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Agrarian Change, Industrialization and Geopolitics

Beyond the Turkish Sonderweg

Abstract

This article takes issue with the common view that the early Turkish Republic (1920-1940) followed a "special" route to modernity characterized by "state capitalism." It argues that such a view, rooted in the *Sonderweg* paradigm, obscures the historical-comparative specificity of Turkish state formation, leading to problematic conclusions about the character of Turkish modernization. Based on insights derived from Karl Polanyi's notion of "economistic fallacy" and Political Marxism's conception of capitalism, I offer a new interpretation of the early Republican project in Turkey, which, in turn, provides a deeper understanding of the social content, tempo and multi-linearity of world historical development.

Keywords: Capitalism; Modernity; State-formation; Geopolitics; Late Development; Turkey; Kemalism.

MUCH OF THE LAST TWO HUNDRED years has shown that war, industrialization and agrarian change are deeply interwoven processes. Agrarian and industrial transformation deeply impacted the rules of military competition, forcing ruling elites around the world to "modernize." A multiplicity of "modernization" projects eventually arose, producing historically distinct agrarian-industrial compounds. Every modernization project required a degree of adaptation of foreign institutions, relations and subjectivities to local circumstances, hence entailing the generation of "novel" social forms conducive to industrial and agrarian development. However, it is commonplace to argue that, partly due to the legacy of past social relations and partly due to the economic/military constraints posed by early developers, the processes of adaptation often took more authoritarian, defensive and statist forms in late modernizing countries. The problem of societal reorganization associated with industrialization was thus

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magnified in late-developing countries, forcing them to pursue "peculiar" by-roads to modernity facilitating rapid geopolitical catch-up.

Undoubtedly, for most agrarian and historical sociology scholarship, such a by-road in Western Europe is best epitomized by Germany's "special" route to modernity (*Sonderweg*). Terence Byres, for example, argues that a feudal agrarian-military ruling class, the *Junkers*, remained inexorable throughout the early modern period in Prussia; therefore no capitalist farmers were allowed to emerge from the ranks of the peasantry, which could have otherwise initiated an "agrarian capitalism from below." In its stead, at the onset of the 19th century, partly as a response to the growing profit opportunities and partly due to worsening geopolitical conditions, the Junkers themselves initiated an agrarian capitalism from above. As the Junkers became capitalist, they significantly retarded mechanization in agriculture and thereby industrialization in towns (at least until the 1860s), while leaving an enduring conservative imprint on the processes of modernization in Germany [Byres 1996]. In similar fashion to Byres, Barrington Moore contends that in 17th and 18th century Prussia the prevalence of labor-intensive and labor-repressive agriculture made the development of a "militarized fusion of royal bureaucracy and landed aristocracy" necessary. As the geopolitical pressure to industrialize escalated during the 19th century, the bourgeoisie entered the ruling class coalition, but only as a junior partner: it was "too weak and dependent to take power and rule in its own right"; therefore, it "exchanged the right to rule for the right to make money." Consequently, the weight of the aristocracy in the ruling class alliance persisted, resulting in a process of industrial development led by the state and a conservative modernization project built upon the aristocracy's political and cultural preferences [Moore 1967: 435-440].

The relative lack or weakness of an "enterprising stratum peasantry" in the countryside and of "strong bourgeois agency" in the towns therefore marks the historical distinctiveness of German modernization. In this regard, the *Sonderweg* theory rests on the general standard of capitalist development against which the "modernness" of late development projects is measured. When the classes associated with the "original" advance of capitalism——i.e. bourgeois classes and middle farmers——are relatively weak and state-dependent, the modernization process takes a statist, conservative, and politically and culturally reactionary form. Therefore, it is the

degree of development of "bourgeois" classes and "middle farmers" that serves as a yardstick by which different modernization projects are classified. The method and assumptions that underlie the *Sonderweg* theory presuppose an "original" pattern of capitalist development according to which late development projects are typified.

Indeed, several critiques of the *Sonderweg* paradigm have been advanced over time; in particular, the derogatory national stereotypes and idealized conceptions of Western European history have been subjected to fierce historiographical debate [e.g. Arnason 2002; Blackbourn and Eley 1990; Collins 1995; Delanty 2003; Ertman 1997]. The departure from the alleged "ideal-types" of and "aberrations" from Western European modernity has, in turn, not only forced us to rethink the question of late development but has also contributed to a deeper understanding of the multi-linearity of world historical development. That said, it is surprising that the critique of the *Sonderweg* paradigm has hardly made an impact on the conventional interpretation of the Turkish road to modernity. Most of the alleged peculiarities of the "German path," i.e. the transition to "capitalism from above," the "persistence" of bureaucratic interests, the "weakness" of the industrial bourgeoisie and the resultant "conservative modernity," directly echo the conventional framework of analysis used to explain the sociological-comparative character of early Republican Turkey. According to Çağlar Keyder, for example, the specificity of Turkish modernization lies partly in the "peripheral" integration of the Ottoman Empire into the world economy and partly in "the peculiar status of the bureaucracy as a ruling class." While the empire's peripheral status in the world economy considerably limited the prospects for the development of an industrial bourgeoisie, the power of the bureaucratic class curtailed the development of a landowning oligarchy in 19th century Anatolia [Keyder 1987: 77]. During the early Republican period, thus, it was the bureaucratic class that restructured the social pillars of the modernization project from above by creating an industrial bourgeoisie and a middle stratum of market-oriented peasantry. The result was two fold. First, "the bourgeoisie exchanged the right to establish […] a civil society for […] the privilege to make money" [*ibid*.: 82]. Second, while the political support extended to the middle peasantry began to generalize the relations of "petty commodity production" in agriculture, it also checked the rapid development of capitalist social relations in the countryside, thereby sanctioning a highly mediated articulation with capitalism. A form of "state

capitalism" and an authoritarian/statist modernization project eventually prevailed under the rubric of Kemalism [*ibid*.: 105].

In this article, I develop a theoretical and historical critique of this analytical and comparative framework based on Karl Polanyi's notion of "economistic fallacy" and Political Marxism's conception of capitalism. The central tenet of my theoretical argument is that in an analytical framework informed by the *Sonderweg* paradigm the existence of capitalist social relations is already presupposed in some embryonic form in order to explain capitalism's emergence. Presuming the prior existence of capitalism leads not only to ahistorical conceptualizations of the emergence of capitalism, but also supresses the radical multi-lineatiy of modern word development by assimilating qualitatively different modernities into an overarching account of the varieties of capitalism. The article begins by introducing the *Sonderweg* paradigm and its critiques. I will pay particular attention to Terence Byres' method of explanation of the differing forms of capitalist transition, and David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley's critique of the *Sonderweg* paradigm. I will propose that a departure from the *Sonderweg* theory, in fact, enables us to differentiate among qualitatively distinct projects of modernity. I will then situate within the broader *Sonderweg* debate the specific problem of early Republican modernization in Turkey.

Agrarian change, industrialization and the economistic fallacy: Re-conceptualizing late modernization

The critique of "economistic fallacy" constitutes one of the main methodological pillars of Karl Polanyi's analysis of the development of market society. According to Polanyi, reading back into history the dynamics and motives underlying market society naturalizes and universalizes capitalist economic action, thereby turning capitalism into a self-referential and self-birthing phenomenon. Economistic fallacy narrates a world history in which past economies appear to be mere "miniatures or early specimens of our own" and markets seem to have "come into being unless something was to prevent it" [Polanyi 1957: xviii; 1977: 14]. Immediately lost in this narrative, Polanyi argues, is the fact that non-market economies do not have "institutionalized markets" to compel and induce economic action driven by a distinctive market rationality. As such, Polanyi departs

from the idea that capitalism is a natural trait of a single class agency emphasizing the institutional/political foundations of capitalism. He hints that class interests, far from being explainable *sui generis,* are comprehensible only by focusing on the historically specific circumstances of social reproduction.

From this angle, the terms "capitalism from below" and "capitalism from above" become susceptible to serious ambiguities, especially in relation to their utilization as conceptual keys to understanding diverging paths to modernity. No doubt, one of the most sophisticated scholarly works employing these theoretical pointers is that of Terence Byres. For Byres, the manner in which the "agrarian question" is resolved, i.e. the question of how to reorganize rural social structures in ways conducive to the development of capitalism in agriculture and industry, has profound implications for explaining varying trajectories of modern state-formation [Byres 1996: 419-420]. Depending on which class is central to agrarian transformation and how this centrality is checked and supported by other classes and the state, the transformation of rural societies has taken very different forms, generating "progressive" or "reactionary" modernities [Byres 2009: 34]. "Capitalism from below," in principle, speaks to a situation wherein the process of agrarian transformation derives its main impetus from within the peasantry: a richer stratum of farmers, exploiting growing market opportunities, rises from an ocean of small peasant holders, improving the forces of production and deepening the process of social differentiation, thereby providing a large home market for industrial and consumption goods as "petty commodity producers." For example, the agrarian transition in the Northern US, which is considered by Byres as a typical case for "transformation from below," began *first* as a result of the commercializing impulses from within the peasantry and then due to the strict imposition of debt and tax payments and the enforcement of a new land system that closed off cheap and easy access to the bulk of public lands. Eventually, rural households became progressively dependent on the market for their social reproduction, thereby expanding both marketable agricultural output and the home market for manufactured goods. In this regard, Byres sees prior peasant differentiation, hence the existence of a proto-capitalist group of peasants, as central to a relatively rapid, generalized and "progressive" transition to capitalism.

The assumption guiding Byres' idea of "capitalism from below" is that, prior to the transformation of the rules of accessing land, accumulation through product specialization, improvements in labor productivity and cost-cutting was rational. Hence commodity-producing

rural households were, in fact, "capitalist farmers in embryo" who were subjected to "the law of value, to the market" [Byres 2009: 37; 1996: 387]. True, the prior existence of a strong middling peasantry producing commodities was an important variable in *facilitating* the transition to capitalism both in England and the Northern US [Brenner 1985: 300; Post 2011: 180; Dimmock 2014: 182-183]. Yet, Byres overlooks the fact that, for peasant households to turn into "petty/simple commodity producers," a qualitative change in the rules of accessing land had to occur, which would compel and empower rural households to initiate and generalize the dynamics of capitalist accumulation [Friedman 1980]. Without broader socio-legal changes, rural households, regardless of the degree of prior economic differentiation, would remain as producers who prioritize production for subsistence, who do not have to compete in the market to survive, and who are not empowered to accumulate land at the expense of less competitive peasant producers.[1] As such, depicting rich peasants as being "proto-capitalist" falls back into the "economistic fallacy": Byres presumes and extrapolates back in time the logic and imperatives of capitalist accumulation in order to make the case for a "farmer-led" capitalism.

By contesting the argument that agrarian capitalism "rose" from "below" in early industrializing states, we challenged the first comparative criteria (a rising middling peasantry) according to which the "modernness" of late modernization projects is conventionally typified. What about the (industrial) bourgeoisie? After all, was it not also the "weakness" or "absence" of an industrial bourgeoisie that led "astray" the projects of late modernization? As mentioned earlier, Germany's *Sonderweg* has been conventionally understood as a "compromise between iron and rye," an aphorism used by many scholars to explain Germany's statist/protectionist economic policies and the bourgeoisie's assimilation into the Junkers' conservative political/cultural outlook [e.g. Gerschenkron 1943; Moore 1966].

Perhaps one of the most powerful critiques of this position is provided by Geoff Eley and David Blackbourn [1984]. Eley and Blackbourn confront the *Sonderweg* schema of world development

[1] This point is further clarified when one considers that both in 15th century England and France "a middle peasantry on relatively quite large holdings" occupied a strong position even though the developmental patterns under similar commercial and demographic conditions radically diverged thereafter. While in England the lordly imposition of new rules of reproduction led to the rise of a class of capitalist tenants from the ranks of the peasantry, in France in the absence of "leaseholds" the result of demographic and economic growth was the morcellization of land, the perpetuation of peasant ways of life, and the rise of the "tax-office" structure of absolutism [Brenner 1985: 300-302].

by challenging "assumptions about the role played by a buoyant bourgeoisie in the forging of bourgeois society" [*ibid*.: 16]. They criticize "the habitual conflation" of bourgeoisie and democracy, which, they contend, is rooted in highly contested histories of the "early" modernizers such as England and France [*ibid*.: 58-59, 168-174]. Departing from narratives of a bourgeois class dedicated to carrying out its "historic mission" of transforming society, Eley and Blackbourn argue that across Western Europe "the bourgeoisie was unable (reasonably enough) to act as midwife at its own birth" [*ibid*.: 169]; nor was it the ardent supporter of the development of liberal democratic institutions. A diversity of political regimes, state forms and ruling class alliances were perfectly compatible with securing bourgeois predominance and the consolidation of capitalist social relations [*ibid*.: 10; 84-85]. Therefore, the transition to capitalism "should be dissociated from the necessary introduction of specific constitutional and liberal-democratic forms of rule" and "redefined more flexibly to mean the inauguration of the bourgeois epoch—i.e. the successful installation of a legal and political framework for the unfettered development of industrial capitalism" [*ibid*.: 83, 168]. As such, Blackbourn and Eley undermine the second yardstick against which late modernization projects are conventionally measured and found wanting. They strike a blow to "capitalism from below," casting further doubt on a "Western norm" of capitalist development and modernization. All that said, however, a serious theoretical lacuna still exists in their analyses, which eventually pries it open to economistic fallacy. Although Blackbourn and Eley undermine the assumption of a "bourgeois-led" capitalism, they continue to equate the bourgeoisie to capitalism and the "inauguration of the bourgeois epoch" to the "victory" of capitalist property relations [*ibid*.: 84]. The clear inference is that even if capitalism was not borne by the bourgeoisie, it was for and supported by the bourgeoisie.

Clearly, in certain socio-historical contexts, commercial and industrial interests may support the establishment, generalization and deepening of capitalist social relations. Yet it is one thing to recognize possible bourgeois involvement in the constitution of market society and it is quite another to consider the (industrial) bourgeoisie as synonymous with capitalism. Especially in the absence of relative factor mobility and market competition, the bourgeoisie, no matter how industrious, would be under no compulsion nor be able to systematically increase specialization, improve labor productivity,

reorganize labor processes, reinvest in production and accumulate at the expense of less efficient producers.[2] In other words, they would be neither allowed nor compelled to transform "labor power" into "labor," systematically increase the "organic composition of capital" and reduce the "socially necessary labor time" involved in appropriating "surplus value." In such conditions no industrialist could transform into a "capitalist," that is a "supervisor and director of the [labor] process, as a mere function, as it were endowed with consciousness and will, of the capital engaged in the process of valorizing itself" [Marx 1990: 1022]. In short, although Blackbourn and Eley partly overcome the "economistic fallacy" by departing from the conception of "bourgeois-led" capitalism, they fall back into it by uncritically equating the industrial bourgeoisie to capitalism.

The price paid for this conceptual conflation is high: as capitalism becomes an ever-present trait of the industrial bourgeoisie, all modernization projects with an industrial bourgeois component simply correspond to temporally and spatially differentiated attempts to develop capitalism. As such, the phenomena conventionally associated with "modernity" such as the centralization of the state, the systematization of cultural codes, nation-building, democracy, equality and secularism, simply mean facilitating the politico-cultural "superstructure" of and catching up with capitalism [Wood 1991: 162-163]. With the unqualified equation of modernity to capitalism, the *Sonderweg* paradigm consequently builds a historical narrative in which all modernization projects with a "bourgeois" component are reduced to different instances of a single "transitional" social type, all moving at different speeds and by different paths towards capitalist modernity. Taken as a whole, the *Sonderweg* theory is characterized by a method of explanation that rules out from the very beginning the possibility of alternative non-capitalist (and non-socialist) modernities.

Central to the reinterpretation of modernity offered here is thus a definition of capitalism that avoids circular explanations of capitalism's origins and captures the historically-changing conditions of the transition to capitalism. In other words, what is needed is a conception of capitalism that is both historically-specific and historically-dynamic. Political Marxism (PM) delivers precisely such a conception of capitalism. Contrary to the conventional emphasis on "economic" processes, PM

[2] Even in the presence of relatively developed capitalist relations and institutions, more often than not industrialists themselves have jeopardized the further development of market relations that would have subjected them to the pressures of international economic competition [Chaudry 1993; Chibber 2005].

argues that capitalism is built through systematic political interventions into existing ways of life that ensure the commodification of the means of subsistence, especially of land and labor. In other words, market economies are not mere summations of preexistent commercial trends or a pre-given capitalist rationality (arguing so would mean presuming the existence of capitalism from the very beginning), but are conscious politico-cultural constructs that systematically undercut the customary conditions of social reproduction, imposing successful commodity production as the ultimate basis for holding and expanding the means of subsistence [Brenner 2007: 59]. In this regard, according to PM, the transitions to capitalism cannot be explained through the mere existence of commerce, industry, wage labor or private property (all of which can be dated back to ancient societies), but are best understood in terms of socially- and temporally-varying ways of organizing human relations and the institutions that produce the historically specific impact of "market dependence" [Wood 2002]. Put differently, the transitions to capitalism did not follow a universal pattern, but all transitions, in principle, presuppose a strategic political intervention into the conditions of access to land and the elimination of non-market survival strategies.

Capitalism as market dependence signifies the minimum socio-legal prerequisites to the existence of capitalist social relations. This also implies that the focus of market dependence can not be on any static phenomena/policy. Depending on past socio-institutional legacies and the timing and international context of capitalist transition, the mechanisms that ensure market dependence take different forms. The socio-institutional content of market dependence is not fixed, but cumulatively changes. As a consequence, PM neither sets up pre-given norms for the transition to capitalism, nor does it treat subsequent transitions as counter models to privileged ideal types. As such, PM has a potential to provide a narrative of multiple modernities that does not presume capitalism from the very outset. PM saves modernity from the straitjacket of capitalism, thereby providing a deeper understanding of the social content, tempo and multi-linearity of world historical development. It is with this new historical-comparative perspective that I will reinterpret the Turkish road to modernity.

The Turkish Sonderweg*: Kemalism as state capitalism?*

Most students of Turkish modernization try to capture the specificities of Turkish modernization through the concept of "state

capitalism." As indicated earlier, the main argument is rooted in the *Sonderweg* paradigm: in a predominantly peasant-based agrarian economy and in the absence of a strong bourgeois class, capitalism had to be initiated by the state. This is then used to explain why the process of capitalist development unfolded only limitedly and protractedly; why it lacked "ideological coherence" [e.g. Zurcher 2010: 149-150]; why it took an authoritarian form [e.g. Parla and Davison 2004: 30]; and why it was largely confined to "superstructural reforms" [e.g. Timur 2001: 106].

Capitalism is the only mode of production that does not presuppose direct coercion in the immediate processes of production. That is to say that in certain historical conjunctures the mere economic threat of losing employment and property may well secure the reproduction of the relations of capitalist accumulation [Wood 1981]. Nevertheless, "state capitalisms" are possible and in fact have been historically very common. That is, states have often intervened in economic life, taking extremely authoritarian, and protectionist/populist measures in order to stabilize market society and overcome its crises. Indeed, this is precisely what Kemalism's Western European counterparts carried out during the interwar period. Nazi and Fascist restoration in Germany and Italy, for example, was not a "political freeze of or simple reaction" to capitalism, but was underlined by the aim of "rationalizing" capitalism. Against what they conceived to be a "wasteful," "egoistic" and "rentier" capitalism, devoid of social harmony and subject to cycles of boom and bust, fascism and Nazism aimed to reorient economic life on the basis of totalitarian "productivist" ideologies [Maier 1988: 12-15]. Enhancing technical efficiency and economic productivity, through scientific management of the labor process or repression/corporatist regulation of industrial conflict, was the key to the ability to reallocate the economic rewards of capitalism without a radical redistribution of political power. In the face of inflationary pressures and militant trade, civic ideas were totally discarded in favor of a new social order based on authority, discipline and economic renovation. In order to achieve this, the state "distorted" market prices, regulated the movement of labor, invested in massive public works, brutally repressed the working classes, allocated raw materials, and even implemented a few (temporary) socially-protectionist measures for workers and peasants [Maier 1987: 77]. Clearly there were winners and losers within the business community; nonetheless the fact that businessmen had already won an unprecedented degree of

authoritarian control over labor, combined with gains accrued from increased productivity and geopolitical expansion, well compensated for the occasional injuries that might be caused by tariff changes or the loss of a state license to invest in new plant [*ibid*.: 85].

Therefore, the important point to establish here is that, notwithstanding substantial national differences, state capitalism in both Germany and Italy was characterized by a specific combination of public and private powers that aimed to deepen the commodification of labor according to the requirements of an "organized capitalism." Likewise, tariffs, production quotas and monopolies did not annihilate market competition, but "rationalized" it: extra-economic measures were used in ways to compel and induce producers to "improve" the technological and organizational set-up of the production process [Jessop 2013: 103]. All combined, both fascism and Nazism, though disastrous failures, attempted to stabilize and improve capitalism and, by doing so, they obliterated or subordinated the potentially radical aspects of modernity (such as radical interpretations of "equality," "democracy" and "rule of law") to the capitalist project [Renton 2001: 144-145]. The question to be answered is whether early Kemalist modernization can be subsumed under the same rubric of state capitalism. How successful and willing was the early Republican regime in initiating and sustaining a capitalist restructuring of social relations and institutions? In the remainder of this chapter, I will provide an alternative historical narrative to those informed by the *Sonderweg* paradigm.

The (geo)politics of sharecropping: class, state and the nation

> *There is no basis for Bolshevism in Turkey, as we have neither big capitalists, nor artisans, nor millions of workers, nor a land question in our country.*
>
> Mustafa Kemal, 1921.

Negating the "land question" and class struggle in Turkey was typical of the early Republican regime. Yet, far from an expression of actual conditions, the Kemalist denial of class struggle, in fact, testified "either to apprehension that conditions generating class struggle existed in the society, or to the fact that the anticipated future economic development might lead to such a struggle" [Karpat 1959: 53]. The denial of class differences, in other words, had much more to do with preempting class conflict than an actual disbelief in

the existence of class differences. There was ample justification for such a preemptive strategy. According to one estimate, in 1913, land ownership was so concentrated in the Anatolian countryside that 87 per cent of the rural population occupied only 35 per cent of the cultivable land, and 8 per cent were totally landless [Ahmad 2002: 43]. There is every reason to assume that, after almost a decade of continuous war from the beginning of the World War to the end of the War of Independence in 1922, the land question was even more alarming in the wake of the establishment of the Republic (1923). Most of the land and property seized from the deported and exterminated non-Muslim Ottoman subjects was appropriated by Muslim landlords, which caused several land disputes between the landlord class and the incoming immigrant population [Tezel 1986: 332-333]. Regardless of regional differences, the overwhelming majority of the land-hungry population was heavily indebted to the landlord class. They were thus subject to relations of usury and involved in sharecropping to be able to meet their subsistence needs [Silier 1981: 15]. "Middle farmers," who were able to produce for their subsistence as well as for the market, were a "very thin" strata of the rural population [*ibid*.: 14]. Peasant indebtedness and (near) landlessness was the major source of labor supply for sharecropping land owners who, remained "absentee" landlords, i.e. landowners disinterested in production and investing in land [Silier 1981: 15-16; Tezel 1986: 338-339].

Perhaps more disturbing than its economic consequences, however, sharecropping was seen by the bureaucratic elite as an acute political and geopolitical problem. For one thing, "[t]he role of land-hungry peasants in the Bolshevik Revolution" was still "a fresh memory in the minds of many Turkish elites" [Karaömerlioğlu 2008: 124]. Indeed, during the Turkish War of Independence (1919-22) the Bolsheviks had been involved in propaganda activities in Anatolia and had exercised significant impact over the socialist-leftist group within the first national assembly (much to the chagrin of the nationalist/Kemalist elite). Although Mustafa Kemal managed to suppress socialists in the parliament after 1922, the elite perception of postwar politics and landlessness would be filtered through this war-time trauma of imminent socialism [Tunçay 1991: 90]. Equally important, the geopolitical situation during the post-war period made sharecropping look much more unstable and threatening than it actually was. The end of the war in 1922 had hardly brought to an end the

international disputes over the new Turkish state.[3] The fledgling Republic, unable to consolidate its borders and under threat by foreign irredentism, remained hard-pressed on the international front. Most of the territorial claims and disagreements over the new Turkish state were to last up to the mid 1930s, only to be magnified later by the massive insecurities caused by World War II [*ibid*.: 123]. The implication is that geopolitical complications following the birth of the Republic (1923) largely shaped the elite's perception of the land question and of internal threats. The Republican cadres came to perceive landlessness and the relations of personal dependence underlying sharecropping arrangements as the ultimate hothouse for the development of alternative forms of sociality and loyalty, hence the catalyst of domestic rebellion and foreign intervention [Kuruç 1987: 158; Tezel 1986: 344].

All that said, however, almost paradoxically, the sharecropping landlord also constituted one of the main pillars of the political alliance on which the ruling Republican People's Party (RPP) rested. Put differently, while sharecropping stood out as the repository of politico-cultural forms and identities potentially endangering the state, the sharecropping landlords were one of the main constitutive elements of Republican power in the countryside. Therefore, directly implicated in the consolidation of the Republican regime was the establishment of a form of production which was insulated from the (geo)politically risky consequences of sharecropping and landlessness yet not based on a redistributive land reform. Before turning to explain what this new form of production really entailed, I will first make clear what it did not entail in the next two sections.

Ten "bourgeois" years, 1923-1932: capitalism unbounded?

Throughout the early Republican period two main concerns thus marked the trajectory of Kemalist agrarian policy. On the one hand,

[3] The new Turkish state and the Allied Powers could not come to an agreement on two important issues: the status of the oil-rich Mosul region in Southern Kurdistan and the status of the Turkish Straits [Barlas 1998: 121]. Britain refused to give in to Turkish demands over Mosul, while all the Allied Powers refused to recognize full Turkish sovereignty over the Straits; they demanded that the Straits be demilitarized, open to international ships, and governed by an international commission. The official disputes over the Straits and Mosul were (temporarily) concluded during the 1920s in favor of Britain and the Allies, thereby leaving Turkey unsatisfied with the status quo. In addition, Mussolini's rise to power in 1922 marked an overt return of Italian ambitions over Aegean and Mediterranean Turkey, further aggravating the fear of foreign military intervention [*ibid*.: 132-133].

the sharecropping landlord was one of the main pillars of the Republican regime. On the other, the fear of rebellion, geopolitical challenges and concerns for economic efficiency forced the bureaucratic elite to implement (however limitedly) policies aiming to stabilize the countryside and to prevent the expansion of sharecropping arrangements [Tezel 1986: 343]. Reconciling these two contradictory interests was the underlying motive behind the Kemalist vision of agrarian property relations. Tellingly, by enhancing the status of private property, the first Republican constitution (1924) facilitated the legal consolidation of large estates. Landlords who had possessed large estates on a *de facto* basis therefore obtained full legal title over their lands. Yet, neither the constitution nor the new civil code (1926) took any measures to prevent the morcellization of land. Ottoman laws prescribing partible inheritance remained in full force and effect [*ibid*.: 340-341]. More importantly, "the greatest difficulties were encountered in applying the rules relating to land"; consequently, arable land continued to be created and transferred without official registration [Versan 1984: 250]. As a result, there was no political attempt to establish a landlord/merchant monopoly over land, and marginal lands of little or no cost remained readily available [Keyder 1981: 24]. This, in turn, allowed for considerable demographic growth without the peasantry further swelling the ranks of sharecroppers and the dispossessed. Likewise, the land tax, which had accounted for more than 20 per cent of all government revenues in the early 1920s, was finally and definitively abolished by the Republic in 1925. This led to "a significant decrease in the tax-burden of the rural population,"' hence an important attempt at pulling the peasantry out of indebtedness and sharecropping, facilitating the establishment of an internal market [Pamuk and Owen 1999: 15]. Viewed together, the Kemalist gambit in agriculture seems to have opened with two opposing moves: the regime attempted to protect the minimum basis of peasant subsistence by permitting the expansion and division of small landholdings; at the same time, it officially recognized large sharecropping units, thereby forestalling a redistributive land reform.

Such were the initial steps towards institutionalizing Republican agrarian policy. Clearly, depending on the larger context of social reproduction, the existence of small producers and sharecroppers may not constitute an obstacle for the development of capitalist social relations [e.g. Friedman 1980; Post 2011]. After all, the transition to

capitalism inevitably takes a historically specific form due to spatial, temporal and geopolitical differences. Yet, as alluded to earlier, it is equally true that all transitions, in principle, presuppose the elimination of non-market survival strategies. This, in turn, requires the restructuring of human relations and social power in ways that ensure the systematic imposition of the market as the main access to the means of self-reproduction. Put differently, although all capitalisms are spatially and temporally differentiated, the transition to capitalism, in principle, presupposes the transition to a regime of property that is subsumed to the operation of market imperatives or "law of value," i.e. a socio-legal order that systematically enables and compels producers and employers to increase the "ratio of unpaid labor to paid" and decrease "the socially necessary labor time involved in appropriating surplus value" [Post 2013].

How conducive to capitalism was the emerging agrarian structure? According to Çağlar Keyder, who provided one of the most rigorous analyses of early Republican Turkey, it definitely was. Keyder argues that, given the relative openness of and favorable agricultural prices in the world market, the Turkish state during the 1920s remained responsive to the demands of merchants and commercially-oriented landlords [Keyder 1981: 128]. In addition to the encouraging world market conditions, the state's abolition of tax-farming, railroad policy and support for tractor purchases provided extra impetus for the expansion of commodity production, not only for big landlords but also for an emergent stratum of middle peasants. The combined impact of this transformation was "*qualitative* on the would-be middle peasant by bringing him to the market, and *quantitative* on the large farmer through increasing the size of his surplus product" [*ibid*.: 33, my emphasis]. Indeed, according to Keyder, it was this "qualitative" transformation of the middle peasantry in the 1920s that would facilitate the expansion of commodity relations in the 1930s. For, while the Great Depression arrested the development of export-oriented merchants/landlords, thereby significantly diluting the merchants' influence on the formulation of the state's agrarian policy, from the mid 1930s the state would actively promote the further enrichment of the middle peasantry. Through extensive support policies, Keyder contends, the state turned middle peasants into "petty commodity producers" i.e. small producers whose relation to land and production was determined by the market. In so doing, it not only fostered the production of crops necessary to industrialization, but also created a stable base for the deepening of the internal

market [*ibid*.: 129]. In summary, Keyder's argument is that world market conditions in the 1920s and state support programmes in the 1930s increased the level of "marketization" on both large and middle holdings, ultimately leading to the consolidation of "an autonomously functioning economy" ruled by market imperatives or the "law of value" [*ibid*.: 128].

Keyder's analysis of early Republican agriculture is questionable in one important methodological respect. Keyder's analysis of petty commodity production (and sharecropping) is problematic in that the criterion Keyder uses for the transition to "petty commodity production" and capitalism, in many ways, boils down to "production for the market" or "market participation." In this framework of analysis large landholdings using wage-labor (an "extremely rare" phenomenon in Anatolia), by virtue of their level of commercial activity, are capitalist by definition, and sharecropping landlords and peasants who participate in the market are simply impending capitalists and "petty commodity producers" [*ibid*.: 13; 16]. Keyder, as such, tends to overlook that in a socio-legal context that drains the peasantry of most of their surpluses through usury and allows the almost unrestricted division and expansion of land, neither the peasantry nor the sharecropping landlord would be compelled to increasingly depend on the market and be able to reorganize/improve production according to the dictates of market competition. They would remain as producers who prioritize production for subsistence, who do not have to compete in the market to survive, and who are not empowered to accumulate land at the expense of less competitive peasant producers. What is neglected in Keyder's account, therefore, is that unless a systematic political intervention to existing ways of life takes place—which increasingly forces and induces the commodification of land and labor—peasants, sharecroppers and sharecropping landlords can produce for the market and be impacted by market prices, yet will reproduce forms of social labor inherently antagonistic to the development of capitalism. As such, Keyder reproduces the "economistic fallacy." Keyder (just like Byres) presumes the logic and imperatives of capitalist accumulation in order to make the case for a "petty commodity production" route to capitalism.

In fact, the historical indicators appear to justify this view. From 1923 to 1929, Turkish agriculture experienced exponential growth under conditions of an open economy [Keyder 1981: 37]. The state agricultural bank injected substantial loans into the agricultural sector with the hope that the small landholdings, based on collateral

guarantees, would obtain access to official credit channels, thereby enabling them to increase production for the market and mitigating their extreme dependence on the big landlords and usurers [Hershlag 1968: 49]. Furthermore, from 1923 to 1934, the state distributed about 5 per cent of the gross cultivatable area to immigrants and landless peasants, which somewhat increased the portion of lands under the control of small holdings [Hershlag 1975: 172]. Under these circumstances, it seems safe to assume that the peasantry, unburdened by tax-farming and to some extent supported by the state, responded to favorable world market prices by increasing their level of production and surplus taken to the market. Yet, it is mistaken to interpret the peasants' increased production for the market as necessarily leading to a "qualitative" transformation of their relation to land and production. For one thing, the state's attempts at breaking the relations of usury bore no fruit in the countryside: land distribution was too limited to generate a qualitative impact on the peasantry as a whole [Tezel 1986: 345], and the plots distributed to a limited number of cultivators were "far less than was required to maintain a family" [Hershlag 1975: 172]. Likewise, most of the state-provided credit was used up by land-holders with large holdings [Silier 1981: 44-45]. Even when the peasantry obtained some access to these funds, they mainly used them "to pay off their debts, instead of investing the money in equipment, fertilizer and irrigation" [Hershlag 1968: 113]. In these conditions, it would be very hard to assume that peasants increasingly gave up subsistence agriculture, devoted the majority of their labor-time to commodity production, and reorganized their labor process according to the dictates of market competition.

Clearly, as Keyder assumes, there must be a segment of the peasantry able to produce commodities relatively independently of the relations of debt and usury. Yet, a closer look at this so-called "middle peasantry," which was engaged especially in wheat, tobacco and hazelnut production, shows that it was barely able to accumulate any surpluses [Tezel 1986: 436]. This was the case because foreign and domestic merchants, organized in monopolies and trade associations, were able to collectively dictate prices to the peasantry that were much lower than the world average [Silier 1981: 30-31; Tezel 1986: 358-359; Toprak 1988: 22]. All in all, throughout the 1920s the continuing relations of usury and monopoly, combined with the relative availability and divisibility of land, eventually led to a pattern of agricultural development that was not conducive to the consolidation of petty commodity production. Partly driven by increases in

population and partly thanks to the improvements in security and transportation, peasants extended and divided the area under cultivation, yet remained unable or unwilling to develop a capitalist logic of social reproduction. In other words, increases in commodity production were generated not by an *intensive* growth underlined by a qualitative transformation of the peasants' labor process and increasing dependence on the market, but by an *extensive* growth based on the expansion of the peasants' traditional survival strategies alongside their limited and occasional engagement with the market [Tezel 1986: 340-341, 434-435; Hershlag 1968: 112].

Given that there was no alternative source of labor supply and that land was expandable and divisible by the peasantry, sharecropping landlords did not develop any systematic interest in supervising and improving the labor process on large estates.[4] On average 90-95 per cent of the land within big estates was left uncultivated [Silier 1981: 16]. Relatedly, sharecropping arrangements on big estates were governed by the same logic of reproduction that prevailed on small peasant holdings [Tekeli and Ilkin 1988: 40, 89].[5] That is, following Friedmann's model [1980: 177-178], sharecropping peasants either maintained the safety-first logic of subsistence agriculture or, if they were under conditions of extreme indebtedness, sharecropping

[4] Sharecropping does not necessarily inhibit the development of capitalist social relations. Yet, for sharecropping to be considered a "transitional" form, the landlord and sharecropper, in principle, must be able and willing to organize the labor process according to the dictates of market competition. This, in turn, requires available land in a given area to be held under the monopoly of the landlord class. For, it is ultimately the landlord class's monopoly on land and the resultant closure of access to free or inexpensive land that would force the sharecropper to be more willing to cooperate with the landlord, to increasingly specialize, and to fully engage in commodity production. Unless these conditions apply, and especially if land clearance is a viable option for the sharecropper, higher yields that could be produced by increased utilization of labor-saving tools and techniques would not only benefit the sharecropping landlord but would also help sharecroppers pay off their debts and become "independent" peasants again. With no monopoly over land and no access to an alternative labor market, the sharecropping landlord would be more likely to choose not to invest in the means of production that could otherwise cause him to lose his only source of labor [Bhaduri 1973]. As such, sharecropping put definite limits on the transformation of the labor process, deterring the introduction of labor-saving techniques and the capitalist reorganization of production.

[5] The number of tractors in Turkey increased from 220 in 1924 to 2,000 in 1930. Yet, this increase hardly signified the rise of a capitalist landlord class. For one thing, most of these tractors were not bought according to some cost-price calculation, but obtained through state subsidies, which "amounted to close to the full price of the tractor" [Keyder 1981: 25]. Also, the tractors had no practical use on large estates run by sharecroppers, for reasons explained above. In any event, most landlords would find the use of tractors increasingly "non-economical" especially after the Great Depression [Tekeli and Ilkin 1988: 84-85] and the government would cease supporting mechanisation in agriculture in order to pre-empt the danger of rural unemployment [Hershlag 1968: 111].

peasants got "locked in" "chronic overproduction" despite falling prices and deteriorating terms of trade, while the entire surplus product accrued only to the absentee landlord/creditor. Hence, in the absence of a transformation of social relations and institutions that would set free alternative sources of credit and food supply, sharecroppers were *inherently* unwilling or unable to respond to fluctuating market conditions or to transform the conditions of production, and they were incapable of reinvesting in land. Either way, sharecropping arrangements continued to forestall the operation of market principles on big estates.

If the Republic of the 1920s was not able to initiate a capitalist growth dynamic in the countryside, it was even less able to do so in the towns. For the inability/unwillingness of the state to transform agrarian property relations, together with the wartime exhaustion and exodus of local populations, rendered precarious the already feeble supply of industrial workers.[6] Most industrial production could be carried out only through temporary and seasonal peasant-workers, who came to industrial sites for a month or two at the end of the harvest season in order to supplement their household income [Makal 2007: 121; Koç 2013: 193; 213-214]. That is, given the lack of a skilled and permanent workforce, industrialists had little incentive to invest in labor saving technology, organize and manage the production process "efficiently", or to increase extremely low wages, which could otherwise have helped to stabilize the supply of labor power [Hershlag 1968: 119]. From the 1920s, therefore, "efforts at reviving industrial production were largely hampered by difficulties securing workers and labor scarcity discouraged investments in new industrial enterprises" [Arnold 2012: 371].

However, despite all these organizational and productive inefficiencies, easy profits could still be made by the nascent bourgeoisie. During the 1920s, besides continuing to seize properties that belonged to emigrating/deported minorities, the bourgeoisie, domestic and foreign, received extensive support from the new state eager to create a domestic market and promote industrialization. How successful was the state at compelling and encouraging private actors to invest in and improve productive forces? Despite government support, private actors invested mainly in industries in which there was virtually no or little competition from imports despite low tariffs [Boratav 1981:

[6] The emigration of Ottoman minorities alone "removed those responsible for 70 per cent of the capital and 75 per cent of the labour in Turkish industrial enterprises" [Arnold 2012: 371].

168-169; Hale 1984: 157]. Furthermore, political measures aimed at strategically utilizing subsidies largely failed as local manufacturers circumvented regulations: "companies of paper acquired subsidized goods and sold them to other companies at a profit and then never began production" [Arnold 2006: 87]. With easy access to political rents and no compulsion to compete, manufacturers' social reproduction hardly depended on successful commodity production and extending/deepening their hold over scarce reserves of labor power [Tezel 1986: 112]. "The rent of protection [...] appropriated by the local industrial bourgeoisie [...] constitute[d] the basic source of accumulation" [Boratav 1981: 176]. Indeed, there were attempts from the ranks of the bureaucracy to "discipline" the bourgeois class, yet to no avail. The industrial bourgeoisie reacted in 1931 to policies that aimed to condition the protection of the internal market to the bourgeoisie's ability to sell in the international market [Kuruç 1987: 88-89], forcing the resignation of the then economics minister and the overhaul of economic policy in conformity with bourgeois interests [Tekeli and Ilkin 2004: 217-218].

In short, during the 1920s, the state was neither able to generalize "petty commodity production," nor to initiate a socio-legal transformation that would release labor for permanent absorption in industrial activity. Relatedly and ironically, the state's ability to induce the reorganization of industrial activity according to market imperatives was by and large undermined by the growth of a non-capitalist industrial bourgeoisie whose relation to production was handicapped by chronic shortages of labor and the contraction of international markets. Because the "nascent" bourgeoisie did not invest and comply with developmental regulations, and due to the emergence of new external challenges and opportunities, the state was to directly engage in production from 1932 onwards.

The "etatist" thirties: industrialization, monopolization, peasantization

During the Great Depression, the peasantry became worse off both in absolute and relative terms. Agricultural prices decreased much faster than the prices of manufactured goods, while agricultural taxes, which either remained constant or increased, continued to burden the rural masses [Emrence 2000: 33]. Anatolian peasants pursued "typical" survival strategies during the depression. They reverted to

subsistence farming; they fell into further debt and increasingly became sharecroppers; they gave up product specialization and diversified crops as much as possible; and lastly, they (temporarily) migrated to the closest towns and usually found no employment [Akçetin 2000: 93-98]. Surely, in the eyes of the Republican elite the prevailing destitution in the countryside once again resuscitated the ghost of rebellion. Also, the rise of peasant movements during the 1920s in the Balkan countries, especially in Bulgaria, had further aggravated the fear of violent unrest in Turkey, forcing the ruling elite to consider new strategies to restore stability and order after the Great Depression [Karaömerlioğlu 2001: 79]. Worse still, the world economic crisis revived geopolitical tensions in the Balkans. Italian and Bulgarian revisionism's return to the region with full force after 1929 heightened the perception of geopolitical threat, the fear of internal instability, and the need for industrialization that had haunted the Turkish ruling elite since the 1920s [Barlas 1998: 138-143]. While forcing industrialization, the escalating inter-imperialist rivalry also enlarged the pool of external funds available for industrialization. The Soviets, British and German states, attempting to expand their zones of influence in the Balkans and the Middle East, competitively extended low-interest credit and technical help to Turkey during the 1930s and early 1940s [Tezel 1985: 430; Hale 1981: 74].

Turkish "etatism" was born in this social and international context, although what exactly was meant by etatism was never fully clear. The ruling party insisted that etatism was neither "socialism" nor "liberalism" because it left room for private enterprise while making the state responsible for economic activities considered vital to rapid industrialization and the maintenance of order. By the end of the decade, the state emerged as an important, if not the leading, investor and producer in iron, steel, cement, utilities and mining. It nationalized all the previously built railroads, established state banks and investment agencies, and took back most of the state monopolies which had been run by private actors since the 1920s.

All this, however, hardly means that "the private sector was hurt by the expansion of the state sector" [Pamuk and Owen 1999: 19]. Although some distributional tensions inevitably existed between the two sides, protection of and incentives for private investment became even more generous than in the previous period [*ibid.*]. Much more importantly, the state simultaneously gave in to business demands for internal monopolies and external protection [Ilkin and Tekeli 2004: 219-220]. Ever since the 1920s, industrialists attempted to "organize in

cartels in order to prevent overproduction or in order to safeguard the high profit rates they enjoyed" [Keyder 1987: 103]. What changed with etatism is that the state, previously unable to prevent business circumvention of productivist policies, began to deliberately encourage monopoly business practices. Etatism "responded positively to [business] demands and permitted the formation of sector-based associations which openly sought to fix prices and avoid competition" [*ibid.*]. The state therefore encouraged monopolization of large industrial enterprises. Yet at the same time, almost contradictorily, the state imposed additional taxes on mechanization as well, thereby limiting competition and preventing the dissolution of primitive manufacturing enterprises [Aydemir 1979: 454; Tekeli and Ilkin 1987: 5]. The overall expectation from this seemingly contradictory bundle of economic policies was that rapid industrialization could be achieved without the social costs associated with capitalist industrialization. This was also expected to promote growth and stabilization in the countryside by creating an internal market for raw materials and food, for which demand and prices had fallen since the international crisis.

As pointed out earlier, "distorting" market prices and signals through a variety of political measures and incentives was a key element of all "state capitalisms". From this perspective, one may argue that reducing competition and granting privileges to the industrial sector in Etatist Turkey was hardly an extraordinary measure.[7] What is striking, however, is that as the Turkish state froze competition and secured profits for industrialists, it did nothing to "intensify" industrialists' control over the labor process by trying to increase the permanent labor supply. Despite the enactment of highly authoritarian labor regulations and penal laws, the state took virtually no measures to close the land frontier and overturn laws of partible inheritance. Peasants could still clear the land at little or no cost and indeed "the government aided this trend by actually distributing the land in small plots" [Birtek and Keyder 1975: 454].[8] Furthermore,

[7] For example, South Korea was a case in point, where the state was central to initiating and strategically fostering the processes of capital industrialization; breaking through the world market, and attaining high levels of labor productivity, savings and investment from the late 1960s onwards. Therefore, state involvement in the economy in South Korea did not constitute a buffer against commodification; on the contrary, the state provision of oligopolistic rights and subsidies in the internal market in South Korea worked to ensure that capitalists became subject to the rules of reproduction in the international market. Likewise, the provision of subsidies to peasants in order to enhance productivity was compensated for by charging the peasantry above-market prices for their access to fertilizers and consumption goods [Amsden 2003; 1985: 86-87; also see Chibber 2003].

[8] Between 1934 and 1938 approximately 3 per cent of the landless and near-landless peasants benefited from the distribution of state-owned lands [Silier 1981: 75].

pace Keyder, instead of promoting the rise of a middle stratum of petty commodity producers, which would have increased productivity and gradually released labor from agriculture, state support of agriculture seems to have aimed at the consolidation of the "peasantry." For one thing, price support programs addressing especially wheat-producing peasants, which Keyder sees as the pioneer of the so-called petty commodity producers, in fact remained "limited, not exceeding 3 per cent of the wheat crop in any given year" [Pamuk and Owen 1999: 22]. In other words, "the adverse terms of trade for wheat in the early 1930s were kept more or less constant until the war" [Boratav 1981: 184]. In contrast to wheat, tobacco was indeed a major crop, for which the state, through its tobacco monopoly, provided relatively generous price support programs and credit [*ibid*.: 185]. Yet, the state monopoly on tobacco did not attempt to replace powerful commercial agents that were able to dictate much lower prices on the peasantry. Big private actors, buying cheap from the peasantry and selling dear to the state, therefore became the primary beneficiary of the state's encouragement of tobacco production [Silier 1981: 86-88]. Unsurprisingly, there was no productivity growth even in major commercial crops produced by the peasantry, such as wheat and tobacco [Tekeli and Ilkin 1988: 56-64; Koç 1988: 86][9]. Also, beneath the surface of agricultural growth, sharecropping remained rampant. The sharecropping landlord, producing mainly cotton and beet, made huge profits thanks to state credit and price support programs [Silier 1981: 88], which were in turn spent on luxury consumption, rather than invested in production [Tezel 1986: 439]. Relatedly, with peasant surpluses largely accrued to commercial agents and sharecropping landlords, "villagers did not become significant consumers of urban manufacturers" and "the national market (outside the urban areas) [...] [remained] both narrow and thin" [Keyder 1994: 152].

Viewed in this light, it seems implausible to contend that the leitmotiv of the state support of agriculture was the creation of a rural capitalist class or the qualitative transformation of agrarian property relations. Instead, the safer argument would be that the state aimed to restore (however limitedly) the minimum conditions for the reproduction of peasant households by preventing seasonal price

[9] While the total cropped area constituted only 4.86 per cent of the total area in 1927, and then rose to 10.20 per cent in 1934 and 12.25 per cent in 1940, "the relative rise in area and in crops was almost identical" [Hershlag 1968: 112]. Consequently, according to one estimate, between 1926 and 1950 labor productivity in agriculture increased only 15 per cent [Tezel 1986: 378].

fluctuations and price speculations [Tekeli and Ilkin 1988: 41; Toprak 1988: 22-23]. By doing so, the state tried to promote political stability and production for the market without changing the essentially "peasant" character of social reproduction. To create and sustain a peasantry that cultivates a minimum amount of land and is able to produce some surplus for industrialization was the ultimate goal of the etatist agrarian policy. Indeed, the peasantry was seen as the antidote to the potential threat of working class and religious radicalism [Karaömerlioğlu 2000: 125]. The model countryside for the Kemalist elite was based on a mode of life far away from the tumultuous world of sharecropping relations, and that certainly did not resemble the world of restless "petty commodity producers," i.e. farmers whose reproduction depends on their ability to respond to changes in commodity prices/relative profits [Friedman 1980]. The "agrarian question" in early Republican Turkey, thus, had nothing to do with establishing a capitalist market and everything to do with finding the ways in which the peasant mode of life could be consolidated.[10]

In short, the development of capitalism in the Turkish countryside seemed neither feasible nor desirable. The flipside of this is that the overall occupational structure in Turkey remained roughly the same till the end of the 1940s, which indicates the persistence of chronic labor shortages in industrial towns. Monopolization and protection of business on the one hand and the unavailability of a permanent work force on the other ultimately created an industrial structure in which "several enterprises continued to exist only thanks to government support and an artifical price structure" [Hershlag 1975: 190]. Despite the enactment of highly authoritarian labor regulations and penal laws, industrialists were neither able nor willing to intensify their control over the labor supply and the labor process. As a consequence, in industries approved for state support, "investments incurred created additional jobs, but no real progress was made in the level of productivity": "the relative increase of output and labor was almost equal" [Hershlag 1968: 106]. Productivity being stagnant, there was no ground to offer higher wages to workers. Even in state factories, where better wages could be offered, wages were

[10] In the words of a prominent Republican intellectual and bureaucrat: "if a land reform is accomplished in our country, its end result will again be a social polarization under the impact of social differentiation and diversification, which are the tendencies and laws of the system of market economy. Lands given to the peasants will be centralized again in the hands of some farmers and city dwellers because of factors such as debt and price setbacks. For this reason, land reforms are, in fact, far from being an absolute measure to solve land issues" [Ismail Husrev Tokin, 1934, quoted in Karaömerlioğlu 2000: 122fn].

not high enough to retain workers. "Extremely high" turnover rates consequently prevailed in both state and private factories: workers often quit their jobs simply because they could easily return if they chose. This rendered totally ineffective employers' control over labor which could otherwise have been exercised through recruitment practices. Relatedly, in a context where workers could easily exit and re-enter the labor market, the deskilling of labor and the scientific management of the labor process could backfire. There was, therefore, no willingness or compulsion to supervise the labor process. "Workers were not fired even after they were fined for absenteeism at various times," and in many industrial plants there was no well-defined wage policy in place, no clear and accessible system of remuneration that would reward more productive workers and, in some factories, not even proper bookkeeping [Akgöz 2012: 93-111].

It must be clear by now that early Republican etatism did not entail the development of "state capitalism." Neither land nor factory were organized on the basis of market imperatives. The state encouraged peasantization and monopolization as the foundation of a new industrialization strategy. The bureaucratic elite and industrial bourgeoisie allied to form a redistributive non-capitalist economy in which they themselves became the primary beneficiaries. Likewise, in this redistributive economy the regime's relation to sharecropping landlords was unambiguously supportive, provided that sharecropping relations were kept politically and geopolitically sterile. Rural masses lived in destitution, yet the state, unable/unwilling to initiate a systematic transformation of the rules of accessing land, attempted to maintain their minimum basis of subsistence, and by doing so it defined social reproduction away from the market. The construction of a "market society" was not central to the early Republican modernization project. Instead, as I will briefly show in the next section, the Turkish ruling elite embarked on an alternative project of modernization.

From the agrarian question to the national question: Redefining property and the citizen-Turk

If the Republic was not the political expression of an "incomplete" capitalist transformation or a "weak bourgeoisie," how to make sense of the Turkish road to modernity? In other words, if the early Republican regime cannot be explained through the *Sonderweg* paradigm, what to

make of Kemalism's oft cited "paradoxical" character: its "ad-hoc absolutism" and "futurist democratism" [Dumont 1981: 28]; its heavy-handed single party rule and relentless referencing to parliamentary sovereignty as the sole legal basis for popular legitimacy [Koçak 2005: 43]; its "elitism" and "populism" [Karaömerlioğlu 2008: 116]; and its promotion of "totalitarianism" and "individualism" [Mardin 1981: 212-213]; its repeated oscillation between universal and exclusionary notions of citizenship [Ince 2012]? I suggest that what lent the early Republican regime its specific politico-cultural baggage was the internal structure and geopolitical conditions of surplus appropriation.

As indicated earlier, the transition to capitalism requires a systematic political intervention into human relations in ways that eliminate non-market access to the means of subsistence. It is only when people lose their unmediated access to the means of subsistence that human existence becomes thinkable in "economic" terms and that the "economy" has a practical significance [Sayer 1987: 20-21]. In non-capitalist class societies, by contrast, the producer is not separated from the means of production; thus the extraction of the surplus product has to be obtained by "non-economic" means.[11] Indeed, it is the re-organization of political power under capitalism and its differentiation from economic processes that *may* make thinkable a political arena in which subjects are formally equal despite their socioeconomic inequalities. Clearly, the argument here is not that capitalism requires equality or that capitalism is necessarily less authoritarian than other modes of socioeconomic organization. Capitalism can and has been congruent with highly authoritarian forms of rule and compatible with different forms of labor control. Yet, the opposite is also true: as capitalism effectively denies any rights of participation in decisions related to the organization of production, thereby shielding itself from any kind of democratic accountability at the workplace, it *may* also allow the creation of a political space consisting of formally equal subjects [Wood 1995]. While other class-based systems are *structurally* antithetical to political equality due to the fusion of political and economic powers, capitalism is not.

The point is that the early Republic embraced political equality and universal suffrage (in a two-tier election system) in an utterly non-capitalist society, i.e. in a society wherein the state remained and

[11] This does not mean that the capitalist state does not intervene in the economy. Indeed, the state, no longer directly involved in the process of appropriation, still secures, complements or promotes the functioning of the capitalist economy. What is at issue here is, therefore, not the "extent" of state intervention, but the constitution of a qualitatively different relation between political and economic power that produces and reproduces the "fiction" of self-regulating markets.

expanded as the main and direct source of income and property. In such a context, wherein access to state and property was, at least in principle, universalized among politically equal subjects, the Turkish elite had to continuously reinterpret the conditions of having property and being equal. The Republic's emphasis on compulsory "public education" (The 1924 Constitution, article 87) and "universal conscription" (enacted through the Military Service Law of 1927) was particularly important in this respect. For, while the Turkish elite were unable or unwilling to initiate an organized attack on peasants' customary rights on land, they could link the enjoyment of these rights to peasants' protection of the "fatherland" and their disciplining through a centralized system of education. Put differently, given the social and geopolitical turmoil, improving the state without "capitalism" arose as the most urgent task, which the Republican regime tried to deliver by linking the peasants' access to land to their acquisition of skills and allegiance conducive to the social and geopolitical reproduction of the ruling elite. As such, political and geopolitical utility for the state, instead of market competition, provided the subject with access to property, means of subsistence and civic status.[12]

Without structural change in the rules of accessing land, using education and conscription as a way to facilitate modernity was a double-edge sword, however. On the one hand, both measures had to resort to a somewhat egalitarian and populist understanding of political community in order to broaden the mass base and increase the geopolitical competitiveness of the Kemalist regime. Yet, the potential radicalization of "equality" also had to be restrained by hierarchically requalifying the rules of participation in the Republican moral economy. This became an acute problem especially in the face of the absorption of greater numbers of commoners into public education and the resultant glut in bureaucratic cadres.[13] For, theoretically, every citizen who was educated in the public school system and who proved his political allegiance by doing military service was entitled to become

[12] This model has certain affinities to the French Republican tradition, and more specifically to Rousseau's idea of popular sovereignty. In Rousseau's works, participation in the civic militia and education (rather than property ownership) figures prominently as a Republican mean that promotes self-government while inducing citizens to work for the "general will" [Wood 2012: 200]. For the impact of French Republican tradition on the Ottoman/Turkish intelligentsia, see Ozdalga [2005]. Although very important, a wider discussion of this point falls beyond the scope of the present paper. For a discussion see Duzgun 2017a; 2017b.

[13] "In 1930, 34 percent of the budget went for salaries paid to civil servants, whose number was constantly increasing in the 1920s without any consideration for the financial capacity of the state" [Hershlag 1968: 68].

a participant in the political and economic establishment. Therefore, the rules of accessing the state, which was by far the main source and generator of income, had to be repeatedly conditioned to credentials other than citizenship and merit. Thus, the institutionalization of "military service" and "public education" as the ultimate means to acquire political and economic rights had direct implications for the structure of surplus appropriation and would inevitably lead to "exclusions" from the theoretically universalized political space, most notably for Kurds and non-Muslims.

Significant steps had been taken to universalize conscription and compulsory public education before the Republic. The Ottoman ruling elite had to a large extent subjugated and co-opted provincial notables to the central administration, breaking their autonomous power over the local populace [Mardin 2006: 202]. However, non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, thanks to their links to foreign powers, successfully resisted universal conscription and retained their autonomous schools until 1914, which not only made them the usual victims of state violence, but also led to their marginalization in the emerging Republican order [Zurcher 1999]. Likewise, Kurdistan remained relatively unscratched in the face of Ottoman centralization attempts. In Kurdistan, political and religious power holders (often the same person), with relatively independent sources of income, remained in power. Relatedly, landlessness and sharecropping relations were more common in Kurdistan than in any other region [Keyder 1981: 13; 19]. Consequently, while the relations of personal dependence prevailed and persisted in the region, centralist measures such as public education and conscription never took root before the Republic. No wonder resistance to the Republican attempts at political and religious centralization[14] was fierce in Kurdistan. Of 18 major revolts that broke out between 1924 and 1938, 17 took place in the Kurdish regions. Combined with new geopolitical fears related to

[14] The first powerful nationalist/secular strike was undertaken in 1924 with the unification and centralization of the school system. While the legislation abolished all religious schools, it also set Turkish as the only medium of instruction, thereby undermining the use of Arabic and Kurdish. In 1925, the state outlawed all dervish orders, lodges and ceremonies, and criminalized religious titles apart from those endowed by the state. Likewise, from 1925 onwards, a series of new laws proscribed clothing and headgear associated with hierarchies of the old religious and political establishment. The Turkish Civil Code of 1926 completed the unification of the legal system under state control, secularizing the last residues of religious regulation, especially with regards to marital and family law. In 1928, the state introduced and enforced for all public communications the use of the new Turkish alphabet based on Latin script, replacing the previously used Persian-Arabic script. The same year the constitutional clause that declared Islam as the state religion was removed.

the British and French presence in the Middle East, Kurdistan caused a continuous perception of imminent geopolitical threat and a "civil war-like" situation during the interwar years, whose impact on the Republican psyche would, in many ways, be comparable to that of the war of independence [Tunçay 2010: 134-135].

Given the non-capitalist character of surplus appropriation, the marginalization of non-Muslims, and the (geo)political threats (real or perceived) posed by Kurds, it is not surprising that the Republican elite hierarchically redefined equality and civility by continuously reasserting "ethnic" and "secular" differences among "equals." As a result, while Turkishness, in principle, was defined by the Republican regime as a "legal," "civic" and "voluntarist" citizenship category, in practice it became a dual category which simultaneously encompassed "real citizens" and "half citizens"; while the former represented the ethnic and secular "Turks" (whatever that might mean), the latter referred to the "untrustworthy" non-Muslims and Kurds [Ince 2012: 45-46]. Needless to say, only "Turks" were able to obtain bureaucratic positions, while non-Muslims and Kurds were tacitly yet systematically excluded from state service. Likewise, in the private sector most companies were required to replace non-Muslim Turkish workers with "Turks" and non-Muslim Turkish businessmen were subjected to crushingly discriminatory taxation practices [Bayir 2013: 122-123].

Comparatively speaking, then, unlike Nazism and fascism that attempted to annihilate "man-the-citizen" in favor of "man-the-producer" and resorted to militarism and racial segregation to facilitate an "organized capitalism," in the new Turkish Republic property was much less a right enjoyed by those who used property "productively" and much more a privilege for those who geo(politically) served the "nation." In this sense, the right to property continuously clashed with, but did not crush, the right to subsistence during the early Republican era. While Kemalism allowed for the enrichment of a "Turkified" bourgeoisie (mainly at the expense of the non-Muslim propertied classes), it also created a space of accumulation without changing the rules of accessing land and encroaching upon the minimum subsistence requirements of "patriotic" citizens. Fulfillment of military and political duties, rather than productive activity, was the basis of social reproduction. Relatedly, in the absence of a capitalist space wherein the right to "improve" property overrides the right to equality, Kemalism had to find new ways in which the right to property could be contained as well as reinforced. This is

precisely why Kemalism, in contrast to Nazism, could still claim the sharing of the "universal" values of "civilization" while continuously reinterpreting the manner of their implementation in hierarchical ways. For example, certain early Republican elite, willing to stabilize sharecropping relations, could claim that peasants should be taught how to gain and exercise their rights so that "nobody could insult and 'exploit' them" [Ismail Hakkı Tonguç, quoted in Aytemur 2007: 102; 105]. The spread of values such as "freedom of thought, freedom of expression, and equal rights which had been the well-known slogans of the French Revolution" could be seen as essential to the elimination of differences which would otherwise undermine the social order [Ismail Hakkı Tonguç, quoted in Aytemur 2007: 105-106]. Despite their essentially conservative agenda, the Republican elite, in the absence of a productivist space, had to engineer and contain a radical citizenship ethic so that peasant labor and bodies could be expanded and tapped in ways to reproduce the Republican order.

One implication is that, despite tacitly and persistently postponing their realization, Kemalism's official embracement of equality and democracy could still be used by the lower classes to radicalize these concepts from within the official ideology.[15] This was in stark contrast to Nazi political theory, for example, which completely banished parliament and the rights of the individual in favor of a "spiritually-driven" *Volk* and *Führer* [Shilliam 2009: 175]. Thus, while in Nazi Germany the room for popular negotiation, mobilization and sovereignty was completely obliterated in favor of hierarchy and productivity, Kemalism's bureaucratic elitism could still potentially turn into populist radicalism. For, in an economy driven by political redistribution of the sources of income, the lower classes could raise their stake by reinterpreting the Kemalist negation of class differences as a blueprint for a politically more equal, if not classless, society. Kemalism, an essentially conservative and elitist venture, could potentially be led astray by the lower classes, and turn into a breeding ground for radical forms of political equality and citizenship.

[15] For example, the Kemalist attempt to create a peasant intelligentsia through "Village Institutes" (VIs) more often than not "created a type of student who happened to be too disobedient and self-confident despite the mainstream norms of the Single Party regime." This also partly explains why "many graduates of the VIs […] took part in progressive organizations and trade unions in the late 1960s and 70s" [Karaömerlioğlu 1998: 70]. For a detailed survey of how the populism of the VIs became a challenge to Kemalist populism see also Aytemur 2007: ch. 5.

Conclusion

In this article, I have raised and substantiated two theoretical points. *First*, the *Sonderweg* paradigm rests on a deductive understanding of class agency. Class roles are theorized not through social agents' relations to one another in historically specific contexts of social reproduction, but primarily deduced from *a priori* abstractions derived from the capitalist mode of production. That is, the (industrial) bourgeoisie and middling farmers are read back in time as universal carriers of capitalism. The entire discussion on late development then boils down to finding reasons for the "absence" or "weakness" of industrial and agrarian middle classes. *Second*, by judging the quality of modernization according to the level of development of capitalism and the bourgeois classes, the *Sonderweg* paradigm uncritically dissolves modernity into capitalism, thereby obscuring the heterogeneity of world historical development. By transhistoricizing capitalist dynamics, the *Sonderweg* paradigm rules out from the very beginning the possibility of substituting historically novel modern social forms for capitalism.

Proceeding from these theoretical premises, I have argued that scholarly accounts informed by the *Sonderweg* paradigm lead to a mischaracterization of Kemalism as "state capitalism". Neither in the countryside nor in towns, I have contended, was the early Republican regime able or willing to legislate capitalist property relations. During the 1920s and 1930s, the state elite were unable to impose market discipline on the bourgeois classes and were fearful of the divorce of the peasantry from the land. They tried new ways of political and ideological mobilization that would stabilize, if not mitigate, sharecropping relations, preempt peasant migration to the cities, and keep the peasantry away from ethno-religious and revolutionary currents. Via a series of "populist" measures, such as fiscal incentives and limited land redistribution, the state elite preempted peasant dispossession and labor mobility, which they perceived as the ultimate danger to the existing sociopolitical order. In the absence of a stable supply of labor power, industrialists, foreign and domestic, invested only to reap easy profits in an economy completely sheltered from international competition. Organized in monopolies, they prevented competition and "overproduction," and even sabotaged state plans to improve industrial productivity. Combined with the world economic crisis and the escalating threat of war during the 1930s, the state responded to its

inability to establish "institutionalized markets" by formulating alternative rules governing social and geopolitical reproduction. Through an alliance with a non-capitalist industrial bourgeoisie, the state elite instituted education, Turkification, secularization and the militarization of Republican subjects as the ultimate basis of their social reproduction. The main principles of Turkish republicanism, "etatism," "populism," "nationalism," and "secularism," were consolidated in this context, leading to the emergence of an alternative regime of accumulation and an alternative modernity.

Kemalist modernization then did not derive from "market society." It aspired to cultivate modern forms and values while deliberately sidestepping the institutionalization of capitalist social relations (whereas the totalitarian-corporatist regimes in Western Europe, to which Kemalism is often compared, aspired to eradicate the most progressive aspects of modernity in order to deepen and rationalize capitalism). As such, the original Kemalist project was a historically distinct modernization strategy that bypassed capitalism (and socialism) based on an alternative form of property and sociality. In theory, this undertaking never relinquished its claim for the role of the individual and popular sovereignty in the making of "civilization." However, given the non-capitalist character of prevailing property relations, and in the face of geopolitical uncertainties, it endlessly racialized, militarized and secularised the politico-cultural conditions of being civic, equal and modern.

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Résumé

Cet article discute de façon critique la vision commune selon laquelle la jeune République Turque (1920-1940) aurait suivi une voie « spéciale » vers la modernité caractérisée par le « Capitalisme d'État ». Il entend montrer que cette thèse, associée au paradigme dit « Sonderweg », obscurcit davantage qu'elle n'éclaire ce qui fait la spécificité historique et comparée de la formation de l'État en Turquie, conduisant à des conclusions fragiles à propos du processus de modernisation. En s'appuyant sur l'approche des relations sociales de propriété mais également la notion d'*economistic fallacy* développée par Karl Polanyi, l'article propose une nouvelle interprétation du projet républicain pour la Turquie, et entend contribuer à une meilleure compréhension du contenu, du tempo et de la multi-linéarité du développement historique mondial.

Mots-clés : Capitalisme ; Modernité ; Formation de l'État ; Géopolitique ; Développement tardif ; Turquie ; Kémalisme.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Beitrag diskutiert kritisch die allgemein verbreitete Vorstellung, dass die junge türkische Republik (1920-1940) mit dem Staatskapitalismus einen besonderen Weg in die Modernität gewählt hätte. Er versucht des Weiteren zu zeigen, dass diese These, in Verbindung mit dem Paradigma des sogenannten « Sonderwegs », die historisch-komparative Besonderheit der türkischen Staatsbildung eigentlich mehr okkultiert, da sie zu voreiligen Rückschlüssen bezüglich des türkischen Modernisierungsprozesses führt. Aufbauend auf dem Ansatz der sozialen Besitzverhältnisse sowie des von Karl Polyani entwickelten Begriffes des « wirtschaftlichen Trugschlusses » schlägt der Aufsatz eine neue Interpretation des republikanischen Projekts der Türkei vor und möchte zu einem besseren Verständnis des Inhalts, der Geschwindigkeit und der Multilinearität der weltgeschichtlichen Entwicklung beitragen.

Schlüsselwörter : Kapitalismus; Modernität; Staatsbildung; Geopolitik; Späte Entwicklung; Türkei; Kemalismus.