BOOK REVIEWS


Although interrupted by periodic crises, Turkish modernisation project “aimed at building a nation-state based on market economy, secularism and a re-constituted Turco-Muslim identity” displayed a strong account for continuity by successfully re-shaping itself in the face of change. This is the main argument of *Turkey: Challenges of Continuity and Change*. Kemalist modernisation project is located at the core of this argument because of its central role in constituting modern Turkey. According to the authors, Mustafa Kemal carried on the ‘modernisation in terms of Westernisation’ project that had been started in the late Ottoman period to the new Turkish Republic and achieved a considerable success in building a modern state.

As explained by its authors, the book intends to provide a general framework for understanding contemporary Turkey for the general reader. Given that both of the authors are specialised in Middle East Studies and that the book is published as a part of the Contemporary Middle East Series, Turkey’s modernisation process is studied in comparison with other Middle Eastern states and its non-Middle Eastern features are emphasised. Mainly, adaptation of the

cultural aspect of modernisation—secularism in this context—unlike other examples in the Middle East is discussed as a difference.

Kemalist modernisation project is described as a pragmatic project whose pragmatism allowed for flexibility which in turn enabled the continuity of modernisation. The use of Islam (as in the Turkish-Islamic Synthesis) in the name of Kemalism by the military regime of 1980 sets a good example of this pragmatic nature according to the authors. Kemalism redefined itself in the face of challenges coming from anti-secular, anti-unitary camps.

In order to trace back the roots of the Kemalist modernisation project and thus the roots of the emergence of a modern state, the book starts with a chapter that gives us a summarized version of the reformation process in the Ottoman Empire. As stated by the authors, reforms in the Ottoman time were aiming at strengthening the state but at the same time the liberal environment they aspired to create was undermining a ‘strong’ state. Even the Abdul Hamid era, when the reformation process was suspended on a large scale, is presented as helping the creation of need for change and modernisation. In this respect, it is interesting that the Abdul Hamid era is not presented as a break from modernisation but presented as continuity. Identity debate carried on by the elites who founded the Committee of Union of Progress (CUP) demonstrates a good case of how the project of modernisation could redefine itself in the face of new challenges then. At the beginning, the unifying identity was the Ottoman defined by both Muslims and non-Muslims having equal rights. Later on, after the loss of large non-Muslim territories, Ottomanism gained an Islam-based stance. After the defeat in the First World War and the victory in the War of Independence, Turkishness came to the front because of the new secular version of modernisation.

Next chapter on politics in Turkish Republic focuses on political parties maintaining that party politics make the most important part of political life in Turkey. The reason is that political parties “are seen as legitimate representatives of society in general” by the authors. Thus, history of party politics in Turkey is the history of consolidation of democracy. Along with party politics, the military plays a crucial role in Turkish politics. In 1960, 1971, 1980 and 1997

\textsuperscript{2}Ibid., p.25.
governments experienced periodic interventions from the military. Authors argue that unlike other military interventions in the Middle East, 'peaceful transfer of power' to the civilian governments from the army took place in relatively short time periods in Turkey. It should be stated here that the authors sees the 1980 coup different than others. According to them, the 1980 coup is not another periodic intervention but a turning point that marks a big change in Turkish politics. This big change is the inclusion of Islam in the official discourse. The concept Turkish-Islamic Synthesis advanced by the army generals is a big change in the spirit of secular Kemalist modernisation project.

Transition from single-party politics to multi-party politics is taken as a turning point in the modernisation process. Authors discuss that the divide between unitarists and liberals in the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) continued between political parties CHP (Republican Peoples Party) and DP (Democrat Party) in this transition period. This divide also signified a divide between the military-bureaucratic elite—defenders of Kemalism—and the traditional-liberal forces in the society. During 1970s, in the time of CHP and AP (Justice Party) divide, a counter-elite with conservative and traditional characteristics was finally formed.

In the relatively short chapter on Turkish economy, writers study the economic aspects of the Turkish modernisation. Modernisation meant industrialisation in terms of economy. The story of transition from a rather strict etatism and import substitution industrialisation to a liberal, export-oriented economy is outlined briefly. Economic crises interrupting development and negative effects of economic liberalisation such as unequal income distribution, high unemployment are again briefly touched upon. Effects of economic situation on the political life are not forgotten. The change from an agriculture-based economy to an industry-based economy had deep impacts, such as the impact of migration to cities, on political life. A different example for the economics-politics connection presented in the chapter is about the implementation of 24 January (1980) Decisions which mark a radical turn to neo-liberal economic policies. According to the authors, without the authoritarian atmosphere created by the 1980 coup, implementation of these decisions would not have been that uncomplicated.
The chapter named “Turkey in world affairs” is a 45-page summary of the history of Turkish foreign policy. Authors define Turkey as a ‘medium-sized power’ that can change the flow of world affairs in its favour from time to time but mostly affected by the great power politics. Three strands of continuity affecting Turkish foreign policy are identified in this chapter. These are geopolitics, identity (regional and domestic, domestic being Islamic and Kurdish identities) and history (which gives the state an upper hand due to the institutional capability it inherited from the Ottoman Empire unlike other Middle Eastern states). They also describe a change considering foreign policy that is; today, foreign policy is debated widely in the public sphere.

Offering that “the main contours remained the same but foreign policy has gone through various stages”\(^3\), Turkish foreign policy is classified into six stages. The first one, taking place between the years 1923-1939, is marked by the state formation and regime consolidation process. In this stage, Turkey needed peace both internally and externally in order to normalise its relations with the world. Second stage is the Second World War period when Turkey’s only aim was staying out of the war. This is a period when the relations deteriorated with the West. Third stage, between the years of 1945-1960, is marked by the conditions of the Cold War. In this stage, Turkey becomes a part of the Western alliance and NATO, establishes close ties with the US and proves its strategic importance to the West. The fourth stage is a quest for a multi-dimensional foreign policy. Developments such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, détente and the Cyprus issue leads to a deterioration in Turkey’s relations with the West. Thus, Turkey tries to normalise its relations with the Soviet Union and the Middle East. In this stage “Turkey is still a part of the Western alliance but it is making an effort to diversify its foreign policy”\(^4\). 1980-1990 stage signifies the rising strategic importance of Turkey due to the Second Cold War. Also in this stage ‘West’ is no longer a unified entity for Turkey. While the relations with the US improve, relations with the EC countries worsen due to the undemocratic developments caused by the 1980 coup. The last stage that has started in the 1990s is marked by the conditions of the post-Cold War environment. Authors argue that in

\(^3\)Ibid., p.94.
\(^4\)Ibid., p.108.
the post Cold War era, Turkey engaged in a new activism in its foreign policy. Relations with different actors and regions diversified. In this stage of post-Cold War activism, although slowed down by the economic situation inside, the Kurdish issue and the Islamic factor, Turkey reached beyond its material capabilities. Rapprochement with Greece, relations with the EU, Balkans, Turkic states, Middle East improved. It is discussed that in this stage, two factors play a crucial role in drawing the limits of Turkish foreign policy: Islam and the Kurdish issue. For instance, Turkey’s Middle East policy is described as “a hostage to the Kurdish issue”.

In the concluding chapter, the main feature of the book is described as showing how constitutive elements of the ‘Kemalist modernisation project’ have evolved until today—these elements being secularism, Westernisation, Turkish nationalism and unitarism. Secularism faced a serious challenge from conservative segments of the society but today it seems like Islamist discourse adapted a closer position towards secularism. Westernisation although challenged from time to time has been and still is the main tendency in politics. Democratisation as a complementary part of the Westernisation had been interrupted several times by coup d’etats and it is still a hot topic especially in the European Union membership debates. Unitarism of the state is challenged by the Kurdish separatist movement. It is useful to state here that the authors argue that “[b]oth Islamic and Kurdish identities have been redefined over time, not only because of their inner dynamics but also through their interaction with the modernisation project itself.”

The book is successful in its attempt to present a general framework for understanding contemporary Turkey. It provides a concise chronology of events that helps the reader to follow the main contours of continuity and change easily. However the use of concepts such as ‘threat perception’, ‘détente’, ‘insecurity’ can confuse readers without an IR background. Another negative aspect of the book is that it is mainly telling the reader what happened instead of how it happened. Non-Turkish readers or undergraduate students who want to learn about Turkish politics would find it useful as a reference but a qualified Turkish politics reader would hardly

5 Ibid., p.127.
6 Ibid., p.136.
find something new in it. One more thing which is really hard to find in the book is the authors’ own interpretations of the events. That would be enriching for the readers considering that both of the authors are experts on the subject.

Although history of party politics in Turkey serves well to the main aim of the book—because of the continuities it presents—and although the authors gave a good explanation about why they did so, limiting Turkish political history with party politics is not very stimulating. Moreover, maybe because of the lack of in-depth analysis, the reader is channelled to adapting a rather simple correlation between party politics and coup d’etats in Turkey: Whenever the party politics system was insufficient to respond to the new demands from the society, a political crisis that ended up with the intervention of the military took place. ‘Polarisation in the society’ is used as a common justification for explaining the flow of events but again a more detailed analysis would help the reader understand why polarisation itself occurred in the society. Also economic conditions’ effects on political life could be explained more in detail for further clarification.

Authors quote Şevket Pamuk’s words for the Turkish economy as a “half full-half empty glass”7. After reading the book, it would be safe to argue that this metaphor also applies to Turkish politics. Periodic military interventions and periodic economic crises form the empty half and the continuity in the tendency for modernisation and democratisation would make the full half.

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7Ibid., p.86.
US's hyperactive foreign policy after September 11 has created an idea especially among scholars, politicians, and strategists that USA is trying to rebuild her hegemonic power. It has been asserted that America's power is irresistibly rising and it could be compared with the Roman Empire. Most of the literature gave importance to works that are not only related to the current situation of the hegemonic power, but also how it could sustain. In this process, US had important problems with both nonwestern countries and western countries. Iraqi War, which tested transatlantic relations very seriously, and Rumsfeld's words about Europe, old Europe, can be accepted as the culmination of the worst time between the two continents. Robert Kagan, who is one of the most prominent neo conservatives, provides important clues about relations between Europe and US in his work, *Paradise and Power*. After it was published, which defends superiority of the US to Europe and claims that Europe cannot be a threat for the US because of its weakness, it took important reactions. So many articles and books published as a response to Kagan's work. The book, which reviewed here, is not a response, but it is a work which draws a bright and very optimistic future for the European Union. On the one hand, this book reveals US weakness; on the other hand, it exposes EU's success. Moreover, the main claim of the author is that EU's characteristics, which are seen as its weakness, are the real power of the EU and these features carry the it to global power in 21th century.

The first point in the book is the idea that use of force and military projection capability make the US powerful and it can impose its will by coercing, applying military pressure and bribing. However, when its back is turned its potency wanes. That's why, according to the writer, US's power is shallow and narrow. On the other hand, the power of European Union is different than US's. Once anything enters into the EU's sphere of influence, countries would be changed forever. And they cannot think to be out of this area. EU tries to change other countries political life, economy and
social values from inside. Again, according to author, these changes are preferable for the other countries. Because of EU’s tactics and perception of the other countries, India, Brazil, South Africa and China will help to the EU to assume the first hegemony in the world arena.

The core idea of the book is that characteristics of the EU, which are generally defined as weakness of Europe, are real power of the organization. This new power definition cannot be measured by military budgets and smart weapon technologies. To the writer, it is a long-term power. The real power of EU is rooted in its very core. EU’s power is a transformative one. For Europe, there is no one-way development model. Each country can preserve its traditional political structures. The EU expands its area of influence by creating common standards implemented by national institutions. Therefore, it does not face any resistance, especially military or terrorist. Nevertheless, while US companies and military bases became target for terrorist organizations, Europe’s “invisible” institutions export itself without any challenge. The main reason of the difference between Europe and US is their way of thinking. Europe no longer perceives the world with geopolitical terms. On the one hand, it aims to change core of the institutions and all of the societies; on the other hand, the US aims to change only visible face of the regimes. Their threat styles are also very different. Whilst the US prefers the threat of use of force, the EU uses to cut the relations.

Another point in the book is related to institutional structure of the EU. Is it a confederation, constitutional federal democracy-extremely bureaucratic state or is it too divided which could cause collapse of the Union? Some scholars expect and emphasize that EU should finish its evolution and establish a lawmaker parliament at the end. However, according to Leonard, the EU is not a state, but a network. The EU left the real power and authority to local parliaments.

According to the author, although Europe is seen as too divided, it is not a disadvantage or weakness for it, but power of the community. In fact, though Europe divided into two camps during the Iraqi War, it could conduct transatlantic relations with the US. This is a kind of bad cop- good cop game. Moreover, the EU can be resembled as Hydra, which is mythological creature, which has nine
heads and when one of them is chopped, two others grow in its place. With Hydra example, the author sees different wills and approaches in the EU add bargaining power for it. Besides this, the EU has very important weapon in international arena. It is the weapon of law and legality. Legitimation in the Iraqi Crisis was not a tactical issue for Europe. Although EU’s insistence on legitimatizing the operation towards Iraq were accepted by almost all countries in the world, USA perceived it as weakness. Until the EU was established, for European states sovereignty and statehood ideas meant avoiding intervention in domestic affairs. But with EU, these concepts mean that mutual intervention and surveillance. As EU developed in its internal organization, thousands of standards, laws and regulations were formed. In this process, European countries put forth more effort to adjust themselves and rule of law idea was constitutionalized in the continent. From now on, the question is that how non-European regions, neighbors and membership candidates could be adjusted to this idea. At the same time, this is the main foreign policy weapon of EU. Since the EU itself is made of an international treaty, it is based on an idea whose core is not hierarchy but voluntary cooperation. EU uses this weapon not only to its near abroad but also all parts of the world, especially in Africa. This approach is contrary to international relations theory which puts forward that the nature of international relations is anarchical and order could be imposed by hierarchy. That’s why it is called revolutionary approach to international relations.

To sum up, this book is very optimistic for the EU’s future. It defines EU as the new strategic power and 21th century as the EU’s century. In this context, US hegemony is criticized in the book. Making lots of comparisons, the author tries to indicate EU’s power and US’s weakness. To support his argument, he emphasized three reasons: The first is the rise of the euro. For the author, since dollar is the most common currency all around the world, the US can close its budget deficit. This is the main factor behind the US power. However, the euro has been rapidly replacing dollar. The second is the EU’s self-sufficiency in energy area. USA is very dependent country in terms of energy. Since in EU most of the energy production comes from non fossil based sources, it is much more independent than USA. That’s why; lack of energy resources will not affect the EU as it does the US. The third is that integration and expansion make the EU more powerful. Transformation of the
European continent creates a Union which can be real entity against US power. In this context, Leonard expects that European Union would be the next hegemonic power.

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