



An Investigation of Turkey's Social and Economic Policies from the Foundation of Republic (1923) to Atatürk's Death

Majid Radfar, Master's degree in History of Islamic Iran, Azad University of Science and Research
majid.radfar2023@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to examine the social and economic policies implemented in Turkey from the foundation of the republic until Atatürk's death. The employed methodology involved a descriptive and analytical approach utilizing library resources. Mustafa Kemal's activities in Turkey have been widely regarded as a pivotal moment in the history of Turkey, resulting in both favorable and unfavorable consequences. Undoubtedly, despite the prolonged duration of the reforms in this nation, Kemal's multifaceted endeavors in the realms of economics, society, culture, and others are unparalleled for their nature, variety, and scope during his era. The aforementioned reforms have yielded numerous consequences for Turkey, a portion of which persist to this day and have been entrenched within the fabric of Turkish society. The Islamists after Najm al-Din Azbakan lacked a profound conviction in effecting its alteration and were incapable of doing so with ease. Moreover, certain Islamic nations have taken notice of Kemalism in Turkey and regard its amalgamation with the Islamism of the Welfare and Justice Party as a paradigm for their societal advancement. Hence, the scholarly examination of the religious and social changes that occurred in Turkey during the tenure of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk remains a pertinent topic.

Keywords: Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Social policies, Economic policies

INTRODUCTION

Over forty years spanning from 1923 to the mid-1960s, the Republic of Turkey was able to preserve its national sovereignty through the governance of relatively consistent civilian administrations. Concurrently, the country made notable strides toward modernization in the domains of economics, social welfare, and politics, albeit with some irregularities. Turkey's comparative stability sets it apart from other regions in the Middle East, which are characterized by leaders with brief tenures. The initial quarter of the 20th century was a period of instability for the Turkish populace, marked by a series of governmental collapses and a lack of effective governance in numerous regions of Turkey. Between 1908 and 1918, Istanbul experienced 34 alterations in its cabinet composition until the end of the hostilities. In 1907, the British Embassy located in Istanbul dispatched a report to London, indicating that "the management of the provinces seemed to be in a state of utter disorder. Individuals evade tax payments and military enlistment. The displacement of governors from their administrative hubs has resulted in the public being openly encouraged to engage in riotous behavior."

Atatürk, a military and political leader, is widely recognized as the founder of the Republic of Turkey and is commonly referred to as the "Father of the Turks." He possessed exceptional aptitude in matters related to the military. Atatürk was born on May 19, 1881, in Thessaloniki, a city located in the northern region of contemporary Greece. During the time of his birth, Thessaloniki was under the dominion of the Ottoman Empire. Initially, he enlisted in the

Ottoman military and participated in combat operations against the Italian forces in Tripoli, Libya. During the initial ten years of the 20th century, Atatürk, in collaboration with a cohort of Turkish officers known as the Young Turks, laid the groundwork for implementing reforms in the military and administration that were supportive of Turkish nationalism. In the context of the Balkan wars, Atatürk attained a prominent position as a commanding officer. He attained the position of commanding officer during the Balkan wars and demonstrated his military prowess by successfully resisting the British forces in the Dardanelles and the Gallipoli Peninsula in 1916. His efforts prevented the occupation of Istanbul by the British and their allied forces during the First World War. Subsequently, he engaged in combat operations on the Eastern Front of the Second World War.

Atatürk's implementation of the transition from Eastern-Islamic civilization to universal Western civilization entailed not only governmental structural changes, but also a transformation of daily life, including alterations to concepts of time and place, dietary and sartorial practices, and Turkish customs. Atatürk argued, "The Turkish populace must exhibit civilized behavior in their familial, lifestyle, and appearance domains, to attain a civilized status. In 1925, a dress law was implemented that required the Turkish population to adopt the common dress of the civilized nations of the world. This legislation marked the initial phase of a process aimed at altering the outward appearance of the Turkish people. The reorganization of the family structure was brought about by the introduction of the new Civil Code in 1926, which was influenced by the Swiss Civil Code. During the same year, the Grand National Assembly decided to substitute the European calendar with the Hijri calendar. Subsequently, Sunday was officially recognized as a holiday, replacing Friday. The replacement of the Arabic alphabet with the Latin alphabet by the Republic of Turkey in 1928 was a deliberate move to sever all connections with the Islamic heritage of the nation. It was made compulsory to select a surname in 1934, and Mustafa Kemal opted for the surname Atatürk. As the popularity of Radio Cairo surpasses that of Radio Ankara, there has been a noticeable imposition by the government on the dissemination of Turkish music through broadcasting channels. Mustafa Kamal exhibited a keen interest in the realm of traditional music, however, he perceived it as a vestige of Turkey's Islamic and Eastern history, thereby impeding the nation's progression towards Western modernity. Regarding the above-mentioned material, this study aimed to examine the social and economic policies implemented in Turkey from the inception of the republic until the passing of Atatürk.

Economic Policies

Turkey's Economy during the Time of Atatürk

The dissolution of the Ottoman Empire was a direct consequence of World War I. However, the period of the liberation war spanning from 1919 to 1923, which entailed a struggle against the Greek invasion in western Anatolia and the French occupation of Cilicia in the southern region, ultimately resulted in the formation of the Republic of Turkey. The initial objective of the newly established government in Ankara was to implement modernization measures in the country, which had been severely impacted by over ten years of warfare. The armed conflict resulted in the demise of a significant portion of Turkey's populace (10%), caused severe damage to the economy, and imposed a considerable burden on the nation's communication infrastructure. The overarching objectives of the government were to facilitate the conversion of the subjugated and victimized populace of Anatolia into an independent, modernized, and industrialized state



with Westernized values. Atatürk endeavored to convey to the Turkish populace that the Ottoman government's economy was predicated on a statist approach, which has since become obsolete in the contemporary global context. He emphasized the need to reconstruct a modern Turkey by placing reliance on a national economy¹.

Considerable focus was required for the establishment and revitalization of the novel system. However, the implementation of industrialization, which commenced in the 1930s, was incentivized through diverse means. The establishment and development of communication were primarily facilitated through the construction of railways. The revitalization of the silk industry was facilitated by governmental interventions. The commencement of sugar production can be traced back to the government's decision to standardize beet and establish refineries in Apollo, situated in Thrace, and Oshak, located in western Anatolia. Two additional governmental actions held significance. In 1924 "Ish Bank" was established to extend financial support to private business investments, including those in the industrial sector. Subsequently, in 1927, the "Industry Promotion Law" was ratified, thereby enabling the utilization of various concessions for the promotion of industries².

During the 1930s, there was a notable development of novel industries in the regions of Central Anatolia and Kayseri-Nigde in Inner Anatolia. The recently established factory, comprising a single unit, was strategically situated close to the railway lines, adjacent to multiple towns that had a population of at least 10,000 individuals, as recorded in the 1927 census. Industrial activities commenced in major provincial centers such as Eskishahr, Kayseri, and Sivas, which were strategically located at significant points of intersection of its lines. Additionally, new industrial areas gradually emerged around the end of the Karabuk-Zongoldak axis and along the Izmit Bay. Despite the intention to allocate industrial centers in a manner that was both politically and socially equitable, the emir frequently lacked sufficient economic clout to impede the concentration of interests in the Aegean, Marmara, and Northwest Belt regions. Ankara stands as a formidable contender alongside Istanbul and Izmir in terms of its appeal as an industrial hub³.



Alterations in the Political System

The political leader received backing from the extensive bureaucratic and military infrastructure that had been instituted under the empire's oversight since 1817, during the execution of his policies. This does not imply that the Republicans will inevitably dominate the realm without any doubt. In the aftermath of the 1908 constitutional revolution, the Young Turks conducted purges, expelling civil servants who had engaged in corruption or espionage under Abdul Hamid's regime. In some instances, the public played a role in driving these individuals away. During 1913 and 1914, Enver Pasha conducted a purge of numerous officers who had been elevated to their positions during the preceding regime. In their stead, he appointed officers who had completed their education at the newly established military colleges. The Kemalist

Olugh Igdemiro, *ibid.*, p. 171.¹

Peter Beaumont et al. (1990). *Middle East*, Translated by Mohsen Shanechi and others, Mashhad, Astan Razavi, p. 536

Peter Beaumont, *ibid.*, p. 567.³

movement underwent a process of refinement. Law 347 was enacted on September 25, 1923, allowing for the termination of military officers who failed to participate in the national resistance movement. In 1926, a law (Law 854) was enacted for civil servants, which bore a resemblance to a previous law passed three years prior. However, the remedies provided by this law seemed to be restricted in their scope. Subsequently, on May 24, 1928, Law M 1289 was introduced to facilitate procedures for officers and civil servants who believed they had been unfairly terminated⁴.

Within the realm of finance, the Republic was bequeathed two separate bureaucratic frameworks from the Empire. Two distinct entities involved in the collection and management of financial resources in the Ottoman Empire are the Ministry of Finance and the Ottoman Public Credit Department⁵. The former underwent a comprehensive modernization process under the leadership of Javed Beyk, who served as the Minister of Finance during the Young Turks era. The latter, on the other hand, has been responsible for the collection of taxes, customs duties, and indirect taxes related to tobacco sales since 1881. Beyk had assumed control of the tobacco, salt, and fisheries commodities previously held by the European creditors of the empire. The Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 resulted in the new Turkish government taking on a portion of the Ottoman debt. As a consequence, the independent functioning of the Public Credit Department was discontinued and the Turkish government acquired control over existing monopolies. In 1932, all of these entities were consolidated under the control of monopolies. During the 1920s and 1930s, monopolies played a crucial role in generating revenue for emerging states.

Undoubtedly, the religious branch has undergone the most changes among all the branches of government bureaucracy in this republic. The Education Unity Law and the European-style family law plan respectively passed in 1924 and 1926, resulted in the secular government gaining direct control over crucial domains, thereby diminishing the influence of religious institutions. The dissolution of the caliphate and the concomitant substitution of the Shaykh al-Islam, the preeminent religious authority, with a board of directors overseen by the prime minister, resulted in a significant diminution of the religious leader's authority. Conversely, the reforms implemented in 1916 resulted in the removal of Shaykh al-Islam from the cabinet and the subsequent loss of his jurisdiction over Sharia courts, endowments, and religious schools, thereby significantly constraining its efficacy. Zibakalam (1998) asserts that Mustafa Kamal Pasha's ability to implement his reforms with minimal resistance from senior clerics is indicative of the Ottoman religious institution's bureaucratic nature and its subjugation to state control during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

In 1924, the Young Turks attempted to introduce scientific subjects to the curriculum of religious schools as a means of reform. However, the Kemalist faction deemed these schools to be beyond reform and subsequently shut them down. After that time, the responsibility for the education and training of religious professionals was assumed by Istanbul University's Faculty of Theology and several other institutions dedicated to the instruction of preachers and religious leaders. It is noteworthy, however, that the first of these institutions was shuttered in 1935. As a consequence, it was not until the generation of students educated during the 1930-1931

Gotthard jaeshke, turk inkilabi turk inkilabi tarihi kronolojisi, trans niyazi recep aksu (istanbui:Istanbul ⁴ universitesi , 1941),vol. 2 ,p.73
2. Atabaki, ibid., p. 178.⁵



academic year that the decline in the quality of religious education in the Ottoman Empire became apparent and underwent a gradual decline, beginning in the mid-1940s and culminating in its eventual disappearance⁶.

Modifications within the Political Party

The People's Party can be characterized as a partisan political party that emerged as a novel instrument of the Republican regime in Turkey. It is noteworthy that this party held a monopoly on political and legal representation in Turkey from 1925 onward, except for a brief three-month interval in 1930.

The nation possessed a significant history of political parties starting from 1908, and from 1913 to 1918, it was governed by a single-party system. However, it is worth noting that this instance exhibited notable distinctions. In the second constitutional period, there was a shift in power towards a secret and extra-parliamentary committee that held control over both the parliamentary party and the cabinet. The Republic saw the establishment of the party by Mustafa Kamal within the National Assembly, which exhibited a strong affiliation with the government⁷. During the period spanning from 1925 to 1929, the emergency law was implemented, leading to the transfer of all powers of the parliamentary party to the cabinet. It is a verifiable reality that the parliamentary party held no authority during the timeframe in which the most radical reforms were ratified. During this period, reform laws were commonly ratified with unanimous or near-unanimous support, yet the total number of votes cast typically fell below fifty percent⁸.

Authoritarianism and Political Modernization by Atatürk

The primary objectives of the new regime were to effect cultural and political changes aimed at resolving issues about identity, loyalty, and legitimacy. The pace of the cultural revolution was notably swifter than that of the political revolution. The Kamal regime exhibited a significant degree of continuity with the preceding era, while also representing a departure from established norms. This was since many of the regime's top officials were drawn from the ranks of the Ottoman bureaucracy and possessed a privileged social status. Additionally, they maintained their involvement in military affairs. However, significant political transformations occurred.

In January 1921, a significant shift in the fundamental principles of the government's legitimacy took place. The Grand National Assembly considered the sole authentic representative of the populace, enacted a law that unequivocally vested sovereignty in the nation. Thus, the former monarchical system and religious and political leadership of the old caliphate were dismantled. The year 1923 marked the official declaration of the Republic of Turkey, which entailed the removal of Islam as the state's official religion from the constitution (Raesi Nia, 1995).

The administrative system that was established from the early 1920s to the 1960s concentrated all legislative and executive powers in a national assembly or parliament, as per the new constitution. The president was elected through this assembly. The President, under the



siyasi Tarih 1789-1960p430. Fahir h armaoglu⁶

Carl Bruckman (2005). History of Nations and Islamic States, Translated by Hadi Jazayeri, Tehran, Scientific and ⁷

Cultural Publishing House, p. 435

Brookman, ibid., p. 436.⁸

established protocol, appointed the Council of Ministers. This body was held accountable to the assembly and subject to investigation and scrutiny. In actuality, a form of patriarchy or patriarchal governance was operationalized through the military and the singular political party structure. Atatürk, recognized as the founder of the Turkish nation, gained growing charisma over time. It is difficult to dispute his impact on the military. The legitimacy of the new regime was believed to be derived from the commanding and captivating personality of its leader. During the period spanning from 1923 to 1950, the Republic of Turkey was governed by a total of two presidents. Kemal initiated measures to assert his authority over the assembly by intervening in the 1923 elections and establishing a novel political party, subsequently renamed the People's Party. During his tenure, this party was called the Republican People Party (RPP). He successfully marginalized his primary adversaries and utilized his authority to establish a sovereign state. As noted by Bernaldluis, Kemal's re-election by the assembly was a mere formality, as he was entitled to hold the office for life with powers equivalent to those of a sultan. He had the authority to remove and appoint according to his own volition. The subsequent leader, Ismat Inonu, assumed comparable authority and even augmented his jurisdiction throughout the Second World War⁹.

The foremost objective of Kemal Atatürk was to establish authority over all significant centers of influence. The initial action taken by him was to disentangle the military from the realm of politics. During the period of one-party rule spanning from 1923 to 1945, a clear demarcation was maintained between the military and political spheres. Numerous army officers opted to retire from their military service to pursue a career in politics, as they were advised to do so. Consequently, a significant number of these individuals subsequently became members of the governing People's Republican Party. The officers who opted to continue their service in the military were deprived of the right to participate in the electoral process or access current events through print media¹⁰.

The upper echelons of the People's Republican Party were predominantly occupied by former officers, bureaucrats, and intellectuals. In contrast, the national level was controlled by the traditional rural elite who owned land. The People's Republic made a conscious decision to function as a "cadre party" and an "elite organization". The party's leadership did not many any substantial endeavors to broaden its popular constituency and garner the backing of the masses. Instead, it has concentrated its efforts on a select group of Westernized elites, while the peasant masses have been increasingly neglected. They experienced estrangement from the government of the People's Republic. The employment of authoritarian and exploitative techniques by the bureaucracy resulted in heightened levels of alienation among the populace. According to the majority of peasants' beliefs, the People's Republic, along with the tax collector, was perceived as a conspirator.

As a result, the political and social participation of the peasants, who made up more than 75% or possibly 80% of the country's population, was disregarded in this manner. A significant proportion of ex-military personnel and leaders assumed crucial roles and positions within the legislative and executive branches via the RPP. Former military officers were frequently hired in

Movasaghi, *ibid.*, pp. 151-184⁹

siyasi Tarih 1789-1960p 654. • Fahir h armaoglu¹⁰



the capacities of legal professionals and corporate leaders. The formation of the Progressive Republican Party (PRP) in November 1924 was a response to the perceived weakness and ineffectiveness of the opposition in the National Assembly. The PRP, led by a group of former officers, aimed to restore principles such as people's sovereignty, liberalism, democracy, and respect for religious beliefs and opinions. The emergence of a potential threat from former members of his party compelled Kemal Atatürk to replace the more hard-line Prime Minister, İsmet İnönü, with Fethi Okyar. The emergence of said opposition party coincided with the uprisings of both the Kurdish and religious factions in 1925. Upon İnönü's return to the position of prime minister, the aforementioned political party was swiftly repressed within a mere few months of its inception (Ramsaur, 1995).

At the onset of the religious uprising, a legal enforcement mechanism was implemented to establish a single-party system, thereby quashing any political endeavors beyond the purview of the People's Republic Party. Over the following 24 months, a total of over 500 individuals were subject to capital punishment as a result of judicial rulings. Particularly following a subsequent surge of opposition in 1926, it reached its apex in an unsuccessful endeavor to assassinate Kemal Atatürk. Several newspapers located in Istanbul were shut down and journalists were apprehended and held in custody¹¹.

The Turkish regime's authoritarian character was firmly entrenched until 1933, particularly until 1935, and precluded any avenue for dissent or divergence. In 1936, İsmet İnönü, the Prime Minister and General Secretary of the People's Republic, declared the complete and absolute synchronization between the government's administrative machinery and the party organization. Consequently, all government officials in the administrative branches are mandated to adhere to this directive. (Robinson,...)

During this period, there existed minimal practical distinction between the party and the administrative apparatus. Even after 1939, when legal provisions prohibited party officials from assuming governmental administrative positions, this remained a factual reality. Following the demise of Atatürk in November 1938, the candidate of the party, İnönü, was expeditiously elected as both the president and the president of the People's Republic, owing to the party's position. The military was consistently in the public eye as the entity responsible for making and ultimately deciding upon the "ultimate decision." The political alliance between İnönü and Marshal Fuat Köprülü, who held a conservative stance and wielded significant control over the military during the republic, proved to be highly effective in terms of political maneuvering and wielded considerable influence. This alliance resulted in the complete isolation of the Bayar 2 faction, which was characterized by a liberal tendency led by Bayar, a prominent businessman, and banker, within the party. Due to İnönü's perceived lack of charisma in comparison to Kemal, he was bestowed with the designation of "National Leader" and "Permanent Chairman" within the party. The political system assumed a fascist character, as succinctly captured by the party's motto "One Party, One Nation, One Leader". During the Second World War, the Turkish government significantly increased its level of intervention in nearly all facets of Turkish society, surpassing its previous level of involvement (Zibakalam, 2003).

Cultural Revolution and Westernization



The elites and the Kamal regime prioritized cultural and political transformations over socio-economic reforms. It is conceivable to address the concerns about identity and legitimacy through a novel nationalist political ethos within the confines of the nation-state. According to Toprak, their objectives were outlined as follows:

- 1) The process of formulating an ideology for the movement provided political legitimacy to the national regime and its objectives.
- 2) The governmental control over individuals and various societal factions, including those based on ethnicity, religion, and other affiliations.
- 3) The establishment of a national identity that catalyzes social mobilization.

In contrast to the conventional political culture and governance, the novel political culture and governance exhibited a highly secular nature. According to the perspective of the Kemalist elites, the process of modernization was synonymous with the adoption of secularism and Westernization.

The Turkish nationalists opted to pursue national autonomy, however, as Toprak aptly observes, their nationalism was situated "not within a national framework but rather within a Western framework". They fully renounced their national, traditional, and indigenous values, culture, and history, and focused primarily on altering the fundamental value system of Turkish society through channels such as the educational system and mass media¹². The Turkish Revolution can be characterized as a revolution in values that was predominantly instigated by the upper echelons of society. According to Zargar (1993), the Kemalist perspective posits that the popular acceptance of Westernization as a "pseudo-ideology" necessitates a transformation in the non-Western societal value structure.

Kemal Atatürk prioritized three key objectives in his efforts, namely, the stabilization of the republic, the establishment of a cohesive national education system, and the imperative of purifying, refining, and advancing the Islamic faith by eliminating its use as a political instrument¹³. The last objective was implemented during the secularization process to counter "the sole alternative source of ideology for mass mobilization, namely Islam, and to preclude its impact on Turkish society and the shift of the society from a traditional Islamic framework to a Western one."¹⁴

Atatürk prioritized education in conjunction with de-Islamization as a means of realizing ideological maxims, or to present a wholly Western and contemporary facade for the emerging Turkish state. Historically, education has been accessible to all individuals, however, the distribution of educational resources and employment opportunities for the educated populace have been primarily concentrated in urban areas. The newly established ruling class, which notably included Atatürk, received their education and instruction within the contemporary imperial educational framework during the latter part of the 19th century. There was a notable rise in social mobility, particularly through enlistment in the military and advancement within bureaucratic systems. Within the newly formed republic, individuals of high social status who received education from these two influential establishments frequently regarded religious institutions as their primary adversaries. They endeavored to broaden and strengthen their

Binnaz. Toprk, Islam and political development in Turkey .leiden: brill. 1981.p.38¹²

ibid.p.39¹³

ibid.p.39¹⁴



foothold by providing education to intellectuals who had adopted Western cultural norms. The expansion of high schools and universities with a non-religious and secular curriculum was a means through which they achieved this objective. This curriculum was no longer pertinent to Arabic and Persian culture. The closure of the former Ottoman academic center for Science and Technology, Dar al-Funun, in 1933 marked a significant shift in educational institutions. The newly established Istanbul University became the primary institution for instruction, where students were exposed to and instructed in Kemalist ideology.

The distinction between traditional and modern institutions, which had persisted since the old regime's reforms, has shifted in favor of the latter. However, the new administration disregarded the cultural and historical foundations of enduring institutions. In other words, rather than undergoing a genuine internal and bottom-up transformation of social relations, they just imitated Western ideals, symbols, and patterns superficially and formally without learning science and technology. According to Burkes, the secularism of Kemal was deficient in a robust ideological foundation and favorable perception, rendering it susceptible to vulnerability.

The urban elite and educated class were frequently impacted by cultural modifications that were enforced through authoritative means. The literacy rate exhibited a notable increase from approximately 8% in 1928 to exceeding 20% in 1935 and ultimately reaching 30% by the conclusion of World War II. The majority of the regime's educational endeavors were concentrated in both major and minor urban areas. However, the regime's affiliation with traditional rural aristocrats and influential individuals hindered the proliferation of education among the rural populace, resulting in a significant disparity between urban and rural areas¹⁵. It was apparent to the government that the majority of Turkish citizens lacked comprehension and interest in reforms. Certain actions taken by the government were intentionally crafted to serve as propaganda for the general population. The urban populace comprised a small fraction of the overall population and was distinguished from the rural inhabitants who constituted nearly 80% of the nation. The novel Western culture was emblematic of the affluent bourgeoisie of the metropolis and was merely a superficial veneer that failed to permeate the wider society. A disparity had emerged between the governing authorities and the populace subject to their governance. People discovered that they shared little in common with the new elites and that their world was very different from theirs. The rulers maintained that the elites were populist even if they seemed different and spoke in a language that was alien to the average person. The state of alienation persisted and intensified during the 1930s, culminating in a further deterioration following the demise of the influential and captivating leader, Atatürk. Following this, there existed two distinct forms of culture: the Westernized and secular culture of a minority group with significant influence within the bureaucracy, and the native culture of the majority group, which was closely tied to Islam.

The previous emphasis on politicizing the peasantry was supplanted by a deliberate endeavor to educate a cohort of Westernized elites¹⁶.

Notwithstanding the prevailing political culture among the ruling elites, the political culture of the urban and rural lower classes, particularly the peasants, persisted traditionally and served as a foundation for the traditionalist, fundamentalist, and even modern Islamic movements. The



Davison, r.h., op.cit.,p.143.b.toprak, op.cit., p. 122.¹⁵

Rustow, in pye, l. & verba, s., op.cit., pp. 180-185.¹⁶

inability of the cultural transformations enforced by higher authorities to permeate the rural regions and exert their impact was manifested in the initial uprisings of resistance. According to Toprak's assertion, the secular policies and Westernization program of the government had posed a threat to the value system that governed a traditional Islamic society. However, the absence of a new ideological framework that could appeal to and be embraced by the masses further compounded the issue. Furthermore, there was a lack of government intervention with a comprehensive strategy and a dedicated effort toward implementing structural and economic reforms in rural regions.

Hence, the comprehension of Westernization, which is equivalent to modernization within the Turkish framework, was not grasped by the general populace. The matter of secularization was exclusively pursued by the Westernized elite to impose their perspective on modernity upon the masses who were reluctant to relinquish their cultural orientation¹⁷.

Due to this rationale, it can be observed that while the Westernization movement in Turkey predates Japan's modernization, the Turkish populace was unable to attain a fusion of culture, modernity, and identity, unlike their Japanese counterparts. The Turkish experience encountered several socio-economic challenges, alongside ideological and political factors, which can be attributed to the social framework of the new republic and the social and economic transformations that occurred within Turkish society in 1930-50.

Conclusion

The Republic of Turkey's socioeconomic underpinnings, and to a certain degree its economic strategies, appear to have predominantly persisted with the traditional Ottoman models. The reforms implemented during 1923-45 in the republic were not successful in bringing about any significant alterations to the existing structures. Within the realm of social forces, two prominent groups exist the ruling elite, which encompasses the head of state, military personnel, administrative bureaucrats, and intellectuals, and the rural elite, which includes nobles, landowners, and the emerging business class. Within the two primary social groups, the first group consists of the ruling elite, which encompasses military personnel, administrative bureaucrats, and intellectuals. The second group comprises the rural elite, including nobles, landowners, and the emerging business class. The elites belonging to the first group possess a distinct social ideology or strategy. The objectives lacked clarity and specificity concerning the promotion of economic development. They exhibited a degree of unfamiliarity with matters of economics that bore a resemblance to that of the Ottoman Empire during the 1920s. Throughout the Ottoman era and beyond, the Turkish military and administrative bureaucracy, despite their significant political influence and national authority, lacked robust and enduring connections with the landed oligarchy. The entrenched oligarchy that emerged possessed significant historical ties to the surrounding communities and wielded authority over both their economic resources and physical assets. A significant proportion of the Turkish military's officers have historically been and continue to be drawn from the lower-middle and middle socioeconomic strata.

In the era of the War of Independence and the Kemalist modernization movement, Western cultural and political institutions were adopted and established without significant alterations to the social, territorial, and rural framework. The indigenous aristocracy provided backing for the modernization initiative of the national military-administrative elite, and, in exchange, were permitted to maintain their land, prestige, and regional sway. The primary casualties of this arrangement were the rural populace, as evidenced by the apparent absence of authentic land reform in the Republican regimes.

Simultaneously, following the decline of the empire, various indigenous non-Muslim and Muslim factions, including those present at the Sivas Congress (September 1919) and the "associations for the defense of rights," sought to reconcile or submit to the guardianship of global powers, to safeguard their pre-existing interests and privileges. The aforementioned phenomenon may have been a result of the recognition of the decline of the previous governing class before the resurgence of the contemporary military and administrative ruling class following the War of Independence and after the 1920s. Moreover, notwithstanding the nationalist elites' formal repudiation of Western powers' guardianship, such guardianship was being actualized via the establishment of a quasi-capitalist socioeconomic framework interlinked with the worldwide economy. The acceptance of economic capitulations by the Kamali regime, as evidenced by the Treaty of Lausanne, had a significant impact on the economic policies of the republic during the period spanning from 1923 to 1928. The imposition of these restrictions served to limit the republic's economic autonomy. The aforementioned capitulations were implemented to impose tariffs. The policy in question ceased and established a specific standardized level in 1916, while also disallowing differential rates of indirect taxes on both imported and domestically produced goods. Subsequently, Turkey was compelled to eliminate extant quantitative limitations on international commerce and abstain from imposing fresh restrictions¹⁸.

The nationalist movement's heterogeneous and incongruous character was manifested in the amalgamation of "rights defense congresses" and the inaugural "Great National Assembly" (1920-23). During the inaugural session of the National Assembly, a considerable proportion of its members comprised administrative-military elites, accounting for 43% of the total. Additionally, a notable percentage of the members were engaged in trade (12%) and agriculture (6%), while a significant number also held religious occupations. 57%)

The People's Republican Party, also known as the Kemalist Party, held a monopoly on power in Turkey between 1925 and 1945. Its origins can be traced to a coalition between the country's central military, administrative, and intellectual elites and regional aristocrats, many of whom were involved in landownership and commerce. During the year 1915, it can be observed that there was a lack of a robust indigenous commercial or industrial group. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the capital invested in the urban hubs was owned by individuals of Greek, Jewish, Armenian, or foreign descent, amounting to 85% of the total capital. After 1915, a shift in the aforementioned trend occurred, wherein Muslim commercial entities were favored. The cancellation of the capitulations occurred upon Turkey's entry into World War I. The forced displacement of Armenians from the eastern provinces during 1915-16, and the non-violent



Ahmad Movasaghi, "Examining the experience of cultural and political modernization in Turkey between 1920-18 1950", Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Summer 2018, No. 52, pp. 151-184.

exchange of populations with Greece in 1923, resulted in the departure of a significant proportion of merchants and agricultural producers from the nation. The government's involvement in regulatory activity during a decade of war was necessitated by military requirements and civilian shortages, as well as the subsequent reconstruction needs. This involvement extended beyond the customary areas of customs revenue collection, taxation, and public works¹⁹.

During the period spanning from 1914 to 1945, a merchant class emerged in Turkey, primarily as a result of capital taxation, particularly during World War II. The cessation of collaboration between religious factions during times of war was brought about by secular reforms. The persistent alliance between the dominant political class at the federal level and the agrarian elite with financial influence at the regional level persisted. The Kemalist faction collaborated implicitly with the aristocracy and landed elites to uphold and potentially reinforce the existing state of affairs in the countryside, wherein the landed gentry held significant influence. Consequently, a nation was established with a hierarchical social organization in which the government assumed an intermediary function. Following 1945, Turkey exhibited characteristics of a semi-feudal society that was superficially modernized²⁰.

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