conditions have been reinterpreted as security threats. This development has meant that fundamental policy making is removed from the sphere of the elected representatives and entrusted to the security community, of which the military bureaucracy forms the key component.

Rapid economic and social change, in a context of stark inequality, weak democratic traditions and a propensity for violations of basic rights, soon took a toll on the Turkish military–society relationship, resulting in increasing corruption, especially of the security forces in anti-terrorist operations. The Susurluk scandal revealed the existence of a criminal triangle of politicians, mafia bosses and security forces who were engaged in the war against the PKK.81 As the public outcry created immense pressure for accountability, transparency and justice in the system, the security forces and the Refahyol coalition government led by Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan and Deputy Prime Minister Tansu Çiller opposed a ‘clean hands’ operation to reform the system. Çiller gave unequivocal support to dubious state practices including illegal murders: ‘Those who shoot bullets or those who are the targets of bullets in the name of the state are both honorable. They all are heroes.’82 Even Turkey’s right-wing forces concurred with broader social pressure, demanding the termination of indiscriminate use of security forces, unchecked privileges and vested interests in intelligence and anti-terrorist operations.

The military and the political class: patterns of perceptions

From the perspective of elected representatives, perhaps the most serious factor capable of tilting the balance of the civil–military equation in favour of the latter is the perception of the civilian political class by the military: it is no secret that the Turkish army, like most of its counterparts elsewhere, perceives the civilian world as unstable, inept, careerist, populist, imprudent, corrupt and irresponsible. This anti-political cognitive map of the officer corps is incongruent with even the most flexible assumptions of representative democracy. The

81 This scandal followed a traffic accident in which Abdullah Çath, an ultranationalist involved in political killings in the 1970s and was on the run, a civilian security chief in Istanbul and a young woman taken for a joy ride were killed together. The only survivor was a tribal chief from the south-east who was also a DYP deputy and whose tribe was on the side of the state.

82 This was, however, hardly a surprising statement as it is now known that she and her then police chief, Mehmet Ağar, were involved in this triangle since 1995, when he agreed to arrange to hunt and eliminate Abdullah Öcalan, then leader of the PKK, so as to enable Çiller to capitalise on the event for the December 1995 elections.
The Turkish military

military sees the political parties, most interest groups, political leaders and the civilian presidents – or at least did so until the election of the current president in 2000 – as disruptive and divisive forces. Army takeovers are justified on the basis of the deep void in political authority in conditions of breakdown of public order preceding the coups.

Turkey’s political parties do bear a very heavy burden of responsibility for failing to carry out independent policies on major political issues, adapt to changing needs, implement reforms to reverse the disintegration of the political system and democratise the internal workings of their own party structures. Such changes would both help them win public support and overcome their lack of self-confidence with regard to the military. Eric Rouleau, in a sense, underscores the key importance of being able to puncture this vicious circle when he speaks of the ‘good statecraft’ of the former prime minister Turgut Özal (1983–9), who managed to curtail the political role of the military hierarchy to some extent during his premiership.

However, the political class has at times displayed some initiative and a willingness to strengthen civilian institutions, reshape the political process and question who defines the security threats, sets acceptable risks and determines appropriate responses to them. For example, former Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yılmaz, the leader of the MP, a junior partner in the three-party coalition government between 1999 and 2002, suggested in the aftermath of the 28 February process that the generals should abandon the fight against reactionary Islam and focus their attention on external defence. More importantly, he made a speech in his party’s convention on 4 August 2001 arguing that Turkish politics was afflicted by a ‘national security syndrome’, which, he claimed, only served to frustrate the reforms necessary to democratise and integrate the Turkish political system into the EU. The response of the military high command was vehement, suggesting that national security was an issue to be kept out of politics.

The weakness of the constitutionally elected authorities is not directly responsible for the strong political role of the generals. On the contrary, the historical position of the military, that is, its self-assigned capacity to guard the regime, has played a major role in detracting further from the ability and responsibility of civilian leaders to assume control over the political environment and to manage the key political problems effectively. The

most compelling explanation for civilian ‘weakness’ is that frequent military incursions into politics seriously weaken the foundations of democracy, cause a severe crisis of public confidence in the political class and exacerbate the already existing power asymmetry in civil–military relations and the overt political role of the military.

Reinventing security in the face of post-Cold War renaissance of militaries and changes in security

In many developing countries that, at one time or other, were under military rule, the recent 'global wave of democratization has prompted important shifts in civil–military relations'\(^85\) which have less to do with postmodern security concerns than with the end of the bipolar tension and the new movement towards decentralisation of state powers. This trend has caused hopes in the direction of a more democratic formulation of civil–military relations: it has ‘unleashed a tendency for civilian governments to try to assert greater influence over the officer corps and for militaries to try to defend their preexisting prerogatives’.\(^86\) Contrary to this trend, however, the political power of the Turkish military has risen sharply in the last decade. The Kurdish issue and the growth of political Islam have enabled the military to reaffirm its central role at a time when faith in armies has given way to downsizing their structures and a reduction of military expenditure in the West.

The perception that Turkey occupies a unique strategic position and faces genuine security risks on her borders is a central factor in shaping the military’s rationale for security considerations with very little debate and civilian input. Turkey’s geo-strategic position is frequently emphasised by military and civilian leaders to show the country’s military and political value to the West and to justify a large military with a big budget. Many foreign observers agree that Turkey faces genuine security risks on her borders and its ‘comparative advantage lies in its ability to influence trans-regional risks and opportunities’.\(^87\) Turkey’s leaders argue that the country has moved from being a secondary member of NATO to a country of primary importance (from a ‘flank country’ to a ‘front country’),\(^88\) a view first expressed by US assistant secretary of state

86 Ibid.
88 Ibid.
The Turkish military

Richard Holbrooke in March 1995. The implications of this geo-strategy-based outlook for civilian participation in national security policy is rather bleak: in the words of one researcher, "Turkey's national security conception is predetermined by its geopolitical position and domestic make-up and that such "givens" do not leave much room for discussion . . . the relative lack of debate on Turkey's security conceptualization could partly be explained with reference to the assumption that Turkey's geographical location determines its security policies."

That being said, it is clear that a geo-strategically motivated threat perception is very real for the military. Some countries such as Syria, Iran, Iraq and Armenia, and, to a lesser extent, Russia, hold hostile or potentially hostile stances towards Turkey. The existence of a Kurdish autonomous entity in northern Iraq disturbs Turkey's foreign and security policy makers intensely. To deal with these threats, the military leadership argues that the national security apparatus must be kept ready and capable. When these perceptions of internal and external threats are combined, it seems that, contrary to the global trend, the end of the Cold War has not led to a less security-based domestic agenda in Turkey. On the contrary, it has meant that security is still a 'control' problem rather than a democratic contract with the society built into the culture, environment and everyday routine.

New traumas, insecurities and crises intimately connected with the end of the Cold War reinforce the historical/geographical determinism built into the system for the guardian role of the TAF. Changing security concepts have not led to diminished prerogatives and have reinforced the self-appointed role of the armed forces. Jane Chanaa's portrayal of some military power structures exploring new venues to maintain their political power 'structurally, ideologically and materially' in the new era is an excellent description of the Turkish military. Chanaa argues that the 1990s saw 'security traditions reinventing themselves' in some developing nations. Emergence of internal security threats has been an effective instrument to enable many developing states, including Turkey, to broaden their security agenda.

91 Cizre, 'Demythologizing the National Security Concept', p. 216.
Conclusion

Chanaa’s argument that some post-Cold War militaries have been ‘resourceful in their invention’93 of new security priorities lends support to the notion that the Turkish military’s power struggle with civilian authority, along with the TAF’s genuine commitment to Kemalist ideology, has shaped the military’s anti-political interventionism. The idea that ‘security is not only to be given or taken; it is also out there to be made’94 shows the apex of the military’s construction of a power base from which it can redefine the standards and course of Kemalist order and progress. Since the end of the Cold War, hopes for a more democratic structure of civil–military relations have emerged. However, the conservative tone of international politics, the revival of Islamism and the escalation of the Kurdish conflict have provided the momentum for a redefinition of national interest, security and the expansion of the guardian role of the TAF.

The TAF’s maintenance of a high degree of autonomy in political and institutional realms has generated a host of contradictions for Turkey’s democracy. For one thing, it has weakened the bases of representative process. The overbearing weight of the military in the system has tended to inhibit the imagination of the political class, which is confronted with colossal challenges such as massive internal migration and urbanisation connected to the south-east question, yet does not have the political margin to encourage it to develop the necessary willingness, capacity and credibility to solve them.

This pessimistic assessment can be qualified by some positive developments. The EU accession process has generated an important undercurrent for the normalisation of the position of the military in the political system. Moreover, under the impetus of the process, increased governmental leverage over key national security and foreign policy issues such as the EU, Cyprus and Iraq has brought forth the need for the civilian elites to develop alternative choices, strategies and policies that are designed to show up the political character of the internal security problems and make them a matter of public debate. Combined with the international backing for the JDP on the basis that it serves as a ‘Muslim democratic model’ in the region, this new civilian initiative has undermined the military’s ability to challenge a popularly backed government.

93 Ibid., p. 43.
94 Ibid., p. 44.
Together with the irtica ('religious reaction'), the Kurdish question has constituted the most important challenge to the Turkish Republic since its foundation in 1923. The trajectory of the Kurdish issue has been determined by two features: the state's denial of its existence; and the emergence of its radical challenge to the state. Official state policy either denied the very existence of a distinct group called Kurds, or presented the Kurds as a threat to Turkey and the 'Turks as a national entity. The Kurdish struggle, on the other hand, has been at the basis of a series of revolts between 1923 and 1938 and, later on, in the 1970s-1990s, of urban violence and guerrilla warfare.

Since the beginning of the Republic, there has always been a close link between Turkey's internal Kurdish issue and the Kurdish conflict in the Middle East. Almost all the Kurdish struggles throughout the twentieth century have in fact had a regional dimension, thus playing a decisive role in the foreign policies of Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria. With the notable exception of President Turgut Özal (1989–93), the Turkish authorities have always considered the formation of an autonomous Kurdish entity within the neighbouring territory as a potential threat to their own territorial integrity, and thus advocated a system of regional security against 'Kurdish separatism'.

In this chapter I will first underline the importance of the pre-Republican period in the emergence of Kurdish nationalism. I will then comment on the 'years of revolts' that covered almost the entire period of Mustafa Kemal ( Atatürk)'s presidency. In the third section, I will focus on the 'period of silence' (1938–61), which played an indirect role in the formation of a codified Kurdish nationalism and its symbols. The fourth part will be dedicated to the long and problematic renewal of a Kurdish movement in Turkey between 1961 and 1980. The last section will analyse the consequences of the 1980 military coup and the guerrilla warfare conducted by the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) between 1984 and 1999, and provide an update concerning the present situation.
In the transition from a multinational empire to a nation-state, political life in the new Turkey experienced a radical transformation. There is still heated debate among scholars as to whether there was continuity or change in the Republic’s political life. Some have argued in favour of continuity, claiming that the architects of the Republic belonged to cadres who had acquired their experience of politics after 1908. That is true, though the transitions from empire to nation-state, from monarchy to republic, from theocracy to a laicist/secular state and society, seem sufficient reasons to strengthen the claims for change, even for revolutionary change.

When war ended in total collapse in November 1918, it seemed doubtful that a viable Turkish state would emerge from the ruins. The territory left to the Ottomans by the armistice of 1918, which the nationalists then claimed as the borders of the new Turkey, was also contested by Greece and Armenian nationalists, as well as by Britain and France. Thus before there could be any political life, the Turks had to salvage a new state from the ruins of empire, and that took almost five years of war and diplomacy to achieve. During these years the Turkish elites were divided. The sultan’s supporters relied on diplomacy and the goodwill of Britain for their very survival. But Britain had its own post-war agenda and did not support Istanbul’s aspirations. As a result, the sultan was left with a truncated state by virtue of the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres, which he was forced to sign on 10 August 1920. The sultan justified his total surrender, declaring to his privy council that a weak existence is preferable to total annihilation.

Nationalist forces under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal refused to accept the terms of treaty and continued to fight the Greek invasion of Anatolia that had begun in May 1919. While they fought the Greek army in the west and Armenian nationalists in the east, the nationalists presented a united front. But cracks began to appear in their ranks as soon as victory was in sight. However, in August 1921, when faced with defeat, the assembly appointed Mustafa
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Kemal commander-in-chief and even allowed him to exercise authority over the assembly in military matters. After winning the battle of Sakarya in September, he became the dominant force in the national movement. Had the nationalists been defeated at Sakarya, leadership might well have passed to another successful general, possibly the conservative nationalist Kazım Karabekir. But for the moment, Mustafa Kemal was triumphant and the National Assembly bestowed upon him the title Gazi (warrior in the holy war or jihād).

Now that their Greek clients had lost the war, the Allies hoped to divide the nationalists by inviting both the sultan in Istanbul and the assembly in Ankara to send delegations to Lausanne to negotiate peace. But the Ankara assembly claimed that it was the only legitimate authority. Istanbul having lost any claim to legitimacy when it collaborated with the Allies. General Refet Bele, a prominent nationalist who sought to maintain the monarchy, advised the sultan to dismiss the ‘phantom government’ of Istanbul and recognise Ankara. But Vahideddin refused. In November, the assembly abolished the sultanate, claiming that the sultan’s government had ceased to exist on 16 March 1920 when the Allies had occupied his capital. Thenceforth Istanbul was to be governed as a province from Ankara. Having lost all authority, Sultan Vahideddin fled his capital on 17 November aboard a British battleship. Next day, the assembly, where the radical nationalists declared that sovereignty resided, elected Abdülmeclit caliph.

The opposition objected to the assembly exercising such direct authority and claimed that there was no precedent for such practice. Mustafa Kemal responded to this criticism in a speech in which he argued that ‘we are unique’ (‘Biz bize benzeriz’) and had no need to copy other models of government. The opposition then attempted to disqualify Mustafa Kemal’s membership of the assembly by proposing a law that required five years residence in Anatolia in order to be elected to the assembly. Mustafa Kemal pointed out that his military career had not permitted such residence anywhere, and the proposal was withdrawn. He saw the strength and determination of the opposition and decided to fight back. He announced to the press that he would form the People’s Party as the vehicle to wage the political struggle. After touring Anatolia and testing the pulse of the country, Mustafa Kemal announced the party’s formation in April 1923.¹

Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal took measures to weaken the opposition in Istanbul. When Ankara was declared the capital of Turkey in October 1923, Istanbul was marginalised from political life. The declaration of the Republic on 29 October 1923 and Mustafa Kemal’s election as its president also caught the opposition off guard as its prominent leaders – Rauf, Refet, Adnan and Ali Fuad – were out of Ankara. By proclaiming a republic, the Kemalists not only weakened the caliph’s supporters who wanted the office of president to go to him, but they proclaimed their commitment to modernity and equality, rather than the modernisation and patriarchal hierarchy of the old order. The Kemalists had rejected hierarchy and tradition, the foundations on which the old order had rested and which the conservative nationalists, who went on to form the Progressive Republican Party, wished to maintain.

The offensive against the opposition continued with the arrival of an independence tribunal in Istanbul to deal with dissidents. Prominent members of the opposition were arrested soon after the Istanbul press published the letter of two prominent, pro-British Indian Muslims – the Agha Khan and Ameer Ali – appealing to the government to retain the caliphate. In December 1923, the assembly passed a law that ended whatever military support there was for the opposition; officers were given the choice between their military careers and politics, and officers on active service were barred from being deputies. The opposition wanted Mustafa Kemal to leave the People’s Party and become an above-party president. But he rejected both suggestions and declared that conditions in the country were not ripe for more than one party.²

For some time there were rumours that the opposition was about to found a party to be called the Progressive Republican Party. The People’s Party responded by adding ‘Republican’ to its own name, becoming the RPP. The Progressive Republican Party (PRP) was founded on 17 November and its programme was published the next day.³ As a gesture to the opposition, Mustafa Kemal replaced İsmet Paşa as prime minister with Ali Fethi, a figure more acceptable to the opposition. But tension between the parties continued until the outbreak of Şeyh Said rebellion among the Kurdish tribes in February 1925. The government declared martial law and Prime Minister Fethi Bey asked the opposition to dissolve their party. But General Kazım Karabekir refused, claiming there was no reason to do so. In March the assembly passed the Maintenance of Order Law (Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu) and restored the

³ Ibid., pp. 55ff.
independence tribunals. For the moment all further political activity in the country was frozen. The opposition press was closed down along with those of the nascent left and in June 1925 the government finally ordered the disbandment of the PRP.

Having crushed the Kurdish rebellion and free of all opposition, the Kemalist regime was able to implement policies that destroyed the social foundations of the old order and established those of the new one. In its 1923 regulation the party spoke of exercising national sovereignty in a democratic manner and of modernising society. Now that the government was in a position to carry out reforms, Mustafa Kemal declared: ‘Gentlemen . . . the Republic of Turkey cannot be a country of Sheiks, dervishes, disciples, and followers. The most correct and truest path is the path of civilization.’ During the next four years, until the Law for the Maintenance of Order was repealed in March 1929, the legal structure of the country was transformed: women were given rights they had never enjoyed in the past and religion was brought under the state’s control so that it could not be manipulated for political ends by opponents of the regime.

There were protests against the reforms and the opposition was driven underground. The institutions associated with the sufi mystical orders (tarikats) may have been destroyed, but their tradition remained strong, even while it was dormant. They reasserted themselves after 1950 and have continued to play a critical political role thereafter. The Kemalists were aware of the existence of opposition and tried to defuse it by promoting a friendly opposition party in the legislature. Therefore in August 1930, Mustafa Kemal announced that Ali Fethi (Okyar), his close associate, had been permitted to found an opposition party, the Free Republican Party. However, such was the people’s discontent with the regime, exhibited by popular demonstration on behalf of the new party, that the RPP felt threatened. The government resorted to fraud and vote rigging in the local elections and the Free Party protested but to no avail. Unable to obtain any satisfaction from the RPP, Fethi Bey dissolved his party and thus ended the brief experiment with multi-party politics.

The Free Party episode alarmed the ruling party by exposing the strength of conservative forces opposed to the iconoclastic reforms. But the incident in Menemen (23 December 1930), a small town in the most advanced region of western Anatolia, shook the regime to its foundations. Supporters of the old order, led by a Naqshbandi Shaykh, demanded the restoration of the caliphate.

and the şeriat. They even beheaded a reserve officer who had been sent to investigate. The government realised that the reforms had not taken root and had to be explained to the people with an ideology and appropriate institutions. The RPP decided to do just that.  

In his speech before the RPP’s Izmir congress (28 January 1931), Mustafa Kemal redefined his party. He noted that political parties could be founded for a specific and limited purpose; for example, the merchants of Izmir could found a party that would meet their own interests or farmers could form their own party. ‘However, our party has not been founded for such a limited purpose. On the contrary, it is a body designed to meet the interests of every class equitably without undermining those of any other.’ Along with this above-class policy, the RPP also began to disband organisations outside party control. Thus the Turkish Hearths (Türk Ocakları), an independent nationalist body, was disbanded in April 1931 and soon after replaced with the party-run People’s Houses (Halkevleri). Their goal was to spread modern culture and civilisation throughout Turkey, as well as to explain Kemalist ideology now defined by its six principles of republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, revolutionism/reformism and laicism. The process of fusing party and state into a mono-party system was completed by 1935 at the party’s fourth congress.  

Though the mono-party trend was undoubtedly influenced by events in the Soviet Union, Italy and Germany in the 1920s and 1930s, Mustafa Kemal, Atatürk after 1934, supported the state’s supremacy only because it seemed more efficient than the ‘chaos’ prevailing in the democracies. The nationalist press even reported that Franklin D. Roosevelt’s America favoured state intervention in order to cope with the situation created by the world crisis. However, Atatürk continued to support a mixed economy against the hardline statist; in 1932 he backed the Business Bank (İş Bankası) group, replacing the statist minister of the economy, Mustafa Şeref (Özkan), with Celal Bayar, founder of Business Bank. Atatürk removed Recep Peker as the RPP’s general secretary in June 1936 and prevented him from carrying out measures to reorganise and further strengthen the party.  

Meanwhile an amnesty law passed on the tenth anniversary of the Republic allowed opponents of the party to return from exile. While the political system

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7 *Cumhuriyet*, 29 December, 1931; see also C. H. Dodd, ‘Atatürk and political parties’, in Heper and Landau (eds.), *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey*.
9 Ibid.
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was being liberalised, paradoxically the state was being strengthened with such measures as the abolition of Turkish Masonic Society and restrictions against the operation of foreign organisations in Turkey. Finally, in November 1938, Celal Bayar replaced İsmet İnönü both as prime minister and deputy party leader, suggesting that the statist faction was being marginalised. That might have been the case had Atatürk lived longer to consolidate the process. But immediately after his death on 10 November 1938, the assembly elected İsmet İnönü president of Turkey and the statists were once again firmly in the saddle. Bayar was allowed to remain prime minister until January 1938 when he was replaced by Refik Saydam.  

Faced with a threatening world crisis that led to the Second World War, İnönü decided to reconcile Atatürk’s opponents with the regime and pursue a policy of moderation. Thus at the fifth party congress in May 1939 he announced the end of the party’s control over the bureaucracy; provincial governors would no longer head local party organisations, nor would the secretary general be minister of the interior. Within the assembly a faction called the Independent Group was set up to act as the loyal opposition. In the general election of March 1939 the process of consensus building continued, and such close associates of Atatürk as Şükrü Kaya and Kılıç Ali were left out while former rivals and critics – Kazım Karabekir, Hüseyin Cahid Yalçın, Refet Bele and Ali Fuad Cebesoy – were brought into the assembly.

Politics during the war undermined the consensus upon which the RPP’s dominance had rested. Until the war the two sectors – the state and the private – had grown side by side. But the private sector expanded rapidly during the war. Economic growth and the new sense of confidence made the state’s paternalism more difficult to bear. The National Defence Law of 1940 gave the state extensive power over the economy as well as over the rights of citizens, while the Capital Tax of 1942 (Varlık Vergisi) attempted to destroy the non-Muslim bourgeoisie by impoverishing it. Both laws showed how arbitrary, unpredictable and unaccountable the state could be, even though its measures were designed to benefit the Muslim bourgeoisie. This situation could be remedied only if the state was made accountable so that the rising bourgeoisie would feel secure. But that could happen only once the war was over.

10 At the extraordinary congress of the RPP Atatürk was declared ‘the Party’s founder and its eternal leader’ while İnönü became its ‘permanent national chief’ (milli şef). See Kemal Karpat, Turkey’s Politics: The Transition to a Multi-party System (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 38.

The statist wing of the party also understood that post-war changes were under way and had to be taken into account if the party was to remain relevant. They wanted to transform Turkey by implementing land reform and creating a prosperous landholding peasantry instead of a feudal landlord class. The government saw the land reform bill as a ‘genuinely revolutionary law’.12 But the bourgeoisie and the landlords wanted a free-market economy, an independent landed class and integration with the West. They responded by supporting the opposition within the party.

On 7 June 1945, four dissident members of the RPP wrote a memorandum demanding political liberalisation. They proposed that the government implement fully the principle of national sovereignty as stated in the constitution and that party business be carried out in accordance with the principles of democracy. The four were Celal Bayar, a banker and close associate of Atatürk; Adnan Menderes, a prominent landowner from the Aegean region; Fuad Köprülü, a historian and professor of Turcology; and Refik Koraltan, a seasoned bureaucrat. President İnönü’s response was not immediate. But in his speech of 1 November, he hinted that he was prepared to make major adjustments to the political system and to bring it in line with the changed circumstances in the world, a reference to the victory of the democracies over fascism. The main deficiency in the Turkish system, he noted, was the lack of an opposition party and he indicated that he was now prepared to allow the formation of such a body. There were rumours in the press that Bayar and his friends were about to form such a party; these rumours were confirmed when the formation of the Democrat Party (DP) was officially announced on 7 January 1946.13

Once the opposition became active, multi-party, mass politics soon replaced the politics of elites of the single-party period. The centre of political life also shifted from the cities to the provinces largely untouched by Kemalist reforms or modern secular culture. That explains the growing role of Islam after 1945, and both the RPP and the DP facilitated the Islamic resurgence, as any party would have done, so as to compete successfully in the new political climate.

12 That was the description of Prime Minister Şükrü Saraçoğlu. See Ayın Tarihi (Ankara: Basın Genel Direktörlüğü, June 1945), pp. 35–47.
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Despite some hostility to the new party in RPP circles, there was no sense of alarm at the advent of the opposition party. After all, its leaders were all Kemalists of long standing who espoused the same basic philosophy as their opponents, with only a difference in emphasis. Celal Bayar liked to use the metaphor of the two parties resembling two cooks preparing the same dish, but he said that his party had the better recipe for Turkey’s development. The RPP leadership expected the DP to behave as the Free Party and done in 1930 and the Independent Group during the war, as a token opposition that would never question the legitimacy of the government. The public therefore saw the new party as a means to deflect popular hostility against the government rather than offering a genuine alternative. The Democrats seemed to be serving that very function, as their programme hardly differed from that of the RPP. They adopted the ‘six Kemalist principles’, as required by the constitution, but declared that they would interpret them according to the needs of the times rather than dogmatically. Their main aim was to advance democracy by curbing government intervention and increasing the rights and freedoms of the individual. They emphasised populism and popular sovereignty and wanted political initiative to come from the people and not from the party. The Democrats soon became the spokesmen for private enterprise and individual initiative, which won them the support of the businessmen, the intelligentsia and the voting public.

The Republicans had transformed the country by reforming its legal and institutional structure. But most of the people had gained little, though their expectations had risen sharply. They had suffered under the wartime regime that was imposed upon them, marked by widespread corruption and the rule of the gendarme. They especially resented the policy of laicism/secularism, and never understood how they had benefited from it. It was all very well for the RPP to claim that what was being done was ‘for the people’, but why was it being done ‘in spite of the people’, as the party’s slogan had it?

Between 1946 and 1950, the two parties acquired new identities designed to appeal to the electorate. İnönü reinvented his party by giving it a liberal face, declaring that he was no longer the ‘National Chief’ or the ‘Permanent Chairman’. He decided to hold an early general election before the DP was able to organise, but the Democrats refused to participate in any election until the laws had been democratised. The government therefore made further concessions, amended the electoral law to allow direct elections instead of a two-tier ballot through electoral colleges, granted the universities administrative autonomy and liberalised the press laws. The RPP also abolished the law proscribing associations with the purpose of propagating class distinction,
Republican radicals wanted to make the RPP a ‘class party’ and win the support of peasants, workers, tenant farmers, artisans and small merchants, at the same time isolating the Democrats as the party of landlords and big business. However, the party’s moderates prevailed and the RPP continued to oppose class struggle, seeking instead a balance among the classes.

Despite the reforms, the RPP failed to placate any constituency other than its traditional supporters. The Democrats exploited this popular antagonism towards government by emphasising its arbitrary character and promising to end the hated rule of the gendarmerie and the bureaucracy. They became the party of the masses by constantly attacking ‘the tyranny of the state’. Voters were convinced that by bringing the Democrats to power they would free themselves of an oppressive state and improve their material lot as well. Having lost the 1946 election, the Democrats realised that they could come to power only in a fair and honest election in which the bureaucracy remained neutral. They began to prepare the ground for that by winning over the bureaucracy.

The world conjuncture – the triumph of the democracies and the free-market system, the beginning of the Cold War – seemed to favour the Democrats. But President İnönü also understood the trend and supported his party’s moderate faction against the statists. On 12 July 1947 he abandoned the single-party option for Turkey and gave the opposition total freedom of action and equality with the RPP. He met the DP’s challenge by adopting free-market policies and opening up Turkey’s economy. He was convinced that Turkey’s future was best served by market rather than state capitalism and that foreign investment on a grand scale was vital for rapid economic growth. If foreign investment could be attracted by political stability and multi-party politics, he was willing to take that path. The lira was devalued, import regulations were eased and banks were permitted to sell their gold reserves. The result of the ‘7 September measures’ was to begin an inflationary trend that pleased local and foreign businesses but alienated the masses. İnönü, the devout secularist, began to make concessions on that front as well. Religious concessions were considered of prime importance to isolate the Democrats as well as the Nation Party, which had been formed in 1948 by conservative dissidents in the DP. Therefore religious instruction was permitted in schools and other concessions followed. Finally in January 1949 Şemsettin Güngör, a professor of history and a man with Islamist sympathies, was appointed prime minister.

15 Karpat, Turkey’s Politics, p. 169.
The political initiative seemed to have passed to the Republicans. Over the years the RPP had taken on so much of its rival’s colouring that it was difficult to tell them apart. The programmes of the two parties hardly differed. Both spoke of an anti-Soviet/communist bipartisan foreign policy that supported the West in the Cold War. As early as June 1946 the left-wing Socialist Workers’ and Peasants’ Party had been closed down and in 1948 leftist influence was liquidated in Ankara University by the purge of its faculty.

İnönü was confident of success in the general election of 14 May 1950. But he forgot that he personally symbolised the past, and voters were convinced that nothing would really change while he was at the helm. Moreover, the DP had neutralised the bureaucracy by holding the RPP, and not the state, responsible for past misdeeds. Had the bureaucracy remained hostile, the DP’s electoral victory would have been uncertain. In a society dominated by the concept of an all-powerful state, the influence of the official in political life was, and still remains, overwhelming.

The May 1950 election results came as a great surprise: the voters delivered a shattering defeat to the RPP, giving the DP 53.35 per cent of the vote and 408 seats while the RPP won a respectable 38.38 per cent but only 39 parliamentary seats. Such was the verdict of the winner-take-all system used at the time. As late as 1954, İnönü described his party’s defeat as the ‘ingratitude’ of the voter.16 Rarely had a ruling party given up its power at the polls.

The DP victory was a radical turning point in Turkey’s political landscape: power had passed into the hands of new elites and away from the old civil-military bureaucracy. Roles were reversed as the DP became the governing party and the RPP went into opposition, creating an identity crisis difficult to adjust to. Had the political culture of Turkey matured sufficiently, İsmet İnönü, the leader of a defeated party, would have retired and allowed a new leadership appropriate to the times to emerge. But the RPP had become ‘İnönü’s party’ and there was a fear that it would fragment if he retired. For their part, the Democrats believed that the people had given them the mandate – what they described as the national will (milli irade) – to run the country according to their programme and that the opposition was duty bound to let them do so.

In power the DP leaders were faced with a dilemma: they had promised to destroy the single-party system once they assumed office. But in office they were forced to work with the institutions established by the single-party regime – the constitution, the bureaucracy, the army, in short the entire state

16 İnönü’s comment to Dankwart Rustow was: ‘I never expected to see so much ingratitude’, quoted in his ‘Political parties in Turkey’, p. 22, n.12.
structure – as well as with the RPP itself. The government wanted to work within the inherited system and to transform the country. The party’s rank and file, on the other hand, pressured the government to destroy the institutions of the old regime as rapidly as possible. İnönü was a constant reminder of the past and became a factor – the ‘Paşa factor’ – in Turkey’s political life throughout the 1950s. The Democrats feared that state institutions, especially the army, continued to be loyal to him because of the historic role he had played in the founding of the Republic. The Democrats countered this fear by leaning on their electoral victories in 1950 and 1954 and the ‘national will’, which they believed gave them the right to monopolise all state institutions with total disregard for the opposition. Such was the mono-party mentality exercised during the multi-party period.17

Even before the general election of May 1954, relations between the parties deteriorated dramatically. The government declared war on the RPP, confiscating the party’s assets not indispensable for the continuation of its activities. Laws were passed to strengthen its position in the country by curbing all possible criticism; for example, a law forbade university faculties from participating in the country’s politics. Only a sense of insecurity accounts for the anti-opposition measures taken by Prime Minister Menderes. Given the government’s economic record, electoral victory in 1954 seemed assured without any repressive measures. Good harvests, foreign credit and investments in public works, especially road construction, gave an air of growing prosperity the opposition could hardly contradict. On 2 May 1954 the voters delivered their verdict with a massive victory for the DP with 57 per cent of the vote and 504 seats, while the RPP’s share of the vote declined to 35 per cent with only 31 seats.18

Adnan Menderes was transformed by the result. The transition period of 1950–4 was over; he now expected all opposition to bend to the ‘national will’ or he threatened to break it. In the process he alienated both the universities and the press, the bastions of Turkey’s intelligentsia. With a huge majority in parliament, only the party could rein him in. The Istanbul anti-Greek riots of 6–7 September 1955 led to dissension in the party and forced the interior minister to resign on 10 September. Even Menderes’s position was shaken and

17 See Ahmad, Experiment, in which chapters 2, 3, and 5 are devoted to the DP era, while chapter 4 discusses the RPP in opposition. See also Ali Yaşar Sarıbay, ‘The Democratic Party, 1946–1960’ in Heper and Landau (eds.), Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey. Samet Ağaoğlu, Demokrat Partinin doğuş ve yükseliş sebepleri bir soru (İstanbul: Baha Matbaası, 1972) provides an insider’s view.
18 Ahmad, Experiment, pp. 50–1.
he considered resigning. As there was no other leader willing to replace him, his cabinet resigned instead and the assembly gave him a vote of confidence, abandoning the principle of cabinet responsibility! Academics who had supported the DP gave up hope of reform from within the party. They broke away in December 1955 and formed the Freedom Party (FP, Hüriyet Partisi). The DP had become ‘Menderes’s party’ and there was no one of any stature to challenge him.

The opposition was in disarray. The RPP was the only party with a national following. But during its years in opposition it failed to offer any alternative to the DP, shed its image as an authoritarian party or win the public’s confidence. The Freedom Party, though it became a significant opposition with thirty-two members in the assembly, lacked national organisation to transform itself into an effective opposition. Thus when Menderes announced that an early general election was to be held on 27 October 1957, the three opposition parties – the RPP, the FP and the Republican Nation Party (RNP) – failed to agree on any formula for cooperation, blaming İnönü for the failure.

Though the Democrats won the 1957 election, the turnout was lower and their vote declined to below 50 per cent, losing them their right to claim the mandate of the ‘national will’. They still enjoyed a substantial majority in parliament with 424 seats as compared to 178 Republican seats and only 4 each for the FP and RNP. The opposition became more confident, questioned the election results and called for the reform of political institutions. Meanwhile the economy stagnated with high inflation. Under Western pressure, Menderes was forced to introduce a stabilisation programme in August 1958, devaluing the Turkish lira from 2.80 to 9.025 to the US dollar.

Because of the deteriorating economic situation and rising social tensions, the country began to experience popular unrest against the government. There were student demonstrations encouraged by the opposition and troops were called in to quell them. In January 1958 there were rumours of a military conspiracy marked by the arrest of nine officers. But the government was unable to uncover a plot despite a long investigation. The government had lost control over virtually the entire state apparatus – the armed forces, the bureaucracy, the universities and the press. The July 1958 military coup and the overthrow of the monarchy in Iraq had a detrimental effect on political life in Turkey. As a result the Democrats became more truculent and began calling for measures against the opposition, accusing it of engaging in ‘subversive activities’.

Prime Minister Menderes spoke of curtailing democracy if the RPP did not desist from its negative policies, but the RPP refused to be intimidated. On
12 October 1958 the Democrats called for the creation of a ‘Fatherland Front’ in order to counter what they described as the RPP’s ‘front of malice and hostility’. The Republicans had become more confident after the 1957 election and harassed the government at every opportunity. The decision of the FP to dissolve itself and merge with the Republicans added to their confidence. Moreover, the RPP had begun to acquire a new image by focusing on the country’s concern with growing economic inequality and social justice. The party began to call for constitutional and institutional reforms, reforms they themselves had failed to carry out during their long years in power.

After Menderes survived a crash at London’s Gatwick airport in February 1959 the government began to exploit a cult of personality. The tragic crash took the lives of fourteen of his entourage who had come to resolve the crisis in Cyprus. But Menderes’s survival was portrayed as a miracle; Islam was now used more explicitly in the political struggle against the opposition. Meanwhile, early in 1959, İnönü proposed that the government hold early elections in order to calm the situation. In April, he launched a country-wide campaign whose climax was his tour of the DP’s stronghold, the Aegean region where the İnönü party was attacked and he was struck by a stone. The RPP exploited the incident and walked out of the assembly when the DP majority refused to discuss, let alone investigate, the incident.

Political life was polarised and there seemed no common ground between the parties. The RPP kept demanding an early election while DP hardliners called for the disbandment of the RPP. Any possibility of an early election was ruled out on 1 March when the government passed the 1960 budget and political calculations based on an early poll were upset; the RPP declared that ‘it was now impossible for the two parties to overcome their differences’. 19

The political situation continued to deteriorate with neither side willing to compromise. On 18 April 1960 the government established a committee of Democrats to investigate whether the RPP had transgressed the legal limits of opposition. The committee was given extraordinary powers superseding those of the assembly and the courts. It recommended the suspension of all political activity for three months as well as a press blackout on its investigation. As though that was not sufficient, on 27 April the government gave the committee further powers to control the press, to issue subpoenas and even to imprison anyone who hampered the investigation.

The committee sparked off a demonstration in the capital on 19 April and law professors denounced these measures as unconstitutional. In assembly

19 Cumhuriyet, 12 March 1960.
debates that followed, İsmet İnönü was suspended for twelve sessions for inciting the people to revolt and resist the law, attacking the Turkish nation and army and the integrity of the assembly.\textsuperscript{20} The opposition responded by using its youth organisation to demonstrate in Ankara and Istanbul, leading to the establishment of martial law and the closure of the universities.

By early May the situation had stabilised, largely because the demonstrations had not spread to the urban masses. But relations between the parties remained brittle and there was talk of military intervention. İnönü, hinting at the fall of Syngman Rhee in South Korea, told foreign journalists that ‘an oppressive régime can never be sure of the army’; Foreign Minister Zorlu replied that the ‘Turkish officer is fully aware that the army should not interfere in politics’.\textsuperscript{21} But plans for a coup were already at an advanced stage, and though the government seemed aware of a conspiracy it could do little to prevent it. Menderes decided to shore up his position by demonstrating that he still enjoyed popular support by going before meetings throughout the country. He addressed large crowds throughout western Turkey, returning to Ankara for the 19 May Youth Day festival.

The situation seemed to be under control until the War College cadet demonstration of 21 May. The government was flustered, and responded by declaring a state of siege in the capital. Ironically, the conspirators, fearing lest an investigation of the cadets might lead to the discovery of their plot, hastened their coup. It was scheduled to take place while Menderes was visiting Greece on 25 May. But on 24 May Menderes decided to postpone the visit and set out on another tour of Anatolia. He declared that the investigating committee had completed its work and was preparing its report. He was even going to announce an early general election for June in his Konya speech, hoping that would restore political normality. But before he could do so, the conspirators arrested him on the morning of 27 May, opening a new page in Turkey’s political life.\textsuperscript{22}

Political life after 27 May 1960

Having captured political power the military junta of thirty-eight officers, calling itself the National Unity Committee (NUC), adopted the opposition’s ideas of amending the 1924 constitution and bringing Turkey’s institutions in

\textsuperscript{20} Ahmad, Experiment, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., pp. 147 ff.
line with the requirements of the post-war world. Professor Siddik Sami Onar, the rector of Istanbul University, was invited to write a new constitution. The junta’s decision to involve intellectuals transformed a military coup into an institutional revolution, a ‘revolution of the intellectuals’.

The Onar Commission presented its preliminary report on 28 May and legitimised the intervention, describing how the DP had corrupted political power and lost respect for the constitution, the press, the army and the university. The commission recommended creating a totally new state and social institutions before restoring political authority and legal government to civilians. Meanwhile on 12 June 1960 the NUC set up an interim government legalised by a provisional constitution allowing the NUC to rule until a new parliament had been elected.

Broadly speaking, there were two factions in the NUC: moderates and radicals. The moderates constituted the majority representing the liberal and democratic wing that wanted to restore power to the politicians – that is to say, the RPP. The radicals, mainly junior officers under Colonel Alparslan Türkeş, wanted to retain power *sine die* so as to carry out a more thorough
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institutional restructuring than that envisaged by the intellectuals. However, on 13 November the fourteen radicals were purged from the NUC, allowing the moderates to carry out their programme. On 22 February 1962 and 20/21 May 1963, frustrated junior officers and cadets led by Colonel Talat Aydemir attempted to carry out coups against the NUC. These were the last attempts at coups from below; the senior officers took counter-measures to ensure that any future military intervention was limited to the hierarchical principle.

The 1961 constitution and the new institutions such as the electoral law guaranteeing proportional representation were designed to prevent ‘majoritarian democracy’ of the type practised between 1950 and 1960. It was a radical departure from its predecessor. There was a bicameral parliament, with the lower house elected by proportional representation, and an upper house, the senate, consisting of 150 members, some elected by a straight majority while others were appointed by the president. The two chambers together constituted the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). The assembly elected the president for a term of seven years from among its own members by a two-thirds majority. The cabinet was responsible to the assembly. An important innovation that frustrated future governments was the creation of the constitutional court, whose principal function was to review the constitutionality of legislation. It became one of the most important and controversial institutions, constantly under attack from politicians whose arbitrary acts it refused to sanction.

The 1961 constitution guaranteed citizens the freedoms of thought, expression, association and publication, as well as other civil liberties, and promised ‘social and economic rights . . . and the freedom of work and enterprise’. The military high command was made the guardian of the new regime. Article 111 created the National Security Council (NSC) made up of ‘the Ministers provided by law, the Chief of the General Staff, and representatives of the armed forces’. Its function was to assist the cabinet ‘in the making of decisions related to national security and co-ordination’. The term ‘national security’ was so broad and all-embracing that the generals had a say in virtually every problem that came before the cabinet. In March 1962, a bill increased the powers and influence of the NSC, allowing the body to interfere in the deliberations of the cabinet. Moreover Article 110 made the chief of staff responsible to the prime minister, not the defence minister, in the exercise of his duties and powers. The armed forces had become an autonomous institution recognised as the

guardians and partners of the new order. The high command had become an integral part of the political and socio-economic life of the country.

The revolution changed the political architecture in other ways as well. Turkey now enjoyed a greater degree of freedom than ever before. Citizens had greater civil rights, and the universities greater autonomy, with students allowed to organise their own associations. Workers were given the right to strike as well. In such a political environment, some intellectuals and trade unionists organised the Workers’ Party of Turkey (WPT) to represent workers and peasants.

The Democrat Party became a part of history, but its political base remained a much-sought-after prize by all the neo-Democrat parties of the centre-right. Two such parties were formed in 1961 as soon as political activity was restored. They were the Justice Party (JP), led by a retired general with close ties to the junta, and the New Turkey Party (NTP), whose leader, Ekrem Alican, had opposed Menderes and formed the Freedom Party in 1955. In the general election of October 1961, these parties won 48.5 per cent of the vote between them (34.8 and 13.7 per cent respectively) compared to the 36.7 per cent won by İnönü’s RPP. The election was a tribute to the charisma of Adnan Menderes. After a public trial that was designed to humiliate him and destroy his prestige, Menderes and two ministers, Fatin Rüştü Zorlu (foreign affairs) and Hasan Polatkan (finance), had been hanged in September 1961. But he continued to exercise his authority from beyond the grave, and the election was also a vote of censure against the military regime which had ousted him. As there was no question of permitting a neo-DP coalition to form the government – that would have invited another intervention by the army – President Cemal Gürsel asked İnönü to do so.

The first coalition (10 November 1961 – 30 May 1962) was a partnership between the RPP and a reluctant JP. It lasted barely six months because of constant threats and prodding from the Armed Forces Union. The second coalition was formed with great difficulty on 25 June, and only after much bullying by the generals. It survived until December 1963. All the parties in the assembly except the JP provided ministers: that is to say the RPP the NTP and the Republican Peasants’ Nation Party, plus independents. But the RPP’s partners performed so badly in the local and municipal elections of November 1963 that they withdrew from the coalition, concluding that collaborating with İnönü was the kiss of death. After these elections, the JP became the most popular party in the country.

İnönü formed his last cabinet with independents on 25 December 1963, coinciding with the crisis over Cyprus and the threat of war with Greece. No
longer commanding a majority in the assembly, İnönü survived and received a vote of confidence on 3 January 1964 because some members of the opposition parties supported the government in the crisis. But throughout 1964, the opposition gave no quarter to the government, despite the country’s preoccupation with Cyprus. The cabinet could have been brought down at any time. But JP’s leader, Süleyman Demirel, waited for the opportune moment after his own position was more secure both in the party and with the generals. By the beginning of 1965 he was ready to assume control and decided to use the budget debate on 12 February as the occasion to force İnönü’s resignation.

The fourth coalition was JP rule by proxy. It was led by Suat Hayri Ürgüplü, an independent senator elected on the JP list, and included other independents as well as ministers from the parties of the right. This government’s principal task was to lead the country to the general election later in the year and restore political stability. The voters were tired of weak, ineffective governments. In the 1965 general election they therefore voted for the nearest option they had to the populist DP: Süleyman Demirel’s JP.

The JP had been formed on 11 February 1961 with the blessing of the army. It is no coincidence that its leader, Ragıp Gümüşpala, was a retired general who had commanded the Third Army in May 1960. He was appointed chief of the general staff on 3 June and retired in August to emerge as the leader of the principal neo-Democrat party six months later. Gümüşpala was the army’s insurance against DP revanchisme and the ex-Democrats’ insurance against military pressure. His death on 5 June 1964 brought the party face to face with the crisis of leadership. All the factions put forward their candidates: the hard-line ex-Democrats nominated Said Bilgiç; those who wanted to appease the army proposed a retired air force general, Tekin Arıburun, who had also been Celal Bayar’s aide-de-camp; the conservatives supported a law professor, Ali Fuad Başgil; and the middle-of-the-road moderates put forward Demirel, a relatively unknown engineer whose patron had been Adnan Menderes. Because he was the least controversial candidate, the party chose Demirel as its leader.

Süleyman Demirel epitomised the new Turkish politician who rose to the top because the junta had purged the top layer of leadership from politics. That was perhaps either the most destructive or the most constructive aspect (depending on one’s political perspective) of the military intervention. An artificial political vacuum was created which sucked in people who would otherwise have remained outside politics. Demirel had been an engineer in the state’s Department of Water Works and it is doubtful if he would have entered politics but for the extraordinary circumstances of the 1960s.
Within the party Demirel was seen as a technocrat ideally suited to deal with the modern world and who, in sharp contrast to Menderes, understood the workings of a complex economy. Since he lacked a political base in Isparta, his place of birth, he was considered politically weak and therefore unlikely to dominate the party. Moreover, his modest village–small-town background, which he exploited with skill, made Demirel appealing to the ‘ordinary Turk’, especially the ambitious rural migrant who had settled in the shantytowns of the major cities and who could identify with Demirel as a ‘self-made man’. Though he was not an exceptional orator, his idiom and the way he spoke made him a ‘man of the people’ while leaders like İnönü, and even the socialist Mehmed Ali Aybar, the leader of the WPT, clearly belonged to the old military–bureaucratic elite.  

Politics in the 1960s contrasted sharply with those of the previous decade. Turkey had been thoroughly politicised after 1960 and the new freedoms provided by the constitution permitted ideological politics for the first time. There was now a left-wing presence in the country, especially in the universities. Students had organised their own political associations, some affiliated to the WTP. Political literature, especially translations of left-wing writings from the West, was readily available. The isolation of Turkey came to an end and the country became more aware of the world around it. The right, alarmed by this awakening, abandoned its complacency and began to mobilise its own forces in support of what was described as ‘the struggle against communism’. These political trends coincided with the country’s disenchantment with the United States. Throughout the 1950s Menderes had remained totally loyal to Washington and had supported US Cold War policy without question. On seizing power, the junta immediately reaffirmed Turkey’s commitments to her Western allies. During the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962, Prime Minister İnönü promised to stand by Washington even if that meant facing a Soviet attack and nuclear annihilation, as it very nearly did. But during that crisis Turkey learned that she was little more than a bargaining counter in the negotiations between the superpowers and that her ally did not take her interests into account during the negotiations. Public opinion became convinced that Turkey’s interests were negotiable and that she was no longer a ‘strategic asset’ for Washington. The Cyprus crisis of 1963/4 in which Washington seemed to side with Athens – especially the Johnson letter of June 1964 – inflamed public opinion against America. There were anti-American

24 Ibid., pp. 55–103; and Ahmad, Experiment, pp. 112–36.
demonstrations which continued on and off until the military takeover of 12 March 1971.\textsuperscript{25}

Turkish public opinion had become so outraged by the events on the island and was so convinced of the righteousness of the Turkish cause that there was overwhelming support for military intervention. That is why the shock was so great when the country learned of President Johnson’s letter of 5 June to Prime Minister İnönü forbidding intervention. Though the full text of the letter became public knowledge only much later, its contents were leaked to the press almost immediately. It seemed to confirm the claims of the nationalists who, since the Cuban missile crisis, had charged that Turkey was a pawn of the West, which had no intentions of coming to her defence if ever the need arose. The Johnson letter gave rise to virulent anti-Americanism and a clamour from nationalists and the left for a ‘non-aligned Turkey’. Even the government was shaken by Johnson’s bluntness and its own impotence.

Anti-Americanism became more than an issue of foreign policy; it polarised the country into two camps, which have been rather crudely defined as the pro-American right and the anti-American left. In fact, those who made up the anti-American camp included neo-Kemalist nationalists of all political stripes as well as leftists, and the two often overlapped. Such people came to see Turkey’s predicament in terms of dependence on and exploitation by the capitalist West whose leader was the United States. The history of Turkey’s war of liberation was reinterpreted and presented as a struggle against imperialism with the Kemalists bent on establishing an independent, non-aligned state while their opponents were willing to accept foreign tutelage.

A similar analysis was applied to post-war Turkey, and the rulers were criticised for lacking the determination to preserve the country’s true independence. Both the RPP and the DP were found guilty; the former for accepting the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan and the latter for leading Turkey into NATO and the Baghdad Pact. However, there was no excuse for continuing these policies now that they had been exposed by recent events as being futile.

For the first time, such criticism came from outside the bureaucratic establishment and the major parties. It came mainly from the intelligentsia, especially groups of students who formed ‘ideas clubs’ (\textit{fikir kulüpleri}) in the universities where they discussed the problems confronting their underdeveloped society or, in their words, a society which had been ‘left underdeveloped’ by

imperialism. These clubs were the first serious attempt to create a civil society in a country where bureaucratic control had smothered all initiative. Some of their members joined the WPT, which provided a political platform for their views. Even the RPP was influenced by these radical trends and was forced to respond by describing itself as ‘left-of-centre’ in order to remain politically relevant.

The right was alarmed by the appeal of this new radical nationalism which it denounced as communist. Since the neo-Kemalists had succeeded in making nationalism one of the tenets of their ideology, the right, which hitherto had monopolised nationalism, was forced to use Islam as a counterforce. New right-wing organisations such as the Association to Combat Communism were formed as early as 1962 and presented ‘Islam as the antidote to communism’. This political manipulation of Islam continued to increase throughout the 1960s, especially after Saudi money became influential through the organisation known as the Union of the World of Islam or the Rabitat-ul Alem-ul Islam. But religion also became significant politically when the economic policies of import substitution marginalised an entire sector of society, parts of which, as we shall see, sought a remedy in Islamist politics.26

Demirel, whose Justice Party won the 1965 election with a majority sufficiently large to form the government, had to cope with all the new forces released by the 27 May regime. Because he spent a year in America as an Eisenhower fellow and was employed by a US multinational corporation operating in Turkey, Demirel became the symbol of modern capitalism and the link with the United States. He was therefore attacked from all sides: by the left and the neo-Kemalists, as well as the religious right, which denounced him as a Freemason. Demirel’s political position deteriorated as the 1960s drew to a close. He had no solution for the frustration over the Cyprus problem which continued to fester with time, seeming to favour the Greeks. The country became more politicised, resulting in increasing anti-Americanism, especially after the US intervened in Vietnam and the 1967 war in the Middle East.

During these years, Turkey’s workers became more militant and politicised by the events of the 1960s, especially by the propaganda of the WPT. Consequently, in 1967 a group of unions broke away from the pro-government confederation, Türk-İş, and formed the radical confederation DİSK (the Confederation of Revolutionary Workers’ Unions). The former, founded on

the American model, concentrated on economic demands and discouraged political affiliation. The latter, following Europe’s example, claimed that economic demands could be won only through political action. It therefore supported the WPT. The split resulted in defections and the weakening of Türk-İş which, despite claims to the contrary, was unofficially affiliated to the JP. The government and the employers’ unions were alarmed. They saw that they were losing control of the workers’ movement and decided to regain control before it was too late.

Demirel may have controlled the situation better had his own party remained united. But that was not the case, not because of any failing on his part, but because of the consequences of economic policies with which he was identified. He wanted to be the architect of a modern capitalist state and society, willing to bury old, outmoded structures in order to achieve this goal. He told the assembly: ‘The path of the modern Turkish state will be totally different from the methods of nineteenth-century capitalism.’ And so it was. Large-scale modern capitalist enterprises, which in some areas had the character of a monopoly, soon became dominant throughout Anatolia. A small group of capitalists, some of whom were soon to be listed among the Fortune 500 companies, took advantage of the new economic policies. But the small independent tradesmen, merchants and artisans who were scattered throughout the country failed to survive the competition.

Those who represented this traditional lower-middle class in the JP began to criticise Demirel for falling into the hands of vested interests and serving them rather than the people. They adopted Islamist rhetoric and denounced him as a Freemason, allegedly like most big businessmen and industrialists in Turkey. Demirel recognised the dilemma of these people, but he offered them no help, only advice. ‘In our country’, he told their delegation, ‘there are a million and a half tradesmen and artisans; that means about five or six million people. Self-sufficient, experienced, knowledgeable, and skilled people are a force in the democratic order. Today’s small tradesman may be tomorrow’s factory owner.’ But in order to rise above their predicament they were told to organise and pool their resources. However, few were either able or willing to do that; many went bankrupt.

If these people failed to heed Demirel’s advice, they did begin to organise politically, supporting those who opposed Demirel and his policies. In May 1968, Professor Necmettin Erbakan, soon to found the Islamist National Order Party (NOP), attacked the government’s economic policies which he said had made Turkey into ‘an open market for Europe and America’. A year later, with the support of the delegates from Anatolia, Erbakan defeated Demirel’s
candidate in the election for the presidency of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

The JP won the general election in October 1969 but its share of the vote was reduced by 6.4 per cent. Encouraged by these results, Erbakan formed his own party in January 1970. Later in the year, in December, another faction broke away from the JP and formed the Democratic Party. Meanwhile, Colonel Türkç, who had seized control of the Republican People’s Nation Party in 1965, renamed it the Nationalist Action Party (NAP) in February 1969. His aim was to attract the same lower-middle-class vote by creating a militant, ultranationalist, neo-fascist party that claimed to be equally opposed to monopoly capitalism and communism. The RPP had also split soon after it adopted the left-of-centre programme in 1965. Its right wing broke away in protest and under Professor Turhan Feyzioğlu’s leadership formed the Reliance Party, later the Republican Reliance Party. This fragmented right became the major factor of political instability of the 1970s.

Rising political tensions, societal changes and events around the world coalesced in the late 1960s and early 1970s to produce an explosive situation. Industrial expansion with a high rate of growth created ever-rising expectations that proved impossible to meet. High inflation restricted consumption to an affluent minority; the labour force grew but never in proportion to the demand for jobs so that unemployment was always rising, though mitigated by emigration to Europe to fuel its ‘economic miracle’. At the same time workers became more militant and joined unions in increasing numbers. As in most Third World countries, Turkey’s population not only increased rapidly, but the percentage of those under thirty assumed alarming proportions. The education system, already inadequate, failed to meet the needs of a growing student body while the economy failed to provide jobs to thousands of new graduates each year. Schools and institutions of higher education (universities, teachers’ training colleges and schools of theology) doubled their enrolment in the 1960s and became recruiting grounds for fringe political groups of the left and right.

Murat Belge, a left-wing activist in the 1960s and an ideologue of the left, wrote that in ‘the prevailing hothouse atmosphere of Turkish student politics, the dramatic events of 1968 – the Tet offensive in February, the French student rising in May, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in August – had an even greater impact than in most countries’. These events coincided with the

amendment of the electoral law on 1 March abolishing the ‘national remainder system’. This provision of the electoral law had allowed the Workers’ Party to win fourteen seats in the 1965 assembly and play an oppositional role of historic importance totally out of proportion to its size. That is why the government wanted to amend the law and remove the WPT from the political scene.

Under the amended law, the WPT would have secured only three seats for the same number of votes; in the 1969 election it won only two. Commenting on the new law, *The Economist* (9 March 1968) drew the obvious conclusion: ‘Since the Turkish Communist party is banned, the Labour [i.e. Workers’] party is indeed the only legal home for extreme left-wingers. Subversion thrives in political frustration, and whether the Labour party is subversive now, it is much more likely to be tempted in that direction if its parliamentary outlet is largely stopped up.’

The WPT itself did not become subversive, though some of its supporters did. Convinced that the parliamentary road had been closed off to the left, some came to believe that the only way to power was via a military coup in partnership with sympathetic officers. The left became divided among those who continued to support the WPT and those who supported the ‘National Democratic Revolution’—that is to say, an alliance with radical military officers. Others were convinced that the answer to Turkey’s problems was to be found in Maoism of perhaps the Indian, Naxalite variety, or the Latin American urban guerrilla strategy.

Meanwhile, the government, having wounded the left with the election law, decided to destroy DİSK’s political unionism by passing a law favouring the pro-government Türk-İş. The amended law, wrote Professor İşki, an expert on the Turkish union movement, ‘prohibited the existence of unions unless they represented at least one third of those working in a particular workplace. Most important, however, was the explicit and public admission by government spokesmen that the amendment was going to be used to wipe DİSK out of existence.’

The workers responded to this law by staging a vast and largely spontaneous demonstration on 15/16 June 1970 and succeeded in totally paralysing the entire Istanbul–Marmara region. This was the last straw for the regime, which described the demonstration as ‘the dress rehearsal for revolution’. Observers noted the government’s inability to maintain law and order with the institutions of the Second Republic and predicted another period of

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military tutelage. Demirel had often complained that it was impossible to run the country with such a liberal and permissive constitution.

By January 1971, Turkey seemed to be in a state of chaos. The universities had ceased to function. Left-wing students emulating Latin American urban guerrillas robbed banks, kidnapped US servicemen and attacked American targets. Neo-fascist militants bombed the homes of university professors critical of the government. Factories were on strike and more workdays were lost between 1 January and 12 March 1971 than during any prior year. The Islamists had become more aggressive and the NOP openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces.

By the beginning of March, Demirel had been overwhelmed by the rapidly deteriorating situation which he no longer controlled. A meeting of his party’s assembly group on 8 March showed that he no longer enjoyed its confidence and the generals learned of this immediately from their confidants in the JP. Two days later, they met and decided that Demirel would have to go since he no longer enjoyed the full support of his own party. Therefore on 12 March, the generals acting on behalf of the Turkish armed forces presented a memorandum to President Sunay and the chairmen of the two chambers. They demanded the formation of a strong, credible government capable of implementing reforms envisaged by the constitution. They threatened to take power if the government refused to resign, leaving Demirel with no alternative. His resignation cleared the way for the anti-democratic measures he had often called for but had been unable to take because of the guarantees provided by the 1961 constitution.

Social democracy and political terror, 1971–80

The generals gave priority ‘to the restoration of law and order’, and that meant the elimination of the political left and all its organisations such as the Workers’ Party, the Federation of the Revolutionary Youth of Turkey or the Dev-Genç youth movement, the ideas clubs in the universities, branches of the Union of Teachers and DİSK. At the same time, the so-called Idealist Hearths, the youth organisation of the Nationalist Action Party, were given free rein to act as vigilantes against their ideological rivals.

The junta replaced Demirel’s government with an ‘above-party’ cabinet of technocrats and on 19 March Professor Nihat Erim, a conservative Republican, was appointed prime minister. He was supported by the right-wing parties and, with İnönü’s backing, was expected to win over the RPP. Erim failed

29 Ibid., p. 325.
to carry out the reform programme envisaged by the junta, partly because of the fresh outbreak of terrorist violence carried out by left-wing extremists driven underground when the political left was proscribed. Martial law was declared in April in eleven provinces, including the south-east where Kurdish separatists were active. As a result political life ground to a halt and on 3 May all strikes and lockouts were declared illegal.

For the next two years, repression became the order of the day. The constitution, blamed by the right for all of Turkey’s problems, was amended without public discussion so that the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the 1961 constitution were removed. The generals had concluded that the liberal constitution was a luxury for Turkey, a developing society. After the liberal constitution had been amended, there was talk of reform. But the right was opposed to economic reforms and Demirel therefore created a crisis by withdrawing JP ministers from the cabinet. The crisis was resolved on Demirel’s terms but eleven reformist ministers, convinced that reform was dead, resigned and forced Erim to follow suit.

The second Erim cabinet (11 December 1971–17 April 1972) was also a failure. Without Demirel’s support Erim could do little, and Demirel was biding his time in order to regain power at the next election. Erim therefore resigned and was succeeded by Ferit Melen, who continued to give priority to law and order rather than reform and the fundamental problems of economy and society remained untouched. But as 1973 approached, the mood in the country began to change with the promise of elections. In May 1972 Bulent Ecevit had succeeded in capturing the RPP’s leadership from İsmet İnönü and began to steer the party towards social democracy. He also abandoned İnönü’s policy of collaborating with the generals; instead, he and Demirel agreed not to elect General Faruk Gürler president when General Cevdet Sunay’s term expired in 1973. On 6 April retired admiral Fahri Korutürk, a compromise candidate, was elected president. When Melen resigned on 7 April, Korutürk appointed Naim Talu, a conservative spokesman for big business, as prime minister. Reform was now a dead letter and it was left to the post-election government to carry it out.

Turkey began to prepare for election. The right seemed firmly under Demirel’s control, though it was still fragmented thanks to the formation of such small parties as the Reliance Party, the National Action Party and the National Salvation Party (NSP), formed after the closure of the Order Party in 1971. The left, heavily bruised after March 1971, began to coalesce around the new, social democratic RPP. Social democracy became so dominant after the October 1973 election that the generals were forced to intervene.
even more forcefully in September 1980. The RPP had won with 33.3 per cent of the vote and 185 seats, but it still lacked the 226 necessary for a parliamentary majority. Ecevit was forced to form a coalition with a party of the right.

When Ecevit was asked to form the government, Turkey’s establishment wanted to see an RPP–JP coalition, with Demirel restraining Ecevit’s radicalism. But Demirel refused to join any coalition, knowing that the new government would face the odium of having to take unpopular economic measures in order to deal with a worsening economic crisis, partly the result of a downturn in the world economy. Ecevit was forced to turn to Necmettin Erbakan, the Islamist populist leader. After much haggling, the RPP–NSP coalition, formed in January 1974, was based not on any shared programme but on pure political opportunism. It was therefore fragile and not destined to last. It ended on 18 September when Ecevit resigned. Having become a charismatic leader following his decision to intervene in Cyprus after the Greek Cypriot coup against President Makarios, he was convinced that he would win an early election and come to power on his own.

He miscalculated badly because the parties of the right, fearing an Ecevit landslide, refused to permit an early election. Instead, they agreed to form a coalition under Demirel that came to be known as the ‘Nationalist Front’, the ‘Rightist Front against the Left’. The cabinet, announced on 31 March 1975, was made up of four parties – Justice, Salvation, Reliance and the Nationalist Action Party – supported from the outside by Democratic Party defectors acting as independents. The Action Party was able to have two of its three deputies in the cabinet, thereby legitimising its neo-fascist ideology. The parties of the right used the coalition to colonise the state by placing their supporters in various ministries. The pro-Front media popularised the slogan ‘Demirel in Parliament, Türkçe in the Street’ and the party’s militants, known as the Grey Wolves, began to play an even more active role in the violence so that political terrorism became a regular feature of Turkish life. Political violence plagued Turkey throughout the 1970s, provoking military intervention in 1980. Its immediate aim was to undermine Ecevit’s social democratic movement as an electoral factor.

The attack on RPP meetings did not have the desired effect of intimidating the party’s supporters. When the senate elections were held in October 1975, Ecevit’s share of the vote increased from 35.4 to 43.9 per cent. Demirel’s also increased, from 30.8 to 40.8 per cent, while that of the small parties declined. It seemed as though the country, tired of squabbling coalitions, was returning to a two-party system.
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The voters responded neither to the Islamist propaganda of the Salvationists nor to the exploitation by the neo-fascists of the communist threat. They voted parties with programmes: the RPP’s promise to create a capitalist Turkey ‘with a human face’, and Demirel’s ‘Great Turkey’ of which all Turks would be proud.

Ironically the election results guaranteed the continuation of the Nationalist Front coalition until the general election for which all parties began to prepare in earnest via their control over the state structure. Violence increased throughout 1976 and 1977 with the government unable to check it. The liberal press spoke openly of the threat of fascism. Prime Minister Demirel decided that the only way to extricate himself from the Nationalist Front was to hold an early general election. On 5 April 1977 the JP and the RPP voted together to hold the election on 5 June.

The tempo and intensity of political violence increased sharply with the announcement of elections. It reached its climax on May Day 1977 when a huge rally was organised in Istanbul as a show of strength against what it described as ‘the rising tide of fascism’. The right succeeded in turning the rally into a massacre. If their aim was to intimidate voters it failed miserably, for when the election was held the following month the turnout had increased from 68.8 per cent in 1973 to 72.2 per cent and though the RPP won 213 seats it failed to win the 226 necessary to form the government on its own.30

Ecevit formed a minority government, the first in Turkish history, but he failed to win a vote of confidence on 3 July. Demirel then formed the ‘Second Nationalist Front’ government on 21 July. In this coalition the JP had thirteen portfolios, the Islamists eight and the neo-fascists five, exposing how dependent the JP had become on the extreme right. However, this coalition did not survive the local elections of December 1977. On 31 December, Demirel failed to win the vote of confidence when twelve JP deputies who had resigned voted against the government because of the ongoing violence and oppression against the Kurds in the south-east.

Ecevit was able to form a cabinet with the support of defectors from the JP and the old RPP, all acting as independents. He knew that such men would never permit him to implement his programme, and all he promised to do was to ‘restore peace and unity’ in the country. But he failed to accomplish

30 The RPP won 41.4 per cent of the ballot and the JP 36.9 per cent. The share of other parties, apart from the NAP, was substantially reduced and the Democratic and Reliance parties were virtually eliminated. The Salvationists lost half their seats in the assembly, suggesting that religion was not the primary factor in determining the way Turks voted. Only the NAP among the minor parties did well in 1977, its vote increased from 3.4 to 6.4 per cent and its representation in the assembly from three to thirteen seats. In this case both violence and state power had paid off.
even that and political terrorism took a sinister turn when the right began a campaign of assassination, culminating on 1 February 1979 with the murder of Abdi İpekçi, the editor of Milliyet, a liberal daily. Ecevit was forced to declare martial law in thirteen provinces on 25 December 1978 when the terrorists began targeting the Alevi community, an offshoot of the Shia sect. Even the limited martial law failed to curb the violence, and support for Ecevit began to erode. When partial senate and by-elections were held on 14 October 1979, the voters punished Ecevit: his vote declined to 29 per cent, that of the JP rose to 46.83 per cent, while the NSP and the NAP made no gains.

Ecevit resigned on 16 October and Demirel formed a minority government on 12 November. Another Nationalist Front cabinet was totally unacceptable though Demirel continued to depend on support of the right. The right had accomplished its aim of destroying social democracy just as the political left had been destroyed after 1971. Demirel won a vote of confidence on 25 November, although his government could not provide the political stability the region required after the political turmoil caused by the revolution in Iran and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan. Moreover, the onset of globalisation also required a government that was not amenable to populist electoral politics. Both required a military intervention that reorganised the entire political structure of Turkey to provide such a government. That is precisely what the military intervention of 12 September 1980 set out to do.

**Political and economic restructuring after 1980**

After dismissing the Demirel government, the generals set themselves up as the executive and legislative branch by establishing the National Security Council (NSC), made up of General Kenan Evren, who was chief of staff, and the chiefs of the army, navy, air force and gendarmerie. They governed, though some power was delegated to a technocratic cabinet led by retired admiral Bülent Ulusu until civilian rule was restored after the elections of November 1983. Meanwhile martial law was established and the generals set about restoring ‘law and order’. All political life came to a standstill as the political parties were closed down and former politicians banned from participating in politics. Before some semblance of political life was restored, Turkey’s institutions – the constitution, the electoral law, the universities – were radically amended so as to depoliticise the country.

When political parties were restored in 1983, only ‘new politicians’ were allowed to form them. Party leaders were carefully vetted, and were disqualified if they seemed a threat to the new regime. All members of the
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1980 parliament were disqualified from political activity for five years and all party leaders for ten. Thus when elections were held only three parties participated. The centre-right had coalesced around Turgut Özal’s Motherland Party, known by its Turkish acronym ANAP, and retired general Turgut Sunalp’s Nationalist Democracy Party (NDP), while the centre-left was represented by the Populist Party led by Necdet Calp, a retired bureaucrat whose only qualification was that he had been İsmet İnönü’s secretary31. Though banned, former politicians such as Süleyman Demirel, Bülent Ecevit, Necmettin Erbakan and Alpaslan Türkeş continued to cast a long shadow on political life.

The election of November 1983 brought Özal’s ANAP to power with 45.15 per cent of the vote, with the Populist Party receiving 30.46 per cent and the NDP 23.27 per cent. Özal claimed that his party represented all the ideological tendencies – from left to right – that had existed before 1980. He was a technocrat who had led the economy in Demirel’s last cabinet and continued to do so under the generals. He had asked for five years of ‘social peace’ with no political disruptions, and that is what the regime provided. He was given a free hand ‘to correct the country’s economic problems’ as he saw fit. That meant bringing down inflation by freeing prices, cutting back on consumption by holding down wages, increasing exports, and signing agreements with foreign creditors to postpone debt repayments that amounted to about eighteen billion dollars.

In Turkey, parties tend to assume the character of the leader rather than remain parties of ideas or programmes. Thus the RPP became İnönü’s party, the DP Menderes’s party, the JP Demirel’s party and the Islamist parties Erbakan’s parties. ANAP was Özal’s party right from the start, and his cabinets reflected his absolute control over the body; there was never a question of inner-party democracy. This remained true even after he became president in 1989 and formally left the party’s leadership.

By early 1986 the banned leaders – Demirel, Ecevit, Erbakan and Türkeş – had emerged on the political scene behind proxy parties. But these men had to wait until the referendum of 6 September 1987 before their political rights were restored. The way was open for an early election set for 29 November, with Özal calculating that the less time the opposition had to organise the better for his party. ANAP won the election but with a

reduced majority of 36.29 per cent, with the Social Democrats (SHP), led by İsmet İnönü’s son, Erdal İnönü, coming second with 24.81 per cent, and Demirel’s True Path Party (TPP) coming in third with 19.15 per cent. Four smaller parties failed to clear the 10 per cent hurdle introduced by the new electoral law and therefore won no seats. The left vote was now divided between the SHP and Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party (DLP), which won 8.53 per cent.

ANAP’s position continued to decline, and the local election of 26 March 1989 proved to be disastrous; within five years the party’s vote had declined from 45 to 22 per cent. Özal knew that he would lose his majority by the time the next general election was held in 1992, ending his political career. He therefore decided that he would have the assembly elect him president when General Evren’s term ended in 1989. The party, divided between Islamists of the ‘Holy Alliance’ and nationalists, saw Özal’s departure as an opportunity to seize control. Turgut Özal was elected Turkey’s eighth president on 31 October and assumed office on 9 November 1989.

Özal’s presidency (1989–93) was marked by political instability. Led by Yıldırım Akbulut, a colourless prime minister and without Özal’s controlling hand, factions began to struggle for leadership, further weakening the party. There was talk of military intervention because the government was unable to deal with a growing Kurdish insurgency, political assassination, ‘Islamic fundamentalism’, and economic problems. The Gulf crisis of 2 August 1990 distracted the country’s attention from domestic issues and strengthened Özal’s position. But the effect was only temporary. A survey taken in March 1991 showed that support for ANAP had slipped in Istanbul from 22 to 18 per cent. The fortunes of the social democrats had also declined and only Demirel’s TPP had made some gains. The election in June of the young, ‘modern’ Mesut Yılmaz – he was only forty-three – as ANAP’s leader, and the defeat for the nationalist–religious groups, promised to improve the party’s standing in the country. He decided to hold the general election in 1991 rather than 1992 when the economic situation would be even worse. Therefore the assembly voted to go to the polls on 20 October.

The elections vindicated Yılmaz’s decision, and ANAP came second behind Demirel’s TPP. The real losers were the divided social democrats. The Social Democratic Populist Party (SHP), the most popular party in 1989, had slumped to third place with 20.8 per cent of the vote and eighty-eight seats while Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party won 10.8 per cent of the vote and seven seats. Erbakan’s Welfare Party entered the assembly with sixty-two seats, reflecting the growing political importance of Turkey’s Muslim middle class.
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There were no significant ideological differences between the two centre-right parties – ANAP and TPP – but they refused to merge and form a strong government. Vested interests prevailed and Yılmaz preferred to go into opposition rather than accept Demirel’s leadership. Instead, despite ideological differences, Demirel formed a coalition with the Erdal İnönü’s social democrats, the kind of non-ideological coalition the country had sought throughout the 1970s.\(^\text{32}\) The government had 266 assembly seats and 48 per cent of the popular vote. In theory, it was a strong government capable of carrying out the reforms necessary to enter the global market.

Turgut Özal died suddenly on 17 April 1993, and was succeeded in May as president by Süleyman Demirel. He gave up the party’s leadership to Tansu Çiller (1946-), a relatively young and inexperienced politician, with a doctorate in economics and close links with the business community. The American-educated Çiller was expected to give a modern image to the party. She continued the coalition with the social democrats whose position with the voters eroded as they gave support to right-wing policies detrimental to the common man. The Welfare Party – the reincarnation of the Islamist NSP – took advantage and strengthened its position with the electorate.

During the 1990s, the Kurdish insurrection, which began in 1984, became more serious and moderate Kurdish politicians formed political parties in order to put their case in the assembly. One such party, the People’s Labour Party, was banned by the constitutional court in August 1993, and so was its successor, the People’s Democracy Party (HADEP), formed in May 1994. It too ran into problems. Meanwhile, the fortunes of the TPP declined rapidly under Çiller’s leadership and the Welfare Party won the general election in December 1995 with 21.38 per cent of the vote and 158 seats.\(^\text{33}\)

None of the parties had won sufficient seats to form the government, and attempts to form coalitions led nowhere. The secular parties refused to join a Welfare-led coalition while the leaders of TPP and ANAP – Çiller and Yılmaz – refused to serve under each other’s leadership. In March 1996, Yılmaz and Çiller finally agreed to form a coalition, with a rotating premiership, which was


\(^\text{33}\) The DYP received 19.18 per cent and 135 seats; ANAP, 19.65 per cent and 133 seats; DSP, 14.64%; RPP, 10.71%, reverted to its historic name; MHP, 8.18%; HADEP 4.17%; YDM (New Democracy Movement), 0.48%; Nation Party, 0.45%; New Democracy Party (YDP), 0.34%; the TPP split as a result of Çiller’s leadership and dissidents formed the Democrat Turkey Party.
supported by Ecevit’s Democratic Left Party. Refah’s Erbakan undermined this coalition, threatening to expose Çiller’s alleged corruption by launching a parliamentary investigation. Such a coalition was too unstable to have a long life, and tensions within the cabinet forced Mesut Yılmaz to resign on 6 June. There was no choice but to ask Erbakan to form the next cabinet, the first to be led by an Islamist.

Erbakan’s blackmail paid off, and Tansu Çiller agreed to form a coalition with the Islamists providing he froze the investigation against her. Erbakan, ever the opportunist, agreed and a ‘Welfarepath coalition’ with Erbakan as prime minister was announced on 29 June 1996. In the wake of such unprincipled political behaviour, a survey revealed that people had lost confidence in politicians as well as other state institutions, and only confidence in the military had increased.

Despite his cautious approach as prime minister, Erbakan was constantly criticised in the secular media. The generals who dominated the NSC humiliated him by further expanding Turkey’s military cooperation with Israel. Moreover, his efforts to appease the secular elites alienated his own grassroots supporters, who expected the kind of aggressive Islamist policy he had always spoken of before coming to power. But Welfare’s leadership had become moderate and centrist because of the gains made by the Anatolian bourgeoisie, the so-called ‘Anatolian tigers’, since the 1980s. The Islamist bourgeoisie wanted to share in the benefits of globalisation, and these were forthcoming only if their party was in power. The rank and file, on the other hand, having suffered economic hardship, continued to voice radical demands.

In February 1997, things came to a head when a Welfare Party mayor organised a ‘Jerusalem Day’ demonstration and called for the liberation of the city from Israel. It was a demonstration reminiscent of the Menemen incident of 1930, and the secular forces, particularly the armed forces, were appalled that such an event could be staged so near the capital. The army responded by sending tanks through the Sincan township, arresting the mayor, declaring the Iranian ambassador, who had spoken at the demonstration, persona non grata, and launching an investigation against the Welfare Party. Moreover, on 28 February the generals, describing political Islam as more dangerous than Kurdish nationalism, forced Erbakan to accept a twenty-point programme designed to undermine the influence of political Islam. Its supporters were to be purged from the state apparatus along with schools for prayer leaders and

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preachers, the expansion of which the generals had legislated after September 1980 in order to counter the influence of ‘leftist ideologies’.

In August a law was passed extending secular education from five to eight years with the aim of weakening the hold of political Islam on Turkey’s lower- and lower-middle-class youth.

Premier Erbakan’s position became untenable, and he resigned on 18 June 1997. He hoped that the coalition would survive if President Demirel appointed Tansu Çiller prime minister. But Demirel appointed ANAP’s Mesut Yılmaz, and the courts launched an investigation against the Welfare Party. The leaders, realising that their party would be dissolved, responded by forming another party – the Virtue Party (VP, Fazilet Partisi) in December 1997 with Recai Kutan as its leader. Each time the Islamist party was dissolved, its successor claimed to be more moderate and less Islamist. By May, Recai Kutan had abandoned the hardline Islamist rhetoric of Erbakan and no longer spoke of leaving NATO or of introducing Islamic banking. He also went to Anıtkabır to pay his respects to Atatürk, a demonstration that the Islamists were willing to join the mainstream of political life.

Nevertheless, the constitutional court dissolved the Virtue Party in June 2001, describing it as a hotbed of fundamentalism, especially for its role in promoting the headscarf in its campaign against the secular state. In July, Islamists formed Saadet or Felicity Party (FP), while in August the reformist and ‘modern’ wing of the Virtue Party formed the Justice and Development Party or JDP which they claimed was secular. Its leader was Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the former mayor of Istanbul, who had been imprisoned for inciting religious hatred and the violation of secularism. He soon became the most popular leader, and polls showed that his party would win the next election.

The Yılmaz-led coalition with the Democratic Left Party and the Democrat Turkey Party, founded by anti-Çiller dissidents, lasted until November 1998. Yılmaz was brought down by an opposition censure motion that charged him with corruption and links with the ‘mafia’. Ecevit, a rare politician with a clean record, formed a coalition with independents on 11 January 1999. His task was to lead Turkey to elections to be held on 25 April 1999. The capture of Abdullah Öcalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, the

PKK, on 15 February heightened the nationalist mood of the country, virtually guaranteeing a nationalist landslide in the coming election.

Ecevit, who had virtually abandoned social democracy, had reinvented himself as an ardent nationalist while the Action Party had no problem flaunting its extreme nationalism. The election result was described as a political earthquake. The nationalists (DLP and NAP) had eclipsed the liberals (ANAP, TPP) because voters were tired of the corruption and bickering of Yılmaz and Çiller. The Islamist vote had also declined from 19 in 1995 to 15.94 per cent in 1999, but the party was still a force to be reckoned with, as municipal election results showed. HADEP, the pro-Kurdish party, had failed at the national level but it controlled cities in south-east Anatolia. The RPP, on the other hand, seemed to offer nothing to the voter and failed to enter parliament.

Bülent Ecevit formed a coalition with ANAP and the NAP. His principal task was to manage a stagnant economy, and the coalition partners promised to work together and provide sorely needed political stability, thereby winning the support of the business community led by the Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association of Turkey (TÜSİAD, Türkiye Sanayiciler ve İş Adamları Derneği). But the devastating earthquakes of 17 August and 12 November 1999 marginalised plans to reform the economy, forcing the parties to pull together in the crisis. However, they could not agree to amend the constitution and allow Süleyman Demirel a second term when his presidency expired on 5 May 2000. They agreed to elect Ahmet Necdet Sezer as Turkey’s tenth president. He was president of the constitutional court, an independent-minded liberal secularist who promised to supervise the reform agenda required to meet the ‘Copenhagen criteria’ for Turkey’s entry into the EU. These criteria included economic reform, restoration of human rights and the protection of minorities (Kurds, Alevi and non-Muslims), as well as bringing the military under civil control. The EU’s demands divided the coalition and slowed down the reform programme.

In 2001 a new crisis rocked the coalition, which had been the most stable government of the last five years. On 19 February President Sezer rebuked Ecevit for tolerating corruption in his cabinet. Ecevit exploded, describing Sezer’s accusation as a ‘crisis’. The stock market, anticipating a political crisis, 36

36 The DSP share of the vote rose 10 per cent from 14 per cent in 1995 to 23.33 per cent; NAP’s rose over 100 per cent from 8.18 to 17.07 per cent; the Virtue Party’s vote fell from 19 to 15.94 per cent; ANAP fell 5 per cent to 14.12; DYP fell 8 per cent from 19 to 11.11 per cent; the CHP with 9.02 failed to clear the barrage. For the first time, the CHP found itself out of parliament; HADEP also failed to clear the 10 per cent threshold. See Ali Çarkoğlu, ‘The Geography of the April 1999 Turkish Elections’, Turkish Studies 1, 1 (Spring 2000).
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collapsed, creating financial and economic turmoil. The country’s financial situation was already weak, and Ecevit’s words merely triggered a storm that was about to break.37

Economic instability inevitably led to political instability. There were rumours that the coalition would be replaced by an interim government that would lead the country to fresh elections. On 16 July, Ecevit issued the warning that rumours were undermining confidence in the coalition and its ability to carry out the IMF programme. President Bush’s ‘war on terror’, following the 11 September attacks in New York and Washington, enhanced Turkey’s strategic position, ensuring urgent US loans for the recovery programme. But Washington required that Turkey have a stable government as well.

The ideologically divided coalition failed to carry out many of the reforms required by the EU, such as the abolition of the death penalty, giving certain rights to the Kurdish population, or bringing the armed forces under civilian control. It was a question of votes and the NAP feared it would lose its constituency (the lower middle class of Anatolia) if it supported such reforms. Ecevit’s sudden illness on 4 May 2002 raised the question of his resignation, but he refused to make way for a new leader. Had Ecevit resigned the coalition could have carried on under a new DLP leader such as İsmail Cem. As it was, however, the coalition was paralysed; the three parties knew that an early election might mean that they would not even clear the 10 per cent hurdle and be left out of the next parliament. Polls showed that the Justice and Development Party was considered the favourite in an early election.

On 7 July 2002, the NAP’s leader, Devlet Bahçeli, finally called for an early election to be held on 3 November, bringing the political crisis to a head. Next day the deputy prime minister, Hüsamettin Özkan, and three others from the DLP resigned. When Foreign Minister İsmail Cem resigned from the cabinet and the party, there were rumours that he would form a new political party with Kemal Derviş and Hüsamettin Özkan that would govern Turkey with the support of centre-right parties (ANAP and the TPP). But Ecevit refused to resign, and announced on 16 August that he would lead the country to early elections.

İsmail Cem’s New Turkey Party was formed on 22 July. Kemal Derviş, the most significant member of the troika, failed to join. When he resigned in August, he joined the RPP after failing to bring about a union of the centre-left

37 See Sefa Kaplan, Kemal Derviş: Bir ‘kurtarıcı‘ öyküsü (İstanbul: Metis, 2001). Kemal Derviş gives his own account, in Kemal Derviş, Krizden çıkış ve çağdaş sosyal demokrasi (İstanbul: Doğan, 2006). He describes the period from 25 February 2001, when he received a phone call from Ecevit, to 23 August, when he joined the RPP.
that included elements of the centre-right. He wanted to create a political movement he called ‘contemporary social democracy’, capable of coming to power on its own at the next election and forming a strong government that could carry out the reforms necessary to end the political and economic crises that had plagued Turkey throughout the 1990s. When he failed to form such a movement, Derviş joined the RPP led by Deniz Baykal. His membership of the RPP and his support in the media improved the party’s standing among voters. Surveys showed that Baykal was receiving only about 6 per cent of the vote while the JDP was in the 20 per cent range. Baykal had failed to enter parliament in 1999 and it was doubtful that he would do so in 2002. By early September the polls showed that the RPP had moved up from 6.9 to 14.3 per cent thanks to the ‘Kemal Derviş factor’. Meanwhile, the JDP’s vote had risen to almost 25 per cent. Confronted with this reality, on 18 September TÜSİAD’s chair Tuncay Özilhan stated his preference for an RPP–JDP coalition, especially if Kemal Derviş was in charge of the economy. That was the hope of the bourgeoisie: that the election of 3 November 2002 would produce a two-party coalition so that the RPP could control the ‘extremist, Islamist’ tendencies of its JDP partners.

The election results on 4 November produced a surprise. Justice and Development emerged as the winner with over 34 per cent of the votes and 363 seats, more than the number required to form the government. The RPP had won 19 per cent of the votes and had 180 seats, becoming the only opposition. All the other parties had failed to clear the 10 per cent barrier and therefore had no representation in a parliament in which 37 per cent of the voters were not represented.38 The voters were totally disenchanted with the old leaders and parties, and Erdoğan was seen as a new leader. Though he had cut his teeth in Erbakan’s Welfare Party he had broken away and had not joined its successor. He also had the common touch: he lacked a modern, professional education and knew no foreign language, but had succeeded in becoming a dollar millionaire while mayor of Istanbul. He was seen as a role model.

Though the JDP had its roots in political Islam, most of its leaders had moved to the centre and declared their party to be secular, democratic and conservative, Muslim democrats, rather like the Christian democrats in Europe. Surveys showed that the party’s support was 51 per cent rural and 49 per cent urban, and largely male. Housewives (17 per cent) tended to vote JDP while

38 It seemed that the voters had humiliated and eliminated the former party leaders Bülent Ecevit, Devlet Bahçeli, Necmettin Erbakan, Mesut Yılmaz and Tansu Çiller. Even the newly founded Young Party of the business tycoon Cem Uzan won only 7.2 per cent of the vote. Professional advertisers had run his campaign and given the voters musical concerts and free food, as well as much publicity in the Uzan-owned media.
urban working women tended not to. The Felicity Party, formed on 21 July 2001, was the successor to former parties of political Islam, and the electorate humiliated it by giving it only 2.5 per cent of the vote. The JDP represented the counter-elite that had emerged in Anatolia, and the press described the 2002 election as ‘the Anatolian revolution’.

The JDP relied on what may be described as the support of ‘moderate’ Muslims, the majority of whom (43 per cent) opposed the implementation of the şeriat. Some of its vote (27 per cent) came from the Felicity Party base, who voted for the JDP mainly because other parties had failed to deal with the economic crisis, marked by unemployment and rising prices. They reasoned that Erdoğan, having successfully run ‘greater Istanbul’, would be able to do the same with Turkey.  

Having served a prison sentence for making a divisive political speech, Erdoğan became prime minister in March 2003 only after a constitutional amendment permitted him to be elected to parliament. Under his leadership the party strengthened its position, increasing its vote in the local elections of March 2004 from 34 to 43 per cent while that of the RPP declined from 19 to 15 per cent. The Republican opposition offered no alternative programme while the governing party passed ‘reform packets’ to meet EU demands. Such was the progress in passing reforms that on 17 December 2004 the EU accepted Turkey’s membership conditionally on further reforms being implemented, and announced that accession talks could begin on 3 October 2005.

The liberal press saw the talks as the beginning of a long journey that would create a ‘new Europe and a new Turkey’. But there was also a nationalist backlash resulting from all the barriers that some European countries were raising in Turkey’s path, constantly making new demands for Turkey to meet. Thus Baykal’s RPP, like other opposition parties, was becoming nationalist and conservative rather than retaining its social democratic identity. The JDP was also affected by its own policies, which alienated its radical Islamist wing, disenchanted by the fact that the party had failed to legalise the headscarf in public spaces such as the universities, or open up more employment opportunities for the graduates of religious schools. On the other hand, secular forces in Turkey feared that Erdoğan had a secret agenda to Islamise society by colonising the state by means of packing the bureaucracy with his party’s supporters, a fear heightened by Erdoğan’s defence of a partial ban on alcohol sales in December 2005.

By 2006 the major political issue was the succession to President Ahmed Necdet Sezer, a militant secularist, whose term expired in May 2007. Secular Turkey was alarmed when it realised that Prime Minister Erdoğan was determined that his party should elect the president while it had the necessary majority in parliament to do so. The opposition therefore called for an early general election hoping that the JDP, whose popularity was thought to be declining, would not have the necessary votes in the new parliament to elect its nominee as president. It would therefore have to settle for a compromise candidate and elect an above-party president. But Erdoğan stated categorically: ‘Don’t expect early elections.’ On 10 April 2007, President Sezer, presiding over his last NSC meeting, warned his audience that religious fundamentalism had reached alarming proportions and Turkey’s only guarantee against this threat was its secular order, hinting that a military intervention was still on the cards if the governing party persisted in electing an ‘Islamist’ president. However, Erdoğan was faced with opposition from the radical ‘Islamist’ wing in his own party. Led by Bülent Arınç, the speaker of the house, they demanded that a committed ‘Islamist’ be nominated, failing which Arınç would put himself forward, thus dividing the party. Erdoğan compromised and chose Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül, a founding member of the JDP and respected by the secularists as a moderate Islamist.

The Republican opposition in parliament objected that the president could not be elected without a two-thirds quorum in the chamber, and they took their objection to the constitutional court. The court agreed, and annulled the first round of voting on 1 May 2007. When, five days later, parliament again failed to elect Abdullah Gül, his candidacy was withdrawn and the scene was set for an early general election, to be held on Sunday 22 July. The parties began to negotiate mergers so as to present the electorate with a robust and united front against the JDP. The ‘centre-left’ RPP and the Democratic Left Party (DSP) failed to agree on the terms of a merger, though the DSP agreed to fight the election alongside the RPP. The centre-right parties – the True Path and the Motherland Party – tried to reinvent themselves by calling themselves the Democrat Party, hoping that the magic of the name would bring them the necessary 10 per cent of the vote to get into parliament. However ANAP withdrew from the negotiations and the party decided not to contest the election, thereby virtually disappearing from political life. Erdoğan tried to appeal to the centre-right voters by purging his party’s electoral list of radical ‘Islamists’ so as to present a moderate face. The Nationalist Action Party decided to strengthen its ultra-nationalist image by including in its electoral list Tugrul Türkeş, the son of Alparslan Türkeş, the party’s founder. Meanwhile
there were massive demonstrations in Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir against the JDP and in support of a secular Turkey.

The result of the general election of 22 July 2007 confounded most predictions. The JDP performed far better than expected, winning 45.5 per cent of the vote and 341 parliamentary seats, while the RPP won 21 per cent and 112 seats, and the Nationalist Action Party won 15 per cent and 71 seats. Independents unofficially representing the DSP, which would not have cleared the 10 per cent barrier, won 23 of the 26 independent seats and were therefore able to articulate Kurdish grievances in the next parliament.

The 2007 election is considered one of the most important elections of the multi-party period. It highlighted the bankruptcy of the traditional centre-right parties – the DYP and ANAP – with the failure of the newly created Democrat Party to enter parliament. Some therefore see the JDP, despite its Islamist roots, as the new representative of the centre-right. The RPP’s poor performance under its current leadership forced it to find a new leader who would take the party from ultra-nationalism back to the kind of social democracy that made it so successful in the 1970s. The ultra-nationalist NAP emerged as the party of the extreme right, having doubled its share of the vote since the November 2002 election. The 2007 election was undoubtedly one of the most important elections of the multi-party period, marking the bankruptcy of the centre-right. Following the elections, Erdoğan again chose Abdullah Gül as the AKP’s candidate for the presidency, and he was duly elected the eleventh president of the Republic on 28 August 2007. At the time this chapter was written (October 2007) the AKP controlled three principal levers of power – the executive, the legislature and the presidency. It remained to be seen whether the party would use its powers to pursue policy to maintain the secular character of society or try to impose traditional–‘religious’ values on Turkey.
Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey: is the glass more than half full?

ŞEVKET PAMUK

Introduction

One metaphor for assessing Turkey’s economic performance in the twentieth century may be to ask whether the glass is half full or half empty. On the one hand, Turkey has experienced far-reaching economic changes since the early 1920s. The primarily rural and agricultural economy of the early twentieth century has transformed into a mostly urban economy. Average or per capita incomes have increased more than fivefold during this period. Other indicators of standards of living have also improved significantly. Life expectancy at birth has almost doubled from under thirty-five years in the interwar era to sixty-nine years. Adult literacy rates have increased from about 10 per cent to about 90 per cent (see table 10.1).

On the other hand, it would be misleading to judge economic performance only in absolute terms. The twentieth century, especially its second half, was a period of rapid increases in the standards of living in most parts of the developing world, of which Turkey is still considered a part. Increases in per capita incomes in Turkey since the First World War have been close to, but slightly above, world averages and averages for the developing countries. The income per capita gap between Turkey and the high-income countries of Western Europe and North America was about the same in 2005 as it was on the eve of the First World War. Certainly, Turkey has not been one of the miracle-producing economies of the twentieth century. Moreover, its record in human development has been weaker than its record in economic growth, close to but perhaps below average for the developing world. In addition, these increases or improvements have not all been achieved at a steady pace. In fact, Turkey’s economy has been plagued by recurring political and macro-economic instability that has led to a number of crises, especially in the second half of the twentieth century. The most severe of these, a financial crisis, occurred in 2001. That the economy managed to rebound strongly within a few years should perhaps remind us of the above metaphor.
### Table 10.1. Economic and human development indicators for Turkey, 1913–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1980</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (mill.)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of urban pop. (5000 inhab.) in total pop. (per cent)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of agriculture in the labour force (per cent)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of agriculture in GDP (per cent)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of industry in GDP (per cent)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita, PPP adj. in 1990 US</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>1,620</td>
<td>4,020</td>
<td>7,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita as per cent of (W. Europe + US)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita as per cent of developing countries</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita as per cent of world</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life expectancy at birth (years)</td>
<td>30?</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult literacy (ages above 15 in per cent)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Annual growth rates (in per cent)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>GDP per capita</th>
<th>Total agricultural output</th>
<th>Total industrial output</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1913–50</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923–50</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950–80</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980–2005</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005–2005</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013–2005</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes**: The inclusion of women working in the family farm in the labour force but the exclusion of urban women working at home from the labour force tends to overstate the share of agriculture in Turkish employment statistics. Per capita GDP in constant US dollars is the basic indicator for examining long-term increases in average incomes. These series are calculated with a purchasing power parity adjustment in order to take into account the fact that price levels tend to be lower and the same dollar income purchases more in lower-income countries.

Also on the positive side, the last decade has witnessed important changes in Turkey’s relations with the European Union (EU). Although the first agreement for cooperation between Turkey and what was then the Common Market dates back to 1963, both sides remained doubtful about Turkey’s integration. Turkey’s first application for membership in 1987 was turned down, but it joined the European customs union in 1996. After a reasonably successful implementation of the customs union for one decade, formal negotiations for membership in the EU began in 2006.

I begin below with several key indicators that offer a summary evaluation of Turkey’s economic development record since 1923 or 1913 in a comparative framework. The rest of the chapter attempts to understand that record. In recent years, a growing literature has emphasised the contribution of the social and political environment, and more specifically of institutions defined as written and unwritten rules and norms, to long-term economic change. In the second section, I will sketch a framework for understanding the linkages between the evolution of institutions and economic change in twentieth-century Turkey. I will then examine, in the third section, world economic conditions, government economic policies and the basic macro-economic outcomes for Turkey in three sub-periods, in order to gain additional insights into its absolute and relative growth record. With its very large share in employment and total output until recently, agriculture is of central importance also for understanding long-term economic development in Turkey. Similarly, income distribution, or more generally the distribution of gains, must be part of any long-term evaluation. In the fourth section, I focus on these two themes, agriculture and income distribution and regional disparities, before offering some concluding remarks in the fifth section.

Economic growth and development record

In the 1920s, less than 25 per cent of Turkey’s population lived in urban centres with more than 5,000 inhabitants. The rural–urban shares remained little changed until after the Second World War, but Turkey has been experiencing rapid urbanisation since then. The proportion of the population living in urban centres, as defined above, increased to 44 per cent by 1980 and to 68 per cent by 2005. Rapid urbanisation has been accompanied by large shifts within the labour force. Agriculture’s share in total employment declined from about 80 per cent in 1913 and in 1950 to 34 per cent in 2005, while industry’s share rose from about 9 to 23 per cent, and that of services increased from 11 to 43 per cent. Similarly, agriculture’s share in GDP declined from about 55 per cent
in 1913 and 54 per cent in 1950 to 11 per cent in 2005. The share of industry has increased from about 13 per cent in 1913 to 26 per cent in 2005 while the share of services has increased from 34 to 64 per cent during the same period (see table 10.1 and graph 10.1).

The beginning date or base year for long-term comparisons of economic growth (1913 vs. 1923) requires an explanation. A decade of wars beginning in 1912 had resulted in a dramatic 20 per cent decline in population and as much as 40 per cent decline in per capita income by 1922. As a result, the GDP per capita levels for Turkey were sharply lower than long-term trend values in the early 1920s. For this reason, the year selected for long-term comparisons makes a big difference. While I provide values for both base years in table 10.1, for most comparisons I will use 1913, which is also used in most international comparisons.

Per capita income in Turkey and the rest of the Ottoman Empire rose during the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the gap between the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States and the developing world, including the Ottoman Empire, widened considerably during the century before the First World War, due to the rapid rates of industrialisation in the former group. GDP per capita in the area within the present-day borders of Turkey was approximately US$ 1,200 in 1913 (see table 10.1). This was 29 per cent of the level of GDP per capita in the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States, calculated on a population-weighted basis, and
168 per cent of the GDP per capita income in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, also calculated on a population-weighted basis and for the same year.

Two world wars and a great depression later, per capita income in Turkey in 1950 was more than 30 per cent higher, at US$ 1,620 constant or inflation adjusted. This was equal to 24 per cent of the per capita income of the high-income countries and 188 per cent of the per capita income in the developing countries. By 2005, GDP per capita in Turkey had reached US$7,500, an increase of more than fivefold since 1913. This figure corresponded to about 30 per cent of the level of GDP per capita in the high-income countries of Western Europe and the United States, and approximately 225 per cent of the GDP per capita income of the developing countries for the same year. In other words, average incomes in Turkey have increased at about the same rate as those in high-income countries since 1913. Turkey has not been able to close any of this large gap. At the same time, increases in average incomes in Turkey since 1913 have been slightly faster than those in the developing world. If 1923 were chosen as the base year, Turkey’s long-term record would look considerably better (table 10.1)

In graph 10.2, I provide per capita GDP series for Turkey and a number of other regions and continents as percentages of the average for Western

![Graph](image-url)
Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey

Europe and the United States for the period since 1913. This graph allows further insights into Turkey’s comparative economic record in the twentieth century. It shows that while its growth record was better than the averages for Latin America, Middle East and Africa as a whole, Turkey has lagged well behind Southern Europe and East Asia since 1950.

However, GDP per capita is not an adequate measure of economic development or more generally of standards of living. For this reason, the human development index (HDI), a broader measure first introduced by the United Nations in 1990, has become quite popular. HDI has three components: longevity as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge as measured by a weighted average of adult literacy; and years of schooling and income as measured by GDP per capita. Estimates for HDI for Turkey and other countries are available for the benchmark years of 1950 and 1975, as well as for the period since 1990. Recently, I made a separate estimate for Turkey in 1913, making use of the data cited above. These estimates allow us to obtain an overview of the standards of living in twentieth-century Turkey and insert it into a comparative framework (table 10.2).

It is not easy to compare the evolution of HDI of developing countries with those of developed countries today or in the past. For this purpose, I present in the last column of table 10.2 a measure for the extent to which countries have reduced the distance between their level of HDI of 1950 and the maximum attainable score of 1. While Turkey and many other developing countries with low initial levels have experienced large increases in HDI since 1950, the developed countries have generally shown larger increases when measured as per cent of maximum possible increase. In terms of this latter measure, Turkey has done better than African and Eastern European countries, about the same as Latin American countries, and has lagged behind East Asian countries since 1950.

Changes in life expectancy at birth, or \( e(0) \), provide a dramatic example of changes in twentieth-century Turkey. The earliest period for which we have estimates of \( e(0) \) is for the 1930s, when the figure was thirty years. Life expectancy at birth had increased to forty-seven years by 1950 and to sixty-two years by 1980. In 2004, the latest year for which we have the estimates, \( e(0) \) stood at seventy years: sixty-eight years for men and seventy-three years for women (table 10.1). While official estimates are not available for adult literacy in the early years of the Republic, it can be safely assumed that the rate did not exceed 10 per cent in the 1920s. In 1935, the literacy rate for individuals over the age of fifteen was 19 per cent: 31 per cent for men and only 8 per cent for women. By 1950, the adult literacy rate had increased to 28 per cent: 47 per cent.
Table 10.2. Changes in the human development index, 1913–2003

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>1913</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1975</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>Change in 1950–2003 as per cent of possible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Western Europe</td>
<td>0.580</td>
<td>0.707</td>
<td>0.848</td>
<td>0.935</td>
<td>77.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>0.643</td>
<td>0.774</td>
<td>0.861</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>0.466</td>
<td>0.676</td>
<td>0.851</td>
<td>0.943</td>
<td>82.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.225</td>
<td>0.522</td>
<td>0.755</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>0.143</td>
<td>0.247</td>
<td>0.406</td>
<td>0.602</td>
<td>47.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.271</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.549</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>0.625</td>
<td>0.800</td>
<td>0.912</td>
<td></td>
<td>76.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>0.694</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.795</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>0.403</td>
<td>0.607</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.808</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>0.511</td>
<td>0.626</td>
<td>0.784</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexico</td>
<td>0.270</td>
<td>0.484</td>
<td>0.688</td>
<td>0.814</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>0.249</td>
<td>0.448</td>
<td>0.641</td>
<td>0.792</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Korea</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.459</td>
<td>0.687</td>
<td>0.901</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.407</td>
<td>0.614</td>
<td>0.796</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>0.388</td>
<td>0.603</td>
<td>0.757</td>
<td>0.778</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.337</td>
<td>0.467</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>54.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.303</td>
<td>0.512</td>
<td>0.753</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iran</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>0.507</td>
<td>0.736</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.291</td>
<td>0.433</td>
<td>0.659</td>
<td>51.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>0.194</td>
<td>0.326</td>
<td>0.453</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Turkey</strong></td>
<td>0.190</td>
<td>0.382</td>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>0.750</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Regional or continental averages are weighted by the population of the individual countries. For definition of HDI, see the text. In the last column, the maximum possible improvement in HDI is 1–(HDI in 1950).


for men and 13 per cent for women. In 2005, it stood at 89 per cent: 95 per cent for men and 82 per cent for women (table 10.1).

Since 1913 and especially since 1950, levels and improvements in life expectancy in Turkey have been comparable to those in other developing countries with similar levels of income. However, since 1913 and 1950 education levels in Turkey as measured by literacy, years of schooling and school enrolment have been lagging significantly behind education levels in developing countries with similar levels of GDP. At the same time, the incidence of poverty in Turkey has been lower in comparison to developing countries with similar levels of income. These contrasts can be clearly observed in a
comparison of Turkey with countries in Latin America since 1913 and 1950. Levels of schooling in Turkey have been below the averages for the larger Latin American countries throughout the twentieth century. The lagging performance in education is not a matter for the historical record alone, however. This deficit will make itself increasingly felt in the decades ahead. For further increases in GDP per capita, Turkey will need a better-educated labour force and significant increases in the technology and knowledge component of its economy.

Along with other Muslim majority countries, Turkey also lags behind developing countries with comparable levels of per capita income in indices aiming to measure gender equality and the socio-economic development of women. One other reason why many of Turkey’s human development measures have been lagging behind is the large regional differences in these indicators between the mostly Kurdish south-east and the rest of the country, as discussed on pp. 296–97 below.

Institutional change and economic growth

For decades it was believed that economic growth results in part from the accumulation of factors of production and improvements in their quality through investment in machines and skill formation, and in part from increases in productivity derived from advances in technology and organisational efficiency. In recent years, however, a useful distinction is being made between the proximate and the ultimate sources of economic growth. The former relates to the contributions made by the increases in factor inputs and productivity as cited above. The latter refers to aspects of the social and economic environment that influence the rate at which inputs and productivity grow. A growing literature emphasises the importance of institutions or written and unwritten rules of a society and policies such as property rights and their enforcement, norms of behaviour, political and macro-economic stability, which affect the incentives to invest and innovate. In this new perspective, the basic function of institutions is to provide certainty in economic activity. More complex economic structures will not emerge unless institutions can reduce the uncertainties associated with such structures. Recent research has also revealed very large differences in total productivity levels between countries. It appears that more than half of the differences in levels of per capita production are due to the
productivity obtained from the same amount of resources rather than from the accumulation of more machines or skills per person. In this context, the quality of institutions is increasingly seen as the key to the explanation of economic growth and long-term differences in per capita GDP. Economic institutions also determine the distribution of income and wealth. In other words, they determine not only the size of the aggregate pie, but also how it is divided amongst different groups in society.

The process of how economic institutions are determined and the reasons why they vary across countries are still not sufficiently well understood. Nonetheless, it is clear that because different social groups including state elites benefit from different economic institutions, there is generally a conflict of interest over the choice of economic institutions, which is ultimately resolved in favour of groups with greater political power. The distribution of political power in society is in turn determined by political institutions and the distribution of economic power. For long-term growth, economic institutions should not offer incentives to narrow groups, but instead open up opportunities to broader sections of society. For this reason, political economy and political institutions are considered key determinants of economic institutions and the direction of institutional change.

The evolution of economic institutions in Turkey and their consequences for economic growth and distribution of income have not been closely studied. In the next section, I will examine structural change, industrialisation and the basic macro-economic outcomes in three sub-periods: the interwar years or the single-party era until the end of the Second World War; the import-substituting industrialisation era after the Second World War; and the globalisation era since 1980. I will thus seek to gain insights not only into Turkey’s record of economic growth and distribution, but also into the evolution of the economic institutions that played a key role in these outcomes. Briefly, there were significant institutional changes in Turkey during the interwar period. Ultimately, however, political and economic power remained with the state elites. Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, the regime remained decidedly

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urban in a country where the overwhelming majority lived in rural areas and engaged in agriculture. As a result, these institutional changes did not reach large segments of the population. Rates of increase of per capita GDP remained low in Turkey as in most developing countries during this period. Pace of economic growth accelerated in both the developed and developing countries including Turkey after the Second World War. With the transition to a more open political regime and urbanisation, urban industrial groups began to take power away from the state elites. The economic institutions began to reflect those changes. This transition, however, has not been smooth or easy. For most of the last half-century, political and macro-economic instability, including three military coups and a series of fragile coalitions and the shortcomings of the institutional environment, seriously undermined the economy’s growth potential. The glass has remained only half full.

World wars, the Great Depression and étatism, 1913–1946

The Ottoman economy, including those areas that later comprised modern Turkey, remained mostly agricultural until the First World War. Nonetheless, per capita income was rising in most regions of the empire during the decades before the war. But the destruction and death that accompanied the Balkan Wars of 1912–13, the First World War and the War of Independence, 1920–2, had severe and long-lasting consequences. Total casualties, military and civilian, of Muslims during this decade are estimated at close to 2 million. In addition, most of the Armenian populace of about 1.5 million in Anatolia were deported, killed or died of disease, after 1915. Finally, under the Lausanne Convention, approximately 1.2 million Orthodox Greeks were forced to leave Anatolia, and in return, close to half a million Muslims arrived from Greece and the Balkans after 1922.

As a result of these massive changes, the population of what became the Republic of Turkey declined from about 17 million in 1914 to 13 million at the end of 1924. The population of the new nation-state had also become more homogeneous, with Muslim Turks and the Kurds who lived mostly in the south-east making up close to 98 per cent of the total. The dramatic decline in the Greek and Armenian populations meant that many of the commercialised, export-oriented farmers of western Anatolia and the eastern Black Sea coast,

as well as the artisans, leading merchants and moneylenders who linked the rural areas to the port cities and the European trading houses, had died or departed. Agriculture, industry and mining were all affected adversely by the loss of human lives and by the deterioration and destruction of equipment, draft animals and plants during the war years. GDP per capita in 1923 was approximately 40 per cent below its 1914 levels (also table 10.1).

The former military officers, bureaucrats and intellectuals who assumed the positions of leadership in the new republic viewed the building of a new nation-state and modernisation through Westernisation as two closely related goals. They strove, from the onset, to create a national economy within the new borders. The new leadership was keenly aware that financial and economic dependence on European powers had created serious political problems for the Ottoman state. At the Lausanne Peace Conference (1922–3), which defined, amongst other things, the international economic framework for the new state, they succeeded in abolishing the regime of capitulations that had provided special privileges to foreign citizens. The parties also agreed that the new republic would be free to pursue its own commercial policies after 1929. The new government saw the construction of new railways and the nationalisation of the existing companies as important steps towards the political and economic unification of the new state inside new borders. Despite its rhetoric to the contrary, the regime’s priorities lay with the urban areas. It considered industrialisation and the creation of a Turkish bourgeoisie to be the key ingredients of national economic development.

Nonetheless, the new regime abolished the much-dreaded agricultural tithe and the animal tax in 1924. This move represented a major break from Ottoman patterns of taxation and a significant decrease in the tax burden of the rural population. While this decision has been interpreted as a concession to the large landowners, the new leadership was concerned more about alleviating the poverty of the small and medium-sized producers, who made up the overwhelming majority of the rural population. In the longer term, the abolition of the tithe and tax-farming helped consolidate small peasant ownership.


recovery of agriculture provided an important lift to the urban economy as well. By the end of the 1920s, GDP per capita levels had attained the levels prevailing before the First World War.  

The Great Depression

The principal mechanism for the transmission of the Great Depression to the Turkish economy was the sharp decline in prices of agricultural commodities. Decreases in the prices of leading crops, such as wheat and other cereals, tobacco, raisins, hazelnuts and cotton, averaged more than 50 per cent from 1928–9 to 1932–3, much more than the decreases in prices of non-agricultural goods and services. These adverse price movements created a sharp sense of agricultural collapse in the more commercialised regions of the country, in western Anatolia, along the eastern Black Sea coast and in the cotton-growing Adana region in the south.

Earlier in 1929, even before the onset of the crisis, the government had begun to move towards protectionism and greater control over foreign trade and foreign exchange. By the second half of the 1930s, more than 80 per cent of the country’s foreign trade was conducted under clearing and reciprocal quota systems. As the unfavourable world market conditions continued, the government announced in 1930 a new strategy of étatism, which promoted the state as a leading producer and investor in the urban sector. A first five-year industrial plan was adopted in 1934 with the assistance of Soviet advisers. By the end of the decade, state economic enterprises had emerged as important and even leading producers in a number of key sectors, such as textiles, sugar, iron and steel, glass works, cement, utilities and mining. Etatisme undoubtedly had a long-lasting impact in Turkey, and later in other countries around the Middle East. However, the initial efforts in the 1930s made only modest contributions to economic growth and structural change. For one thing, state enterprises in manufacturing and many other areas did not begin operations until after 1933. Close to half of all fixed investments by the public sector during this decade went to railway construction and other forms of transport. In 1938, state

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8 Özel and Pamuk, ‘Osmanlı’dan cumhuriyet’e’.
10 Ibid., pp. 139–62
enterprises accounted for only 1 per cent of total employment in the country. Approximately 75 per cent of employment in manufacturing continued to be provided by small-scale private enterprises.\textsuperscript{12}

\textit{Etatism} did not lead to large shifts in fiscal and monetary policies, either. Government budgets remained balanced, and the regime made no attempt to take advantage of deficit finance. In fact, ‘balanced budget, strong money’ was the government’s motto for its macro-economic policy. The exchange rate of the lira actually rose against all leading currencies during the 1930s. The most important reason behind this policy choice was the bitter legacy of the Ottoman experience with budget deficits, large external debt and inflationary paper currency during the First World War. İsmet İnönü, the prime minister for most of the interwar period, was a keen observer of the late Ottoman period and was the person most responsible for this cautious, even conservative, policy stand. In other words, government interventionism in the 1930s was not designed, in the Keynesian sense, to increase aggregate demand through the use of devaluations and expansionary fiscal and monetary policies. Instead, the emphasis was on creating a more closed, autarkic economy, and increasing central control through the expansion of the public sector.\textsuperscript{13}

Economic growth and its causes

Available estimates suggest that GDP and GDP per capita grew at average annual rates of 5.4 and 3.1 per cent respectively during the 1930s, despite the absence of expansionary fiscal and monetary policy (see table 10.1 and graph 2). One important source of the output increases after 1929 was the protectionist measures adopted by the government, ranging from tariffs and quotas to foreign-exchange controls, which sharply reduced the import volume from 15.4 per cent of GDP in 1928–9 to 6.8 per cent by 1938–9 (graph 10.3). Import repression created attractive conditions for the emerging domestic manufacturers, mostly the small and medium-sized private manufacturers.

There is another explanation for the overall performance of both the urban and the national economy during the 1930s, which has often been ignored amidst the heated debates over \textit{étatsisme}. Thanks to the strong demographic recovery, agriculture – the largest sector of the economy, employing more than

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Graph 10.3 Degree of openness of Turkey’s economy, 1913–2005

three-fourths of the labour force and accounting for close to half of the GDP – did quite well during the 1930s.\(^4\)

Given its balanced-budget policy stand, government actions in response to sharply lower agricultural prices after 1929 were limited to purchases of small amounts of wheat. It is remarkable that despite the adverse price trends, agricultural output increased by 50–70 per cent during the 1930s. The most important explanation of this outcome is the demographic recovery in the countryside. In the interwar period, Anatolian agriculture continued to be characterised by peasant households who cultivated their own land with a pair of draft animals and the most basic of implements. With the population beginning to increase at annual rates around 2 per cent after a decade of wars, expansion of the area under cultivation soon followed. It is also likely that the peasant households responded to the lower cereal prices after 1929 by working harder to cultivate more land and produce more cereals in order to reach certain target levels of income, very much like the peasant behaviour predicted by the Russian economist Chayanov. In other words, behind the high rates of industrialisation and growth in the urban areas were the millions

of family farms in the countryside, which kept food and raw materials prices lower until the Second World War.\textsuperscript{15}

Difficulties during the war

Although Turkey did not participate in the Second World War, full-scale mobilisation was maintained during the entire period. The sharp decline in imports and the diversion of large resources for the maintenance of an army of more than one million placed enormous strains on the economy. Official statistics suggest that GDP declined by as much as 35 per cent and the wheat output by more than 50 per cent until the end of the war. In response, the prices of foodstuffs rose sharply and the provisioning of urban areas emerged as a major problem for the government. Under these circumstances, \textit{étatisme} was quickly pushed aside. Large increases in defence spending were financed by monetary expansion. High inflation, wartime scarcities, shortages and profiteering accentuated by economic policy mishaps soon became the order of the day. Measures such as the 1942 Varlık Vergisi, or Wealth Levy, which was applied disproportionately to non-Muslims, only made things worse.\textsuperscript{16}

As declining production and sharply lower standards of living combined with increasing inequalities in the distribution of income, large segments of the urban and rural population turned against the Republican People’s Party (RPP), which had been in power since the 1920s. In terms of economics, the war years, rather than the Great Depression and \textit{étatisme} era, thus appear to be the critical period in the political demise of the single-party regime.

Despite two world wars and the Great Depression, per capita levels of production and income in Turkey were 30–40 per cent higher in 1950 than the levels on the eve of the First World War (see table 10.1 and graph 10.2).\textsuperscript{17} Around mid-century, the economy was much more inward-oriented than it had been in 1913. Due to the impact of two world wars and a depression, rural–urban differences and regional disparities were considerably higher than they had been in 1913.

\textsuperscript{17} Özel and Pamuk, ‘Osmanlı’dan cumhuriyet’e’.
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The post Second World War era, 1946–80

Domestic and international forces combined to bring about major political and economic changes in Turkey after the Second World War. Domestically, many social groups had become dissatisfied with the single-party regime. The agricultural producers, especially poorer segments of the peasantry, had been hit hard by wartime taxation and government demands for the provisioning of the urban areas. In the urban areas, the bourgeoisie was no longer prepared to accept the position of a privileged but dependent class, even though many had benefited from the wartime conditions and policies. They now preferred greater emphasis on private enterprise and less government interventionism.18

International pressures also played an important role in the shaping of new policies. The emergence of the United States as the dominant world power after the war shifted the balance towards a more open political system and a more liberal and open economic model. Soviet territorial demands pushed the Turkish government towards close cooperation with the United States and Western alliance. The US extended the Marshall Plan to Turkey for military and economic purposes beginning in 1948.

Agriculture-led growth, 1947–62

The shift to a multi-party electoral regime brought the Democrat Party (DP) to power in 1950. Undoubtedly the most important economic change brought about by the Democrats was the strong emphasis placed on agricultural development. Agricultural output more than doubled from 1947, when the pre-war levels of output were already attained, through 1953.19 A large part of these increases were due to the expansion in cultivated area, which was supported by two complementary government policies, one for the small peasants and the other for larger farmers. First, the government began to distribute state-owned lands and open communal pastures to peasants with little or no land. Second, the DP government used Marshall Plan aid to finance the importation of agricultural machinery, especially tractors, whose numbers jumped from less than 10,000 in 1946 to 42,000 at the end of the 1950s. Agricultural producers also benefited from favourable weather conditions and strong world market demand for wheat, chrome and other export

commodities, thanks to American stockpiling programmes during the Korean War.  

The agriculture-led boom meant good times and rising incomes for all sectors of the economy. It seemed in 1953 that the promises of the liberal model would be quickly fulfilled. These golden years did not last very long, however. With the end of the Korean War, international demand slackened and prices of export commodities began to decline. With the disappearance of favourable weather conditions, agricultural yields declined as well. Rather than accept lower incomes for the agricultural producers, who made up more than two-thirds of the electorate, the government decided to initiate a large price support programme for wheat, financed by increases in the money supply. The ensuing wave of inflation and the foreign-exchange crisis, which was accompanied by shortages of consumer goods, created major economic and political problems for the DP, especially in the urban areas. One casualty of the crisis was the political as well as economic liberalism of the DP. Just as it responded to the rise of political opposition with the restriction of democratic freedoms, in most economic issues the government was forced to change its earlier stand and adopt a more interventionist approach. It finally agreed in 1958 to undertake a major devaluation and began implementing an IMF and OECD-backed stabilisation programme.

To this day, agricultural producers and their descendants, many of whom are now urbanised, continue to view the DP government, and especially the prime minister, Adnan Menderes, a large landowner, as the first government to understand and respond to the aspirations of the rural population. The DP also offered the first example of a populist economic policy in modern Turkey. Not only did it target a large constituency and attempt to redistribute income towards them, but it also tried to sustain economic growth with short-term expansionist policies, with predictable longer-term consequences. The 1950s also witnessed the dramatic acceleration of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey. Both push and pull factors were behind this movement, as conditions in rural areas differed widely across the country. The development of the road network also contributed to the new mobility.

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Import substituting industrialisation, 1963–77

One criticism frequently directed at the Democrats was the absence of any coordination and long-term perspective in the management of the economy. After the coup of 1960, the military regime moved quickly to establish the State Planning Organisation (SPO). The idea of development planning was now supported by a broad coalition: the RPP with its étatist heritage, the bureaucracy, large industrialists and even the international agencies, most notably the OECD.23

The economic policies of the 1960s and 1970s aimed, above all, at the protection of the domestic market and industrialisation through import substitution (ISI). Governments made heavy use of a restrictive trade regime, investments by state economic enterprises and subsidised credit as key tools for achieving ISI objectives. The SPO played an important role in private sector decisions as well, since its approval was required for all private-sector investment projects which sought to benefit from subsidised credit, tax exemptions, import privileges and access to scarce foreign exchange. The agricultural sector was mostly left outside the planning process.24

With the resumption of ISI, state economic enterprises once again began to play an important role in industrialisation. Their role, however, was quite different in comparison to the earlier period. During the 1930s, when the private sector was weak, industrialisation was led by the state enterprises and the state was able to control many sectors of the economy. In the post-war period, in contrast, the big family holding companies, large conglomerates which included numerous manufacturing and distribution companies as well as banks and other services firms, emerged as the leaders.

For Turkey, the years 1963 to 1977 represented what Albert Hirschman has called the easy stage of ISI.25 The opportunities provided by a large and protected domestic market were exploited, but ISI did not extend to the technologically more difficult stage of capital goods industries. Export orientation of the manufacturing industry also remained weak. Turkey obtained the foreign exchange necessary for the expansion of production from traditional


agricultural exports and remittances from workers in Europe. The ISI policies were successful bringing about economic growth, especially in their early stages. GNP per capita increased at the average annual rate of 4.3 per cent during 1963–77 and at 3.5 per cent per annum including the crisis years of 1978–9. Rate of growth of manufacturing industry was considerably higher, averaging more than 10 per cent per annum for 1963–77\textsuperscript{26} (see also table 10.1 and graph 2).

The role played by the domestic market during this period deserves further attention. Despite the apparent inequalities in income, large segments of the population, including civil servants, workers and, to a lesser extent, agricultural producers, were incorporated into the domestic market for consumer durables. Perhaps most importantly, real wages almost doubled during this period. Behind this exceptional rise lay both market forces and political and institutional changes. While industrial growth increased the demand for labour, the emigration of more than a million workers to Europe by 1975 kept conditions relatively tight in the urban labour markets. At the same time, the institutional rights they obtained under the 1961 constitution supported the labour unions at the bargaining table. Large industrial firms, which were not under pressure to compete in the export markets, accepted wage increases more easily since higher wages served to broaden the demand for their own products. By the middle of the 1970s, however, industrialists had begun to complain about the high level of wages and an emerging labour aristocracy.\textsuperscript{27}

While industry and government policy remained focused on a large and attractive domestic market, they all but ignored exports of manufactures, and this proved to be the Achilles’ heel of Turkey’s ISI. The export sector’s share in GDP averaged less than 4 per cent during the 1970s, and about two-thirds of these revenues came from the traditional export crops (graph 3). A shift towards exports would have increased the efficiency and competitiveness of the existing industrial structure, acquired the foreign exchange necessary for an expanding economy and even supported the import substitution process itself in establishing the backward linkages towards the technologically more complicated intermediate and capital goods industries.

There existed an opportunity for export promotion in the early 1970s, especially in the aftermath of the relatively successful devaluation of 1970. By that


\textsuperscript{27} Hansen, \textit{Egypt and Turkey}, pp. 360–78; Keyder, \textit{State and Class in Turkey}, chap. 7; Barkey, \textit{Industrialization Crisis}, chap. 5.
time, Turkish industry had acquired sufficient experience to be able to compete or learn to compete in the international markets. For that major shift to occur, however, a new orientation in government policy and the institutional environment was necessary. The overvaluation of the domestic currency and many other biases against exports needed to be eliminated. Instead, the successes obtained within a protected environment created vested interests for the continuation of the same model. Most of the industrialists as well as organised labour, which feared that export orientation would put downward pressure on wages, favoured the domestic market-oriented model. Moreover, political conditions became increasingly unstable during the 1970s. The country was governed by a series of fragile coalitions with short-time horizons. As a result, the government made no attempt to shift towards export-oriented policies or even adjust the macro-economic balances after the first oil shock of 1973.  

The crisis of ISI

The short-lived coalitions chose to continue with expansionist policies at a time when many industrialised countries were taking painful steps to adjust their economies. Turkey’s existing policies could be sustained only by very costly external borrowing schemes. In less than two years it became clear that the government was in no position to honour the outstanding external debt stock, which had spiralled from 9 to 24 per cent of GDP. By the end of the decade Turkey was in the midst of its most severe balance of payments crisis of the post-war period. As rising budget deficits were met with monetary expansion, inflation jumped to 90 per cent in 1979. The second round of oil-price increases only compounded the difficulties. With oil increasingly scarce, frequent power cuts hurt industrial output as well as daily life. Shortages of even the most basic items became widespread, arising from both the declining capacity to import and the price controls. The economic crisis, coupled with the continuing political turmoil, brought the country to the brink of civil war.

Perhaps the basic lesson to be drawn from the Turkish experience is that an ISI regime becomes difficult to dislodge owing to the power of vested interest groups who continue to benefit from the existing system of protection and subsidies. To shift towards export promotion in a country with a large domestic market required a strong government with a long-term horizon and

considerable autonomy. These were exactly the features lacking in the Turkish political scene during the 1970s. As a result, economic imbalances and costs of adjustment increased substantially. It then took a crisis of major proportions to move the economy towards greater external orientation.

The globalisation era since 1980

Against the background of a severe foreign-exchange crisis and strained relations with the IMF and international banks, the newly installed minority government of Süleyman Demirel announced a comprehensive and unexpectedly radical policy package of stabilisation and liberalisation in January 1980. Turgut Özal, a former chief of the SPO, was to oversee the implementation of the new package. The Demirel government was unable to gain the political support necessary for the successful implementation of the package, but the military regime that came to power later that year endorsed the new programme, and made a point of keeping Özal in the government, as deputy prime minister responsible for economic affairs.

The aims of the new policies were to improve the balance of payments and reduce the rate of inflation in the short term, and to create a market-based, export-oriented economy in the longer term. The policy package included a major devaluation followed by continued depreciation of the currency in line with the rate of inflation, greater liberalisation of trade and payments regimes, elimination of price controls, freeing of interest rates, elimination of many government subsidies, substantial price increases for the products of the state economic enterprises, subsidies and other support measures for exports and promotion of foreign capital. Reducing real wages and the incomes of agricultural producers were important parts of the new policies.\[31\]

With the shift to a restricted parliamentary regime in 1983, Özal was elected prime minister as the leader of the Motherland Party. He soon launched a new wave of liberalisation of trade and payments regimes. These measures began to open up the ISI structures to competition. However, frequent revisions in the liberalisation lists, the arbitrary manner in which they were made and the favours provided to groups close to the government created a good deal of uncertainty regarding the stability and durability of these changes. The response of the private sector to import liberalisation was mixed. While export-oriented groups and sectors supported it, the ISI industries, especially the

large-scale conglomerates whose products included consumer durables and automotives, continued to lobby for protection.\textsuperscript{32}

From the very beginning, the programme of January 1980 benefited from the close cooperation and goodwill of the international agencies such as the IMF and the World Bank, as well as the international banks. For most of the decade these agencies portrayed Turkey as a shining example of the validity of the orthodox stabilisation and structural adjustment programmes. In economic terms, this support translated into better terms in the rescheduling of the external debt and substantial amounts of new resource inflows. As a result, the foreign-exchange constraint disappeared very quickly and the public sector had less need for inflationary finance at home. These were undoubtedly indispensable ingredients for the success of the programme.\textsuperscript{33}

One area of success for the new policies was in export growth. Turkey’s merchandise exports sharply rose from a mere 2.6 per cent of GDP in the crisis year of 1979 to 8.6 per cent of the GDP in 1990 (graph 3). Turkey in fact ranked first amongst all countries in rate of export growth during this decade. Equally dramatic was the role of manufactures, which accounted for approximately 80 per cent of this increase. Among the exports, textiles, clothing and iron and steel products dominated the market. It is thus clear that the success in export growth was achieved by reorienting the existing capacity of ISI industries towards external markets. In addition to a steady policy of exchange-rate depreciation, the exporters were supported by generous credits at preferential rates, tax rebates and foreign-exchange allocation schemes during this drive.

The impact of the new policies on the rest of the economy was mixed, however. Most importantly, the new policies did not generate the high levels of private investment necessary for long-term growth. In the manufacturing industry, high interest rates and political instability were the most important impediments. Even in the area of exports, new investment was conspicuously absent; most of the increase was achieved with the existing industrial capacity. The response of foreign capital to the new policies was not very strong either, apparently for reasons similar to those of domestic capital.\textsuperscript{34} As a result, the growth performance of the economy was modest. GNP increased at the annual rate of 4.6 per cent and GNP per capita increased at 2.3 per cent during the


1980s (table 10.1 and graph 2). Moreover, these were obtained at the cost of accumulating a large external debt, which climbed more than fivefold from less than $10 billion in 1980 to more than $50 billion in 1990.

Another important area where the record of the new policies was bitterly contested was income distribution. From the very beginning, the January 1980 package set out to repress labour and agricultural incomes, and these policies were maintained until 1987 thanks to the military regime and the limited nature of the transition to multi-party politics. Real wages declined by as much as 34 per cent and the intersectoral terms of trade turned against agriculture by more than 40 per cent until 1987, although some of this deterioration had occurred during the crisis years of 1978 and 1979.

The agricultural sector, which continued to provide employment to about half of the labour force, was all but ignored by the military regime and the Motherland Party. The most important change for the sector was the virtual elimination of subsidies and price-support programmes after 1980, which combined with trends in the international markets to create a sharp deterioration in the sectoral terms of trade. As a result, the agricultural sector showed the lowest rates of output increase during the post-war era, averaging only 1 per cent per year from 1980. Agricultural output thus failed to keep pace with population growth for the first time in the twentieth century.

Turgut Özal was a critical figure in Turkey’s transition to a neo-liberal development model in the 1980s. There can be no question that his bold initiatives helped accelerate the opening and market orientation of the economy. His legacy is not wholly positive, however. Özal preferred to govern by personal decisions and decrees, and tended to underestimate the importance of rule of law and a strong legal infrastructure for the effective operation of a market economy. His rather relaxed attitude towards the rule of law had devastating long-term consequences. The significant rise in corruption in Turkey during the 1990s should be considered a direct legacy of the Özal era.35

With the transition to a more open, competitive electoral regime, the opposition began to criticise the deterioration of income distribution and the arbitrary manner in which Özal often implemented his policies. In response, the government increasingly resorted to old-style populism and lost its room for manoeuvre. Public sector wages, salaries and agricultural incomes were sharply increased. Real wages almost doubled from their decade-low point in

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1987 until 1990. These, in turn, sharply increased the deficits and borrowing requirements of the public sector.36

A decade to forget

The globalisation process offered opportunities as well as vulnerabilities to developing countries. In the case of Turkey, political instability and large public-sector deficits that lasted until 2002 made it increasingly costly to participate in the new environment. In 1989, as the macro-economic balances began to deteriorate, Özal decided to fully liberalise the capital account and eliminate the obstacles in the way of international capital flows. He made this shift at least in part to attract short-term capital inflows, or hot money, to help finance the deficits. In the longer term, however, the decision to liberalise the capital account before achieving macro-economic stability and creating a strong regulatory infrastructure for the financial sector was very costly. As the economy became increasingly vulnerable to external shocks and sudden outflows of capital, the 1990s turned into the most difficult period in the post-Second World War era.

Public-sector deficits continued to widen in the 1990s, with programmes directed towards various segments of the electorate, cheap credit to small businesses, lower retirement age and more generous retirement benefits and, most importantly, high support prices for the agricultural producers. The war against the Kurdish separatist PKK in south-eastern Turkey, which lasted from 1984 until 1999, also imposed a large fiscal burden. Domestic and external borrowing was the most important mechanism for financing the growing deficits. High interest-rates and a pegged exchange rate regime attracted large amounts of short-term capital inflows. Private banks rushed to borrow from abroad in order to lend to the government. In addition, large public-sector banks were directed by the governments to finance part of these outlays. Last but not least, monetary expansion was used as a regular instrument for fiscal revenue.

Along the way, the structural reforms that would have increased the resilience of the economy to internal and external shocks were pushed aside. Virtually no progress was made in the privatisation of the state economic enterprises. Attempts to sell large state enterprises were often accompanied by scandals involving leading politicians. The privatisation of some of the smaller public-sector banks resulted in very large losses for the state sector as

these banks were stripped of their assets by the well-connected buyers, and the full guarantees on bank deposits made the public sector responsible for their large losses. Not surprisingly, inflows of foreign direct investment remained limited.

The result was a period of very high inflation, which peaked at more than 100 per cent in 1994 and remained above 50 per cent per annum through 2001, very high nominal and real interest rates, steady increases in public debt and increasing vulnerability to external shocks which led to crises in 1991, 1994, 1998 and 2000–1, the last of which was the most severe. GDP per capita continued to rise as a long-term trend but at a pace lower than the earlier era (graph 2). High inflation and high interest rates made income distribution increasingly unequal, especially in the urban sector. One significant achievement of the period obtained at some political and economic cost was the customs union agreement with the EU that began in 1996.37

By the end of 1999 it was clear that the macro-economic balances were not sustainable. Negotiations with the IMF led to a new stabilisation programme with a pegged exchange-rate regime as the key anchor to bring down inflation. This programme was deeply flawed in design, however, as it ignored significant problems in the financial sector, especially the large deficits of the public-sector banks, which had been used for financing part of the budget deficits. After some initial successes, the programme disintegrated into a full-blown banking and financial crisis in 2001. In the face of massive capital outflows, the government was forced to suspend the programme and accept a dramatic depreciation of the lira.

In early 2001, the Turkish government invited Kemal Derviş to leave the World Bank and take up the job of economy minister. With IMF support, his team developed a programme based around fiscal discipline and large budget surpluses. The programme adopted a floating exchange-rate regime and converted the outstanding liabilities of the public-sector banks to long-term public debt. It also featured some long-term structural reforms, including measures to reform the vulnerable financial system, and a series of laws that attempted to insulate public-sector banks and state economic enterprises from the interference of politicians and strengthen the independence of the central bank.

The economy has staged a remarkable recovery since. After declining by 9.5 per cent in 2001, real GDP increased by about 35 per cent during the

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next four years. By the end of 2005, annual inflation had declined to below 8 per cent, a level not seen since the 1960s (graph 2). Nominal and real interest rates also declined sharply. The credit for this turnaround should begin with Derviş and the initial programme. The Justice and Development Party (AKP) government that came to power after the elections of 2002 should also be credited for maintaining fiscal discipline. The generally favourable international environment, with low interest rates for developing countries, also helped. By 2005, significant amounts of foreign direct investment had begun to flow into Turkey, and the government was making some progress in the privatisation of the state economic enterprises. Thanks to economic growth and the large budget surpluses, the debt burden declined from above 100 per cent of GDP in 2001 to less than 70 per cent by 2005. This was mostly a jobless recovery, however. Despite the substantial increases in output and incomes, unemployment in the urban areas remained above 13 per cent through 2005.

Anatolian tigers

One important outcome of economic liberalisation after 1980 has been the increasing export orientation of the economy. Exports rose from less than $3 billion in 1980 to $70 billion, or 20 per cent of GDP, by 2005 (graph 3). Most of this increase occurred in textiles, steel, automotives and other manufactures, whose share in total exports exceeded 90 per cent in the 1990s. The rapid expansion of exports of manufactures played a key role in the rise of the Anatolian tigers, regional industrial centres such as Gaziantep, Denizli, Kayseri, Malatya, Konya, Çorum and others. With craft traditions and non-unionised workforces, these industrial centres began to account for a significant share of growing exports in textiles and other labour-intensive industries. Their competitive advantage was bolstered by low wages, long working hours and flexible labour regimes. Large numbers of small and medium-sized family enterprises played a central role in the rise of these industrial centres. Their rise was achieved with little state support and little or no foreign investment.

Many of the entrepreneurs in these urban centres have embraced the new liberal discourse. As latecomers to the private sector, they have been more likely to support an Islamist political party and organise under an association of Islamic businessmen as a political counterweight to the Istanbul-based elites. In fact, tensions between the entrepreneurs in the provinces and the Istanbul region’s industrial elites go back to the 1960s, when Necmettin Erbakan, the first Islamist political leader in the post-war era, based his political rise on his
Erbakan, however, appeared to favour various inward-oriented industrialisation schemes. In contrast, the industrialists of the Anatolian tigers have supported the AKP government and its export-oriented policies in the most recent period.

Similarly, large segments of protected domestic industry had opposed closer ties with Europe in the 1970s. In contrast, both the Istanbul industrialists and the entrepreneurs of the Anatolian tigers have supported European integration since the 1990s. Turkey’s favourable experience with export-oriented industrialisation and the discovery that the customs union, which began in 1996, did not lead to the destruction of industry as some had feared, both contributed to the change of attitude. After the acceleration of democratic reforms by the new, AKP-led parliament, the EU decided in 2004 to begin membership negotiations with Turkey. It is not clear when or if Turkey will become a full member of the EU. Nonetheless, the membership process is likely to accelerate institutional changes and create a stronger institutional framework for economic change.

*Agriculture and structural change*

In the first half of the twentieth century, agriculture accounted for more than 80 per cent of employment and more than half of the GDP in Turkey. Although these shares now stand at 35 per cent and 10 per cent respectively, it is clear that any analysis of long-term structural change, economic growth and income distribution in Turkey needs to examine agriculture closely (graph 1).

The total population of Turkey has increased more than fourfold since 1914. Agricultural output has kept pace, increasing more than fivefold during the same period. As a result, Turkey continues to be mostly self-sufficient in food and agricultural goods today. Agricultural output declined by as much as 50 per cent during the decade of wars after 1914, but began to recover in the 1920s. Increases in land and labour productivity were modest during this period, but population and total output began to exceed pre-First World War levels.

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by the middle of the 1930s. Agricultural output began to increase more rapidly after the Second World War, at about 3 per cent per annum until 1980. This higher rate of growth was supported by rapid increases in the amount of land under cultivation. Thanks to the availability of land, the total area under cultivation more than doubled during the decade after the Second World War. After the land frontier was reached, a shift occurred towards more intensive agriculture in the 1960s. In this new phase, output rose more slowly but yields and land productivity increased more rapidly with the use of new inputs, agricultural machinery and equipment, fertilisers, irrigation and high-yielding varieties of seeds. Total output and land productivity growth have slowed down to 1 per cent per annum since 1980, but labour productivity growth has accelerated due to the more rapid labour movement away from agriculture in recent years.

In part because of the availability of land and in part due to government policies dating back to the nineteenth century, small to medium-sized enterprises have dominated agriculture in Turkey, except in the Kurdish south-east and in a number of fertile valleys opened to cultivation only in the nineteenth century, such as Çukurova and Söke. This pattern has encouraged politicians to use government programmes as an electoral instrument since the 1950s. With the manipulation of the intersectoral terms of trade in favour of agriculture, the incorporation of the rural population into the national market accelerated. Villages became important markets for textiles, food industries and, gradually, for consumer durables, as well as agricultural machinery and equipment. In recent decades, non-agricultural activities including tourism and some manufacturing have begun to expand in the rural areas.

The large and expensive irrigation project in the Euphrates valley in southeastern Anatolia stands apart from all other rural development schemes since the Second World War. It originally envisaged the building of a number of interrelated dams and hydroelectrical plants on the Euphrates river in order to irrigate 1.6 million hectares in the plain of Harran, which would double the irrigated area under cultivation in the country. The project has since evolved into an integrated regional development programme seeking to improve the social and economic fabric of a large and poor region of the country. Now one of world’s largest and most ambitious regional development projects, it includes large investments in a wide range of development-related sectors such as agriculture, energy and transport, as well as urban and rural activities.

40 Keyder, State and Class in Turkey, pp. 177–240.
infrastructure. However, until recently the project has been designed and implemented with a developmentalism-from-above approach, and without sufficient understanding of or concern for the needs of the local population. The absence of a shared vision between the planners and the intended beneficiaries, namely the local Kurdish communities, has seriously limited the benefits of the project.\textsuperscript{41}

Despite the large and persistent productivity and income differences between agriculture and the rest of the economy, the strength of small and medium-sized land ownership has slowed down the movement of labour to the rest of the economy. The dominance of small and medium-sized family enterprises in the rural areas was a legacy of the Ottoman era. After the Second World War, it combined with another Ottoman legacy, state ownership of land, to moderate urban inequalities during decades of rapid urbanisation. Many of the newly arriving immigrants were able to use their savings from rural areas to build low cost residential housing (\textit{gecekondu}) on state land in the urban areas. They soon acquired ownership of these plots.

Large productivity and income differences between agriculture and the urban economy have been an important feature of the Turkish economy since the 1920s. Most of the labour force in agriculture are self-employed today in the more than 3 million family farms, including a large proportion of the poorest people in the country. The persistence of this pattern has not been due to the low productivity of agriculture alone, however. If the urban sector had been able to grow at a more rapid pace, more labour would have left the countryside during the last half-century. Equally importantly, governments have offered very limited amounts of schooling to the rural population in the past. Average amounts of schooling of the total labour force (ages fifteen to sixty-four) increased from only one year in 1950 to about seven years in 2005. The average years of schooling of the rural labour force today is still below three years, however.\textsuperscript{42} In other words, most of the rural labour force today consists of undereducated men and women, for whom the urban sector offers limited opportunities. The pace with which rural poverty and population will diminish in the decades ahead will depend on the degree to which the countryside experiences institutional changes and receives greater amounts of education and capital.


\textsuperscript{42} My calculations based on State Institute of Statistics, \textit{Statistical Indicators} data on school enrolment and graduation.
Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey

**Income distribution**

Data on income distribution in Turkey have not been sufficiently detailed and do not easily allow long-term comparisons. In what follows, I will attempt such comparisons by employing simple indicators for which long-term series are available. I will examine changes in income distribution in twentieth-century Turkey in three basic components: (a) distribution within agriculture; (b) agriculture–non-agriculture or rural–urban differences; and (c) distribution within the non-agricultural or the urban sector. The relative weights of these three components have clearly changed over time. Until the 1950s, the first two were more important. With urbanisation after 1950, the second component and, especially since 1980, the third component began to dominate country-wide debates and issues and debates of income distribution.\(^{43}\)

Within the agricultural sector, the evidence on land ownership and land use points to a relatively equal distribution of land, dominated by small and medium-sized holdings in most regions. Despite the limitations of available data, it appears that the Gini coefficients for land distribution and land use have changed little since the 1950s.\(^{44}\) Moreover, distribution within the agricultural sector has been more equal than both the differences between the agricultural and urban sectors and the distribution within the urban sector.

Evidence for agriculture–non-agriculture differences in average incomes can be obtained from the national income accounts. These indicate that intersectoral differences were largest in the interwar period, especially due to the sharply lower agricultural prices during the Great Depression. The intersectoral differences in average incomes declined in the post-Second World War period, in part because of government policies, but they increased again after 1980. The acceleration of urbanisation and the rapid decline of the agricultural labour force in recent years have helped raise average incomes in agriculture (graph 4).

In the absence of other suitable series for long-term comparisons of income distribution within the urban sector, I will focus on the share of labour in per capita income. More specifically, I will follow the index of urban wages divided by output per person in the urban labour force. This ratio was quite low in the interwar period, because of the low levels of urban wages in relation to urban output per capita. This suggests a rather unequal distribution of income within the urban sector until the Second World War. Share of wages in urban income

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\(^{43}\) This section is based on Şevket Pamuk, ‘20. Yüzyıl Türkiyesi için büyümeye ve bölüşüm endeksleri’, *İktisat, İşletme ve Finans Dergisi* 235 (October 2005).

rose steadily after the war, however. Together with the decline in intersectoral differences in average incomes, this pattern indicates that the post-war era until 1980 had a more equal or balanced distribution of income than other period in the twentieth century (graph 4). In the globalisation era since 1980, intersectoral differences in per capita income rose sharply, but they have been declining in recent years with the rapid contraction of the agricultural labour force. It is clear, however, that the country-wide pattern in income distribution is now dominated by changes inside the urban sector. Disparities within the urban sector between labour and non-labour incomes and also between skilled and unskilled labour incomes have increased since 1980.

It is also interesting that for most of the twentieth century, the second and third components of the country-wide income distribution, namely intersectoral differences in average incomes and the distribution of income within the urban sector, have moved together. As the value of these two indices increased, income distribution tended to become more equal and vice versa (graph 4). This pattern suggests that governments were able to influence both components of the income distribution, especially during periods of multi-party electoral politics.

Large regional inequalities are a fourth dimension of income distribution, which especially need to be taken into account in the case of Turkey. Throughout the twentieth century, large west–east differences in average incomes
Economic change in twentieth-century Turkey persisted. Until recently, the private-sector-led industrialisation process was concentrated in the western third of the country. The commercialisation of agriculture had also proceeded further in the western and coastal areas. In addition to lower incomes, the eastern third of the country has also been lacking in infrastructure and services provided by the government, especially for education and health. The development of tourism in the west, the deterioration of the terms of trade against agriculture and the rise of Kurdish insurgency in the south-east during the 1980s further increased the large regional disparities, adding to the pressures for rural-to-urban as well as east-to-west migration. Future progress on the South-East Anatolian Project and the rise of the regional industrial centres may help reduce these disparities. However, economic development in that part of the country hinges, above all, on a political resolution of the Kurdish question.45

Large east–west differences in average incomes have been accompanied by large and persistent regional inequalities in human development indicators since the 1920s. The latest country report for Turkey prepared by United Nations Human Development Programme for the year 2002 indicates, for example, that the top ten (out of eighty) high-income, western and north-western provinces in the country, including Istanbul, had an average HDI equal to 0.825, which was close to the HDI for East–Central European countries such as Croatia or Slovakia. On the other hand, the poorest ten provinces in the mostly Kurdish south-eastern part of the country had an average HDI of 0.600, which was comparable to the HDI of Morocco or India in the same year.46

Conclusion

In trying to analyse Turkey’s economic record in the twentieth century, I began with a distinction between the proximate and ultimate sources of economic growth. The former relates to the contributions made by the increases in factor inputs and productivity, while the latter refers to aspects of the social and economic environment in which growth occurs. In this context, economic institutions are increasingly seen as the key to the explanation not only of economic growth and long-term differences in per capita GDP, but also the question of how the total pie is divided amongst different groups in society. I have emphasised that because there is generally a conflict of interest over the choice of economic institutions, political economy and political institutions

45 Çarkoğlu and Eder, ‘Development alla Turca’.
are key determinants of economic institutions and the direction of institutional change.

Turkey’s transition from a rural and agricultural towards an urban and industrial economy in the twentieth century occurred in three waves, each of which served to increase the economic and political power of urban and industrial groups. Increases in the economic and political power of these groups, on the whole, enabled them to shape economic institutions more in the direction they desired. Each of these waves of industrialisation and economic growth, however, was cut short by the shortcomings or deficiencies of the institutional environment. The first of these waves occurred during the 1930s. After a series of legal and institutional changes undertaken by the new Republic, a small number of state enterprises led the industrialisation process and the small-scale private enterprises in a strongly protected economy. Etatisme promoted the state as the leading producer and investor in the urban sector. Ultimately, however, political and economic power remained with the state elites, and these economic and institutional changes remained confined to the small urban sector.

The pace of economic growth was distinctly higher around the world in the decades after the Second World War. Turkey’s second wave of industrialisation began in the 1960s, again under heavy protection and with government subsidies and tax breaks. Rapid urbanisation steadily expanded the industrial base. The state economic enterprises continued to play an important role as suppliers of intermediate goods. The new leaders, however, were the large-scale industrialists and the holding companies in Istanbul and the north-western corner of the country. With the rise of political and macro-economic instability in the 1970s, industrialisation turned increasingly inward and short-term interests of narrow groups prevailed over a long-term vision, culminating in a severe crisis at the end of the decade.

A third wave that began in the 1980s under conditions of a more open, export-oriented economy widened the industrial base further to the regional centres of Anatolia. The rapid expansion of exports of manufactures played a key role in the rise of these new industrial centres, which began to challenge the Istanbul-based industrialists. Once again, however, rising political and macro-economic instability, growing corruption and the deterioration of the institutional environment in the 1990s brought this wave to a sharp halt in 2001.

Ever since the Young Turk era, governments in Turkey have supported the emergence and growth of an industrial bourgeoisie. Helped by the growth of the urban sector and successive waves of industrialisation, this bourgeoisie has
been gradually wresting control of the economy away from the state elites in Ankara.\textsuperscript{47} For most of the twentieth century the country’s industrial elites remained limited to those of the Istanbul region. But with the rise of the Anatolian tigers, the economic base of the bourgeoisie has been expanding socially and geographically. The AKP government of recent years has been supported by these emerging elites in the provinces.

The political and economic power of the workers, as well as their share in the total pie, was on the rise after the Second World War, especially during the ISI era after 1960. In the most recent era of globalisation, however, economic and institutional changes have combined to reduce the power of the workers and trade unions. Similarly, agricultural producers enjoyed a sharp increase in influence, if not power, with the shift to a multi-party political regime in the 1950s. Their influence and their ability to shape economic institutions have been declining gradually but steadily, however, with the decline in the share of agriculture in both the labour force and total output.

While economic power has clearly shifted from Ankara to Istanbul and more recently towards industrial groups in the provinces, the shift in political power and the move towards more pluralist politics have been far from easy or simple. Too often during the last half-century, Turkey’s political system has produced fragile coalitions and weak governments which have sought to satisfy the short-term demands of various groups by resorting to budget deficits, borrowing and inflationary finance. The political and macro-economic instability also led to the deterioration of the institutional environment. Rule of law and property rights suffered, and public investment, including expenditure on education, declined sharply. The weak governments have been too open to pressures from different groups, or even individual firms or entrepreneurs, seeking favours. As a result, the pursuit of favours or privileges from local and national governments has been a more popular activity for the producers than the pursuit of productivity improvements or competition in international markets.

The crisis of 2001 ushered in significant institutional changes, especially in the linkages between politics and the economy, with new attempts to insulate the latter from short-term interventions in the political sphere. It remains to be seen, however, whether these institutional changes will be effective and durable or whether politics and the institutional environment will regress to their earlier ways. For most of the last century, Turkey has been considered to

have high economic potential. Similarly, it remains to be seen whether this will be realised. It is precisely at this juncture that Turkey’s integration to the EU assumes critical importance. It is not clear when and if Turkey will become a full member of the EU. Nonetheless, the membership process is likely to create a stronger institutional framework for economic change. For the economy, the key contribution of the goal of membership will be the strengthening of the political will to proceed with the institutional changes that may raise the water level in the glass and carry Turkey’s economy to a new level.
for reparations. No legal, financial or territorial claim could successfully be made, the lawyers concluded, against any individual or state.

Nothing at the moment suggests that Turkey is willing to accept legal advice of this kind, but there have been some signs of a more open approach. In 2003 the government approved the screening of the film *Armavir* by the Armenian-Canadian director, Atom Egoyan, even though it shows Turkish troops in 1915 acting with appalling brutality, and it tells a story chillingly different to the one Turkish children are taught in school. But the government's decision came, apparently, too soon: ultranationalists threatened to attack any cinema where the film was shown, and plans to release it in Turkey were postponed indefinitely. Three years later when it was shown on a private television station it was described as 'a propaganda film and a great lie'; but at least local audiences had an opportunity to judge it for themselves.

There will be further flashpoints in the future, and it may fall once again to the European Union to test the limits of Turkey's new approach to the world. The EU reform process has helped change Turkey in dramatic ways, and it is already provoking a backlash among those who were more comfortable with old certainties. But there is one more issue which the EU will in time want to discuss: the fate of the Armenians in 1915.

'France will pose this question,' the then French foreign minister, Michel Barriére, said pointedly, just a few days before Turkey was given its European date.

'Reconciliation is the core idea of the European project. That's why Turkey will eventually have to come to terms with the past, with its own history, and recognize this tragedy.'

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6

RIGHTS AND WRONGS

'This one is for electric shocks,' said Vedat Zencir, carefully turning a small handle. 'And that one over there,' he said, moving across the dimly lit room, 'is for hanging a suspect from the wall - like this.'

It was my first visit to İzmir and on a quiet side street in an old neighbourhood I was being shown around Turkey's most unusual museum. In a small humaid basement, a grizzly array of torture implements was unceremoniously displayed - a cage, a few chains, and some nasty-looking bits of wire.

It would be nice to report that this was a display of horrors from an earlier, more inhumane time, but it wasn't. The privately financed Freedom of Expression Museum was very contemporary. Upstairs, above the torture chamber, was another small display: books and newspapers which had been banned by state censorship, and photographs of dozens of writers and artists who were in jail.

'Ve just wanted to do something, we wanted to remind visitors what can happen here when people express their opinions,' said Zencir, the museum spokesman. 'Torture still takes place, and everybody knows it.'

Some time after my visit the museum was forced to close down - no, not a police raid in the middle of the night, just a simple lack of funds - but that cramped basement in İzmir stuck in my mind as an important symbol. Ordinary people were saying enough is enough - the state has to find a better way to go about its business. The desire for change was brought home to me again a couple of years later in Istanbul, when I interviewed a group of university students about their expectations for
the future. We chatted for a long time, and they said pretty much what I expected them to say. Good jobs, more opportunities, a better democracy. But as I was about to switch off the microphone, I thought of one more question: what about human rights, I asked, what about torture?

I was half-expecting a defensive answer but a young man in the corner, who hadn’t said much, was the first to speak.

‘A lot of people get fed up with the foreign media,’ he said. ‘It’s all “human rights this, human rights that” … it’s not the full picture of Turkey. But we have had a problem, I know we have, and now we have a chance to do something about it.’

Other students at the table nodded. Some of them stared into their glasses of tea.

‘Not for your sake,’ said the girl sitting next to me, ‘but for ours.’

For years Turkey’s human rights record was a national disgrace. A decade ago deaths in custody were commonplace, torture was out of control and extra-judicial executions happened so often that they barely rated a line in the newspapers. But as it entered the twenty-first century, Turkey seemed to realize it could no longer afford to be so cavalier with human life if it wanted to receive the respect it deserves from its own people and from the rest of the world. Pressure from abroad – the ubiquitous EU process – has played an important part, but grassroots protest from civil society has also bubbled up through the system to burst out in a flood of reform.

In a remarkably short space of time many laws restricting freedom of expression have been scrapped, and the government has declared “zero tolerance” for torture. Pre-trial detention periods have been shortened; detainees have more rights of access to lawyers; and sentences for officials convicted of torture or ill-treatment have been increased. Turkey is beginning to shake off the image of malign brutality portrayed in Ankara’s least favourite film, Midnight Express. No one should be complacent, though. Old habits die hard, and most of the exhibits I saw in that sweaty Izmir basement are still in use in the darker corners of the state system.

So a story like this could still happen again. Suleyman Yeter was taken into police custody in Istanbul on 3 March 1999. Two days later he was dead. His body, which I saw before it was buried, bore clear marks of torture and physical abuse. The police said initially that he had died of a heart attack, but even they knew it wasn’t true. Suleyman was a Kurd, and an Alevi; but most of all he was a committed communist, and it was that which brought him into conflict with the state.

I met Suleyman’s family two days after he died, when his body was still in official custody. His mother had just arrived after a long and difficult journey from the east, and she had little information about her son’s death; his aunt had heard about it on the radio. As we sat and talked, Suleyman’s lawyer arrived with one of his friends, Bayram, who had been arrested in the same police raid on a radical left-wing newspaper.

‘The last time I saw Suleyman he was in the cell,’ Bayram told us. ‘He was exhausted and he couldn’t stop shivering. He said he’d been beaten, and they made him lie on a slab of ice while they hosed him down with freezing cold water. Then they came and took him away again, and that was that.’

The next morning I went with the family to the state mortuary. They were made to wait on the pavement for more than an hour as an extraordinary police presence built up around them. Only after a long bureaucratic battle was Suleyman’s body finally released for burial. Before his funeral took place I saw for myself how he had been tortured to death. His body was carefully laid out in the local cemetery, and a doctor guided me through the clinical detail. There were broken bones in his chin and neck, a tooth had been pulled out; there was extensive bruising under his arms, and wounds on several parts of his body. Suleyman’s friends said the police officers who were responsible had been out to get him for some time.

As the coffin was taken outside the long build-up of emotion suddenly broke into hysteria. People began crying and screaming, and Suleyman’s mother tried to pull the green cloth covering off the simple wooden box. But a younger generation, more politicized, was about to take over the funeral. The coffin was draped in a red flag and fists punched the air; slogans were chanted and defiant speeches were made. The creation of another political martyr had begun.

Along the route of the funeral procession, hundreds of police officers
in riot gear lined the streets. Water cannon and armoured cars lurked in the background.

'We can't take any risks,' an officer told me. 'These people are extremists. They will use violence if we give them the chance.'

But Suleyman's funeral was a peaceful affair. At the graveside his wife Ayse, her face animated by angry passion, waved the imam away. Suleyman, she told him, was an atheist. He wanted no prayers.

Back in the capital Ankara, over the next two weeks, I asked for an interview about Suleyman Yeter with four different government ministers. They were all unavailable. I sensed no grand conspiracy, no cabinet cover-up. It was just that in 1999 the death of a radical left-wing union activist in a police cell in the country's largest city didn't seem to be that important. People were used to it, and there was a shocking sense of complacency.

Five years later, a police officer was finally sent to prison for his role in torturing Suleyman Yeter to death. Lawyers for Suleyman's family, who had to fight all the way to bring their case to court, said the punishment was far too lenient. The sentence had originally been ten years, but it was reduced to four years and two months on the grounds that it was impossible to determine which of the three men charged with torturing Suleyman had actually killed him. The officer found guilty, Mehmet Yuruc, will serve less than half his reduced sentence; another policeman was acquitted in court, and the third is still 'on the run'.

Did Suleyman Yeter's family receive justice? Many trials involving police officers never reach any verdict because the legal process is allowed to drag on until cases have to be dismissed. Human rights activists say the authorities often treat police officials leniently, and that makes the declarations of 'zero tolerance' for torture ring uncomfortably hollow. At least in Suleyman's case, after a long legal struggle, a policeman was found guilty. But under reforms to the Turkish penal code, anyone now convicted of torture which results in death is supposed to be sentenced to life imprisonment.

'The verdict in our trial,' said the family lawyer, Kecel Ozturk, 'shows the resistance all state institutions display when it comes to torturers, especially if they happen to be police officers.'

It's a familiar story. There is a big difference between passing laws and enforcing them, and the message that things have to be done differently now has yet to percolate through every layer of the state security system. Turkey's independent Human Rights Association reported 692 cases of abuse in the first six months of 2004, and it is not entirely happy with the European Union's assertion that torture in Turkey is 'no longer systematic'. Electric shocks, sexual assault, beatings on the soles of the feet and 'Palestinian hangers' - a modern and more portable variant of the rack - all continue to feature in the list of complaints.

But indisputably things have changed. Until very recently there was an organized system to torture people and then to cover it up; most of that system has been dismantled. At the highest political levels torture is no longer tolerated. A new generation of security officials with a broader vision is moving into positions of authority. Police academics and military schools have included human rights lectures as part of their basic training for several years, and younger police officers have been changing long-established practices. Instead of handing out a beating to detainees, they hand out a cup of coffee and a few words of advice (inspiring the Wall Street Journal to come up with one of my favourite newspaper headlines on Turkey: MIDNIGHT ESPRESSO).

For an idea of how much things have changed you have to go to the people on the front line. People like Fazal Altunen Taner, who sits at his desk in a small office on a side street off Isikdak Cadessi - the busy shopping boulevard which runs through the heart of Istanbul. As a lawyer he's been fighting human rights cases for a long time, including his own. He was in prison for seven years between 1994 and 2001 without being found guilty of any crime. An initial confession that he belonged to an illegal organization was, he says, obtained under torture.

So Taner has seen and heard enough to be naturally sceptical of claims of progress, but he is very clear that the number of cases of physical torture has been reduced considerably.

'It really is quite striking. There's much less torture now, especially of political prisoners.'

Why has it changed so quickly, I wondered, if the same people are still in the system?

'Because it was a decision made at the top, under pressure from the EU. That was the crucial factor. But we still need far more social change in our society. We've a long way from where we want to be.'

'Do you think the worst is over?'
I hope so, but it's still quite fragile. People are being abused psychologically all the time, and people are still beaten. That's a cultural reality. But it's not as bad as it was.'

The big problem is in police stations and isolated gendarmerie camps where there is insufficient supervision and too much 'freelance' activity.

'If you go in there,' said our driver as we passed one notorious gendarmerie headquarters in the south-east, 'you expect to be tortured. Anything else is a surprise.'

Changing the law doesn't immediately change attitudes - that will take many years, and plenty of torturers still work in the system. But the threat of exposure has made a huge difference. Under recent legal reforms, lawyers now have the right to visit all detainees. They may not always gain immediate access, but they keep trying. Hiding evidence of torture has become more difficult, and the days of blanket immunity have gone.

So it's not perfect, but the public now demands accountability. When volleys of shots rang out one night in November 2004 in the town of Kızıltepe near the Syrian border, the local authorities announced that two more terrorists had been eliminated. But Ahmet Kaymaz and his twelve-year-old son, Uğur, had simply been carrying blankets to a truck parked outside their house. Uğur ended up with thirteen bullets in his body. There were angry newspaper headlines and parliamentary investigations, followed by a lawsuit against four trigger-happy police officers. A similar incident in a remote eastern town a few years earlier - and there were many of them - would barely have been a footnote.

Even before the latest burst of reform, Turkey had a far more accountable system than some of its neighbours. Syria, Iran and Iraq spring to mind. But none of them wants to join the European Union. Turkey does, and it is by European standards that it will continue to be judged. Turkish officials now accept that, it is their choice, but they also believe the EU is not being entirely fair. Countries such as Greece and Spain were allowed to join the union to help strengthen their democratic credentials after military dictatorships. Turkey is being asked to make all the improvements first, before it can be considered for membership.

That's why some Turkish officials grit their teeth and grin when European do-gooders come visiting, and they talk openly about double standards. Scandinavians seem to irritate them in particular. Even Tayyip
The group most of them belonged to, the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), was also responsible for countless political murders, and attracted precious little sympathy from the rest of the country. But for a while the situation in the prisons was front-page news and there were heartfelt calls for 'something to be done'.

'They are the youth of our country and the basic fact is that they are dying,' a senior professor of medicine wrote in an open letter to the prime minister in 2001. 'My conscience is screaming that this should not be allowed, and I want my state to feel the same.'

Civic groups made heroic efforts to mediate, but concern about the 'death fasts' gradually faded, overwhelmed by a sense of hopelessness. There was to be, it seemed, no compromise.

When Selami Kurnaz became the 117th person to die, in Tekirdağ prison in August 2004, no one really noticed. The hunger strike had long since developed into a grim ideological struggle in which martyrdom was at a premium, and individual lives were of secondary concern. The power of the state has been pitted against the inscrutability of small nihilistic groups which want to destroy it. There are some things, it seems, that even the human rights lobby can't do much about.

'We don't give much publicity to the death fasts any more,' said one despairing activist in Istanbul. 'As soon as we talk about it, more people volunteer to die.'

The initial cause of the hunger strike has almost been forgotten. But the struggle passed a point of no return at about five o'clock in the morning on 19 December 2000, when the Turkish security forces stormed prisons across the country, determined to re-establish state control over dormitories run by inmates. Operation Return to Life had been planned for more than a year, and failure was not an option. At Bayrampaşa prison in Istanbul, heavily armed paramilitary police and soldiers took up positions on the roof and began trying to force their way into the dormitories by smashing holes in the walls and ceilings.

Detailed accounts from inmates who survived the assault were later brought out of prison by their lawyers.

'They saw us stand up and they started firing at us,' said Hamide Oztürk, a convicted member of the DHKP-C, who was in the women's ward. 'After the shooting they started to bombard us with all kinds of bombs. They threw smoke and sound bombs, nerve gas and pepper gas.'
Overall conditions inside prisons remain poor—they are underfunded and overcrowded; many prisoners are still awaiting trial, or the outcomes of trials which can drag on for years; and local human rights groups receive a stream of complaints from relatives that prisoners are beaten, victimized or held in isolation. Thousands of inmates are released in regular amnesties, which seem to be the only idea anyone has come up with for keeping the size of the prison population under control.

As for the F-type prisons—the source of so much controversy—they are modern and clean, but the authorities seem to be doing everything they can to impose a regime of isolation, without making it obvious publicly. Some of the more radical political prisoners refuse point blank to cooperate, but even those who want to work within the system struggle to claim the rights they should be granted under the law.

'At the moment it's not too good,' concluded one human rights activist, 'but it's not as bad as more and more people dying on hunger strike. That is simply pointless.'

It was a crime which shocked the country, but it was not altogether uncommon. What made it different was that Guldu伊ma Turan had given an interview to a local newspaper just a few hours before she was shot dead by her brothers.

'Print my picture in your paper so the state will protect me,' she said, but it was to no avail.

Guldu伊ma had already been shot once by her siblings, and left for dead on a street in Istanbul. After this first attack she was taken to hospital where she was supposed to have been under police protection. But there was no one to save her when her brothers returned; as she lay defenseless in her hospital bed, they entered the room and shot her twice in the head.

This horrifying crime was all about cleansing the family's 'honor' according to tribal customs. Guldu伊ma Turan had become pregnant out of wedlock in a small village in the east of the country. She said she had been raped by the husband of her cousin. Frightened that she would be punished for her pregnancy, she appealed for police protection and was moved to a safe house in Istanbul where her baby Umut (Hopes) was born and given up for adoption. After a while her family persuaded her that she had been forgiven. But they were lying. They had decided instead that it was time for her to die.

Mass migration has brought the gruesome phenomenon of honour killings into Turkey's big cities, but most murders like this take place in conservative rural areas far from the centres of power. Forty women were officially reported to have been the victims of honour killings in 2003, but the real number is far higher. Human rights activists are suspicious whenever they read of a young woman drowning in a river, or dying in the kind of agricultural 'accident' which happens when you get run over by a tractor. The killings are carefully planned at gatherings of the clan; a young male relative, often under age, is usually ordered to carry out the crime because a minor will receive a much lighter penalty if he gets caught.

Honour killings get a lot of publicity these days because they are so barbaric, and some Turks think they are publicized almighty in order to run their country down. But this is another story of the two Turkeys: there's the modern Westward-looking Turkey where many women are free to make their own choices, to explore their own sexuality, and to find the partner and the life they want; and there's the other Turkey where men dominate, women are treated as possessions to be bought and sold, and the laws of the land get no further than the front door. Amnesty International estimates that more than a third of all Turkish women are victims of domestic violence, ranging from regular beatings to rape and occasionally murder.

Migration has— if anything— made the problems women face more acute, as conflicting lifestyles collide. I was with a film crew once out in the countryside about fifty miles south of Ankara, not much more than an hour's drive from the capital's trendy bars and cafes. As the sun began to sink lower in the sky we were bumping along a back road near the town of Haymana when we spotted a shepherd looking after the sheep of a local landowner. His dog was alarmingly fierce, but Hasan was perfectly friendly towards strangers who came tramping across the field for no apparent reason. When I asked him about women who choose not to cover their hair, though, his answers were shocking in a country which aspires to Western modernity.

'They're all bitches and prostitutes,' he said in a matter-of-fact voice, 'that's what we're told.'