

Abreg S. ÇELEM & Pelin AKÇAGÜN (Eds.)

Labour in Turkey

Economic, Political and Social Perspectives




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Liberal Populism and Capital-Owning Class in the Transformation of Labour Regime in Turkey

Abstract: This study concentrates on the relationship between the populist rhetoric and capital-owning class in Turkey. The trajectory of populist rhetoric in Turkey has been defined as a consequence of intricate relations between the paradigm of statism and different representations of liberalism, and has been reconstructed within the network of tensions and intersections between statism and liberalism. Populism in Turkey is claimed to involve a liberal content blended with the discourses of developmentalism and religion, which were shaped by the state control, until the 2000s. Starting with the transition to the multiparty period, liberal populism has been used as an effective rhetorical strategy in Turkish political life for the power struggles of different factions within capital-owning class for many years. In this sense, liberal populism has established the main rhetoric in the regulation of the relations between the capital-owning class and the working class until the 2000s. Each new economic arrangement has produced its own liberal populist rhetoric and used it as a propaganda tool for subsequent arrangements. The first part of this study puts a particular focus upon the interconnections between the discourses of liberalism and the paradigm of statism which constituted the very idea of liberal populism. The chapter then attempts to understand how liberal populism shapes political discourses as well as the class dynamics. Lastly, it accounts for how liberal populist rhetoric and political practices of the capital-owning class have developed in the formation process of the circumstances that have led to ruling of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey.

Keywords: Populism, Statism, Political Economy, Turkey, Liberalism

JEL codes: P16; D72

1. Introduction

After the 1980 military coup in Turkey, social relations were reorganized on three levels. The political sphere was reassigned among Turkish nationalism, Islamism, liberal-right wing and social democracy, while the economic sphere was delivered to neoliberal economic policies under the name of free market economy. In the social sphere, policies aimed at gathering the dominant identity under an ideology called Turkish-Islamic synthesis were built. Such authoritarian regulations have led to the popularization of liberalism in Turkey. The

liberal economy promising economic prosperity, the demands for authoritarianism promising political stability, and the uniformization policies promising confidence received the first serious blow with the AKP's coming to power.

The AKP has increasingly gained power as a political party which utilized liberal populism rather than being a libertarian, assuring that it would resolve the interests of different segments of society on the axis of liberalism. The gradual transformation of the party, which introduced itself as "conservative democrat" although initially claimed to be Islamist, has ultimately turned it into a neo-patrimonial and far-right Turkish nationalist party. This transformation of the party also involves the broader change of Islamic populism that accompanies the propaganda of nationalism in Turkey. The dominance of this understanding of Islamic populism in political discourses, which serves as the most powerful discourse tool of the current power structure, is closely linked to right-wing political tradition exploiting the notion of populism as a means of making politics, which has laid the foundation for the establishment of the AKP. Constant efforts to articulate nationalism and religion in the liberal economy model has significantly shaped the AKP's political topography.

The AKP, which came to power in 2002, has gradually lost its inclusive character in the political context by turning into an increasingly narrower party of identity; presented the majority it leans on to justify its authoritarian and neo-patrimonial policies and thus shifted from liberal populism to Islamic populism. This transition process plays a distinctive role in the political history of Turkey. It is closely related to process of constructing the concept of charismatic leadership in the person of Erdoğan as well as to the drastic transformation of political authority and the state. However, one should note that such a transformation in the political authority and the state includes the ways of self-adapting by political authorities and state organizations for the applicability of different economic programs rather than administrative or organizational changes. In this respect, those transformations might be referred as palpable manifestations of intra-class and inter-class struggles rather than differentiations.

By pointing to the shift in the political structure in Turkey between the years 1950 and 1980 with reference to particular moments, our study aims to understand the transformation of the state in Turkey with respect to the relationship between the state and social classes and to provide a comprehensive account of socio-political grounds which allowed for the AKP regime. The first part of the study covers the relation of liberalism which has long dominated the political rhetoric in Turkey with statism and a class analysis of political transformation starting with the transition to the multiparty period. The next part elaborates on the coup period between the years 1960 and 1980 and the functions of the state

and capital-owning class in the transformation of authority. In the final section, we attempt to explain the interrelation of the AKP rule and the ideological – political hegemony built with the 1980 coup.

2. Liberalism in Turkey: Reproduction of Statism

Liberalism in Turkey, as it has been the case with other political views, has not found the opportunity to stay unaffected by the paradigm of statism. For this reason, the ideological objections of liberalism or other political views against the dominant power structure are eliminated by their articulation to the power apparatus; hence, statism is continuously restored. One of the main reasons for this is that one question located at the centre of the tradition of political thought in Turkey remains unchanged since the Tanzimat period: How does the state survive?

Thinking over the political currents in Turkey requires reflecting on Turkish modernization and the contradictions caused by the process of modernization. If political thoughts and trends in the Turkish context are revisited in with closer attention, it becomes clear that they do not emerge as views concerning politics, history and society but more as reactions to Westernization and modernization process. Such reactions might be categorized under several tendencies occurring independently of political ideologies. Some of those tendencies are pragmatic and democratic, or clear and transparent; while some others include elitist and technocrat attitudes, or traditionalist and conservative approaches. These tendencies, which seem different on the surface level, are constructed through rhetorics addressing different segments of the society. Even though the institutions and individuals in the political realm in Turkey define themselves with labels such as liberal, socialist, Kemalist, Islamist, conservative, nationalist, democrat or with eclectic references such as Marxist-liberal, nationalist-conservative, national-leftist or liberal-Kemalist, it would not be wrong to suggest that the underlying constitutive dynamic of Turkish political thought is the complexes formed under intellectual and emotional trauma experienced in the face of modernization and Westernization.

In the formation, development, adoption and implementation of political thoughts in Turkey, the primary motivations surrounding those thoughts have been the state and statism. The transformations that took place (and were impeded) during the process of transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic might be considered as a result of this statist reflex. While the organization of the state has undergone a radical transformation, the statist reflexes of cadres within the state have persevered. These cadres were in harmony with the

state mechanism defeated and destructed in World War I and embraced the idea of statism. To put it another way, the cadres which seized the power and state apparatus aligned the emerging political thoughts with the principle of statism. Since liberalism, as a theory of politics, history and society, had also its share of such alignments, it could not achieve to find the space to develop in its theoretical and practical originality in the early Republican period. Moreover, the wars between 1919 and 1923 alongside the subsequent Kemalist reforms solidified the political sphere; thus, left no room for flexibility. Therefore, a political sphere in which liberalism was able to stand out could not be built (İnsel, 2005).

The first debates concerning liberalism arose in the late nineteenth century among Ottoman intellectuals. Prince (Mehmet) Sabahattin (1877–1948) was the foremost figure who proposed liberalism and federalism as the ideal regime for the Ottoman Empire. The idea of liberalism, which started to influence Ottoman intellectual world with Sabahattin, has involved the critique of despotism in Ottoman Empire. This critique of despotism is interpreted as a political model which can be eliminated by the necessity of the free market economy (Reyhan, 2008). Since these ideas flourished under the influence of translation works, they could not be taken forward beyond the random scattering of concepts in the texts. Sabahattin's views in this period are primarily based on the critique of the political governance structure in the Ottoman Empire through the concepts of "personal entrepreneurial spirit" and "decentralized administration". According to him, political authority needs to be controlled. This control can be achieved not only by the constitutional and parliamentary regime, but also by a culture of socio-economic relations dominated by private property and entrepreneurship. The Ottoman state should get rid of the cumbersome bureaucracy and the educational institutions that train civil servants; the cultural structure and texture that produces intellectually and morally inadequate individuals should be altered (Ege, 1977). In his texts written in Turkish, Sabahattin states that he is not liberal and voices a number of criticisms towards liberalism. Family rather than the individual or liberal values is placed at the heart of liberal elements in his thought. In this respect, Sabahattin's perspective contains a rigidly conservative framework. However, his search for the emancipation of the state within the frameworks that intersect with liberalism causes to define him as a liberal.

In the Republican period, the idea of liberalism which was expressed by Ahmet Ağaoğlu who was influenced by the French liberalism, – in his own way and partly in order to justify the practices of the one-party system – (Schissler, 2003; Aras, 1996) has been one of the political concepts referred to when needed in order to reinforce the legitimacy of the new state and to portray it as a valid form of state. Ağaoğlu's understanding of liberalism does not involve the goal

of policy development; it is rather an instrumental expression used to approve existing state policies. Still, such a conceptualization of liberalism should not lead us to a faulty conclusion that the liberal thought has not existed or the word *liberal* has never been used to describe the practices in the political sphere in Turkey in the early Republican Era. It is known that *the Republican People's Party* (tr. *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*)¹ and the Progressive Republican Party (tr. *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası*)² as an experiment of democracy in the early Republican era were identified as liberal by various intellectuals of the period. Yet, we need to acknowledge that those parties had a superficial relationship with the idea of liberalism even though the term itself was used.

The liberal tradition represented consecutively by the Free Republican Party (tr. *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası*)³ which was also a part of the Republican democracy experiment, the Democratic Party (tr. *Demokrat Parti, DP*)⁴ which joined the political arena with the multiparty period, the Motherland Party (tr. *Anavatan Partisi, ANAP*)⁵ and lastly the Justice and Development Party (tr. *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP*)⁶ have predominantly become capitalist manifestations of an authoritarian populism instead of relying on liberal theses in literal terms. Therefore, attempts to voice a liberal tradition and invent authentic historical

1 It was founded in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk as the first political party in the Republic of Turkey. In 1935, the name was changed to the *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* from *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası*.

2 It was the first opposition party established in 1924 by the founding members of the Republic such as Kazım Karabekir, Ali Fuat Cebesoy and Refet Bele. The party, which adopted the discourses of liberalism, was subjected to heavy criticism by the government after the Sheikh Sait rebellion in 1925, tried in court for illegal activities and closed in June 1925.

3 It was founded in August 1930 by Ali Fethi Okyar with the support and approval of Atatürk. The party, which positioned itself at the center-right and was the product of the transition to the multiparty period, dissolved itself in December 1930.

4 It was founded in 1946 by the politicians who left the Republican People's Party under the leadership of Adnan Menderes as the representative of the values of the center-right. The Democrat Party, the first opposition party of the multiparty political order, came to power in the second election and remained in power until 1960. It was closed in September of the same year with the military coup of 27 May 1960.

5 It was founded by Turgut Özal in 1983 with the permission of military government, after the military coup in 1980. The party, positioned itself in the center-right, embraced neoliberal economic policies and came to power alone in 1983–1991.

6 The party was founded in 2001 by the politicians who broke away from the Virtue Party (tr. *Fazilet Partisi*) placed within the Islamist tradition, under the leadership

roots for it might be interpreted as a part of the strategy of seizing power rather than as relevant to the political journey and experience of liberalism in Turkey.

Considering the question of how the ideas persisting in the historical development of liberalism are understood and implemented in the Turkish context, it may become more obvious that political trends in Turkey contain serious deficiencies in this regard. The first of the persistent ideas inherent to liberalism is the delimitation of the authority, and the second is the neutrality of the authority or reliance on the principles arguing in favour of impartial attitudes to values. It can be suggested that these principles have been preserved for nearly three centuries and that liberalism has been built on these principles. Repositioning of these principles from the domains of philosophy and economy to the domain of law and politics with Rawls shows the point that modern liberalism has reached (Larmore, 2008).

However, the embodiment of liberalism in the political sphere in Turkey cannot be interpreted as a criticism consisting of the delimitation of the authority. It becomes clearer with the examples of politicians who are accepted as liberals by the Turkish right politics such as Menderes⁷, Demirel⁸ and Özal⁹. Statism lies at the very centre of those actors' political agendas and practices, yet they criticized the authoritarian character of the state only when they faced attempts aiming to limit their political power and authority and used it as an instrument of their political propaganda. With the multiparty period, criticism of the authoritarian character of the state has been asserted as a cause of social, political and economic problems. As a result, the populist politics with a particular focus on the abovementioned causation has become one of the main practices of making politics within right-wing political tendencies in Turkey.

Even the relatively smaller groups in which liberalism is conceptualized and embraced as a philosophical, economic and political doctrine, often (re) construct and position themselves in accordance with statism, Kemalism and

of Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The party was founded around right-conservative values.

7 Adnan Menderes (1899–1961) is the founder of the Democratic Party, who served as the prime minister between the years 1950 and 1960.

8 Süleyman Demirel (1924–2015) is the ninth president of Turkish Republic, who served as the prime minister for then years in different periods.

9 Turgut Özal (1927–1993) is the eighth president of Turkish Republic and the founder of the Motherland Party (ANAP), who served as the prime minister for five years and who spearheaded the implementation of the neoliberal economic-political program.

anti-leftism in the unique conditions of Turkey. Such groups represent the ideological opposition against the authoritarian policies of the state. Therefore, they do not have a meaning beyond functioning as the criticism of the authoritarian, uniformist, prescriptive and imposing ideology of the state monopoly in every possible field. Despite the fact that criticizing the above-listed characteristics of the state is normally not limited to the liberals, naming multiple groups who voice such criticisms as liberals in Turkey, blaming them for ignoring the security of the state with respect to their emancipatory disposition or sometimes associating them with the left mainly stem from this critical attitude against the state. One of the most straightforward consequences of this is that even those who do not have a philosophical affinity with liberalism as a theory of history, society and politics, and who do not use this title to identify themselves, have been labelled as liberal. In this sense, the path of the concept of liberalism in Turkey is connected less with the original intellectual content of the concept and more with its various positionings against the state and statism.

Liberalism's intersecting with the criticisms towards statism in Turkey, brought by diverse segments of society ranging from socialists to Islamists eased the path to identify some prominent figures within such groups as liberals. As the sovereign state practices in Turkey has proven so far, liberalism and liberal demands are not perceived as threatening political demands for the order unless they involve specific demands regarding Kurds or align with Kurdish political movement. Therefore, the pressure and threat of the state to left-wing political movements do not apply to liberals. However, the relationship between the label *liberals* – as used in the previous sentence – and liberalism as a political tendency is problematic. Once again, it is useful to remind that liberalism is still used as a synonym for criticizing the system in Turkey since the distinction between being a liberal and criticizing the dominant system, state or the authoritarian character of the state appears to be blurred in Turkey.

3. The Founding Period of Liberal Populism “If You Want. . .”

Although political liberalism did not have the opportunity to develop in the right sense in Turkey, the experience of all the faults and disruptions of liberalism is observed to be consistent with the experience of capitalism in underdeveloped countries. Liberal populism continues its influence as a rhetoric that started just before the multiparty period and proceeded in various forms until today. It can be argued that this liberal-authoritarian populist line, which can be

traced through political figures such as Menderes, Demirel, Özal and Erdoğan, is constructed on development and religion.

After 1945, the developmentalist rhetoric has been the main motive of political propaganda in the political sphere in Turkey. Opposition movements have focused on two issues: the first was the capital/market with promising economic development, and the second was religion incapsulating an emphasis on nativeness-nationalism versus Westernization-modernization. Such processes which might be called as liberal populism have considerably affected multiparty period and become constitutive elements of a populist rhetoric for both the government and the opposition. For instance, economic freedom against the state which represents the military-civil bureaucracy, a traditional defence of religiosity against the top-down oppression of modernization were among the main issues that the opposition is engaged with (Keyder, 2014). After World War II, the demand of the newly emerging bourgeois class to be included in the global market and the instrumentalization of religion by the parties representing the opposition have paved the way to give a new ideological form to the objections against founding cadres of the Republic and the dominant system.

The DP period was an attempt by the agricultural and trade bourgeoisie to establish a new power block by abolishing the military-civil bureaucracy or excluding the traditional republican bureaucracy. As opposed to the solidarist Republic which put national solidarity in the centre, the agricultural and trade bourgeoisie in which economic relations became autonomous, free competition became the rule and free market was advocated instead of the state-dependent market which had no difficulty in getting the support of small producers and craftsmen. As the opposition party, DP added the upper classes to their political orbit on the grounds of the free market economy and the lower classes on the grounds of piety and Sunnism. Thus, one of the typical examples of 20th-century populism was realized in the Turkish context: representatives of the “real” people defending and protecting their own way of life against the elite minority that seized the state and forced the masses to modernize from above came to the political scene with DP (Keyder, 2014). Immediately after the 1950 elections, the removal of the obstacles to the development of capitalism arose as a demand from below while the top-down modernization was rejected. The solution for the recovery from the economic crises experienced under the conditions of war was thought to be the free market and although what this change would bring was unclear, potentially better conditions compared to the previous periods were supposed. Therefore, the rise of Menderes needs to be interpreted as equivalent of the agriculture and trade fraction within the capital-owning class in the political sphere.

When the economic and political developments in Turkey are overviewed in a chronological order, it is observed that transition to the multiparty period in the country also symbolizes the popularization of the narrative of economic liberalism. With the multiparty period after DP's participation in the political domain, the electorate has gained importance, which resulted in the production of the critique towards social, political and economic policies of the one-party period with a populist content in order to receive the majority of the votes. Through the use of a populist discourse instead of proposing a distinctive ideology of its own and striving for it, DP carried out intensive propaganda campaigns by putting forward that CHP was hostile to religion and alien to the values of the society; ignored peasants and tradesmen; and acted with a bureaucratic mind. Religious (and ethnic) policies applied in the one-party period for the construction of Turkish national identity were presented as practices of hostility towards society. In accordance with the operating principles of right-populism, society was categorized as two opposing groups: elites and the public.

Menderes, a landlord and a CHP deputy, objected to the "land reform" law which was prepared in the one-party period, aiming to make peasants property-owners with the land reform; and founded the *Democratic Party* by using the opportunities provided by the World War II conjuncture. In the elections held on May 4, 1950, the DP came to power alone by receiving 53 % of 8 million votes and 408 seats in the parliament. Although CHP took 40 % of the votes in the same election, it only won 69 seats. While the Nation Party (tr. *Millet Partisi*, MP), won 3 % of the votes and one deputy, nine seats were won by the independent candidates. Based on the election data, it can be asserted that the electoral system did not look after the balance of representation and prevented a fair distribution (Tunçay, 1997).

The struggle of Turkey not to enter the war during World War II encouraged a number of political actors who took part in the one-party rule to make a transition to the multiparty system. In this period, the regulations developed by the state to solve the economic and social problems did not lead to the reproduction of consent in the society. As Ahmad (1977: 70) notes, "the state was compelled to intervene even more drastically in almost every aspect of Turkish life". Therefore, the elections won by the DP were not only a change of power. The victory of the DP revealed that right-populist propaganda worked as an effective means of political communication and offered an illusion that power had passed from the elite to the ordinary (Sarıbay, 1991). While the DP defined itself as the representative of the ordinary people, especially the ones living in the countryside, presented CHP as the party of the urbanites and elites (Ahmad, 1977).



Figure 1: 1950 – Propaganda Poster of the Democratic Party “Enough, the Word is the People’s!”

One of the consequences of World War II is that it led to the commitment attitude of the agricultural and trade bourgeoisie in Turkey to get rid of the tutelage of the military-civilian bureaucracy. The disintegrations that began within the CHP as the political representative of this military-civilian bureaucracy manifested itself simultaneously within the bureaucracy as well. The civil bureaucracy gradually weakened its relationship with the military bureaucracy and chose to build a partnership with the bourgeois class. A similar break was also apparent in the armed forces. Some of the military officers withdrew their support from the CHP, started to promote the DP, established secret organizations in favour of the DP and were planning a coup against the CHP unless the CHP agreed to hand over political power to the DP (Özdağ, 1997).

The DP period is a noteworthy moment for the transformation of the labour regime in Turkey in addition to the political transformation summarized above. The first half of this period was the period of economic growth, and the

development policies pursued in line with the interests of the agricultural bourgeoisie yielded their results rapidly. Striking increases were achieved in the production of sugar, cement, electricity and iron and in agricultural production. The number of tractors, which was three thousand in 1950, reached fifty thousand in 1960. The investments made after 1950 were made with external debt received from the United States and the United States was considered to be a powerful ally for the economic development program in Turkey. The US military and financial assistance to Turkey was accepted as an essential component of the economic development. Approximately 70 % of US economic support was used for the interests of the agricultural bourgeoisie (Harris, 1972). Such developments led to the expulsion of the peasants from agricultural lands and the migration to the big cities. The villagers who migrated to the cities quickly became cheap labour.

The DP government tried to cover the emerging social problems with the Sunni-Islamic rhetoric that accompanied the growth and development rhetoric. While the voters in the rural areas took the side of the DP government due to the investments made in the agricultural field, the voters in the urban settings were attempted to be convinced through newly opened Imam Hatip Schools and Higher Islamic Institutes. Although it can be suggested that this struggle for cultural hegemony worked for the majority of voters, it was far from meeting the demands of the new working class, which densified in the cities with migration. Especially the economic crisis in the second half of the DP period and the depreciation of agricultural products in the global market forced the government to borrow more external debt. The currency of the US Dollar dramatically increased due to the inflation rates and the devaluation in 1958 (Ahmad, 1993).

The rapid mechanization of agricultural production during the DP period resulted in the dissolution of the landlord and peasant relations. Social and economic relations in many agricultural basins, especially in Çukurova, were disrupted. The domination of the tractor in agriculture facilitated the cultivation of dormant soils, yet it caused the impoverishment of the peasants. Small-land ownership gradually disappeared, the peasants turned into wage-labourers and a large part of them migrated to the cities. Even if the first generation of workers did not sever their ties with the land completely, the number of wage workers, which was about one million in 1950, increased by two and a half times in 1960. The number of workers in the manufacturing industry reached almost one million in 1960, which was 500 thousand in 1950 (Öztürk, 2010). The rate of urbanization increased unexpectedly as a result of migration and the phenomenon of irregular urbanization and slums (tr. gecekonu) emerged as serious problems. The share of salaried groups in the urban population declined, whereas the rate



Figure 2: 1954 – Propaganda Poster of the Democratic Party: “I Want Your Support for a Great Turkey”

of employment of migrant labourers flocking to cities in irregular and marginal jobs increased.

The DP’s relationship with the working class, as one of the early examples of liberal populism, was shaped according to the class demands of the workers. The party adopted a “protective” attitude about the individual rights of workers, but was taking an “authoritarian” stand when it came to the collective rights (Makal, 2002). Protective policies such as payment of wages on holidays, lunch breaks of no less than an hour, granting annual paid leave right and inclusion of workers in the social security network were reflected as the gains of the working class. Yet, social security funding was obtained neither from the state or the employer, but through high cuts from the wages of workers who were included in the social security system. In this way, health and old-age insurances were paid by the labourers themselves. These funds obtained through the wage-cuts

were deposited in banks, converted into government bonds and used in several investments. The authoritarian policies of the government towards the working class, on the other hand, were becoming apparent as soon as the workers demanded their collective rights. Demands of rights-seeking were being marginalized by the populist rhetoric and demonstrations or strikes of any kinds were being stigmatized as “treason” or “communism”. In 1952, for instance, municipal workers who demanded a wage increase and the dismissal of the municipal cleaning director who mistreated them were arrested and put in prison. Similarly, workers who wanted to organize a rally to protest the unjust dismissals were blamed – by the deputy prime minister himself – to be led by an outsourced secret centre, some opposition politicians who supported workers’ right to rally were accused of promoting anarchy (Atılgan, 2015).

It can be suggested that the Republic, which was founded in 1923, had a degree of democracy ideal. One of the signs of such an ideal was the attempts to transition to the multiparty regime. Although those attempts have failed, it is seen that the ideal of a democratic state rather than an authoritarian and monolithic political power structure was pursued as far as the nation-state regime permitted. This ideal came to an end with the 1960 coup. The coup of 27 May 1960, which put an end to the rule of the DP and caused Menderes to be sentenced with capital punishment, was the result of the military’s cooperation with the industrial bourgeoisie against the DP government which continued to support the agriculture and trade bourgeoisie against the rising industrial bourgeoisie. One of the consequences of the coup in the political sphere is that it removed the possibility of the democratization of the regime in the Republic of Turkey in the medium and long term. With the coup in 1960, the power and influence of the army on the political field intensified. This tutelary and interventionist attitude of the army, which lasted for 50 years in the political field, caused the deepening of social, economic and political problems and massified the Islamic radicalization. The right-populist parties transformed the injustices experienced during the coup periods into the very reasons for their demand for power.

4. From Liberal Populism to Neoliberal Order: Deepening of Depression

The liberal narratives of system criticism within the Turkish right are paradoxically intertwined with statism. In other words, the critique of statism by the right-populist liberalism in Turkey ends with the seizure of the apparatus of power. The liberal populist process that continued with the Justice Party (tr. *Adalet Partisi*, EP) and the Motherland Party (ANAP) after the DP is no exception to

this. One way to confirm this hypothesis is monitoring the articulation of the right-populist ideology and the domestic market, which has been established thanks to the increasing politicization of the economic regulation mechanisms between 1960 and 1980 and the redistribution of income.

Liberal populism continued to be maintained through the discourses of developmentalism and religion as in the previous period after the overthrow of the DP by the military coup, since the transfer of the economic and political dominance of the agricultural bourgeoisie to the industrial bourgeoisie was not sufficient to solve social, political and economic problems. The industrial bourgeoisie did not have the mentality, the hegemonic devices and the masses that could completely transform its strategy of economic accumulation. It lacked the skills to organize relations of production in accordance with the modern capitalist system of production. Although the industrial bourgeoisie had taken the state power and apparatus behind it, it was not strong enough to unite different social segments around its own interests. The industrial bourgeoisie of this period sustained capital movement through the assembly industry. The new working class, which had been concentrated in the cities since the 1950s, began to organize, although it adapted to changing relations of production.

Although the liberal populist rhetoric turned into mainstream political rhetoric on the one hand, the left that called the working class into the political sphere was strengthening on the other hand. The rise and fall of left politics between 1960 and 1980 left its mark in every aspect of everyday life, from the hegemonization of the working class to the distributional relations, from the mode of production to the class organizations. Various ethnic and religious identities as well as peasants, semi-workers and workers, civil servants, professionals and similar groups were directly affected by this process. Until the military coup on 12 September 1980, the opposition left-wing politics in Turkey had functioned as one of the biggest obstacles to liberal populism.

Between the years 1960 and 1971, the alliance of the industrial bourgeoisie and ruling class factions embarked on a struggle for the socio-political hegemony to connect Turkey to the global capitalist economy and to make Turkey as a component of the global market. This hegemony struggle accelerated the politicization of the different segments of society. In a short time, bosses, workers and peasants were organized around their own class interests and other sections of the society, especially students, started to take sides in accordance with such differentiations.

The accumulation strategy implemented by the agriculture and trade bourgeoisie in the DP period failed to transform itself and it led to the reduction of profits. The support of the global capitalism on industry as a new accumulation

strategy in parallel with the above-mentioned processes, turned into a significant opportunity for the industrial bourgeoisie which started to rise after 1950, but failed to establish its own socio-political hegemony. The magical rhetoric that marked the period was the “heavy industry move”. Import substitution was seen as the only way of development for the industrial bourgeoisie, and planning was used as one of the ways to relatively oppress the objections of left politics. The democratic framework in 1961 Constitution, which was drafted after the 1960 coup, depicted development as a condition and requirement of democracy, and ordered that planning was necessary for a democratic development to take place. Thus, thanks to the newly established institutions and legal regulations, it was understood that a strategy of accumulation was adopted not to protect the interests of the agricultural bourgeoisie but of the industrial bourgeoisie. While industrial capital regulated the economic sphere for the new accumulation strategy, the state was reshaping the superstructural elements to regulate the social spaces. The state in Turkey took the most important step in favour of the bourgeoisie that it wanted to create since the foundation of the Republic (Savran, 2004; Yalman, 2004). The military coup of 27 May 1960 was the result of the accumulation strategy and the struggle for hegemony between “agricultural capitalism/authoritarian-liberal populism” and “industrial capitalism/liberal populism”, which emerged in DP period. The army took a stance in favour of the industrial bourgeoisie, but the army’s being unprepared and inadequate to seize power led to weaknesses in the administration process. For this reason, the army aimed to legitimize the coup they made by preparing a democratic-libertarian constitution before the international public opinion. The coup plotters were having difficulty even to name their coup. Therefore, they left the job of legitimizing the coup to the spokesman of the industrial bourgeoisie and the opposition intellectuals representing the opposition in the DP period (Eroğul, 2019).

In 1960, approximately 70% of the population, which was around 28 million, lived in the countryside. In 1970, 60 % of the population, which had reached 36 million, continued to live in the countryside. Turkey experienced the phenomenon of a rapid urbanization at the time and migration from rural to urban areas gradually intensified. Concentration of the population in the cities were essential to meet cheap labour needed by industrial capital. The policy of making investments depending on external debt, which started in DP period, continued. New sources for the industrial capital have been created by building partnerships with the foreign capital. Thus, in the big cities such as İstanbul and İzmir and in some surrounding cities such as Antep and Kayseri, industrialization has progressed parallel to urbanization (Özüğurlu, 2005).

It might be stated that the working class in Turkey has increased numerically, in parallel with the growth of industrial capitalism after 1960. This quantitative growth was effective in the practice of organization and the massification of the working class. The working class, which turned into a class that could no longer be ignored by the state, became one of the major components of the political sphere, with the Workers Party of Turkey (tr. *Türkiye İşçi Partisi*, TİP) which had a socialist programme. Workers, for the first time in Turkey's history, moved away from the state's orbit and they formed new independent trade unions. For this reason, the period between 1960 and 1970 might be called as the rising period of working class. Although the Justice Party (EP) governments, as the DP's successor, have attempted to stop the rise of the working class by making trade unions a target, and criminalizing workers' movements through a number of implementations, they failed to achieve it.

The class struggle that began in the 1960s gradually intensified in the 1970s. Industrial capital has made huge gains, and large industrial capital has become more influent in both economic and political spheres. In the meantime, the working-class movement made its presence evident in every field through strikes, protests and mass rallies. Although the crisis of political representation led to the formation of coalition governments, the conflict of interest between the parties forming these coalition governments made the governments dysfunctional and caused the political crisis to intensify. In this context, revolutionary socialist ideas emerged in the form of various left organizations. Similarly, the Islamist youth movements and the nationalists organized on the axis of Turkish nationalism became more powerful. Street violence and murders began to occur due to political violence.

The period between 1970 and 1980 can be defined as a period in which the struggle between the working class and the industrial bourgeoisie has reached a state of equilibrium and neither of parties could defeat each other. This equilibrium has caused economic and political instability that has become steady. The struggle between right and left politics has intensified and the hegemony crisis has escalated. With the global economic crisis, the import substitution model could not be sustained. Planning-based development programs could not be implemented and the accumulation regime of capital could not approach the expected profitability ratios. As a result, the economic crisis gradually deepened and surrounded daily life. The rise of the working class and its effective power against the industrial bourgeoisie transformed the economic crisis a political one. The lack of economic policies to resolve the contradictions between the social classes, and the inability of the political parties, which could undertake

the responsibility of political representation of classes, to take over the political power intensified the crisis of representation.

After the "Oil Shock" in the 1970s when capitalism entered a structural crisis on a global scale, the accumulation and regulation strategies of capital had to change again.

In this period, when the Keynesian economic model, the Fordist production process and the import substitution strategy went through a crisis, the position of countries in the international division of labour was reorganized. This period, in which welfare state policies in the advanced capitalist countries began to decline, has led to the increasingly authoritarianization of the state due to the crisis in the import substituting accumulation model in less developed countries, and to the maintaining of liberal populism through the bureaucratic means. After 1950, Turkey had moved from an accumulation strategy based on the accumulation of agricultural and trade capital to model based on the accumulation of industrial capital in the domestic market. While the technology and investment goods required for this accumulation model were being imported, consumer goods were produced in the country. This production model reached its limits in the 1970s. The production model and the closed market model, which centred on the domestic market, reduced exportation. The external debt increased due to the inability of capital – spending with the foreign currency with the contraction in the domestic market – to maintain foreign exchange income.

In the 1970s, the accumulation strategy, namely import substitution, was a development strategy for the less developed countries, but it was shaped according to the internal dynamics of each country. The rights gained by the working class, the role of agriculture in the country's economy, the geopolitical position of the country and the opportunities it offers for foreign investors were important factors for the sustainability of the import substituting economy. These factors both defined the limits of import substitution and offered various opportunities in the face of the structural crisis. For instance, a large segment of the rural population in agriculture and farming in Turkey included landowners who were small producers. Although this caused low taxes on agriculture, it facilitated the inclusion of agriculture with industrialization and smoothed the transitions between agriculture and industry. Therefore, the capital accumulation was sustained in agriculture which in the process of industrialization and agriculture, as a life-saving input, relatively eased the crisis in Turkey when the import substitution model came to an end (Ozan, 2012; Keyder, 1981).

The dominant accumulation strategy forms inter-class alliances. The mechanism of the regulations on accumulation practices acts according to the ways of establishing relations between these allies. In Turkey, the reconciliation between

the dominant classes and dependent classes was the constituent factor of the import substitution strategy. For that reason, the working class achieved to have many gains, such as the right to collective labour agreement and unionization during the period of this accumulation strategy. Such developments accomplished the consolidation of the working class with the political order (Ozan, 2012). A similar argument was also true for the middle classes involving professionals. The tendency to reproduce the liberal-populist, developmentalist rhetoric due to the economic growth provided by the import substitution model was quite strong in this class layer. Therefore, the import-substituting model succeeded in building alliances between classes and relatively reconciling the bourgeoisie of industry, trade and agriculture (Gülalp, 1993).

In the 'inward-oriented and external-dependent expansion' period between the years 1962 and 1976, the ruling class components in Turkey might be argued to have a relative internal balance. The legitimacy of this balance in the political sphere was ensured by distributional policies that developed along with the populist rhetoric. This period, in which the interests of the ruling class were presented as the interests of the dependent classes and in which a relative balance was achieved, was reorganized with the intervention of the army in cases where the possibility of dislocation of the equilibrium of the capital-owning class emerged. Populist policies in this period led to the establishment of an effective and strong social security system through inter-class reconciliation. The working class was thus entitled to social security and non-monetary income. What was concealed thanks to populism was the continued high profitability of industrial and commercial capital during this period. The promises and some social policies made to obtain the consent of the dependent classes in the political sphere did not threaten the interests of the ruling class. This model, which relies on integrating all social segments into the system, continued until the end of the 1970s, except for the military intervention in 1971¹⁰ (Boratav, 2019).

The crisis that the global economy experienced after 1974 because of the sudden rise in the oil prices has caused the search of short-term external debt in Turkey. The economic regulations needed to overcome the crisis were postponed due to the populist struggle in the political sphere. By 1977, the dominant model

10 It was a military intervention that took place on 12 March 1971, forcing the Justice Party government headed by Süleyman Demirel to resign. Although the intervention did not result in the dissolution of parliament, the government was dropped and it resulted in the formation of an "independent" government under military guidance, that was not part of any political party.

of accumulation faced a major crisis. While exports declined, foreign trade deficit reached a critical level. Black-marketeering arose out of the failure to implement alternative economic policies and out of political instability. The increasing unemployment and economic crisis revealed that the economic model and the class alliance had come to an end (Ozan, 2012).

In terms of the capital class and the working class, the second half of the 1970s fundamentally affected both the dependent classes and the capital class. The working class in the cities was in severe depression due to the economic crisis. High rates of inflation made it difficult to maintain the real income of the working class. Peasants and farmers were also affected by the economic crisis due to the ever-increasing inflation. However, economic interventions still aimed at maintaining the profitability of industrial capital¹¹. Since the organized working class began to rise from the 1960s onwards, these regulations were met by their reaction. The strikes continued to expand and the collective labour agreements could not be reached (Boratav, 2019; Sönmez, 1986). The conditions underpinning the military coup of 12 September 1980, which was one of the major disasters that Turkey has ever experienced, were in the progress of developing under the pressure of the industrial capital.

5. From the Coup of Neoliberalism to the AKP Regime: The Rise of Dystopia

Turkey in the 1970s had experienced all of the problems posed by late capitalization in a short time. Attempts to overcome social tensions, crises of the nation-state regime and class contradictions with populist policies remained inconclusive because of constant struggles in the field of economy.

Depending on the uneven and compound development of global capitalism, Turkey's position in the geopolitical and global market was causing paradoxes

¹¹ Sönmez (1986) notes that "the share of the agricultural sector in total exports has decreased since 1978 and the share of the manufacturing industry has increased rapidly. While the share of agricultural goods in total exports was 67.4 % in 1978, it decreased to 59.4% in 1979, to 57.5 % in 1980 and to 47.2 % in 1981.

On the other hand, the share of industrial goods in the total has increased continuously from 27.2% in 1978 to 34.7 % in 1979, to 36 % in 1980 and to 48.7 % in 1981. Mainly exported industrial goods were cotton yarn, garments, carpet-rugs, glass and cement. In terms of export revenues, the income obtained from the export of agricultural goods in 1981 increased by 32.8 % compared to 1980 and this increase in industrial goods was 118.7 %."

which both promote an inward orientation and force the country to become externally dependent at the same time. The military of 12 September 1980 occurred as a consequence of the incapability of the dynamics – which caused the economic and political crisis in Turkey – to manoeuvre. This military coup might also be interpreted as the provision of changing economic regulation on a global scale in Turkey.

The coup of 12 September 1980 was the completion of the process that started with the 1971 memorandum. The 1971 memorandum had failed to avert the political and economic crisis in Turkey. This period of crisis could not be steered by the military bureaucracy and politicians due to both internal political contradictions and the influence of the rising left on the working class and the dependent classes. Although the right-populist rhetoric relatively produced a political pressure on Islamists and Turkish nationalists, it did not allow for the formation of a stable political sphere.

The main reason lying at the heart of the crisis was the fact that the accumulation regime had reached its limits, and it was asserted that the crisis could be overcome only by reorganizing the superstructure. However, the influence and power of the class movements on social spheres alongside the inability to seize political power weakened the possibility that the existing political order could avert the crisis. The ongoing crisis of political representation since the 1970s and the radical breaks in the grassroots organizations caused by the tensions between political parties have paved the way for capital-owning class to feel the hegemony crisis fundamentally. *January 24 Decisions*¹², prepared in 1980 in favour of the interests of the capital class were reflections of the global attempts to obviate the crisis faced by global capitalism in Turkey. *January 24 Decisions* were also a significant step for the process of Turkey's articulation to global capitalism (Kazgan, 2005). They served as the first phase of the transition to the new regime of accumulation and promised economic stability. Economic stability primarily aimed

12 *January 24 Decisions* was the name given to the economic program prepared by the Undersecretary of Economy, Turgut Özlal on January 24, 1980, upon the directive of the DP government – founded in November 1979 under the leadership of Süleyman Demirel – in order to abandon the import substitution economic policies and institutionalize the free market economy. The program included political and economic decisions targeting inclusion in the global capitalist economy through regulations such as reducing public expenditures and real wages, the establishment of free exchange rates and facilitating foreign investments. Due to the political conditions of the period, it was implemented only after the 1980 military coup.

to make the free market economy the norm and included a structural adjustment program that put outward opening to its axis.

In the period between 1977 and 1980, the working days that were lost due to the chain of strikes were two and a half times higher than the previous period. The capital-owning class defined the strikes as stray and defeat, demanding the unions to be disciplined and establishment of a secure environment for the capital.

Even though the capital class, which converged around the Justice Party in 1965, began to implement an accumulation strategy in line with the nation-state paradigm, the contradictions between the fractions within the capital class gradually deepened from the 1960s onwards. This has led to the deepening of the crisis of political representation since the mid-1970s. The 1971 memorandum did not solve the crisis of representation, but amplified it. With the rise of the socialist movements and the intensification of the working-class movements, the capital class intensified its pressure on the military bureaucracy and political elites. In order to eliminate the barriers to capital, to suppress the working class and to make new legal arrangements, the army was called by the capital class to the political sphere. Parallel to these developments, the working-class movements continued to exist after 1977, but their rise stalled. While the working class maintained its political activity, they began to turn to the right-populist parties because of the excessive divisions within the left politics and the lack of a united front (Savran, 2016). All of these developments had prepared convenient conditions for the military coup.

The objective requirements of the transition from the import substitution accumulation regime to the neoliberal accumulation regime were fulfilled under the state of emergency after the coup. Each accumulation strategy involves a process in which economic regulation is accompanied by social regulations. The new accumulation regime targeted by the military coup of 1980 in Turkey did not only rearranged the economic sphere, but regulated the legal-political superstructure in accordance with the requirements of the accumulation regime. The military bureaucracy, which ruled the country during the period 1980–1983, immediately implemented neoliberal policies and abolished all possible left-wing opposition by force. This showed that the state was able to grant privileges to certain strategies of different class segments and to facilitate access of certain class fractions to the state, thus making certain interests more privileged than others (Jessop, 2008). Therefore, the 1980 coup was not only a result of the imposition of the capital class, but also a decision of the state to connect to the global capitalism in accordance with the accumulation strategy of industrial capital.

The decisions of 24 January were only implemented after the coup of 12 September 1980, thanks to the social and political spheres that were forcibly flattened. The cadre, who made the coup, appointed Turgut Özal, who would become prime minister as the leader of the Motherland Party (ANAP) in the 1983 elections, as the deputy prime minister responsible for the economy. Özal implemented an economic program in accordance with the neoliberal policies and in favour of the interests of industrial capital. Thus, instead of import substitution, which was maintained by the national developmentalist paradigm, an accumulation strategy based on export growth was introduced. With this transition, it became necessary to narrow the domestic demand in order for capital to move outwards and wages were repressed. The high price increase in consumer goods and the high inflation progressed along with the decline in real wages between 1980 and 1990. For example, real wages in 1988 decreased by 55 percent compared to a decade ago (Kazgan, 2002).

The 1990s were the years when the open economy became a rule and the state provided incentive to the capital-owning class to export. Since the capitalist class in Turkey could not reach the expected level of success in exporting, a new chain of socio-economic crisis was triggered. Unlike the East Asian countries referred as Asian Tigers, which involved an export-oriented bourgeoisie, “financial liberalization has caused the importation of luxury goods and domestic consumption in Turkey” (Yücesan-Özdemir & Ozdemir, 2008). Since the export rates could not be realized at the desired level, the demand-driven growth target in the domestic market had to be increased. Contrary to the trend in the 1980s, in the first half of the 1990s, some improvements were made to the wages of both public and private sector workers. However, the relative increase in wages was not driven by the taxation of the capital-owning class, but by the transfer of resources by the state. Therefore, the relative recovery in the 1990s was driven by taxes on the working class and external borrowing. As a result, the economic crisis returned in 1994 and the price of the populist policies were paid to the labourers again (Yeldan, 2013).

The economic trend in Turkey between the military coup of 1980 and the Justice and Development Party's coming to power involves the elimination of import substitution and the establishment of the sovereignty of financial capital, in short, the removal of the barriers to neoliberal economic policies. This accumulation model aimed to provide incentives for the development of sectors such as banking, tourism and construction, and to grow with privatization policies. All these initiatives were realized with domestic and foreign borrowing. This speculative economic policy has caused four successive crises in 1994, 1999, 2000 and 2001. Those crises provided a two-directional space for the

right-populist politics. While the Kemalist right-populism voiced out its reaction against rising Islamism through the defence of secularism after 1980 coup, the Islamist-conservative new urbanites embarked on the defence of values through the headscarf. Therefore, the economic crises took a political form as a battlefield of cultures and identities.

Islamism, the impact of which would be increasingly felt in Turkey after the Iranian Islamic Revolution in 1979, has evolved in parallel with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis enacted by those who carried out the 1980 coup in order to suppress the left and socialist movements in Turkey. The impact of Islamism gained momentum in Turkey, as a part of the Islamic line that the USA wanted to build around the Soviet Union. The anti-left activities of Islamic organizations in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Palestine and some Central Asian countries in the 1950s and 1960s (Macdonald, 2002) were part of the economic and political struggle of the period. Turkey, as a country located in the Western alliance was one of the active sides of the fight against communism.

Although the impact of Islamism after the coup had been influenced by the works translated from Arabic, Persian and Urdu into Turkish, the real dynamic increasing the effect of Islamism in the country was the determination of the coup-plotters to destroy the leftist movement and the opposition. While this policy aimed at destroying the leftist movement on the one hand, it aimed at adding rising Islamism to right-Kemalism on the other hand. The most significant instances that marked this period were making religious education compulsory in public schools and banning the headscarf in education. The crisis of the dominant ideology in Turkey was attempted to be solved under the state of emergency regime following the coup and right-Kemalism tried to re-weave the distorted understanding of secularism by using Sunnism. While the Turkish-Islamic synthesis became the founding ethos of the 1982 Constitution, the “native and national” or “Turkish and Sunni” identity served to restore nation-state identity. Kemalism was reinvented as a meta-narrative and became the intellectual and ideological basis of the coup (Ögün, 1995). The religionization of Kemalism with the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and its incorporation into Sunnism as one of its components can be considered as an attempt to break the ongoing perception of “irreligious state” since the one-party period. This ideological and political operation by the coup-makers mainly aimed to route Islamism in Turkey against the Islamist movement in the countries around Turkey and to unite the political tendencies within the Turkish right under the control of the state¹³ (İnalçık, 1998).

¹³ After summarizing the intellectual line of Turkish-Islamic synthesisism that has continued since the Ottoman Empire, İnalçık states the following: “Turkish-Islamic

In this way, it would have become possible to control the socio-political influence of the leftist opposition by means of Turkish-Islamic synthesis. Furthermore, the Turkish right would have managed to build its economic and political hegemony without encountering any oppositional movement. In order for the new accumulation strategy to be successful, it was necessary to regulate social mentality as well as this superstructure (Buğra, 2004).

With the 1980 coup, a convenient environment was established for the development of the Anatolian capital which started to grow in the previous period. While the large capital fraction transferred its capital to new investment areas with neoliberalization, small and medium-sized capital holders called Anatolian Tigers (tr. Anadolu Kaplanları) filled the remaining spots. This new capital fraction piled in labour-intensive areas managed to accumulate wealth through risky and relatively less profitable investments in a short period of time thanks to precarious, informal and low-paid informal employment and thanks to the cultural ties built over identity. This capital fraction, which was concentrated in cities such as Kayseri, Konya, Denizli and Gaziantep (Doğan, 2007) in order to obtain government incentives more easily, became the main capital group on which Islamism was based along with Turkish-Islamic synthesisism. Islamism and the centre-right competed to become the representative of this capital fraction.

During these years when the military kept influencing political sphere, the rapid urbanization in Turkey has continued as well. With urbanization, migration and poverty turned into major components of the cities. During this period, when leftist politics lost their influence due to the harsh practices of the coup, Islamism was organized in neighbourhoods and began to adopt some of the

synthesists, after September 12, played a role in forming the basic principles of the central [right] parties. The synthesists' view of secularism brings them closer to Islamic parties." In the related article, he also notes that the criticisms against the Turkish-Islamic synthesis comes from "those who are bound by the democratic, secular, social state conceptualization around the Constitution and from the Directorate of Religious Affairs" (İnalçık, 1998). Although those circles who criticize the ideological transformation in Turkey after the September 12 coup have been claimed to be located in different positions within this synthesis, it is not difficult to observe the impact of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in the transformation of the state and bureaucracy not only in the center-right parties, but also throughout the entire political sphere. The criticism towards this synthesis had a poor impact over masses and had no effect on institutions. Therefore, it cannot be suggested that the criticisms coming from the intellectuals, academics or the Directorate of Religious Affairs have affected the practices of the state. It can be observed better in the AKP period in particular.

discourses and policies of the left under the slogan of “fair order” by the Welfare Party (RP). The pressure on the Welfare Party by the military in order to control both Islamism and the Anatolian capital did not yield the outcomes that the military had expected. As a result, the army reorganized the political space with a semi-coup on 28 February 1997, and the Welfare Party was subsequently closed.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP), which was founded by a group of politicians who left the Welfare Party after its closure, gathered diverse segments of society around itself thanks to pure-liberal rhetoric when it emerged as the representative of rising period of the Anatolian capital that started with Özal. The party focused on the discourse of developmentalism without opposing the army, by avoiding harsh discourses, declaring his distance from Islamism, and by embracing a purely market rhetoric. This strategy worked well for a long time and the AKP, turning the political crisis into an opportunity, successfully survived many compelling processes with also the support of the European Union. It gradually became a hegemonic power in the economic and political sphere. As a consequence, Turkey has turned into a country in which neoliberal economic policies have been fully implemented in which the political sphere, the state apparatus, the regime and all bureaucratic institutions have been converted in accordance with those policies, and in which Turkish-Islamic synthesis has ultimately declared its absolute victory.

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